

Department of Sociology
University of Calgary

SOCI 715.01
Interview-Based Research
Fall 2014

Instructor: Dr. Liza McCoy
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Office hours: Wednesdays 1-3:00 pm; and by appointment

Course hours: Mondays, 1:00 - 3:40 pm, September 8- October 20

Course Description:

This is an advanced course/practical workshop that builds on participants' prior experience with interview-based research. The emphasis will be on ethnographically-committed and language-sensitive approaches to conducting and analysing interviews and focus groups. Topics to be addressed include: research planning, transcription and summary techniques, use of qualitative management software, strategies for 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 articles are available online; PDF copies of the book chapters will be available in D2L. The list of readings will be given in class.

Assignments and Evaluation:

Book report. Each student will select and read one scholarly monograph based on interview research. A list of options will be provided, but I am open to alternatives. Write a 4-5 page critical discussion of the book, focussing on method, analysis and writing. Further instructions will be given in class. You will also make a presentation on the book to the class. Presentations will be scheduled for October 6. (30%)

Course project and paper. There are three options for the course project and paper. (70%)

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). Use this option to try out an interviewing and analytic approach that is new to you. Ethics approval for this research has already been obtained at the course level.

Option 2: Working with existing interview data from a previous study (such as your M.A. thesis), and relevant analytic or methodological sources, analyse some of the data in a new way and write a working 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). This option is suitable for students with lots of practical experience with interview research.

Please submit a one-page, informal proposal describing your plans for your project no later than September 22.

Each student will make a presentation on their project in the final class (October 20).

Papers should be *approximately* 15-18 pages in length (double spaced, with all usual features and formatting), and are due by Monday, October 27 at 1:00 pm at the latest. Please submit hard copies.

Seminar. A seminar is a collaborative accomplishment that depends for its success on the 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 start the discussion on one to two of the readings over the six weeks of the course. As well, because this course functions as a workshop, there will be opportunity to share “tales from the field” and discuss examples from your past and present research experiences.

Final grade. The final grade for the course will represent the combined, weighted grades from the two assignments. In cases where the final grade is on the cusp between two letter grades, I will take classroom contributions into account when deciding whether to round the grade up to the higher level.

Grading Scheme:

Your final letter grade will be determined according to the following schedule:

Percentage Grade	Letter Grade
95-100	A+
90-94	A
85-89	A-
80-84	B+
75-79	B
70-74	B-
69 or less	F