COURSE OVERVIEW

This course is an introduction to the qualitative method of in-depth interviews. The course begins with a very brief introduction to the use of qualitative methods in sociological research and some differing approaches to qualitative methods within sociology. E.g.: What types of research questions are best answered using qualitative methods? What is the link between theory and research when using qualitative methods?

After this introduction, we move into “doing” qualitative research, specifically, in-depth interviewing. We will explore research design issues including developing research questions, selecting samples, and the ethics of research. We will then examine the collection, analysis, and presentation of qualitative interview data, using exercises and your own research projects to illustrate these processes. We will be concerned with practical issues that arise at different stages of the research process.

The best way to learn qualitative methods is to “do” them. Thus, the majority of this course involves doing qualitative interview research and discussing research issues and questions with each other. As outlined below (and in the separate Soc585-00P assignment documents), the requirements for this course revolve around conducting a research project on a topic of interest.

There is a Blackboard site devoted to this course. This site will include all materials that we hand out in class (the syllabus, instructions for written assignments, etc.). Any important announcements will also be posted on this site.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS (See separate Soc 585-00P assignment documents)

- 6 Assignments (these will contribute to your final presentation): 60%
- Class Participation: 20%
- Final Presentation: 20%

RESEARCH PROJECT
The requirements for the course all revolve around a qualitative research project that you will be conducting.

- You may choose your own research question on a topic of your choice. You may use a research project that you are conducting for another class or program/requirement.
- This project must include data collection and data analysis.
- The qualitative data collection will involve in-depth interviews. You will be required to conduct 5 interviews for your project.
- The 6 assignments will be components of your project. I will hand out separate instructions for each assignment and the final presentation.
REQUIRED READING

Required texts – available on Amazon:

Reserve Readings

PLEASE NOTE: Some of the individual readings listed in the syllabus come from the following report (abbreviated: NSF Report), which is uploaded as one PDF file:


National Science Foundation. 2008. Workshop on Interdisciplinary Standards for Systematic Qualitative Research. Report prepared by: Michèle Lamont, Harvard University; Patricia White, National Science Foundation for the National Science Foundation: Cultural Anthropology, Law and Social Science, Political Science, and Sociology Programs.

Various articles.

These additional required readings will be available as PDF files on our BLACKBOARD site.

The Reserve Readings are marked with an asterisk (*) in the Class Schedule below.
CLASS SCHEDULE (Subject to Change)

WEEK 1 (Jan 21): What is Qualitative Research?

* What is Qualitative Research?

* Distinctions between Qualitative and Quantitative Research
  Ragin & Amoroso. Chapter 2: The Goals of Social Research

WEEK 2 (Jan 28): Ethics of Qualitative Research

* Researcher Roles and Ethical Issues in Qualitative Research
  Ragin & Amoroso. Chapter 4: Ethics of Social Research

* Discussion of Emory IRB Process
  Review IRB process documents and examples on BlackBoard

WEEK 3 (Feb 4): Qualitative Research Design I: The Research Process

* Qualitative Research Design: Overview

* Linking Theory and Research: The Research Process
  Ragin & Amoroso. Chapter 3 & Chapter 5.

WEEK 4 (Feb 11): Qualitative Research Design II: Population & Sample

* DUE: Assignment 1: Research Question and Theoretical Framework

* Choosing a Research Site/Population and Gaining Entry

* Sampling and Recruiting
  Weiss. Chapters 1-2.
  * Miles and Huberman. Chapter 2, pp. 16-39.
WEEK 5 (Feb 18): Data Collection: Preparation, Interviewing, Issues
DUE: Assignment 2: Conceptualization
Weiss, Chapters 3-5.

WEEK 6 (Feb 25): Data Collection: In class exercises/discussion
DUE: Assignment 3: Methods, Recruiting Strategy, Data Collection Instruments
Class presentations about research topic and interview guide
Lofland et al. Chapters 6-8 – SKIM as relevant for your project


WEEK 7 (Mar 4): Data Collection: Interviewing
DUE: Assignment 4: Interview Summary
Class presentation/discussion about your interview/observation (Assignment 4)
Review Readings from Weeks 5 & 6

March 11th – Spring Break: No Class

WEEK 8 (Mar 18): Analyzing Interview Data: Thematic Analysis and Coding
Introduction to Analysis
Doing Data Analysis: Coding and Memos
*Miles and Huberman. Chapter 4; Chapter 5A (pp. 90-101) and 5E (pp. 127-141); Chapter 7A (172-177).
Doing Data Analysis: Strategy and Verification
*Miles and Huberman. Chapter 10.
WEEK 9 (Mar 25) Analyzing Qualitative Data: Continued
Assignment 5: Transcription and Developing Initial Coding Key
Workshop on the use of MAXqda for coding, sorting, and analyzing qualitative data

WEEK 10 (Apr 1) Validity, Reliability, and the Insider/Outsider Problem
Class exercises on projects and coding issues
*Miles and Huberman. Chapter 10.

WEEK 11 (Apr 8): How to Present Qualitative Data
Assignment 6: Analyzing and Coding
READINGS: TBA

WEEK 12 (Apr 15): Presentations
Class presentations on projects

WEEK 13 (Apr 22): Presentations
Class presentations on projects