

# **SOCIOLOGY 585-00P: INTRODUCTION to QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS**

Spring Semester 2015 Wednesdays 4pm-7pm

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## **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)

<b>6 Assignments</b> (these will contribute to your final presentation):	<b>60%</b>
<b>Class Participation</b>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Final Presentation</b>	<b>20%</b>

## **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:**

- John Lofland, David Snow, Leon Anderson, Lyn Lofland. 2005. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 4<sup>th</sup> edition. Wadsworth Publishing.
- Charles C. Ragin and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
- Robert S. Weiss. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press.

### **Reserve Readings**

- Matthew B. Miles and A. Michael Huberman. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 2d edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Selections.

**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. 2004. *Workshop on Scientific Foundations of Qualitative Research*. Report prepared by: Charles C. Ragin, Joane Nage, Patricia White for the National Science Foundation: Sociology Program; Methodology, Measurement & Statistics Program; Directorate for Social, Behavioral & Economic Sciences.

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?***

- \*NSF Report 2004, pp. 9-16.
- \*Joel Best. 2004. Defining Qualitative Research. Pp. 53-54 in the *NSF Report*.
- \*Sudhir Venkatesh. 2004. A Note on Science and Qualitative Research. Pp. 141-144 in the *NSF Report*.

#### ***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

- \*Laud Humphreys. 1970. The Sociologist as Voyeur. Chapter 2 in *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal Sex in Public Places*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co.
- \* Maxine Baca Zinn. 1979. Insider Field Research in Minority Communities. Chapter 6 in R. M. Emerson, ed. 2001. *Contemporary Field Research: Perspectives and Formulations*, 2d edition. Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.
- \*American Sociological Association. *Code of Ethics*. SKIM

#### ***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***

- \*NSF Report 2004, pp. 9-20.
- \*Susan Silbey. 2004. "Designing Qualitative Research Projects." Pp121-125 in *NSF Report*.

#### ***Linking Theory and Research: The Research Process***

Ragin & Amoroso. Chapter 3 & Chapter 5.

- \*Snow, David A; Morrill, Calvin; Anderson, Leon. 2003. Elaborating Analytic Ethnography: Linking Fieldwork and Theory. *Ethnography* 4 (2): 181-200.

### **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***

Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland, Chapters 1-4.

#### ***Sampling and Recruiting***

Weiss. Chapters 1-2.

- \*Small, Mario L. 2009. 'How Many Cases Do I Need?' On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field Based Research. *Ethnography*. 10(1): 5-38.
- \*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.

Lofland et al. pp. 99-108.

**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

- \*Michelle Lamont. 1992. Appendix III: Research Procedures, pp. 217-224 in *Money, Morals, and Manners: The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- \*Michelle Lamont. 2000. Appendix A: Methods and Analysis, pp. 251-257 in *The Dignity of Working Men: Morality and the Boundaries of Race, Class, and Immigration*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation and Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- \*Annette Lareau. 2003. Appendix A: Methodology: Enduring Dilemmas in Fieldwork, pp. in *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- \*Karyn Lacy. 2007. Appendix A: A recipe for studying the Black Middle Class, pp. 227-234 in *Blue Chip Black: Race, Class, and Status in the New Black Middle Class*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

**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 11<sup>th</sup> – Spring Break: No Class**

**WEEK 8 (Mar 18): Analyzing Interview Data: Thematic Analysis and Coding**

**Introduction to Analysis**

\*Howard Becker. 2004. “The Problems of Analysis.” Pp. 45-47 in the *NSF Report*.

\*James Mahoney. 2004. “The Distinctive Contributions of Qualitative Data Analysis.” Pp. 95-99 in the *NSF Report*.

\*Eben A. Weitzman. 2004. Advancing the Scientific Basis of Qualitative Research. Pp. 145-148 in the *NSF Report*.

**Doing Data Analysis: Coding and Memos**

Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland. Chapter 9.

\*Miles and Huberman. Chapter 4; Chapter 5A (pp. 90-101) and 5E (pp. 127-141); Chapter 7A (172-177).

Weiss. Chapter 6: Analysis of Data.

**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.

\*Wendy D. Roth and Jal D. Mehta, 2002. "The Rashomon Effect. Combining Positivist and Interpretivist Approaches in the Analysis of Contested Events." *Sociological Methods and Research* 31 (2): 131-173.

\*Wendy Luttrell, 2000. "Good Enough Methods for Ethnographic Research." *Harvard Educational Review*. 70 (4): 499-523.

**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*