

**University of Calgary
Faculty of Social Sciences
Department of Sociology**

Sociology Department Home Page: <http://www.soci.ucalgary.ca>

**Sociology 413.01
Fall, 2008**

Intermediate Qualitative Research Methods

Instructor: Dr. Gillian Ranson

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Office hours: Tues. and Thurs. 2-3 p.m. or by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

Qualitative approaches to research offer unique ways of thinking about and studying the social world. In this course we will examine some of the philosophical underpinnings of selected qualitative approaches, and explore how they work in practice. In particular, we will focus on ethnographic methods (notably observation and in-depth interviewing) as strategies for studying “people in places”.

TEXT

Lofland, John, David Snow, Leon Anderson and Lyn H. Lofland (2006). *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis* (4th edition). Thomson/Wadsworth.

Selected weekly readings, to be posted on Blackboard.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

The grade for this course is distributed over the following requirements:

1. a series of brief exercises aimed at helping students acquire specific qualitative research skills;
2. a mid-term exam, and an in-class final quiz (students may opt to substitute a participation grade for the final quiz);
3. a paper based on an individual research project, conceived, designed and executed during the course.

All grade components *must* be completed in order for students to pass the course.

The value of each component, and its due date, are as follows:

1. Exercises:

- Exercise 1 (Observation of place)Due Sept. 23
- Exercise 2 (Observation of interaction)Due Sept. 30
- Exercise 3 (Ethnographic interview)Due Oct. 14
- Exercise 4 (Interview planning) *In class*, Oct. 16

The exercises will not be graded individually, but all *must* be completed. Collectively, they will be worth 10% of the final grade.

2. Exams:

- Mid-term exam Oct. 23 (25%)
- Final quiz Dec. 4 (10%) OR participation grade (10%)

3. Research paper:

The research paper will be developed in stages, as follows:

- * Preliminary proposal Due Oct. 9
- Full proposal Due Oct. 28 (15%)
- * Proposal revisions, consent form (as needed) Due Nov. 4
- * In-class presentation of research Nov. 27 or Dec. 2
- Final paper Due Dec. 11 (40%)

Items marked with an asterisk (*) will not be individually graded, but *must* be completed. Lateness in turning them in will result in a reduction in the grade for the final paper.

All written term work should be submitted in class on the day it is due. Electronic submission of work will be permitted *only* with prior approval (usually when illness or some other emergency prevents a student from coming to campus). Final papers must be handed in to my office.

GRADING SCHEME:

Final grades will be determined as follows:

A+	(95-100%)	C+	(67-69%)
A	(90-94%)	C	(63-66%)
A-	(85-89%)	C-	(60-62%)
B+	(80-84%)	D+	(55-59%)
B	(75-79%)	D	(50-54%)
B-	(70-74%)	F	(49% or less)

DEPARTMENT AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Deferrals:

If at all possible you must provide advance notice to the instructor if you are unable to take a test or pass in an assignment or essay on time. All requests for deferral of a course component due to health reasons must be accompanied by written documentation as outlined in the University Calendar and should be obtained while the student has the physical or emotional problem rather than after recovery. Deferrals will be allowed in the following circumstances: illness, domestic affliction or religious conviction. Travel arrangements and misreading of the syllabus are not valid reasons for requesting a deferral. Deferrals will not be granted if it is determined that just cause is not shown by the student.

If you have missed a test for a legitimate reason, the instructor can require you to write a “make up” test as close in time to the original test as possible or can choose to transfer the percentage weight to another course component. If the instructor schedules a “make up” test for you, its date and location will be at the convenience of the Sociology Department.

Please note that requests to defer a final examination or to defer term work past the end of a term go through the Undergraduate Programs Office (UPO) and must be processed by the deadlines that are established in the U. of C. Calendar. You can find the forms you need at:

Deferred Final Exam Application:

http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/Winter2008DEFERREDFINALEXAMINATION_S.pdf

Deferred Term Work Form:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/files/registrar/defTW.pdf>

You must submit these deferral forms to the Social Sciences Associate Dean (Students) through the UPO office: Undergraduate Programs Office, 4th Floor, MacEwan Student Centre.

To make an appointment with the Associate Dean, phone (403) 220-8155.

Only the Associate Dean approves requests for deferrals which extend beyond the end of a term. Instructors are not involved in such decisions.

Ethics Research: Students are advised that any research with human subjects--including any interviewing (even with friends and family), opinion polling, or unobtrusive observation--must have the approval of the Departmental Ethics Committee. In completing course requirements, students must not undertake any human subjects research without discussing their plans with the instructor, to determine if ethics approval is required.

Academic Misconduct: Plagiarism, cheating and other academic misconduct are regarded as serious academic offenses. Students are advised to consult the University Calendar which presents a Statement of Intellectual Honesty and definitions and penalties associated with cheating, plagiarism, and other academic misconduct.

The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) legislation disallows the practice of having students retrieve assignments from a public place, e.g., outside an instructor's office or the Department main office. Written assignments must be returned to students individually, during class, or during the instructor's office hours; if a student is unable to pick up her/his assignment s/he may provide the instructor with a stamped, self-addressed envelope to be used for the return of the assignment.

Academic Accommodation: Students with a disability, who require academic accommodation, need to register with the Disability Resource Centre (MC 295, telephone 220-8237). Academic accommodation letters need to be provided to course instructors no later than fourteen (14) days after the first day of class. **It is a student's responsibility to register with the Disability Resource Centre and to request academic accommodation, if required.**

SAFEWALK

The University of Calgary provides a "safe walk" service to any location on Campus, including the LRT, parking lots, bus zones, and campus housing. For Campus Security/Safewalk call 220-5333. Campus Security can also be contacted from any of the "Help" phones located around Campus.

COURSE SCHEDULE

The following is a tentative schedule of class discussion topics and readings. Please note that the schedule may change if interests emerging during the term suggest that other topics and readings may also be relevant.

Week 1 (Sept. 9, 11)

Topic: *Introduction*

Readings:

- Lofland et al., Introduction, Chs. 1 and 2

Week 2 (Sept. 16,18)

Topic: *Research contexts and settings*

Readings:

- Lofland et al., Ch. 3
- Goodsell, Charles B. (1984). "Welfare waiting rooms", *Urban Life*, 12: 467-477.
- George, Molly (2008). "Interactions in expert service work: Demonstrating professionalism in personal training", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 37, 1: 108-131.

Week 3 (Sept. 23, 25)

Topic: *Getting along in the research setting*

Readings:

- Lofland et al., Ch. 4
- Yodanis, Carrie (2006). "A place in town: Doing class in a coffee shop", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 35, 3: 341-366.
- Munch, Allison (2005). "Everyone gets to participate: Floating community in an amateur softball game", in Calvin Morrill, David A. Snow and Cindy H. White (eds.) *Together Alone: Personal Relationships in Public Places*, Berkeley: University of California Press (pp. 111-133).

Exercise 1 (Observation of place) due Sept. 23

Week 4 (Sept, 30, Oct. 2)

Topic: *Varieties of ethnographic data*

Readings:

- Lofland et al., Ch. 5, pp 81-98 and 108-117
- DeSantis, Alan D. (2003). "A couple of white guys sitting around talking: The collective rationalization of cigar-smokers", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 32, 4: 432-466.
- Nukaga, Misako (2008). "The underlife of kids' school lunchtime: Negotiating ethnic boundaries and identities in food exchange", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 37, 3: 342-380.

Exercise 2 (Observation of interaction) due Sept. 30

Week 5 (Oct. 7, 9)

Topic: *A closer look at interviewing (I)*

Readings:

- Lofland et al., Ch. 5, pp. 99-108
- Laurendeau, Jason and Nancy Sharara (2008). “Women could be every bit as good as guys’: Reproductive and resistant agency in two ‘action’ sports”, *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 32, 1: 24-47
- Fairbairn, Nadia, Will Small, Kate Shannon, Evan Wood and Thomas Kerr (2008). “Seeking refuge from violence in street-based drug scenes: Women’s experiences in North America’s first supervised injection facility”, *Social Science and Medicine*, 67: 817-823.

Preliminary research proposal due Oct. 9

Week 6 (Oct. 14, 16)

Topic: *A closer look at interviewing (II)*

Readings:

- Ranson, Gillian (2001). “Men at work: Change – or no change? – in the era of the ‘New Father’”, *Men and Masculinities*, 4, 1: 3-25
- Hoffman, Elizabeth A. (2007). “Open-ended interviews: power and emotional labor”, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 36, 3: 318-346

Exercise 3 (ethnographic interview) due Oct. 14

Exercise 4 (interview planning) in class Oct. 16

Week 7 (Oct. 21, 23)

Review class

[No new readings]

Mid-term exam Oct. 23

Week 8 (Oct. 28, 30)

Topic: *Focusing on meanings*

Readings:

- Lofland et al., Ch. 6
- Tumminia, Diana G. (2002). “In the dreamtime of the saucer people: Sense-making and interpretive boundaries in a contactee group”, *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 31, 6: 675-705
- Davidman, Lyn (1999). “The personal, the sociological, and the intersection of the two”, in Barry Glassner and Rosanna Hertz (eds.) *Qualitative Sociology as Everyday Life*, Thousand Oaks: Sage (pp. 79-87)

Full research proposal due Oct. 28

Week 9 (Nov. 4, 6)

Topic: *The work of analysis (I)*

Readings:

- Lofland et al., Ch. 7
- [Review of selected readings assigned earlier in the course]

Research proposal revisions/consent forms etc. as needed, Nov. 4

Week 10 (Nov. 13) *[Reading Days]*

Topic: *The work of analysis (II)*

Readings:

- Lofland et al., Ch. 8.
- Cahill, Spencer (1999). "Emotional capital and professionalization: The case of mortuary science students (and me)", *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 62, 2: 101-116

Week 11 (Nov. 18, 20)

Topic: *The work of analysis (III)*

Readings: Lofland et al., Ch. 9

Week 12 (Nov. 25, 27)

Topic: *Writing up*

Readings:

- Lofland et al., Ch. 10
- The Sociology Writing Group (1998). "The ethnographic field research paper", in *A Guide to Writing Sociology Papers*, 4th edition. New York: St. Martin's Press.

Student in-class presentations, Nov. 27

Week 13 (Dec. 2, 4)

Student in-class presentations, Dec. 2

In-class quiz, Dec. 4

Final papers due Thursday Dec. 11.

