

LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

Qualitative Methods: Sociology 5113WA

Dr. Sharon-dale Stone

Fall 2011

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Description And Objectives

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

- ⇒ the relationship between theory and method
- ⇒ reasons for the use of qualitative methods
- ⇒ designing, executing, analyzing qualitative research
- ⇒ 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:

1. 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)
2. Rossman, Gretchen B. and Sharon F. Rallis. 2011. ***Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research, 3rd ed.*** Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage Publications (abbreviated *R&R* in outline)
3. Silverman, David (ed.). 2010. ***Qualitative Research: Issues in Theory Method and Practice. 3rd ed.*** Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage Publications. (abbreviated *QR3* in outline)
4. 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 Oct. 24	10%
Observational Research Report (10-20 pp)	Due Nov. 21	15%
Focused Literature Review (6-8 pp)	Due Dec. 12	25%
Seminar Participation	Every class	20%
Presentations		30%

Schedule of Weekly Topics and Readings

Week 1 Introduction to the course

Sept 12 Readings:
Bloor, Michael. "Addressing Social Problems through Qualitative Research." Ch. 22 in *QR3 R&R, Ch 1, Qualitative Research as Learning*

Week 2 Paradigmatic Assumptions

Sept 19 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.
Recommended:
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

Sept 26 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

Oct 3 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.
R&R Ch 2, The Researcher as Learner

In-class work for Week 4, be prepared to discuss the relationship between your own social location and your research interests.

Oct 10: Thanksgiving Holiday – no class

Week 5 Ethical Issues

Oct 17 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.
R&R, Ch 3 & 6
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

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 Oct 24, Week 6: 4-6 pp on the significance of social location regarding what it's possible for you to research

Week 6 Genre, the Research Proposal, and Data Gathering

Oct 24 R&R, Ch 4, 5 & 9

Recommended: R&R, Ch 7 & 8

For Week 6, be prepared to discuss in detail an idea for a research project you might like to do.

Week 7 Issues in Gathering Observational Data

Oct 31 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 7, 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 8 Documentary Realities

Nov 7 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 8, 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 9 Issues in Reviewing the Literature

Nov 14

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*

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

In-class assignment for Week 9, 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. Also be prepared to discuss problems with reliance on systematic reviews.

Week 10 Issues in Interviewing

Nov 21

Readings:

Kathryn Anderson & Dana Jack (1991). "Learning to Listen." Pp 11-26 in Gluck & Patai (eds.), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*.

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:

- 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 10, 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. Also, if you were to do those interviews yourself, would you do anything differently and if so, why? Do you think you would be able to produce the same data?

Due Nov. 21: Observational Research Report

Week 11 Analysis, Interpretation, and Evaluative Criteria

Nov 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*

R&R, Ch 10 & 11

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 and how we might go about deciding on the adequacy of any analysis offered.

Week 12 Writing Qualitative Research

Dec 5

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.*

R&R, Ch 12

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

Due Dec 12: 6-8 pp focused literature review

Assignment Details

ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS MUST FOLLOW THE FORMAT GUIDELINES POSTED ON MOODLE

Seminar Participation (50%)

A. General Participation (20%)

The success of this seminar course heavily 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 (30%)

Each student will be expected to lead three seminar discussions based on a week's readings (likely groups of 3 students to collaborate each week). 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 Oct. 24 (10%)

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 Nov. 21 (15%)

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 Dec. 12 (25%)

Details posted on Moodle.

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, 2nd 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