SOCI 715.01
Interview-Based Research
Fall 2012

Instructor: Dr. Liza McCoy
Office: SS 934
Email: mccoy@ucalgary.ca
Office hours: Wednesdays 10:00am - 12:00 pm; and by appointment

Course hours and dates: Mondays, 9:00-11:50 am, September 10 - October 22   (Note that the end date is different from what is in PeopleSoft.)

Course Description:

This six-week course is designed as an advanced, practical workshop in qualitative, interview-based research. The focus will be on ethnographic and language-sensitive approaches to the generation and analysis of interview data.   Topics to be addressed include: Research planning, recruiting participants, conducting interviews and focus groups, making transcriptions and summaries, use of qualitative management software, data analysis, and writing with interview data. We will also discuss epistemological and ethical issues particular to interview-based research.

Course Readings:

A collection of articles and book chapters. The schedule and list of readings will be given in class.

Assignment and Evaluation:

Course project and paper. There are three options for the course project and paper. Option 1: Conduct 1-2 interviews and write a paper discussing your interview process and offering a preliminary analysis of your data, along with a summary of the interview(s). Option 2: Working with existing interview data from a previous study, and relevant analytic or methodological sources, analyse the data in a new way and write a paper presenting that analysis. (This option requires that such use of the data be consistent with the uses outlined in the consent form signed by research participants.) Option 3: Write an essay that explores some methodological or analytic issue related to interview research, either from a theoretical perspective or through an examination of selected empirical studies (or some combination thereof).

Please submit a one-page, informal proposal describing your plans for your project no later than September 24.

Each student will make a presentation on their project in the final class (October 22). The presentation will not be separately graded, but it will be taken into consideration in determining the final grade for the course (see below). Guidelines for presentations will be given in class.

Papers should be *approximately* 15-20 pages in length (double spaced, with all usual features and formatting), and are due by 9:00 am on Monday, October 29 at the latest. Please submit hard copies.

Seminar. A seminar is a collaborative accomplishment that depends for its success on the participation and contributions of its members. My idea of a good seminar is one that generates intellectually stimulating discussion in an atmosphere of mutual respect and goodwill. Each student will be expected to take responsibility to present informally on two of the readings over the six weeks of the course. As well, because this course functions as a workshop, there will be ample time to share "tales from the field" and examples from your past and present research experiences. These contributions to the seminar will not be graded, but the general quality of a student's participation will be taken into account in determining the final grade (see below).

Final grade. The final grade for the course will in most cases be the grade received for the paper. Good quality classroom contributions and project presentations will have a neutral effect on the final grade; this is simply what is expected of graduate students. Exceptionally strong contributions in class could tip a borderline final grade up one level.