

**SOC 4319 / 5113 FA
QUALITATIVE METHODS**

Tuesday 11:30-2:30
RB 2027

Dr. Barbara Parker

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Welcome to SOC 4319 / 5113 Qualitative Methods. In this course, we will examine qualitative sociological research methodology, methods and epistemology. We will explore the relationship between theory and methodology and query why and when qualitative research methods are best employed. This will involve thinking about ethical issues relating to a qualitative research process. We will learn how to conduct qualitative research by designing a research methodology and undertake techniques in observational research, interviewing skills and critical self-reflexivity. Finally, emphasis will be placed on working through qualitative analysis and writing up results.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop knowledge of the synergy between epistemology, methods and methodology in qualitative research;
- Understand methods employed in qualitative research design;
- Understand significance of ethics and self reflexivity in qualitative projects;
- Propose a qualitative project;
- Understand the relationship between qualitative research and the construction of theory; and
- Develop university-level research, analytical and writing skills.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

1. *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer*, 2nd Ed. (2015), by Deborah K. van den Hoonaard.

** Additional required readings will be posted on the Desire to Learn (D2L) course website that accompanies this course.

HOW THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED

This is a seminar course and as such, requires your full participation. This means that you are **required** to come to every class with the readings done and be prepared to discuss the content, your critical observations and reflections on the weekly assigned materials. Seminars work best when everyone is informed and there is a collective sense of curiosity and interest in the subject. You will each be required to facilitate or present the weekly readings twice over the course of the term (A sign-up sheet will be available in the first class). Regardless if it is your turn to present, you are expected to reflect on the readings, and bring questions and comments for discussion to each class.

If you have questions, at any time during this course, please visit me in my Office Hours (as listed above) or contact me through email at: barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca

Please note: I will only respond to emails sent from a Lakehead university email account. Please recognize that I will do my best to reply to your emails within 24 hours.

LEARNING ACCOMODATIONS: If you have a learning accommodation or special need regarding the format or the due dates for the assignments, you must inform me. The appropriate form can be obtained from the Student Accessibility Services: lakeheadu.ca/faculty-and-staff/departments/services/sas

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

From the Course Calendar,

<http://navigator.lakeheadu.ca/Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=21&chapterid=3506&loaduserredits=False>

Plagiarism shall be deemed to include:

1. Plagiarism of ideas as where an idea of an author or speaker is incorporated into the body of an assignment as though it were the writer's idea, i.e. no credit is given the person through referencing or footnoting or endnoting.
2. Plagiarism of words occurs when phrases, sentences, tables or illustrations of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a writer's own, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on the format followed) are present but referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.
3. Plagiarism of ideas and words as where words and an idea(s) of an author or speaker are incorporated into the body of a written assignment as though they were the writer's own words and ideas, i.e. no quotations or indentations (depending on format followed) are present and no referencing or footnoting or endnoting is given.

The following rules shall govern the treatment of candidates who have been found guilty of attempting to obtain academic credit dishonestly.

(a) The minimum penalty for a candidate found guilty of plagiarism, or of cheating on any part of a course will be a zero for the work concerned.

(b) A candidate found guilty of cheating on a formal examination or a test, or of serious or repeated plagiarism, or of unofficially obtaining a copy of an examination paper before the examination is scheduled to be written, will receive zero for the course and may be expelled from the University.

COURSE EVALUATION

Self-Reflexivity Paper..... 10% (Due: Oct 6)
Ethics: Tri-Council Policy Certificate..... 5% (Due: Oct 13)
Participant Observation..... 10% (Due: Oct 27)
Conducting an Interview..... 10% (Due: Nov 17)
Developing Qualitative Methodology..... 40% (Due: Dec 11 by 4pm)
Seminar Participation..... 25% (½ assigned by peers & ½ from instructor)
(This includes your leading two seminars & facilitating discussions for 2 different weeks)

*** Late Penalty** Students are reminded that late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, including weekends and holidays, unless PRIOR approval for an extension has been obtained. All written work will be evaluated based on organization, presentation, grammar and clarity as well as content. For your own protection, keep a hard copy of all work submitted for this course.

EVALUATION INFORMATION

All assignments will be discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to ask questions about expectations. Please note that unless otherwise specified, assignments are due in class on the due date.

1. Self-Reflexivity Paper (10%)

An important piece of qualitative research is self-reflexivity. Identify a piece of qualitative research (journal article or book) that interests you, and discuss the role played by your own social location in shaping your interest and choice of reading. Include a discussion of how your social location affects:

- the kinds of research / research questions that interest you;
- your philosophical or theoretical approach to research;
- what you are able to find out as you do research; and
- with reference to your identified interest, are there ways in which your social location constrains what you can learn?

This assignment will be 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font.

** You may find it helpful to use the list of selected qualitative journals I will provide for you OR see Appendix A in your textbook for a selected list of Canadian qualitative research resources.

2. Ethics - Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) Certificate - 5%

Please complete and submit the TCPS tutorial certificate to me by the due date.

The link for the tutorial is located at: <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/>

3. Participant Observation - 10%

For this assignment you will choose some type of social setting that you can observe social life without interacting with others such as the library, the mall, a restaurant or cafeteria, a church, a waiting room, a hotel lobby, a bar, a bus depot, the airport etc. Upon completing your observations, write up an analytical and reflexive report that is 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font.

4. Interview - 10%

For this assignment, you are required to develop a set of research questions and then interview one of your classmates. Because the purpose of this assignment is professional skills training rather than research, you will not need to go through an ethics approval process, but you will need to attend to the usual requirements for ethical conduct in research involving human subjects (i.e. respecting participant's right to anonymity, confidentiality, voluntary participation, etc.). If you are able to audio record the interview and your participant is willing, record the interview. Otherwise, take notes, but do not let your note-taking interfere with the flow of the interview. Upon finishing the interview, write up an analytical and reflexive paper that is 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font.

5. Developing Qualitative Methodology - 40%

For this assignment, you are required to develop a mock research proposal. This will include identifying a research question (with rationale & supporting literature review) and methodology with clear methods for approaching your research study. The methodology should be outlined, including why it is appropriate and important for your particular research study. Describe how you will collect data including recruitment strategies. Do not

forget to include any ethical considerations emerging in the construction of your research design.

Please note:

For students enrolled in **SOC 4319**, this assignment will be 10-12 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font.

For students enrolled in **SOC 5113**, this assignment will be 15-20 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font.

6. Seminar Participation (25%)

As discussed, this is a seminar course and therefore requires your active engagement and intellectual curiosity. As such, you are expected to come to class prepared to discuss issues raised by the readings, even if it is not your week to facilitate or present the readings.

Your grade will reflect a mark assigned by your classmates (12.5%) and the Instructor (12.5%). In the final class, there will be time allotted to assign a mark for your colleagues. I recommend that you keep notes each week about your own and your colleagues' participation, which will assist you in assigning a grade at the end of Term.

In my assessment of participation I consider the following:

- attendance;
- completion of required readings;
- participation level (i.e. none, little, active, above the norm);
- level of analysis and/or critique of readings;
- pertinence of comments to course content;
- willingness to ask for clarification and identify problem areas in the readings;
- ability to link specific readings to the broader themes of the course;
- ability to present summaries of readings when requested; and
- ability to respond to questions posed by classmates / professor.

I encourage you not to think about the volume of commentary, but rather which points further your own thinking or the group thinking in the discussion.

You may choose to use other criteria than those suggested above, but be sure to apply your criteria consistently for all your peers and across the term.

READINGS BY WEEK * Please note that all readings are in the textbook or on the D2L website that accompanies this course.

Week 1 – Sept 15

Welcome & Overview: Introduction to Qualitative Research

Review Syllabus and discuss expectations

Readings:

Chapter 1 “Introduction” in textbook (pgs. 1-11)

Week 2 – Sept 22

Epistemology and the Quest for Meaningful Knowledge

Readings:

Creswell, J.W., (2013). *Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Frameworks*, Chapter 2 in *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, pgs. 15-41.

Carter, S. M., & M. Little (2007). Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies and Methods in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10): 1316-28.

Week 3 – Sept 29

Reflexivity and Social Location

Readings:

Broom, A., K. Hand & P. Tovey, (2009). The Role of Gender, Environment and Individual Biography in Shaping Qualitative Interview Data, *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 12(1): 51-65.

Finlay, L., (2002). Outing the Researcher: The Provenance, Process and Practice of Reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(4): 531-45.

Manderson, L., E. Bennett & S. Andajani-Sutjahjo, (2006). The Social Dynamics of the Interview: Age, Class and Gender. *Qualitative Health Research* p. 1317-1334.

Week 4 – Oct 6
Designing Qualitative Research

Readings:

Chapter 2 “Asking Questions and Identifying Goals” in textbook (pgs. 12-33)
Chapter 3 “Strategies for Designing Research” in textbook (pgs. 34- 54)

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Designing a Qualitative Study*, Ch 3 in *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, pgs. 42-68.

Week 5 – Oct 13
Ethical Issues and Confidentiality in Qualitative Research

Readings:

Chapter 4 “Ethics on the Ground: A Moral Compass” in textbook (pgs. 55-74)

Doucet, A. & Mauthner, N. S., (2002). Knowing Responsibility: Linking Ethics, Research Practice and Epistemology. In *Ethics in Qualitative Research*, edited by M. Mauthner, M. Birch, J. Jesop & T. Miller, pgs. 123-145.

Ryen, A. (2011). *Ethics and Qualitative Research*, Ch 23 in *Qualitative Research*, edited by D. Silverman, pgs. 416-438.

Week 6 – Oct 20
Ethnography and Observation

Ch. 5 “Observing Social Life through Field Research” in textbook (pgs. 75-98).

Kontos, P. (2004). Ethnographic reflections on selfhood, embodiment and Alzheimer’s disease. *Aging and Society*, 24: 829-849.

Buscatto, M. (2011). *Using Ethnography to Study Gender*, Ch 3 in *Qualitative Research*, edited by D. Silverman, pgs 35-52.

Week 7 – Oct 27
Research Questions and Data Collection

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Introducing and Focusing the Study*, Ch 6 in *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, pgs. 129-144.

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Data Collection*, Ch 7 in *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, pgs. 145-178.

Week 8 – Nov 3
Interviewing

Ch 6 “In-Depth Interviewing” in textbook (pgs. 99-119).

DeVault, M. L., (2004). *Talking and Listening from Women’s Standpoint: Feminist strategies for Interviewing and Analysis*, in *Feminist Perspectives on Social Research*, edited by S. Nagy Hesse-Biber & M. L. Yaiser, pgs. 227-250.

Week 9 – Nov 10

No Class – Use this time to work on your Final Qualitative Methodology

Week 10 – Nov 17
Emerging Qualitative Methods

Ch. 8 “New Directions in Qualitative Research” in textbook (pgs. 139-154).

Markham, A. N., (2011). *Internet Research*, Ch 7 in *Qualitative Research*, edited by D. Silverman, pgs. 111-127.

Week 11 – Nov 24
Analysis and Interpretation

Ch. 9 “Trust the Process: Analyzing Qualitative Data” in textbook (pgs. 155-171).

Rapley, T. (2011). *Some Pragmatics of Data Analysis*, Ch 15 in *Qualitative Research*, edited by D. Silverman, pgs. 273-290.

Pope, C., Ziebland, S., and Mays, N. (2000). Analyzing Qualitative Data. *British Medical Journal*, 320: 114-116.

Hsieh, H, F., and Shanon, S. E., (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Health Research, *Qualitative Health Research*. 15(9): 1277-1288.

Week 12 - Dec 1
Writing Qualitative Research

Ch. 10 "Writing Up Qualitative Research" in textbook (pgs. 172-191).

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

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Writing a Qualitative Study*, Ch 9 in *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, pgs. 213-242.

** Please note that the Readings may change with notice from the Professor.