

# Qualitative Interviewing Syllabus

Fall 2024

## Instructor information

### Instructor

Julia Rogers

### Email

[Jerogers@ucsd.edu](mailto:Jerogers@ucsd.edu)

### Office location & hours

SSB 467 - TBA

### Course Hours

Tuesdays and Thursdays  
12:30PM - 1:50PM

### Course Location

HSS 2150



## General information

### Description

*"You have been told to go grubbing in the library, thereby accumulating a mass of notes and a liberal coating of grime. You have been told to choose problems wherever you can find musty stacks of routine records based on trivial schedules prepared by tired bureaucrats and filled out by reluctant applicants for aid or fussy do-gooders or indifferent clerks. This is called "getting your hands dirty in real research"... But one thing more is needful; first-hand observation. Go and sit in the lounges of the luxury hotels and on the doorsteps of the flophouses; sit on the Gold Coast settees and on the slum shakedown; sit in Orchestra Hall and in the Star and Garter Burlesk. In short...go get the seats of your pants dirty in real research."*

--Robert E. Park

Qualitative Interviewing Methods are commonly used by sociologists to conduct research. In this course, you will learn the intellectual and practical aspects of interviewing methodology. You will also design and carry out your own interview pilot-study with hands-on guidance and feedback from your instructor and classmates. This course will be taught as a seminar with periodic lectures, so come to class prepared to contribute your ideas and experiences to the discussion. We will meet in-person, once a week. Attendance is expected. You will also work with a small group of your classmates to develop your expertise in your sociology subfield (gender, race & ethnicity, immigration, medicine, etc.) of choice and engage in a collaborative research project. At the end of the quarter you will present your study to your classmates in the form of a Group Presentation and you will produce a lab report.

### Expectations and goals

By the end of this course you will have engaged with every stage of qualitative interview research. This experience will allow prepare you for further training in Qualitative Research in a professional or graduate setting. You will also be able to assess the validity, limitations, and generalizability of qualitative interview research papers that have been published.

## Course materials

### Required Texts

There are two required texts for this course. Any readings not from this text will be made available on the course Canvas page.

*Weiss, Robert S. (1994) Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*

*Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2009). The Craft of Research, Third Edition. University of Chicago Press.*

### Tentative Course Schedule (subject to change)

Week 0 (9/26)	Course Introduction
Week 1 (10/1, 10/3)	What is Qualitative Interviewing?
Week 2 (10/8, 10/10)	Library Research and Literature Reviews
Week 3 (10/15, 10/17)	Research Ethics Asking Questions - How to Refine Research Questions
Week 4 (10/22, 10/24)	From Research Question to Interview Guide
Week 5 (10/29, 10/31)	Theoretical Design and Implementing the Interview
Week 6 (11/5, 11/7)	Data Analysis
Week 7 (11/12, 11/14)	Coding
Week 8 (11/19, 11/21)	Academic Writing
Week 9 (11/26, 11/28 - no class, Thanksgiving)	Flex week Thanksgiving - No class Thursday
Week 10 (12/3, 12/5)	Group Presentations
Final Exam - 12/13, 11:30 - 2:30	Final Paper and Supporting Documents submitted online

## Grading and Assessment

### Grade Breakdown

Participation - 20%	This course will be taught as a seminar-style, workshop-based course. Attendance is required. Due to the regularity of homework assignments and emphasis on participation, it will be difficult for you to succeed in the course if you have frequent absences! If you miss six or more class meetings you will fail this portion of the course. Your participation grade will be calculated based upon your attendance in class, the quality of your participation overall, and completion of “participation” assignments. Everyone gets 2
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	“free” absences; use them wisely. Late-add students are held to the same time commitment as the other students in the course. I will not allow students to add past week 2.
Homework Assignments - 50%	See descriptions in the syllabus below.  Homework consists of both individual and group assignments. Homework that is intended to spur group participation cannot be turned in late for credit but may be required to progress in the course. For assignments 1, 4, & 6 late work will be marked with a zero and is ineligible for the “kitten policy.” All other assignments are docked 1 letter grade per day late, up to 3 days late. The only exception is through use of the “kitten policy” (see later in syllabus for details). The group presentation, group final, and supporting documents are not eligible for the “kitten policy”
Project Presentation 10%	Your group will present your research to your fellow students during weeks 9 or 10 of the course. Your group presentation will be 10-15 minutes long, followed by a 5 minute question-and-answer period: Time-slots will be randomly assigned. You will be required to have a visual aid for this presentation. A portion of your grade will be based upon the quality of your participation with the other groups’ presentations. Attendance is required for all presentations and you are expected to pay attention. A complete guide and grading rubric will be made available to you prior to the presentation. <i>Not eligible for kitten policy.</i>
Group Final Report 15%	A final Lab Report will be created by your group summarizing your research methods and primary findings. <b>One paper will be turned in per group.</b> <i>Not eligible for kitten policy.</i>
Supporting Documents 5%	As an appendix to your final collaborative report you will submit (via Canvas) the following <u>individual</u> supporting documents: all five of your interview transcriptions, as well as your coding scheme, coded transcripts, and any other supporting materials or raw data. <i>Not eligible for kitten policy.</i>

## **HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS: DESCRIPTIONS AND GUIDELINES**

### *Assignment #1: Initial Project Proposal*

Due date: Week 1, 10/10 via Canvas prior to the start of class (12pm) and bring a hard-copy to class. Be prepared to share your idea with a group of students.

Details: Before you start this assignment, read the “Final Project: Description, Guidelines & Rules” in the final section of this syllabus. You will complete a quiz that is the equivalent of 1 to 2 pages (typed, double spaced) describing your idea for your final project. Question 1 asks you to clearly state your topic and preliminary research question. Question 2 asks why you chose this topic, what population you are planning to interview, and any books or articles you have already read that relate to this topic. For question 3 you will explain why the population you have chosen to interview is a good population for your research question. In other words, why will interviewing members of this particular group of people help you answer your research question? Think broadly about the types of question you would ask in an interview to help you answer your research question, and the types of answers you might expect. Feel free to include some of those questions,

Keep in mind that this is a preliminary project proposal and that the details will become clearer as the quarter progresses. This assignment has two purposes: (1) to get you thinking in a directed way about the logistics of your project and to prompt you to think ahead to connect interview data to sociology concepts, and (2) so that I can approve the appropriateness of you project. If your project is not

appropriate for this course, you and I will work together to come up with a new idea. Do your best on this assignment so that you can pinpoint problems early and get the most helpful feedback possible.

### *Assignment #2: Annotated Bibliography*

Due date: October 17th via Canvas, prior to class 12PM

Details: In this assignment, you will begin to tie your research question to the existing literature and sociology concepts associated with your topic. For this assignment, please find five articles in total that are peer-reviewed journal articles. These 5 articles must be composed of the following types: one review article that gives a broad overview of your topic (from *Annual Review of Sociology*), two or three articles that are very close to your research question and use qualitative methods (interviews, ethnography, participant observation, etc.), and one or two articles close to your topic that use survey methods or large database quantitative methods (if none exist, please contact me for further instruction). **You will need a total of five articles.** For this assignment you are intended to work independently on the topic chosen by your group. You do not need to coordinate with your group on which articles are chosen. You will use ASA style for your citations ([https://www.asanet.org/wp-content/uploads/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick\\_Tips\\_for\\_ASA\\_Style.pdf](https://www.asanet.org/wp-content/uploads/savvy/documents/teaching/pdfs/Quick_Tips_for_ASA_Style.pdf) )

The reason for this assignment is to give you an opportunity to develop initial expertise in your topic and to understand the advantages and disadvantages of using different methods to collect data about your topic. You will write an annotated bibliography for these articles. This means that you will give the full citation for each article (as you would in a formal bibliography) and below the citation you will write a paragraph-long summary of the author's research question and claims, their data source, method of analysis, and conclusions. After that you should discuss how the article relates to your research question. For the quantitative articles, consider how answering the researcher's question with an interview study would add to or enhance the results. For the qualitative articles, discuss how your research question builds on previous research and what your study could add to the field in general. The object of this exercise is to understand how your research question and research methods will further understanding of the field. Is there a gap in the existing data or understanding of the field that you could fill? Will your research project expand knowledge or add detail to the field? Will it test existing theory? Please see the Annotated Bibliography guide at The OWL at Purdue for additional guidance ([https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general\\_writing/common\\_writing\\_assignments/annotated\\_bibliographies/index.html](https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/general_writing/common_writing_assignments/annotated_bibliographies/index.html) )

### *Assignment #3: Final GROUP Project Proposal*

Due date: October 22<sup>nd</sup>, via Canvas by 11:59PM

Details: Based on the feedback you received on your initial project proposal and discussions you have as a group, choose a final group research topic. Then, **as a group** write a final project proposal. This brief proposal (1-3 pages, typed and double spaced) should include the title of your research project, and a description of your topic and research question, rationale for conducting the project, interview sampling method, description of your study population, and project hypotheses if applicable (what do you predict you will find?). You may attach some sample interview questions if you find this helpful.

### *Assignment #4: Individual Interview Guide*

Due Date: October 24<sup>th</sup> via Canvas AND bring a paper copy to class

For this individual assignment you will create a list of potential questions to include in your group interview guide for your newly chosen group research question/topic. You will print out and bring this list of questions with you to class to discuss with your group

### *Assignment #5: GROUP Final Interview Guide*

Due date: October 31<sup>st</sup> via Canvas by 11:59PM

Details: Based on the feedback you received on your initial interview guide, project proposal and during in-class discussion, write up your final interview guide. If any of your questions are specifically designed to replicate or challenge specific articles from your annotated bibliography or your further reading, feel free to note this. Remember that you should have a reason for asking every question on the interview guide, whether methodological (building rapport, getting demographic information) or theoretical (relating to the past literature or building your contribution by supporting your hypotheses). Your interview guide should be annotated to note these justifications.

### *Assignment #6: Interview Transcription AND first Interview Report*

Due date: November 14<sup>th</sup>, Bring a paper copy to class for use in a group activity.

Details: Transcribe your first interview (word for word) and complete your first Interview Report. Clearly note who is speaking in each turn; the format should resemble examples from class lectures. We will discuss why in more detail in-class the week before the assignment. Your first interview may not reach the 30 minute threshold, in this case you can use this interview for this assignment but you cannot reuse this interview for assignment 7.

### *Assignment #7: All Interview Reports and Transcripts*

Due date November 26th via Canvas (no hard copy needed)

Details: You will fill out a brief interview report after each interview. You will conduct a total of 3 interviews that exceed 30 minutes in length. These must be transcribed and an interview report form should be completed for each.

## **FINAL PROJECT: DESCRIPTION, GUIDELINES & RULES**

The final project in this class is a written original research report, written in sociology article style and based on an interview study that your group designed and conducted. As an appendix to your final paper, you will submit (via canvas) the following supporting documents: all of your interview transcriptions, as well as your coding scheme, coded transcripts, and any other supporting materials or raw data (except recordings). You will also present your results to your classmates during the last weeks of the course (time slots will be determined randomly). You will receive more specific guidelines about the paper and presentation as the course progresses.

### **Topic choice guidelines**

Your argument, your interview questions, and your general approach to your topic must be grounded in sociological theory. We will discuss what this means in class, and you will have homework assignments and small group work to help you find a suitable body of theory in which to nestle your project. For both methodological reasons and for your intellectual growth as a sociologist, I encourage you to choose a research setting that you are not already intimately familiar with. We will discuss the methodological advantages and disadvantages of familiarity with your research site in class.

## Project rules

You may not design an interview study where the interviewees are: under 18 years of age, prisoners or inmates, in an environment where you will be exposed to HIPAA---protected personal health information, in a population that may not be able to make an informed decision about whether to consent to your interview (e.g. very ill people, people with certain cognitive or developmental disabilities), or in other vulnerable populations as laid out in Institutional Review Board guidelines.

There are other interview studies that may technically be ethical to carry out, but I may not approve them. If this is the case, I will have a one-on-one discussion with you about my rationale and we will work together to design a work-around

## Grading Scale and Policies:

<b>A and A+</b>	<b>A 93% +</b>	“A+” work is exceptional work and is not defined by a percentage alone but is based upon demonstration of exceptional understanding of the material.
<b>A-</b>	<b>90% - 93%</b>	
<b>B+</b>	<b>88% - 90%</b>	
<b>B</b>	<b>83% - 87%</b>	
<b>B-</b>	<b>80% - 82%</b>	
<b>C+</b>	<b>78% - 80%</b>	
<b>C</b>	<b>73 - 77%</b>	
<b>C-</b>	<b>70% - 72%</b>	
<b>D</b>	<b>60% - 69%</b>	
<b>F</b>	<b>Lower than 60%</b>	

*You must complete a preponderance of the assignments to receive a passing grade in the course! I round to the closest whole percentage point. Thus, a grade of 89.5% is rounded up to a 90% and granted a final grade of “A-“*

**Regrade Policy:** Wait 24 hours before challenging a grade - be certain to read all comments. Complaints should have an academic basis and proposed resolution. You must have a specific grade grievance: somewhere that you can point to that points were omitted in error.

**Grade “Bumping”:** I will not "bump" your grade, do not ask.

**Late work:** Please be aware that failure to complete assignments by class time will limit your ability to participate in class sessions and small group work. Late work is docked one letter grade per day, up to three days late, except for homework assignments 1, 4, & 6 which are not accepted late for credit. The final paper and supplemental materials and presentation cannot be submitted late except under extenuating circumstances, with documentation, and when possible with prior arrangement.



**Kitten Policy:** The late work policy is designed to be fair to the majority of students who turn in their work on time and are engaged in class. However, each student may use one “no questions asked” kitten which will enable you to extend the deadline on one assignment for a maximum of two days. To use your kitten simply upload an image of a kitten in place of your assignment and be sure to resubmit the actual assignment within 48 hours of the original due date.

### **Grading for Collaborative Work:**

This course utilized a collaborative project framework. For all group assignments it is possible that members of the group will not receive individual grades. All group members are expected to contribute to the collective project and there are checks in place to ensure participation. If anyone in the group is not participating as expected other group members are not expected to “cover” the work - and they should not do so! If there are any difficulties with the group dynamic, communication, or accountable collaboration you should notify the instructor so I can help your group. I have a variety of resources to aid the group or the individual in question. I will consider it an academic integrity violation for anyone in the group to present work as their own when it is the work of someone else in the group. It is essential that you communicate any problems with your group as soon as possible so that I can implement modifications that will still allow everyone in your group to succeed - waiting until finals week to alert me to problems reduces or eliminates my options in addressing your group’s difficulties and generally results in a lower grade for everyone in the group.

## **COURSE POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS:**

### **Attendance**

Students are responsible for all material presented in the readings, lectures, and in class (even if not covered in the readings). **Class attendance is expected and will be required - late adding students are not excused from the attendance requirement prior to their adding class.** Be prepared to participate: have access to the assigned readings for the week, have a hard or electronic copy of any homework due that day, put away electronic devices, and get to know your fellow students. This course is taught as a workshop and we will be actively practicing interview skills, working with your group, and analyzing data during class time. For this reason, you cannot have more than two weeks worth of absences (6 in total) and pass the participation portion of the course (exceptions may be made in extenuating circumstances with documentation). While you should remain home if you are ill, you are otherwise expected to regularly attend class. If you are ill or experience an emergency please contact Dr. Rogers via email as soon as possible, preferably prior to the start of class. There are two “Free absence” for the course intended to cover the reality of student illness and emergencies: use them wisely.

### **Collegiality & Participation**

This class will involve regular small group work and large group discussions. Your group will be collaborating to produce enough data for your final paper. Your collaboration on your research project will be enjoyable and helpful, and you will learn a lot from helping your classmates and being helped by them. Out of respect for your classmates, please come to class prepared to discuss and work together. The grading scheme is structured to reward you for good preparation and participation. While you may utilize electronic devices to reference course materials and take notes you must resist the temptation to pay more attention to the device than to your classmates or lecture. Being off task during group work will be noted, even if I do not address it directly with you at each instance, and it will effect your final grade.

### **Incomplete**

Please note, I will only assign a grade of “incomplete” for the course in accordance with university policy. The policy is available here (section B): <http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Regulations/500> “An instructor may file an I (Incomplete) only if the

student has completed the majority of the coursework at a passing level and only for documented reasons beyond the student's control (illness, housing insecurity, and family emergency, for example)." A student requesting an incomplete may be assigned an alternative, individual final as to enable their group to complete the quarter.

### Struggles with the course

If you are having trouble with any aspect of the class, including deadlines or attendance, it is always best to email me or come see me as soon as possible. That way we can address the problem before you have fallen too far behind or lost too many points from your final grade. Do not hesitate to ask for help.

### Email Policy

*Instructor Email:* I check my e-mail ([jerogers@ucsd.edu](mailto:jerogers@ucsd.edu)) at least once every weekday - it is probably the most effective way to reach me. To prevent your email from being filtered as spam, you must include "SOCL 104Q" in the subject line of your email. As a productivity strategy, I limit how often I check my email: you are more likely to get a prompt response if you send your emails during normal "business hours" - Monday through Friday, 9am-5pm. I do not check my email on the weekends. If you have not heard back from me by the end of the next business day, please resend your email. For more lengthy inquiries I recommend attending my office hours (TBA) or emailing and requesting an office hours meeting.

*Student Email:* I will frequently contact you via email or Canvas Announcements. This contact will include any changes to course content or scheduling and other vital communications. I will utilize the Canvas system to contact the class. This system utilizes your UCSD email address. You are responsible for checking this email and notifications regularly. If you have a forward in place, it is your responsibility to ensure that this forward is functioning in a thorough and timely manner. You are accountable for all announcements and emails - whether you read them or not.

### Students with Disabilities

In adherence with "Appendix 3: Policy on Students with Disabilities and Steps for Academic Accommodation" if you require disability accommodations for this course you should be registered with the OSD and provide your accommodation letter to Professor Rogers and the Sociology Department Disability Coordinator as early in the quarter as possible. Accommodations cannot be granted retroactively.

<http://senate.ucsd.edu/Operating-Procedures/Senate-Manual/Appendices/3>

### UCSD Statement of Academic Integrity

All work completed for this course should be completed by the student themselves. Students are expected to adhere to the norms and values associated with academic integrity and research ethics.

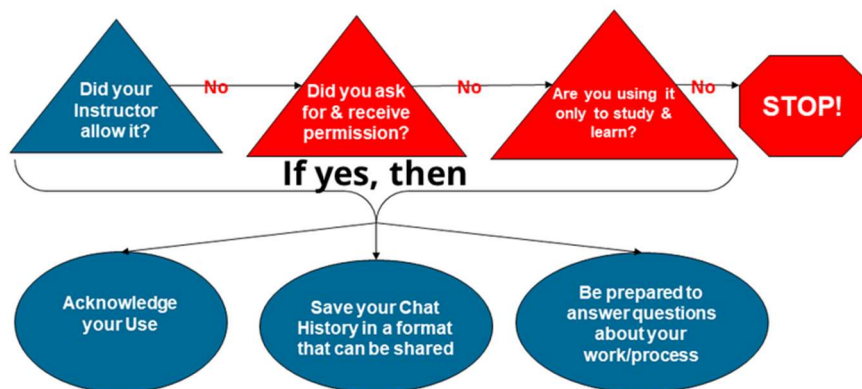
- Students are responsible for producing their own, original work in this class without unauthorized aid of any kind. Representing someone else's work as your own will not be tolerated, as outlined in the UCSD Policy on Academic Integrity published in the UCSD General Catalog.
- Please familiarize yourself with the definitions of cheating.

<http://academicintegrity.ucsd.edu/excel-integrity/define-cheating/index.html>



Statement on GenAI: The use of generative AI programs is in opposition to the learning goals for this course which focuses upon experiential learning. While we may experiment with the use of AI for research design, your individual assignments and group assignments should always be solely and completely your own, human work. Violations of this rule will be addressed as an academic integrity violation. We will discuss in class the ways that GenAI might be useful for, or detrimental to, qualitative research.

Here is a handy decision chart from the Academic Integrity office.



To summarize:

If your instructor did not say you could, then you can't.

Silence does not equal permission.

### Classroom environment

You are expected to respond respectfully to your classmates and instructor at all times, in adherence to the UCSD Principles of Community. Any comments or actions that instigate or contribute to a hostile environment in the classroom are unacceptable.

The following, normative expectations hold for this class. The professor reserves the right to ask you to leave the class if you routinely or egregiously flout them.

- You are bound by the Code of Conduct and Student Code of Conduct. Please familiarize yourself with them: [https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/\\_organizations/student-conduct/regulations/22.00.html](https://students.ucsd.edu/student-life/_organizations/student-conduct/regulations/22.00.html)
- Additionally, I expect that you will treat your fellow students and the instructor with cordiality, respect, and in a professional manner. Disagreements should focus upon ideas, not people. Ad Hominem attacks will not be tolerated, nor will hate speech of any variety. If you have complaints about the course you are welcome to air them, but those complaints should be academic in nature and solution oriented - venting is not appropriate. Additionally, I expect students to accord respect and compassion to their interview respondents - both in person and when discussing their responses to the interviews.
- **Timeliness:** As a rule, you are expected to arrive at or before the official beginning of the class period and stay until the end. However, please do not hesitate to come to class if you happen to be late. Excessive tardiness will impact your participation grade. I make every effort to end class promptly as I am aware that you have other time commitments; if I accidentally exceed the posted time please feel free to prompt me regarding the time.

**\*\*\*The student is hereby notified that information contained in this course syllabus and the reading and course schedule (other than the grade and absence policies) may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate by the instructor.**