

# Soc 108 – Advanced Methods: In-Depth Interviewing

University of California, Berkeley  
Tuesdays 10am-12pm  
124 Wheeler

Instructor: Edwin Lin, Spring 2023

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Office Hours, Sign-Up at <http://www.wejoinin.com/sheets/icwie>

Thursdays 9:45am-11:45am, 1pm-3pm

487 Social Sciences Building OR via Zoom online

Zoom Office Hours Link: <https://berkeley.zoom.us/j/99441395960>

## *Overview of Course Content:*

Scientists primarily use different methods of observation to gather data about their subjects. Social scientists go a step further and instead of just observing their subjects, they also ask them questions directly to gain a deeper understanding of their lived experiences, motivations, and ways of thinking. This course teaches students in a step-by-step manner how to conduct in-depth interviews for the purpose of research. We will learn how interview data is used, how to determine who to talk to, how to develop good questions, and how to gather and interpret interview data. A keystone of the course is writing a sociological research paper using interview data that you will gather as a result of the class—you must gather new data as part of the course. This course requires a high amount of individual and outside-of-lecture research, and is especially relevant for students who have a social research question or project that they want to answer.

## *Office Hours:*

Please sign up for office hours if you know in advance that you'd like to come in. Information is above. If you do not sign up, you are still welcome to drop in, but I do sometimes step out of the office when there is no appointment to run a quick errand. Also, if the door to my office is closed during office hours, feel free to knock (loudly). I try not to run late with my appointments but it does happen—if you notice me running late and have time constraints with your assigned time, please feel free to politely interrupt and let me know.

## *Grade Breakdown:*

Participation and Attendance	10%
Research Proposal	5%
Existing Literature and Method Proposal	15%
CITI Training	5%
Draft Questionnaire	10%
Transcription of an Interview	10%
Preliminary Coding Assignment	10%
In-Class Poster Session Presentation	5%
Final Research Paper	30%

**\*\*\*Attendance to class is mandatory; missing more than two classes will result in a penalty to your grade.** Assignments worth 5% are simply graded on whether you completed the assignment.

### ***Participation and Attendance:***

Please come to class prepared to discuss that week's reading and how you see it relating to your own project. Your participation during class is crucial to learning and understanding the course material. "Participation" does not mean simply speaking out a lot. The content, quality, and depth of your participation is more important than how many times a week you speak. At the same time, showing that you are constantly engaged in our class discussions is also important. I do keep track of participation (you may see me doing this) as a way to ensure no personal bias against you when it comes to determining your participation grade. In-class participation includes sharing about your project, working with other students, and providing comments to other students in the class about their projects.

This class is run like a workshop, which means that while I do give lectures and assignments, I also expect you to engage with the material and to be ready to ask questions and share about your struggles and your experiences with your project. The more you are able to share about your project and ask questions regarding your work, the more you and other students will benefit, and the better the class will be as a result.

For those of you who may dislike participating in large groups or spontaneous participation, there are several options that I am happy to work out with you. If you are at all concerned about participation, please see me *early* in the semester in office hours to talk about this. But due to the nature of this course's subject matter, sharing about your project in class is truly an important and critical part of the course.

**\*\*\*If English is not your first language**, or you have trouble writing in English, there are resources on campus to help in writing your papers. I have posted some such resources on bCourses under "Files" and "Writing Resources." You can also check out the Student Learning Center (SLC) at their website <http://slc.berkeley.edu> for more information.

Also, if you are part of the **Disabled Students' Program (DSP)** and require any special accommodations, please try to plan at least a week in advance—this will guarantee you access to your accommodations. Email me to ask for extensions and accommodations (see course policies).

### ***Research Proposal (1-2 pages):***

In this short proposal, you will be asked to introduce your topic and your research question to me. Explain why you are interested in this research question and why you think qualitative interviews would be a good way to answer your question.

### ***Existing Literature and Method Proposal (4 pages):***

In order for you to conduct research on any topic, it is essential that you understand what others have already said. A literature review provides an overview of the subject that you are studying to help explain to your readers what the scholarly debates are on a particular topic and to show that you have read, evaluated, and comprehended the published research in the field. In this assignment, you will be asked to read academic articles on your topic and put them in conversation with one another. What are the main arguments and debates? On what points do the authors agree or disagree?

After providing this discussion between your academic articles, propose what you will do to contribute to this existing knowledge. Why are qualitative interviews an effective method? Who will you interview and how will you obtain these interviews? What kinds of questions will you ask?

***CITI Training:***

These are training modules completed online. For this class, you will complete two (2) modules, which should take about two hours. Specific instructions will be handed out on how to complete this assignment and upload your results to the bCourses website.

***Draft Questionnaire:***

You will hand in a draft of your questionnaire. Bring a copy to class to share, discuss, and receive feedback. See bCourses “Files” for some examples of questionnaires.

***Transcription of an Interview:***

Transcribe an entire interview, as word for word as possible—this could take several hours! Bring a copy of this to class. We will discuss some of your results, thoughts, reflections, and insights in your interview and make some suggestions to each other about how to improve.

***Preliminary Coding Analysis Assignment (4 pages):***

Provide some insight and analysis to the interviews that you have completed. Suggest some themes, issues, similarities/differences, and key concepts and theories that help explain and answer your research question.

***Poster Session Presentations:***

You will give a short presentation with PowerPoint slides on the results you have discovered so far. You will present your research question, your method, and some of your interview data along with your analysis.

***Final Research Paper (12-16 pages):***

The final product will be a complete research paper including an introduction, literature review, method section, a data analysis/findings section, and a conclusion. More details on this will be provided, but an example outline and checklist can also be found in the “Files” section of the bCourses site.

## **Reading List and Semester Schedule**

Assignments that are “handed out” means they will be explained in class and available on bCourses. Please complete readings before class on the day listed below. Be sure to read the readings with your own project in mind!

### ***Tips About the Readings:***

The great majority of the readings for a class like this (advanced methods) should be skimmed aggressively. That is because most of the readings in this syllabus are essentially “textbook” readings, which means they are trying to teach you abstract concepts for use in the research field. You should read these readings as if you were reading a textbook. This means you should jot down notes on key terms, but mostly use it just as reinforcement of lecture material.

In terms of skimming, learn when to slow down and focus and when to speed up and even skip! I **DO NOT expect you to read every word of every reading**, nor should you, as this is a bad reading habit to develop (for academic, course reading). I would MUCH prefer that you spend even just 10 minutes on every reading on the syllabus rather than giving up and reading only 10% of the readings here. Ideally, you should be able to do a good skim on each day’s reading in about 30 minutes—a closer read may take closer to 60 minutes.

### ***List of Important Due Dates:***

Research Proposal due	Monday, January 30
Existing Lit + Method due	Monday, February 20
CITI Training due	Tuesday, February 21
Draft Questionnaire due	Monday, February 27
Transcription due	Monday, April 3
In-Class Presentations due	Tuesday, April 25
Prelim Coding Analysis due	Friday, April 28
Final Research Paper due	Friday, May 12

### **Week 1- January 17**

#### **Introduction: Choosing a Topic and Research Question**

- Brainstorm ideas of research projects you want to do for this class; they must use qualitative interviews as the core method
- See Week 1 Readings (on bCourses) for some resources
- Start readings for next week (more than usual)

**\*\*\*Research Proposal Handed Out via bCourses due Monday, January 30\*\*\***

### **Week 2- January 24**

#### **Example of In-Depth Interviews and Research Tips**

- Hochschild, Arlie. 2012 [1989]. *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home*. Penguin. Ch. 1, 2, and 4.
- Smith, Sandra Susan. 2007. *Lone Pursuit: Distrust and Defensive Individualism Among the Black Poor*. NY: Russell Sage Foundation Press. Ch. 1 and 3.

**\*\*\*Research Proposal DUE Monday, January 30\*\*\***

**Week 3- January 31**

**Literature Review and Contribution**

- Murray Davis, "That's Interesting!" *Phil Soc Sci*, (1), 1971
- Lin, Edwin, "Big Fish in a Small Pond," *International Migration Review*, 48 (1), 2014: pp. 181-190.

**\*\*\*Existing Lit + Method Handed Out via bCourses due Monday, February 20\*\*\***

**Week 4- February 7**

**Sampling and Generalizations**

- Mario Small. (2009) "How Many Cases Do I Need? On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research." *Ethnography* 10 (1): 5-38.
- Smith, Sandra Susan. 2007. *Lone Pursuit: Distrust and Defensive Individualism among the Black Poor*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. **Appendix A**.

**Week 5- February 14**

**Questionnaires and Research Design**

- Rubin, Herbert J. and Irene S. Rubin. 2012. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. Sage. Ch. 9 and 10 (pp. 131-169).
- Smith, Sandra Susan. 2007. *Lone Pursuit: Distrust and Defensive Individualism Among the Black Poor*. NY: Russell Sage Foundation Press. **Appendices B and C**.
- Review Example Questionnaires and come with any questions you might have!

**\*\*\*Draft Questionnaire Handed Out via bCourses due Monday, February 27\*\*\***

**\*\*\*CITI Training Handed Out via bCourses due Tuesday, February 21\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Existing Literature + Method Proposal DUE Monday, February 20\*\*\***

**Week 6- February 21**

**Ethical Imperatives**

- Adler, Emily Stier and Roger Clark. 2011. "Chapter 3: Ethics and Social Research" Pp 39-70 in *An Invitation to Social Research: How It's Done*. Fourth Edition. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Katherine S. Newman. 2002. "Qualitative Research on the Frontlines of Controversy." *Sociological Methods and Research* 31(2): 123-130.

**\*\*\*CITI Training Due Today, Upload Results by Tuesday, February 21\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Draft Questionnaire DUE Monday, February 27\*\*\***

**Bring a shareable/printed copy of your questionnaire to class on February 28!**

**Week 7- February 28**

**Conducting the Interview, Gaining Entrée**

- Hermanowicz, Joseph C. 2002. "The Great Interview: 25 Strategies for Studying People in Bed." *Qualitative Sociology* 25 (4): 479-499.

**Week 8- March 7**

**Dilemmas and Challenges**

- Weiss, Robert. 1995. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. Chapter 5.
- Khan, Shamus, and Colin Jerolmack. 2013. "Saying Meritocracy and Doing Privilege." *The Sociological Quarterly* 54(1): 9-19.

**Week 9- March 14**

**Transcriptions and Understanding Interviews**

- Katherine Borland. 1991. "That's Not What I Said": Interpretative Conflict in Oral Narrative Research," *In Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, edited by Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, pp. 11-25. New York: Routledge.

**\*\*\*Transcription Assignment Handed Out via bCourses due Monday, April 3\*\*\***

**Week 10- March 21**

**Mandatory Office Hours** in place of regular class

**\*\*\*Complete at least one interview by this Office Hours!\*\*\***

**\*\*\* NO CLASS SPRING BREAK: March 28\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Completed Transcript DUE Monday, April 3\*\*\***

**Bring a printed copy of your transcript to class on April 4!**

**Week 11- April 4**

**Workshop Your Interviews and Quantitative Supportive Data**

- Bazeley, P. (2002) "Issues in Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches to Research," Presented at 1st International Conference - Qualitative Research in Marketing and Management, University of Economics and Business Administration, Vienna.

**Week 12- April 11**

**Coding: Analyzing Interviews**

- Auerbach, C. F. and L. B. Silverstein. (2003) *Qualitative Data: An Introduction to Coding and Analysis*, New York: New York University Press, pp. 31-53.

**\*\*\*Preliminary Coding Analysis Handed Out via bCourses due Friday, April 28\*\*\***

**\*\*\*In-Class Presentations Handed Out via bCourses due Tuesday, April 25\*\*\***

**Week 13- April 18**

**Writing and Presenting Results**

- Lindlof and Taylor (2002) "Authoring and writing," In Lindlof and Taylor, *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed., pp. 279-312.

**Week 14- April 25**

**\*\*\*Presentations in Small Groups\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Final Research Paper Handed Out via bCourses due Friday, May 12\*\*\***

**\*\*\*Preliminary Coding Analysis Assignment DUE Friday, April 28\*\*\***

**Final Paper DUE Friday, May 12**