

**LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**Qualitative Methods: Sociology 5113WA**

**Dr. Sharon-dale Stone**

**Winter 2011**

**Office: RB2038**

**Mondays 9:00-12:00**

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**Description And Objectives**

This **seminar** course is designed to introduce students to the principles behind qualitative research and methods and discuss issues such as:

- ⇒ the relationship between theory and method
- ⇒ reasons for the use of qualitative methods in sociology
- ⇒ how to distinguish "good" qualitative research from research that is poorly executed
- ⇒ ethical issues in qualitative research
- ⇒ writing qualitative research.

**Readings**

Students are expected to engage in critical reflection and debate of the ideas presented in readings:

Becker, Howard S. 2007. ***Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article. 2nd ed.*** Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (abbreviated *WSS* in outline)

Silverman, David (ed.). 2010. ***Qualitative Research: Issues in Theory Method and Practice. 3rd ed.*** Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage Publications. (abbreviated *QR3* in outline)

A significant number of other required readings are either in books on reserve in the library, or (some) can be borrowed from the professor. As well, pdf's of journal articles are posted to Moodle.

**Assignments and Weight (see details, pp 5ff)**

Social Location paper (4-6 pp)	Due Feb. 14	15%
Observational Research Report (10-20 pp)	Due Mar. 21	20%
Focused Literature Review (6-8 pp)	Due Apr. 11	25%
Seminar Participation	Every class	20%
Presentations		20%

**Schedule of Weekly Topics and Readings**

**Week 1 Introduction to the course**

Jan 10

Readings:

Becker, Howard S. 2003. "Making Sociology Relevant to Society." Unpublished.  
<http://home.earthlink.net/~hsbecker/articles/relevant.html>

Becker, Howard S. 2007. "How we Deal with the People we Study: 'The Last Seminar' Revisited." Pp. 26–36 in David Downes, et. al. (eds.), *Crime, Social Control and Human Rights*. Cullompton: Willan Publishing.

Bloor, Michael. "Addressing Social Problems through Qualitative Research." Ch. 22 in *QR3*

Liebling, Alison. 2001. "Whose Side are we on: Theory, Practice and Allegiances in Prisons Research." *British Journal of Criminology* 41: 472-84.

**Week 2 Paradigmatic Assumptions**

Jan 17

Readings:

- Guba, Egon & Yvonna Lincoln. 1994. "Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research." Ch 6 in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.
- Carter, Stacy M. and Miles Little. 2007. "Justifying Knowledge, Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies, and Methods in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Health Research* 17 (10): 1316-28.
- Strega, Susan. 2005. "The View from the Post-Structuralist Margins." Pp. 199-235 in *Research as Resistance*.

**In-class work for week 2**, be prepared to discuss the paradigmatic assumptions that most attract you and why.

**Week 3 Issues in Interpretivism and Constructionism**

Jan 24

Readings:

- Schwandt, Thomas. 1994. "Constructivist, Interpretivist Approaches to Human Inquiry." Pp 118-137 (Ch 7) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.
- Holstein, James & Jaber Gubrium. 1994. "Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, and Interpretive Practice." Pp 262-272 (Ch 16) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.

**In-class work for Week 3**, bring to class a piece of qualitative research that you think is interesting and be prepared to discuss: why it is interesting; what are the paradigmatic assumptions framing the research; and the author's voice.

**Week 4 Reflexivity and Social Location**

Jan 31

- Broom, Alex, Kelly Hand and Philip Tovey. 2009. "The Role of Gender, Environment and Individual Biography in Shaping Qualitative Interview Data." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 12: 1 (Feb): 51 -65.
- Elliott, Jane. 2005. "The Researcher as Narrator: Reflexivity in Qualitative and Quantitative Research." Pp 152-59 in Jane Elliott, *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*.
- Finlay, Linda. 2002. "Outing" the Researcher: The Provenance, Process, and Practice of Reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research* 12 (4): 531-545.
- Manderson, Lenore, Elizabeth Bennett and Sari Andajani-Sutjahjo. "The Social Dynamics of the Interview: Age, Class, and Gender." *Qualitative Health Research* 2006: 1317-1334.

**In-class work for Week 4**, be prepared to discuss your own social location and how that affects your research interests.

**Week 5 Ethical Issues**

Feb 7

Readings:

- Christians, Clifford. 2005. "Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research." Pp. 139-164 (Ch 6) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. 3rd edition*.
- Doucet, Andrea and Natasha S. Mauthner. 2002. "Knowing Responsibly: Linking Ethics, Research Practice and Epistemology." Pp. 123-145 in Melanie Mauthner, Maxine Birch, Julie Jessop and Tina Miller (eds.), *Ethics in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Ryen, Anne. "Ethics and Qualitative Research." Ch 23 in *QR3*.

Lakehead University Research Ethics Guidelines -

<http://policies.lakeheadu.ca/policy.php?pid=195>

Tri-Council Policy Statement: Integrity in Research and Scholarship - [http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/tpsintegrity-picintegritie\\_eng.asp](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Policies-Politiques/tpsintegrity-picintegritie_eng.asp)

Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS) - <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/english/tutorial/welcome.cfm>

Recommended:

Graffigna, G., A. C. Bosio, and K. Olson. 2010. "How do Ethics Assessments Frame Results of Comparative Qualitative Research? A Theory of Technique Approach." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 13 (4): 341 -355.

Punch, Maurice. 1998. "Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research." Pp 156-184 (Ch 5) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*.

**For Week 5**, complete the TCPS tutorial and be prepared to discuss the extent to which you now feel informed about and able to address ethical problems that can arise when doing qualitative research. Comment on who's interests are protected by the TCPS.

**Due Feb 14, Week 6:** 4-6 pp on the significance of social location regarding what it's possible for you to research

### **Week 6 Issues in Gathering Observational Data**

Feb 14

Readings:

Emmison, Michael. "Conceptualizing Visual Data." Ch. 13 in *QR3*.

Wolcott, Harry. 1994. "Confessions of a 'Trained' Observer." Pp. 152-172 in Wolcott, *Transforming Qualitative Data*.

Stimson, Gerry V. 1986. "Place and Space in Sociological Fieldwork." *Sociological Review* 34: 641-656.

**For Week 6**, come with ideas for your observational assignment. We will discuss what you might observe, how you might do it and what you expect to observe.

### **Week 7 Analyzing Texts**

Feb 28

Coffey, Amanda & Paul Atkinson. "Analysing Documentary Realities." Ch. 5 in *QR3*.

Prior, Lindsay. "Using Documents in Social Research." Ch. 6 in *QR3*.

Smith, Dorothy E. 1990. "The Social Organization of Textual Reality." Ch 3 in *The Conceptual Practices of Power: A Feminist Sociology of Knowledge*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Recommended:

Campbell, Patricia. 2011. "Boundaries and Risk: Media Framing of Assisted Reproductive Technologies and Older Mothers." *Social Science & Medicine* 72 (2): 265-272. (empirical example of document/discourse analysis)

Crawshaw, Paul. 2007. "Governing the healthy male citizen: Men, masculinity and popular health in *Men's Health* magazine." *Social Science and Medicine* 65,8 Oct 2007: 1606-1618. (empirical example of document/discourse analysis)

Smith, Dorothy E. 1993. "The Standard North American Family: SNAF as an Ideological Code." *Journal of Family Issues* 14 (1): 50-65.

**In-class assignment for Week 7**, bring to class a short text to discuss and analyze using techniques outlined in this week's readings – perhaps a magazine or newspaper article.

### **Week 8 Issues in Reviewing the Literature**

Mar 7

Readings:

Becker, Howard S. "Terrorized by the Literature." Ch. 8 in *WSS*

Dixon-Woods, Mary. "Systematic Reviews and Qualitative Methods." Ch. 18 in *QR3*

Institute for Work & Health. 2009. "The Systematic Review Program."

[http://www.iwh.on.ca/system/files/documents/iwh\\_annual\\_report\\_2009.pdf](http://www.iwh.on.ca/system/files/documents/iwh_annual_report_2009.pdf)\*

Irvin, Emma, et al. 2010. "Introduction to Special Section: Systematic Reviews for Prevention and Management of Musculoskeletal Disorders." *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* 20: 123-126.

Maceachen, Ellen, et al. 2010. "Workplace Health Understandings and Processes in Small Businesses: A Systematic Review of the Qualitative Literature." *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation* 20: 180-198.

Recommended web resources:

The Literature Review: A Few Tips on Conducting It -

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review>

Writing a Literature Review - <http://www.smu.ca/administration/library/litrev.html>  
 Literature Reviews - [http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature\\_review.html](http://www.unc.edu/depts/wcweb/handouts/literature_review.html)

**In-class assignment for Week 8**, bring to class a short literature review on a subject that interests you and that you think is particularly good and be prepared to discuss why you think it is good.

**Week 9 Issues in Interviewing**

Mar 14

Readings:

Miller, Jody & Barry Glassner, The "Inside" and the "Outside": Finding Realities in Interviews, Ch 8 in *QR3*

Holstein, James & Jaber Gubrium, "Animating Interview Narratives," Ch 9 in *QR3*

Wilkinson Sue, "Focus Group Data," Ch 10 in *QR3*

Recommended:

There is a well-developed literature on qualitative interviewing, discussing both theoretical and "how to" issues. See, for example:

- Kathryn Anderson & Dana Jack (1991). Learning to Listen. Pp 11-26 in Gluck & Patai (eds.), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*.
- Corinne Glesne & Alan Peshkin (1992). Making Words Fly. Pp. 63-92 (Ch 4) in Glesne & Peshkin, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*.
- Elliot Mishler, *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*
- H. Rubin and Irene Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing*
- Jaber Gubrium and James Holstein, *Handbook of Qualitative Interviewing*
- Steiner Kvale, *InterViews*

**In-class assignment for Week 9**, bring to class an article based on qualitative interviewing, preferably one that is relevant to your own research topic. Be prepared to discuss the extent to which the article adequately discusses how the interview data were created; and how the interview data add to an understanding of your topic.

**Week 10 Narrative Inquiry**

Mar 21

Chase, Susan. 2005. "Narrative Inquiry." Pp 651-79 (Ch 25) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research. 3rd edition*.

Cox, Susan M., (2003). "Stories in Decisions" *Qualitative Sociology* 26 (2): 257-280.

Riessman, Catherine Kohler. "What's Different about Narrative Inquiry? Cases, Categories and Contexts," Ch 17 in *QR3*.

Recommended:

Stone, Sharon Dale. 2007. "Patient Concerns Posthaemorrhagic Stroke: A Study of the Internet Narratives of Patients with Ruptured Arteriovenous Malformation." *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 16 (2): 289-297.

**In-class assignment for Week 10**, bring an example narrative to discuss how to resist what Reissman (p. 312) calls "narrative seduction." How and why was the narrative produced and what do you make of it?

**Due Mar. 21: Observational Research Report**

**Week 11 Analysis, Interpretation, and Evaluative Criteria**

Mar 28

Readings:

Altheide, David & John Johnson. 1994. "Criteria for Assessing Interpretive Validity in Qualitative Research." Pp 485-499 (Ch 30) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.

Charmaz, Kathy and Anthony Bryant, Grounded Theory and Credibility." Ch. 16 in *QR3*

Rapley, Tim. "Some Pragmatics of Qualitative Data Analysis." Ch 15 in *QR3*

Recommended:

Smith, John & Deborah Deemer. 2003. "The Problem of Criteria in the Age of Relativism." Pp 427-457 (Ch 12) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials, 2nd edition*.

Wolcott, Harry. 1994. "Description, Analysis, and Interpretation in Qualitative Inquiry." Pp 9-54 (Ch 2) in Wolcott, *Transforming Qualitative Data*.

**In-class assignment for Week 11**, be prepared to discuss the pros and cons of various analytic strategies (e.g. narrative inquiry; grounded theory; thematic analysis), how different strategies produce different versions of reality, and how we might go about deciding on the adequacy of any analysis offered.

**Week 12 Writing Qualitative Research**

Apr 4

Readings:

Becker, Howard S. *WSS*.

Frank, Arthur. 2004. "After Methods, the Story: From Incongruity to Truth in Qualitative Research." *Qualitative Health Research* 14: 430-440.

Marvasti, Amir. "Three Aspects of Writing Qualitative Research: Practice, Genre and Audience." Ch. 21 in *QR3*.

**For Week 12**, be prepared to discuss the writing process.

**Due Apr 11: 6-8 pp focused literature review**

## Assignment Details

### ***Format Guidelines for Written Assignments***

- ⇒ do not include a title page but write your name and the title of your paper at the top of the first page
- ⇒ all papers must be typed and double-spaced, using a font size comparable to Times New Roman 12 pt. or Arial 11 pt.
- ⇒ margins on each page must be at least 1" on all sides
- ⇒ page numbers must be on all pages except the first
- ⇒ do not staple your pages but use a paper-clip
- ⇒ do not place your paper inside any kind of cover
- ⇒ grammar and spelling can make or break a paper, thus all papers MUST BE PROOFREAD
- ⇒ use ASA format for the list of references

### ***Seminar Participation (40%)***

#### **A. General Participation (20%)**

This seminar course depends upon the active and informed participation of all members of the seminar. Weekly seminar discussions and presentations are best when they are dynamic, informed, creative, stimulating and collective. Thus, all students will be expected to be prepared to discuss issues raised by the readings. Students (even when not responsible for facilitating a seminar discussion) are expected to reflect on the readings bring questions and comments for discussion that are based on the required readings, and be prepared to contribute to in-class exercises..

Your grade will reflect the degree of preparation you show for each class and the degree of thoughtful and critical contributions to class discussions and in-class assignments that you show.

#### **B Seminar Facilitation (20%)**

Each student will be expected to lead three seminar discussions based on a week's readings (2 seminars in pairs, 1 alone). This requires:

- ⇒ briefly summarizing the significance/relevance of main points/arguments/ideas
- ⇒ offering some critical reflection about the ideas and arguments put forward – e.g. how they are constructed, their coherence, and how the readings compare and contrast regarding the week's topic

- ⇒ being prepared to respond to questions, and
- ⇒ encouraging class discussion of issues. Seminar leaders may want to bring handouts for the class to follow.

Note that to encourage class discussion, you need to do more than simply come with a list of questions to ask. You need to have already spent time critically reflecting on issues so that you can engage in discussion yourself.

### ***Paper on the Significance of Social Location, due Feb. 14 (15%)***

Identify a qualitative research project that interests you, and discuss the role played by your own social location in shaping your interest. Include a discussion of how your social location affects:

- ⇒ the kinds of research questions that interest you;
- ⇒ your approach to research; and
- ⇒ the kinds of things it is possible for you to find out as you do research. With reference to your identified interest, are there ways in which your social location constrains what you can learn?

Further details to be discussed in class.

### ***Observational Research Report, due Mar. 21 (20%)***

You are required to observe a situation without interacting with others and write a reflexive and analytical report that includes:

- ⇒ a discussion of your conceptual baggage;
- ⇒ a discussion of the process of discovery;
- ⇒ a presentation of the data;
- ⇒ an analysis of the data; and
- ⇒ a conclusion.

Further details to be discussed in class.

### ***Focused Literature Review, due Apr. 11 (25%)***

Details TBA

## ***References***

Brown, Leslie and Susan Strega. 2005. *Research as Resistance: Critical, Indigenous and Anti-Oppressive Approaches*. Toronto :Canadian Scholars' Press.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.) 1994. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.) 1998. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.) 2003. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials, 2nd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.). 2005. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Elliott, Jane. 2005. *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Glessne, Corrine and Alan Peshkin. 1992. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*. NY: Longman.

Gluck, Sherna Berger and Daphne Patai (eds.). 1991. *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. NY: Routledge.

Gubrium, Jaber F. and James A. Holstein. 2009. *Analyzing Narrative Reality*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Holstein, James A. and Jaber F. Gubrium (eds.). 2003. *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Kvale, Steiner and Svend Brinkmann. 2009. *InterViews, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.* Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Mishler, Elliott. G. 1986. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wolcott, Harry F. 1994. *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

### ***Selected Qualitative Journals***

Forum: Qualitative Social Research  
<<http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm>>

International Journal of Qualitative Methods

International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education

International Journal of Social Research Methodology

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography

Qualitative Health Research

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative Research

Qualitative Sociology

Studies in Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic Interactionism