

**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*, 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 each week to class with the readings done. You should be prepared to discuss the content and provide critical observations or 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 our seminar class 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 facilitate, you are expected to read and 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](mailto:barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca)

**Please note:** I will only respond to emails sent from a Lakehead university email account. Also in the subject heading, please put the Course Number (4319 or 5113 depending on your registration). Please recognize that I will do my best to reply to your emails within 24 hours.

**CLASSROOM ETTIQUETTE:** As a courtesy to your peers and the instructor, please turn off or mute all phones and be advised that laptops are only to be used in the classroom for note-taking purposes.

**LEARNING ACCOMODATIONS:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) and register as early as possible. For more information, please visit: <http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca>

**PLAGIARISM & ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT:** Plagiarism is a serious academic offence. Please take the time to familiarize yourself with what it means to plagiarize the words or ideas of others and your responsibilities as a student at Lakehead University. 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.

If you have questions, consult the professor.

## COURSE EVALUATION

Self-Reflexivity Paper.....	10% (Due: Sept 27)
Ethics: Tri-Council Policy Certificate.....	5% (Due: Oct 4)
Participant Observation.....	10% (Due: Nov 1)
Conducting an Interview.....	10% (Due: Nov 15)
Developing Qualitative Methodology.....	40% (Due: Dec 13 by 4pm)
Seminar Participation.....	25% (5% assigned by peers, 5% self-assessment and 15% 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 that is qualitative in approach. 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 the seminar or present the readings. During the term I may request that you attend a guest lecture on campus if the content of the lecture aligns with our focus of study. I will give you advance notice and expect that you will attend with a concession to our regularly scheduled class.

Your grade will reflect a mark assigned by your classmates (5%), self-assessment (5%) and the Instructor (15%). In the final class, there will be time allotted to assign a mark for your colleagues and do a self-evaluation. 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 6**

#### **Welcome & Overview: Introduction to Qualitative Research**

Review Syllabus and discuss expectations

Readings:

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

### **Week 2 - Sept 13**

#### **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 20**  
**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 - Sept 27**  
**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 4**  
**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 11**

**NO CLASS FALL READING WEEK**

## **Week 7 - Oct 18**

### **Community-Based Research, Indigenous Peoples and Social Justice**

Martin, D. (2012). Two-eyed seeing: a framework for understanding indigenous and non-indigenous approaches to indigenous health research. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Research*, 44(2): 20-42.

USAI Research Framework: Utility, Self-Voicing, Access, Inter-relationality, developed by: Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres, 2012. Available as a PDF on D2L or at: <http://ofifc.org/research/research/research>

## **Week 8 - Oct 25**

### **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 9 - Nov 1**

### **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 10 - Nov 8**

### **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 11 - Nov 15**  
**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 12 - Nov 22**  
**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 13 - Nov 29**  
**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.