

SOCIOLOGY 3312
Introduction to Qualitative Methods
Sept – Dec 2017
Friday 11:30-2:30
ATAC 5041

Dr. Barbara Parker
barbara.parker@lakeheadu.ca
Phone: 343-8792
Office: RB 2043
Office Hours: Tuesday 3-4pm

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, focus groups, observational research, ethnography, case studies, content analysis including textual and image analysis and finally, mixed methods. 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, focus groups, participant observation, ethnography and content analysis;
- Understand the ethics process and researcher reflexivity;
- Acquire understanding about analysis and writing up 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 course is held 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 in the Telepresence room. Most weeks we will have lectures 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 3 hours outside the classroom in preparation. This means that on average, per week, you can expect to spend at least 9 hours reading and completing assignments.

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 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

Participation Including Group Work.....	15% Ongoing
Self-Reflexivity Paper.....	20% Due: Sept 29
Mid-term Exam.....	20% October 20
Observation Exercise.....	20% Due: Nov 10
Final Assignment "Research Proposal".....	25% Due: Dec 1

* **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 including Group Work - 15%

Ongoing

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 and group work, which you may be asked to hand in at the end of class. Please be mindful of the diversity of experiences and perspectives your classmates represent when speaking. It is imperative that we foster a culture of respect in the classroom.

2. Reflexivity Paper - 20%

Due: Sept 29th

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 including a discussion of sampling and recruitment of participants, ethical considerations (if discussed), methods employed, the analysis process, and the findings.

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. Mid-Term Exam - 20%

October 20th in-class

Details will be discussed in class prior to the test date, but mid-term test will cover all material from Sept 8 through to October 20th.

4. Observation Exercise - 20%

Due: November 10th

For this assignment, you are required to observe a social setting unobtrusively for 30-45 minutes. This means that you are not to interact with anyone in the setting you choose. Good sites for observation include the library, the mall, a restaurant or cafeteria, a church, a waiting room, a hotel lobby, a bar, a bus depot, the airport, etc.

Once you are set up to observe, you will record field notes to describe in detail what you see, hear and feel in this social setting. These notes will form the basis from which you will be able to write up your observation paper. In writing up the final paper, you will provide analysis of the process of conducting observations that is also reflexive of your own social location, and what you observed.

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

5. Final Assignment “Research Proposal” - 25%

Due: December 1st

For this assignment, you are required to develop a qualitative 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 focus of the assignment is on your methodology, which should be outlined, including why it is appropriate and important for your particular research study (& research question). Describe how you will sample, collect data (specific methods to be used) including recruitment strategies. Do not forget to include any ethical considerations emerging in the construction of your research design. Finally, discuss your plan for knowledge transfer or dissemination.

Your final assignment will be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced with 12 font. Please remember to reference using ASA style.

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

Week 1 – Sept 8

Welcome & Overview: Introduction to Qualitative Research

Review Syllabus and discuss expectations

Week 2 – Sept 15

Epistemology and the Quest for Meaningful Knowledge

Reading:

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

Week 3 – Sept 22

Qualitative Research Paradigms

Reading:

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

Week 4 – Sept 29

Designing Qualitative Research

Reading:

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

Week 5 – Oct 6

Ethics in Qualitative Research

Reading:

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

Week 6 – Oct 13

NO CLASS FALL READING WEEK

Week 7 – Oct 20
Qualitative Research Methods

Mid-Term Exam (first half of the class)

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

Week 8 – Oct 27
Qualitative Research Methods

Reading:
Chapter 6: *Focus Group Research* (pgs. 148-181)

Week 9 – Nov 3
Qualitative Research Methods

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

Week 10 – Nov 10
Qualitative Research Methods

Reading:
Chapter 8: *Case Study* (pgs. 218-245)

Week 11 – Nov 17
Unobtrusive Methods

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

Week 12 – Nov 24
Qualitative Data Analysis

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

Week 13 – Dec 1
Writing Qualitative Research

Reading:

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

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