

**LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**  
**Qualitative Methods: Sociology 5113FA**

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**Fall 2013**

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**Description And Objectives**

This **seminar** course is designed to introduce students to the principles behind qualitative research and methods and discuss issues such as:

- ⇒ the relationship between theory and method
- ⇒ reasons for the use of qualitative methods in sociology
- ⇒ how to distinguish "good" qualitative research from research that is poorly executed
- ⇒ ethical issues in qualitative research
- ⇒ writing qualitative research.

**Readings**

Students are expected to engage in critical reflection and debate of the ideas presented in readings:

Creswell, John W. 2012. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches 3rd ed.* Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage Publications.

Silverman, David (ed.). 2010. *Qualitative Research: Issues in Theory Method and Practice. 3rd ed.* Thousand Oaks, Ca.: Sage Publications. (abbreviated QR3 in outline)

Stone, Sharon-Dale (ed.). 2013. *Readings Package for Sociology 5113 Fall 2013.*

Other required readings are posted to Desire2Learn (D2L).

**Assignments and Weight (see details, pp 5ff)**

Social Location paper (4-6 pp)	Due Oct. 18	10%
Observational Research Report (10-20 pp)	Due Nov. 22	15%
Focused Literature Review (6-8 pp)	Due Dec. 13	25%
Seminar Participation	Every class	20%
Presentations (2)		30%

**Schedule of Weekly Topics and Readings**

**Week 1: Introduction to the course**

Reading: Bloor, Michael. "Addressing Social Problems through Qualitative Research." Ch. 22 in QR3

**Preparation for Week 1:** be prepared to discuss your past experience with qualitative research: whether you have taken a course in qualitative methods, used qualitative methods for your own research, or simply read research based on qualitative methods. Be prepared to discuss your understanding of the differences between qualitative and quantitative methods, and how qualitative methods can be useful for furthering sociological knowledge.

### Week 2 Paradigmatic Assumptions

Readings:

Cresswell, Ch 2

Guba, Egon & Yvonna Lincoln. 1994. "Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research." Ch 6 in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Posted on D2L.

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

**Preparation for Week 2:** bring to class a piece of qualitative research that you think is interesting and be prepared to discuss: why it is interesting; what are the paradigmatic assumptions framing the research; and discuss the author's voice.

### Week 3 Reflexivity and Social Location (researcher as instrument)

Readings (all posted on D2L):

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 (Feb): 51–65.

Elliott, Jane. 2005. "The Researcher as Narrator: Reflexivity in Qualitative and Quantitative Research." Pp 152-59 in Jane Elliott, *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*.

Finlay, Linda. 2002. "Outing" the Researcher: The Provenance, Process, and Practice of Reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research* 12 (4): 531-545.

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

**Preparation for Week 3:** be prepared to discuss your own social location and how that affects your research interests.

### Week 4 Ethical Issues

Readings:

Christians, Clifford. 2005. "Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research." Pp. 139-164 (Ch 6) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 3rd edition.

Doucet, Andrea and Natasha S. Mauthner. 2002. "Knowing Responsibly: Linking Ethics, Research Practice and Epistemology." Pp. 123-145 in Melanie Mauthner, Maxine Birch, Julie Jessop and Tina Miller (eds.), *Ethics in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage. Posted on D2L.

Ryen, Anne. "Ethics and Qualitative Research." Ch 23 in QR3.

Lakehead University Research Ethics Board Agreement Form. Posted on D2L.

Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS): <http://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

**Preparation for Week 4:** complete the TCPS tutorial and be prepared to discuss the extent to which you now feel informed about and able to address ethical problems that can arise when doing qualitative research. Comment on who's interests are protected by following the TCPS requirements.

### Week 5: Designing a Research Study and Choosing an Approach

Readings: Creswell, Ch 3, 4 & 5

**Preparation for Week 5:** be prepared to discuss in detail an idea for a research project you might like to do. How would you design it and why? (note that this exercise does not commit you to actually doing the research, but the more interested you are in the idea, the more you will get out of the exercise)

### Week 6: Research Questions and Data Collection

Readings: Creswell, Ch 6 & 7

**Preparation for Week 6:** create a research purpose statement for a project you would like to do and be prepared to present it to the class. The class will then work collectively to discuss how to make the statement clearer.

**Social Location Paper Due Week 6**

### Week 7: Ethnography & Observation

Readings:

Gobo, Giampietro. "Ethnography." Ch 2 in QR3

Buscatto, Marie. "Using Ethnography to Study Gender." Ch 3 in QR3

Eberle, Thomas S. and Christoph Maeder. "Organizational Ethnography." Ch 4 in QR3.

**Preparation for Week 7:** be prepared to discuss the importance of including observations in qualitative research, even when interviews are the primary method of data collection.

### Week 8: Issues in Gathering Observational Data

Readings:

Emmison, Michael. "Conceptualizing Visual Data." Ch. 13 in QR3.

Wolcott, Harry. 1994. "Confessions of a 'Trained' Observer." Pp. 152-172 in Wolcott, *Transforming Qualitative Data*.

Stimson, Gerry V. 1986. "Place and Space in Sociological Fieldwork." *Sociological Review* 34: 641-656. Posted on D2L.

**Preparation for Week 8:** come with ideas for your observational assignment. We will discuss the setting you might observe, how you might do it and what you expect to observe.

### Week 9 Issues in Interviewing

Readings:

Anderson, Kathryn & Dana Jack. 1991. "Learning to Listen." Pp 11-26 in Gluck & Patai (eds.), *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*.

Miller, Jody & Barry Glassner. "The 'Inside' and the 'Outside': Finding Realities in Interviews." Ch 8 in QR3

Holstein, James & Jaber Gubrium. "Animating Interview Narratives." Ch 9 in QR3

Wilkinson Sue. "Focus Group Data." Ch 10 in QR3

Recommended:

There is a particularly well-developed literature on qualitative interviewing, discussing both theoretical and "how to" issues. See, for example:

- Glesne, Corinne & Alan Peshkin. 1992. Making Words Fly. Pp. 63-92 (Ch 4) in Glesne & Peshkin, *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*.
- Mishler, Elliot. 1986. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*.
- Rubin, Herbert and Irene Rubin. 2012. *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*.
- Gubrium, Jaber and James Holstein. 2002. *Handbook of Interview Research*.
- Kvale, Steinar and Svend Brinkmann. 2009. *InterViews*.

**Preparation for Week 9:** bring to class an article based on qualitative interviewing, preferably one that is relevant to your own research topic. Be prepared to discuss the extent to which the article adequately discusses how the interview data were created, and how the interview data add to an understanding of your topic. Also, if you were to do those interviews yourself, would you do anything differently and if so, why? Do you think you would be able to produce the same data?

### Week 10 Narrative Inquiry

Chase, Susan. 2005. "Narrative Inquiry." Pp 651-79 (Ch 25) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. 3rd edition.

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

Riessman, Catherine Kohler. "What's Different about Narrative Inquiry? Cases, Categories and Contexts." Ch 17 in QR3.

Recommended:

Stone, Sharon Dale. 2007. "Patient Concerns Posthaemorrhagic Stroke: A Study of the Internet Narratives of Patients with Ruptured Arteriovenous Malformation." *Journal of Clinical Nursing* 16 (2): 289-297. Posted on D2L.

**Preparation for Week 10:** bring an example narrative and be prepared to discuss how to resist what Riessman (p. 312) calls "narrative seduction." How and why was the narrative produced and what do you make of it?

**Week 11: Analysis, Interpretation, and Evaluative Criteria**

## Readings:

Creswell, Ch 8 &amp; 10

Altheide, David & John Johnson. 1994. "Criteria for Assessing Interpretive Validity in Qualitative Research." Pp 485-499 (Ch 30) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*.

Charmaz, Kathy and Anthony Bryant, Grounded Theory and Credibility." Ch. 16 in *QR3*

Rapley, Tim. "Some Pragmatics of Qualitative Data Analysis." Ch 15 in *QR3*

## Recommended:

Smith, John & Deborah Deemer. 2003. "The Problem of Criteria in the Age of Relativism." Pp 427-457 (Ch 12) in Denzin & Lincoln (eds.), *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials, 2nd edition*.

Wolcott, Harry. 1994. "Description, Analysis, and Interpretation in Qualitative Inquiry." Pp 9-54 (Ch 2) in Wolcott, *Transforming Qualitative Data*.

**Preparation for Week 11:** be prepared to discuss the pros and cons of various analytic strategies (e.g. narrative inquiry; grounded theory; thematic analysis), how different strategies produce different versions of reality, and how we might go about deciding on the adequacy of any analysis offered.

**Observation Paper Due Week 11****Week 12: Writing Qualitative Research**

## Readings:

Creswell Ch 9

Colyar, Julia. 2009. "Becoming Writing, Becoming Writers." *Qualitative Inquiry* 15 (2): 421-436. Posted on D2L.

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

Marvasti, Amir. "Three Aspects of Writing Qualitative Research: Practice, Genre and Audience." Ch. 21 in *QR3*.

**For Week 12:** be prepared to discuss the writing process.

**Due Dec 13: 6-8 pp focused literature review****Assignment Details*****Seminar Participation (50%)*****A. General Participation (20%)**

This seminar course depends upon the active and informed participation of all members of the seminar. Weekly seminar discussions and presentations work best and are most useful when they are dynamic, informed, creative, stimulating and collective. Thus, all students will be expected to be prepared to discuss issues raised by the readings. Students (even when not responsible for facilitating a seminar discussion) are expected to reflect on the readings bring questions and comments for discussion that are based on the required readings, and be prepared to contribute to in-class exercises as discussed on the outline.

Your grade will reflect the degree of preparation you show for each class and the degree of thoughtful and critical contributions to class discussions and in-class assignments that you show.

**B Seminar Facilitation (2 x 15% = 30%)**

Each student will be expected to work with 1 other student to lead two seminar discussions based on a week's readings. This requires:

- ⇒ briefly summarizing the significance/relevance of main points/arguments/ideas
- ⇒ offering some critical reflection about the ideas and arguments put forward – e.g. how they are constructed, their coherence, and how the readings compare and contrast regarding the week's topic
- ⇒ being prepared to respond to questions, and
- ⇒ encouraging class discussion of issues. Seminar leaders may find it helpful to bring handouts for the class to follow.

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. You should be prepared to lead the 1<sup>st</sup> hour and a half of class, but you may use the entire two and a half hour period if necessary.

### ***Format Guidelines for Written Assignments***



- ⇒ do not include a title page  
but write your name and the title of your paper at the top of the first page
- ⇒ all papers must be typed and double-spaced, using a font size comparable to Times New Roman 12 pt. or Arial 11 pt., and margins on each page at least 1" on all sides
- ⇒ page numbers and your last name must be on all pages except the first, in the top right-hand corner
- ⇒ use ASA format for quoting material, citing sources and for the list of references
- ⇒ when handing in a hard copy do not place your paper inside any kind of cover and do not staple your pages but use a paper-clip (all papers except the observation assignment can be uploaded to D2L)

### ***Paper on the Significance of Social Location, due Oct. 18 (10%)***

Identify a qualitative research project 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?

Further details to be discussed in class.

### ***Observational Research Report, due Nov. 22 (15%)***

You are required to observe a situation without interacting with others and write a reflexive and analytical report that includes:

- ⇒ a discussion of your conceptual baggage;
- ⇒ a discussion of the process of discovery;
- ⇒ a presentation of the data;
- ⇒ an analysis of the data; and
- ⇒ a conclusion.

Further details to be discussed in class.

### ***Focused Literature Review, due Dec. 13 (25%)***

Details posted on D2L.

## References

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.) 1994. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.) 1998. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.) 2003. *Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials, 2nd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.). 2005. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 3rd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Elliott, Jane. 2005. *Using Narrative in Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Glesne, Corrine and Alan Peshkin. 1992. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers*. NY: Longman.

Gluck, Sherna Berger and Daphne Patai (eds.). 1991. *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. NY: Routledge.

Gubrium, Jaber F. and James A. Holstein. 2009. *Analyzing Narrative Reality*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Holstein, James A. and Jaber F. Gubrium (eds.). 2003. *Inside Interviewing: New Lenses, New Concerns*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

Kvale, Steinar and Svend Brinkmann. 2009. *InterViews, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Mishler, Elliott. G. 1986. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Wolcott, Harry F. 1994. *Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, Analysis, and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage Publications.

### Selected Qualitative Journals

Forum: Qualitative Social Research  
<<http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm>>

International Journal of Qualitative Methods

International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education

International Journal of Social Research Methodology

Journal of Contemporary Ethnography

Qualitative Health Research

Qualitative Inquiry

Qualitative Research

Qualitative Sociology

Studies in Symbolic Interaction

Symbolic Interactionism