

**Lakehead University
Department of Sociology
Sociology 4319 / 5113 FA
Qualitative Methods
September – December 2014**

Instructor: Barbara Parker

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Room: Sociology Seminar Room

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Welcome to SOC 4193 / 5113 Qualitative Methods. In this course, we will examine the paradigmatic assumptions of qualitative inquiry and various approaches to qualitative sociological research. We will explore the relationship between theory, methods and methodology and think about why and when qualitative research is 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, interviews and critical self reflexivity. Finally, emphasis will be placed on working through qualitative analysis and writing up results.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Describe the paradigms and epistemological underpinnings of qualitative research;
- Develop an understanding of the approaches and techniques used in qualitative research design;
- Demonstrate understanding of ethics and self reflexivity;
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to propose a qualitative project;
- Discuss how qualitative research can lead to the construction of theory;
- Develop a critical appreciation of the critiques of qualitative research;
- Develop university-level research, analytical and writing skills.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

1. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*, 3rd Ed. (2012), by John W. Creswell.

2. *Qualitative Research: Issues in Theory, Method and Practice*, 3rd Ed. Edited by David Silverman.

** Other required readings will be posted on Desire to Learn (D2L).

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. 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 and it is imperative that you put SOC 4913 or SOC 5113 in the email Subject Heading otherwise it may be missed. 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: <https://www.lakeheadu.ca/current-students/student-services/accessibility/node/14081>

PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

From the Course Calendar,

<http://navigator.lakeheadu.ca/~Catalog/ViewCatalog.aspx?htmlink=true&pageid=viewcatalog&catalogid=19&topicgroupid=9352>

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: Sept 30)
Ethics - Tri-Council Policy Certificate.....	5% (Due: Oct 21)
Participant Observation.....	10% (Due: Nov 4)
Conducting an Interview.....	10% (Due: Nov 18)
Developing Qualitative Methodology.....	20% (Due: Dec 11)
Seminar Participation.....	25% (ongoing)
Presentations (2 x 10%).....	20% (Please use sign up sheet)

*** Late Penalty**

Students are reminded that late papers 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 and tests will be discussed in class and you will have the opportunity to ask questions about expectations.

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. 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?

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.

Further details will be discussed in class

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

Please complete and submit the TCPS tutorial to me.

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 are required to choose some type of social setting that you can observe 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., and write up an analytical and reflexive report that is 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font.

Further details will be provided in class

4. Interview – 10%

For this assignment, you are required to find a person (a classmate, a friend, a relative, a coworker etc.) who is willing to be interviewed for a period of 1-1.5 hours. 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.

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

Further details will be provided in class

5. Developing Qualitative Methodology – 20%

For this assignment, you are required to develop a mock research purpose, research question 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.

This assignment will be 12-15 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font.

Further details will be provided in class

6. Seminar Participation

A) General Participation – 25%

As discussed above, 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 peers (12.5%) and myself, the Instructor (12.5%). In the final class, you will be asked to submit a participation mark for each other student in the class.

In order to assess your peer's contributions, I suggest keeping a log and assigning a mark (from 1-poor to 10-excellent) after each class and making a few key notes to guide your mark assessment.

In my assessment of participation I consider the following:

- attendance at seminars
- 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
- 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.

B) Presentations – 20% total (2 x 10%)

Each student will be required to lead two (2) seminar discussions based on the week's readings. This requires:

- briefly summarizing the significance/relevance of main points/arguments/ideas;
- offer some critical reflection about the ideas and arguments put forward (i.e. how they are constructed, their coherence, and how the readings compare and contrast regarding the week's topic;
- be prepared to respond to questions; and
- encourage class discussion of issues. Seminar leaders may find it helpful to prepare handouts for the class to follow.

Please 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 and encourage others to consider ways of understanding key issues.

READINGS BY WEEK * Please note that all readings are in the textbook unless otherwise noted

Week 1 – Sept 9

Welcome & Overview: Introduction to Qualitative Research

Reading: Ch. 22 in Silverman, D. (ed). *Addressing Social Problems through Qualitative Research*, by Michael Bloor. In *Qualitative Research: Issues in Theory, Method and Practice, 3rd Edition*.

Week 2 – Sept 16

Epistemology and the Quest for Meaningful Knowledge

Reading: Ch. 2 in Creswell (2013). *Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Frameworks*.

Reading: Carter, Stacy M. and Miles Little (2007). Justifying Method, Taking Action: Epistemologies, Methodologies and Methods in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10): 1316-28. Posted on D2L

Week 3 – Sept 23

Reflexivity and Social Location

*All Posted on D2L

Reading: 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): 51-65.

Reading: Dunn, Jennifer (2009). The Path Taken: Opportunity, Flexibility and Reflexivity in the Field, in *Ethnographies Revisited: constructing theory in the field*, edited by Antony Puddephatt, William Shaffir and Steven W. Kleinhecht, p. 277-288.

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

Reading: Manderson, Lenore, Elizabeth Bennett and Sari Andajani-Sutjahjo (2006). The Social Dynamics of the Interview: Age, Class and Gender. *Qualitative Health Research* p. 1317-1334.

Week 4 – Sept 30

Designing Qualitative Research and Choosing an Approach

Readings: Ch 3, 4 & 5 in Creswell. (2013)

Week 5 – Oct 7

Ethical Issues and Confidentiality in Qualitative Research

Reading: Christians, Clifford (2005). Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research. In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by Denzin & Lincoln. p. 139-164. Posted on D2L

Reading: Chapter 23 in Silverman, D. (ed). *Ethics and Qualitative Research* by Ryen, Anne.

Reading: Doucet, Andrea and Natasha S Mauthner (2002). Knowing Responsibility: Linking Ethics, Research Practice and Epistemology. In *Ethics in Qualitative Research*, edited by Melanie Mauthner, Maxine Birch, Julie Jesop and Tina Miller. p. 123-145. Posted on D2L

Tutorial for the Tri-council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS).

Week 6 – Oct 14
Research Questions and Data Collection

Readings: Ch 6 & 7 in Creswell (2013)

Week 7 – Oct 21
Ethnography and Observation

Readings: Ch 2 & 3 in Silverman, D. (ed).

Reading: Kontos, P. (2004). Ethnographic reflections on selfhood, embodiment and Alzheimer's disease. *Aging and Society*, 24: 829-849. Posted on D2L

Week 8 – Oct 28
Interviews and Focus Groups

Readings: Ch 8, 9 & 10 in Silverman, D. (ed).

Reading: Anderson, Kathryn & Dana Jack (1991). Learning to Listen, in *Women's Words: the feminist practice of oral history*, p. 11-26. Posted on D2L

Week 9 – Nov 4
Life History and Narrative Analysis

Reading: Ch 17 in Silverman, D. (ed).

Reading: Cox, Susan. M. (2003). Stories in Decisions. *Qualitative Sociology*, 26(2): 257-280. Posted on D2L

Reading: Chase, Susan. (2005). Narrative Inquiry. In *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research 3rd Ed.*, Denzin & Lincoln. (eds). p. 651-79. Posted on D2L

Week 10 – Nov 11
Analysis and Interpretation

Readings: Ch 8 & 10 in Creswell (2013)

Readings: Ch 15 & 16 in Silverman, D. (ed).

Week 11 – Nov 18
Analysis and Interpretation

Reading: Denzin, N. (2009). Researching alcoholics and alcoholism in American Society. In *Ethnographies Revisited: Constructing Theory in the Field*, edited by Antony Puddephatt, William Shaffir and Steven W. Kleinhecht, p. 152-168. Posted on D2L.

Reading: Pope, C. Ziebland, S., Mays, N. (2000). Analyzing Qualitative Data. *British Medical Journal*, 320 (114). Posted on D2L.

Reading: Hsieh, H, F., and Shanon, S. E. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Health Research, *Qualitative Health Research*. 15(9): 1277-1288. Posted on D2L

Week 12 – Nov 25
Writing Qualitative Research

Reading: Ch 9 in Creswell (2013)

Reading: Ch 21 in Silverman, D. (ed).

Reading: Frank, A. (2004). After Methods, the Story: From Incongruity to Truth in Qualitative Research, *Qualitative Health Research* 14: 430-440. Posted on D2L