

Lakehead University
Department of Sociology

SOCIOLOGY 3312
Introduction to Qualitative Methods
Sept – Dec 2019

Friday 11:30-2:30

Dr. Barbara Parker

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Office Hours: Wednesday 2-3pm

Welcome to SOC 3312 Introduction to Qualitative Methods. In this course, we will examine qualitative sociological research methodology and methods. To do this, we will begin by reviewing the differences between qualitative from quantitative frameworks and learn how and why a qualitative approach can be employed to understand social issues and problems. We will explore qualitative, interpretive and critical approaches and query the relationship between theory, methodology and methods. We will learn about qualitative research design, and explore methods such as interviewing, ethnography and observation, content analysis including textual and image analysis. We will also learn about the process of qualitative analysis, writing up findings and representing the results. Throughout the course and our discussions, we will think about researcher reflexivity and ethical issues relating to a qualitative research process.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop knowledge about qualitative paradigms and research design;
- Understand the relationship between qualitative research and the construction of theory;
- Explore qualitative methods such as in-depth interviewing, ethnography and participant observation and content analysis;
- Understand the ethics process and researcher reflexivity;
- Acquire data analysis skills and practice writing up / representing results; and
- Develop university-level research, analytical and writing skills.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS (available through the University Bookstore)

1. *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (2017), by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber.

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

HOW THE COURSE IS ORGANIZED

This class meets for 3 hours once a week. Because we are only meeting once a week, it absolutely requires your attendance and full participation. You are required to come each week with the readings completed, and be prepared to discuss the topic at hand. We will work in small groups regularly and this work will contribute to your participation grade.

This class is offered to students on both the Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses using Zoom technology. Our classes will consist of lectures, in-class discussions and small group work. Your participation grade will be assigned based on your contributions in the classroom. I encourage you to work across distance and undertake learning with your classmates on the Thunder Bay and Orillia campuses.

It is recommended that for each hour of class time, students spend another 2 hours outside the classroom in preparation. This means that on average, per week, you can expect to spend at least 6 hours reading and completing assignments in addition to our 3 hour class time.

If you have questions, at any time during this course, please visit or call 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. Also in the subject heading, please put the Course Number (SOC 3312). Please recognize that I will do my best to reply to your emails within 24 hours.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE: 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&loaduseredits=False>

If you have questions, consult the professor.

COURSE EVALUATION

Participation.....	10% Ongoing
Self-Reflexivity Paper.....	20% Due: Sept 27
Participation Observation Assignment.....	20% Due: Oct 25
Analysis Assignment	20% Due: Nov 15
Final Paper.....	30% Due: Nov 29

* **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. Also, you are required to use ASA (American Sociological Association) Referencing Style for all assignments. See:

<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/583/1/>

1. Participation - 10%

Your learning is dependent on your participation! Your participation mark will be based on your attendance, your observable engagement with the readings and in class discussions, and your completion of various in-class activities, which you will be asked to hand in at the end of class into the D2L Assignments Folder. Please recognize the diversity of experiences and perspectives your classmates represent when speaking in class – let's all work together to build a culture of respect in the classroom!

2. Self-Reflexivity Paper - 20%

Due: Sept 27

This assignment requires that you find a journal article that interests you, which uses qualitative research. I will provide you with a list of qualitative journals (available on D2L) and I encourage you to use the Sociology Research Guide on the Library website to locate the article.

Once you have found a suitable article, provide a brief overview of the research being described paying attention to the methodology and methods. Include a discussion of the research

question, sampling and recruitment of participants, ethical considerations (if discussed), methods employed, and the analytical process.

Finally, reflect on 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?

Your paper will be 5 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font. Please remember to reference using ASA style.

3. Participant Observation Exercise & Paper - 20%

Due: October 25

For this assignment, you are required to observe a public place 4x for 1 hour each time, and record jottings and fieldnotes. Good sites for observation include the library, the mall, a restaurant or cafeteria, a hotel lobby, a bar, a bus depot, the airport, etc.

A few policies to keep in mind:

Research sites must be public places (e.g., cafes, parks, the library)

- Classrooms and places for “members” are not “public” places for the purposes of unobtrusive research
- For example: you could observe in the seating area of a restaurant, but not in the kitchen, or you could observe at a hockey game, but not at hockey practice or in the locker room

Research must focus on public behavior (e.g., subjects do not have an expectation of privacy)

- Identifying information must not be collected or recorded
- Audio and/or video recording during observations are not permitted

Once you are set up to observe, you will record jottings and fieldnotes to describe in detail what you see, hear and feel in this social setting, which form the basis of this assignment. You will hand in your fieldnotes, formatted, with a title page.

This fieldwork will form the basis of your Data Analysis Assignment and Final Paper.

Further Details will be provided in class

4. Analysis and Observation Paper – 20%

Due: November 15th

For this assignment, your fieldnotes will form the basis from which you will be able to write up your observation paper. In writing up this paper, you will provide an analysis of the process of conducting observations that is also reflexive of your own social location, and what you observed.

Your written paper will be 5 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font. Please remember to reference using ASA style.

Further details will be provided in class.

5. Final Paper - 30%

Due: November 29th

The final paper asks you to use the data you have collected and analyzed to pose and answer your research question in the form of a journal article. Specifically, papers must include an abstract, a brief introduction, a literature review, a methods section, an analysis of the findings, and a discussion of the implications and limitations of the research.

Papers will be between 8-10 pages, double spaced and in 12 font. Please remember to reference using ASA style.

Further details will be provided in class.

Readings By Week

Week 1 – Sept 6

Welcome & Overview: Introduction to Qualitative Research

Review Syllabus and discuss expectations

Week 2 – Sept 13

Epistemology and Qualitative Research Paradigms

Read:

Chapter 1: *An Invitation to Qualitative Research* (pgs. 2-19)

Chapter 2: *Paradigmatic Approaches to Qualitative Research* (pgs. 20-35)

Week 3 – Sept 20

Designing Qualitative Research

Read:

Chapter 3: *Designing Qualitative Approaches to Research* (pgs. 36-65)

Week 4 – Sept 27

Ethics in Qualitative Research

Read:

Chapter 4: *The Ethics of Social Research* (pgs. 66-101)

*Self-Reflexivity Paper Due

Week 5 – Oct 4

NO CLASS

Use class time to work on Participant Observation Assignment

Week 6 – Oct 11

Ethnography

Read:

Chapter 7: *Ethnography* (pgs. 182-217)

Week 7 – Oct 18
NO CLASS FALL READING WEEK

Week 8 – Oct 25
Qualitative Research Methods

Read:
Chapter 5: *In Depth Interviewing* (pgs. 104-147)

*Participant Observation Assignment Due

Week 9 – Nov 1
Qualitative Research Methods

Read:
Chapter 8: *Case Study*

Week 10 – Nov 8
Qualitative Research Methods

Read:
Chapter 9: *Researching Mass Media: Images and Texts* (pgs. 246-268)

Week 11 – Nov 15
Qualitative Data Analysis

Read:
Chapter 11: *Analysis and Interpretation of Qualitative Data* (pgs. 306-338)

* Analysis Paper Due

Week 12 – Nov 22
Writing Up and Representing Qualitative Data

Read:
Chapter 12: *Writing and Representation of Qualitative Research Projects*

Week 13 – Nov 29

Wrap Up, Reflections and Discussion of Course

* Final Paper Due

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