Interviewing

Some of the most interesting and inspiring sociological studies have utilized interviewing as their principal methodological approach to the subject of interest. Moreover, the vast majority of social scientific research employs interviewing in one form or another. Given its central place within the toolkit of sociological approaches to research, this course is designed to deepen students’ knowledge of interviewing as a research method. We will look at the ethical dilemmas and research challenges it poses, as well as become familiar with the details of employing it as one’s methodology.

Since the best way of learning about a methodology is to practice using it, students will be required to conduct a research project during the course of the semester that relies primarily upon interviewing. Thus, students will begin by conceiving of a research question, relating it to the relevant theoretical literatures, and defining the precise methodology that will be employed in studying it. They will, then, move on to carry out the research (including at least 8 interviews during the Spring 2021 semester), code and analyze the data, and prepare a final paper based upon the project. A brief description of the research question/project is due by 9:00 AM on Saturday, 23 January; a project proposal with sample questions will be due on 10 February; a short paper based upon interviews conducted to date will be due on 31 March; and the final paper will be due by 12:00 noon on 10 May.

In addition, students will share their work with the rest of the seminar participants by practicing their interview questions with each other (17 February), as well as making an initial presentation about their project (between Weeks 6-8) and presenting their final results (between Weeks 12-14).

Course Materials:

-A set of required articles and book chapters has been put together for the course, which can be found on our b-course site. They are listed by week in alphabetical order in the section for “Files.” (These are indicated with an * in the Course Readings listed below.)

There are also several electronic copies of this book available through the UCB library system. However, only three students will have access to them at any given time (much as if they were materials on reserve).

-You will need to have an audio-recorder.

-Other Equipment: If you need equipment (laptop, webcam, microphone) in order to participate in our Zoom meetings, you may borrow them through the Student Technology Equity Program (STEP): https://bit.ly/32eaimn

Challenging times:

To say that we are in the midst of challenging times is to say the least. The following is a web-site that has many useful ideas if things start to feel overwhelming or impossible at any point in the semester: https://recalibrate.berkeley.edu/one-click-mode/one-click-graduateprofessional-students

Course Readings:
Week 1: Introduction. (20 January)

Week 2: Why Use Interviewing as a Methodology/An Example of a Research Project That Employed Interviewing  (21-27 January)

Required Reading:
- Blauner, Bob, Black Lives, White Lives: Three Decades of Race Relations in America. Read the Introduction and the Intro. to Part I; skim Chapters 1 and 4; read the Methodological Appendix; and read the The Author’s Story (pp. 1-41; 89-106; 327-330; and 349-359). Berkeley: University of California Press (1989).

Recommended Reading:
- Teddlie, Charles, and Abbas Tashakkori. 2009. Foundations of Mixed Methods Research: Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches in the Social and
Week 3: How to Start the Interviewing Process/Another Example of a Research Project That Employed Interviewing  (28 January-3 February)

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:

Week 4: The Interviewing Process Itself/Another Example of a Research Project that Employed Interviewing  (4-10 February)

Required Reading:


Recommended Reading:
**Week 5: Learning to Listen/Some Issues in Interviewing**  (11-17 February)

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 6: Issues in Interviewing**  (18-24 February)

**Required Reading:**

**Recommended Reading:**

**Week 7: More Issues in Interviewing**  (25 February-3 March)

**Required Reading**
Recommended Reading:

Week 8: Analysis of Data/Problem Solving  (4-10 March)
Required Reading:

Recommended Reading:

Week 9: Analysis of Data/Problem Solving  (11-17 March)

Week 10: Analyzing a Transcript and Analyzing Your Data (31 March)

Week 11: Writing up your Results  (1-7 April)
Required Reading:
- Weiss, Robert S., Learning from Strangers. Chapter 7 (pp. 183-206).
- Lofland, John, and Lyn H. Lofland, Analyzing Social Settings. Chapter 10 (pp. 204-229).

Recommended Reading:
- Strauss, Anselm, Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists. Chapter 12 (pp. 249-264).

Week 12: Individual Presentations  (14 April)

Week 13: Individual Presentations  (21 April)
Week 14: Individual Presentations (28 April)