

QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

6:00-9:20 Mondays

3410 Faner Hall

Professor Rob Benford rbenford@siu.edu

3396 & 3426 Faner

Office Hours: 9:00-noon Mondays & Wednesdays, or by appointment

453-7614

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to familiarize you with the major techniques of qualitative data collection and analysis used by sociologists and other social scientists. These include participant observation, in-depth interviewing, focus group interviewing, biographical methods, content analysis, archival research, and a variety of nonreactive techniques. This course will also address the links among theory, data, and methods, and provide you with a critical appreciation for the qualitative tradition in social sciences. You will not only become acquainted with various qualitative techniques and issues, but also how to conduct field research that is descriptively interesting, theoretically illuminating, and ultimately publishable. The course will follow a seminar format emphasizing reading, group discussion, in- and out-of-class exercises, oral presentations, original research, and writing. We will hear "tales from the field" from faculty members and students who have employed qualitative methods in their research. The success of the class will depend largely on your individual and collective contributions.

TEXTS

Berg, Bruce L. 2009. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 7th ed. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Emerson, Robert M, Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press.

Lofland, John, David A. Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. 2006. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 4th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Richards, Lyn. 2010. *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*, 2nd ed. London: Sage.

Wolcott., Harry F. 2009. *Writing up Qualitative Research*, Third Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

1. Attendance and Participation: You are expected to attend each seminar meeting, participate in discussions, and share your research experiences (tales from the field) with your colleagues. [10%]
2. Assignments: Considerable emphasis will be placed on learning by doing. You will be required to complete 10 challenging but enjoyable assignments. (4% each) [40%]

3. Oral Presentation: The last two weeks of the course have been set aside for you and your fellow students to present your research experiences and findings. [10%].

4. Research Paper: You are to prepare an original research paper based on fieldwork conducted throughout the term. The paper should be analytical and shed some empirical light on a methodological or substantive problem that emerged from your fieldwork. A purely descriptive paper will not be acceptable. You must submit an HSC application form including a brief description of your proposed research on or before February 1. You should craft your paper as though you were submitting it for publication in a qualitative journal such as the *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *Qualitative Sociology*, *Symbolic Interaction*, *Qualitative Inquiry*, and *Human Organization*. Papers are due May 3. [40%]

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1. Evaluation: You will be evaluated on the basis of the extent and quality of your seminar participation [10%], your assignments (primarily fieldnotes and/or interview transcripts) [40%], your oral presentation [10%], and your final paper [40%].

2. Deadlines: Assignments and the paper are due by the due dates specified in the course outline below. Failure to meet a deadline will result in a deduction of one letter grade per calendar day. Incompletes will not be granted unless circumstances are consistent with SIUC policies for incompletes.

3. Academic Honesty: ALL UNIVERSITY POLICIES REGARDING PLAGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY WILL BE UPHELD IN THIS COURSE.

4. Emergency Procedures: Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT'S website at www.bert.siu.edu, Department of Public Safety's website www.dps.siu.edu (disaster drop down), and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. **It is important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency.** The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.

SEMINAR OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENTS

I. Epistemology & Ethicality

- Jan. 25 Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods & Grounded Theory
 Readings: Berg, Ch. 1: "Introduction"
 Lofland et al.: "Introduction"
 Lofland et al., Ch.1: "Starting Where You Are"
 Lofland et al., Ch. 2: "Evaluating Data Sites"
 Richards, Ch. 1: "Setting Up Your Project"
 Berg, Ch. 2: "Designing Qualitative Research"
- Feb. 1 Ethical Issues, Human Subjects, and Institutional Review Boards
 Readings: Berg, Ch. 3: "Ethical Issues"
 Assign. 1: HSC Application Forms/Research Proposals Due

II. Doing Fieldwork

- Feb. 8 Getting Started
 Readings: Lofland et al., Ch. 3: "Getting In"
 Berg, Pp. 190-197: "Ethnographic Field Strategies"
 Richards, Ch. 2: "Making Qualitative Data"
 Emerson et al., Ch 1: "Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research"
- Feb. 15 Participant Observation
 Readings: Lofland et al., Ch. 4: "Getting Along"
 Berg, Pp. 198-218: "Ethnographic Field Strategies" (continued)
 Emerson et al., Ch. 2: "In the Field: Participating, Observing, and
 Jotting Notes"
 Berg, Ch. 7: "Action Research"
 Assign. 2: Field Notes I Due
- Feb. 22 Logging Field Data
 Readings: Lofland et al., Ch. 5: "Logging Data"
 Emerson et al., Ch. 3: "Writing Up Fieldnotes I: From Field to
 Desk"
 Emerson et al., Ch. 4: "Writing Up Fieldnotes II: Creating Scenes
 on the Page"
 Berg, Pp. 218-228: "Ethnographic Field Strategies" (continued)
 Richards, Ch. 3: "Data Records"
 Richards, Ch. 4: "Up From the Data"
 Assign. 3: Field Notes II Due

Mar. 1 Intensive Interviewing

- Readings: Berg, Ch. 4: "A Dramaturgical Look at Interviewing"
 Berg, Ch. 5: "Focus Group Interviewing"
 Assign. 4: Field Notes III Due

Mar. 15 Using Qualitative Software: Guest Ethnographer Dr. Kathy Ward

- Readings: Richards, Ch. 5: "Coding"
 Richards, Ch. 6: "Handling Ideas"
 Richards, "What Are You Aiming For?"
 Richards, Searching the Data"
 Assign. 5: Interview Transcripts/Notes IV Due

Mar. 22 Coding and Analyzing Qualitative Data

- Readings: Lofland et al., Ch. 6: "Thinking Topics"
 Lofland et al., Ch. 7: "Asking Questions"
 Emerson et al., Ch. 5: "Pursuing Members' Meanings"
 Emerson et al., Ch. 6: "Processing Fieldnotes: Coding & Memoing"
 Lofland et al., Ch. 9: "Developing Analyses"
 Berg, 228-236: "Ethnographic Field Strategies" (continued)
 Assign. 6: Field Notes V Due

III. Nonreactive Techniques

Mar. 29 Content Analyses

- Readings: Berg, Ch. 11: "An Introduction to Content Analyses"
 Wolcott, Ch. 1: "On Your Mark"
 Assign. 7: Taxonomic Analysis Due
 Assign. 8: In-Class Content Analysis Exercise

Apr. 5 Physical Traces and Audio Visual Techniques

- Readings: Berg, Pp. 287-290 (end of Ch. 8): "Physical Erosion & Accretion"
 Wolcott, Ch. 2: "Get Going"
 Wolcott, Ch. 3: "Keep Going"
 Assign. 9: Field Notes VI Due

Apr. 12 Biographical and Historical Methods

- Readings: Berg, Pp. 268-286 (beginning of Ch. 8): "Archival Strategies"
 Berg, Ch. 9: "Historiography and Oral Traditions"
 Berg, Ch. 10: "Case Studies"
 Wolcott, Ch. 4: "Linking Up"
 Wolcott, Ch. 5: "Tightening Up"
 Assign. 10: Field Notes VII Due

IV. Finishing Touches

- Apr. 19 The Art and Craft of Writing, Speaking and Publishing Ethnography
Readings: Lofland et al., Ch. 10: “Writing Analysis”
 Berg, Ch. 12: “Writing Research Papers”
 Emerson et al., Ch. 7: “Writing an Ethnography”
 Emerson et al., Ch. 8: “Conclusion”
 Richards, Ch. 10: “Telling It”
 Wolcott, Ch. 6: “Finishing Up”
 Wolcott, Ch. 6: “Getting Published”
- Apr. 26 Evaluating Qualitative Research: Issues of Reliability, Validity, Voice & Resonance
Readings: Lofland et al., Ch. 8: “Arousing Interest”
 Richards, Ch. 9: “Seeing a Whole”
Course Evaluations
- May 3 Student Presentations
Research Papers Due
- May 10 Student Presentations