

University of British Columbia
Sociology 382, Section 002
Sociological Methods: Qualitative Research

Term I: September – December 2013

Class Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays
2:00 – 3:20pm

Class Location: AnSo 134

Instructor: Professor Wendy D. Roth

E-mail: wendy.roth@ubc.ca

Office: ANSO 3115

Office phone: 822-4845

Office hours: Tuesdays 3:30-4:30pm
or by appointment

Prerequisites: Sociology 100 (6) or its equivalent

Course Description: This course is designed to provide students with an overview of qualitative methodological approaches to sociological inquiry. It will focus on four common research methods: interview-based research, ethnography/participant observation, focus groups, and case studies. Special emphasis will be placed on the first two methods, which are most commonly used in qualitative research. For each of these methods, readings and class exercises will address: 1) What is it and what is it used for? 2) How do you do it? And 3) What are examples of research that uses it? In this course, you will gain hands-on research experience by conducting an in-depth interview. You will learn methods of analysis and practice analyzing the interview data you have collected. Finally, you will learn how to design a rigorous qualitative study and to write a research proposal.

Course Objectives: After completing the course, you should be able to:

- 1) Describe the uses of qualitative work for generating and testing hypotheses;
- 2) Explain which research methods are most appropriate for different types of research questions;
- 3) Evaluate the quality of the data and the appropriateness of the research design in sociological studies you read;
- 4) Assess the ethical responsibilities of qualitative researchers, who have closer contact with research subjects than most survey researchers;
- 5) Conduct in-depth interviews and develop coding schemes to analyze qualitative data;
- 6) Design your own research projects using qualitative methodology.

Required Texts: These texts are available at the UBC Bookstore and are on reserve in Koerner Library.

Berg, Bruce L. 1998. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 6th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Weiss, Robert S. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: The Free Press.

+ 1 book assigned for Book Discussion group presentations (see below)

All other required readings will be available on the course website (www.connect.ubc.ca) and on reserve at Koerner library.

If you would like to use the electronic readings, print or download them all at the beginning of the term. These readings have been made available on the website for your convenience, but technical problems should never prevent you from doing the readings!

Required Equipment: You will need either a digital recorder or a cassette recorder and two 90-minute cassettes. If you use a cassette recorder, standard-sized cassettes are *strongly* recommended. iPhones and MP3 players are fine as long as you can save the recordings in .wav or .mp3 format and send them as e-mail attachments. A limited number of recorders may be borrowed from Arts Audio Visual. Please see me well in advance of the assignment deadline if you would like to borrow equipment for this assignment.

ASSIGNMENTS

Due Dates and Evaluation:

- **Aboriginal Research and Reconciliation Assignment** (3-5 pages) (15%)
Due September 26
- **Book Discussion Group Assignment** (15%)
Due dates specified below
- **Interview Assignment** (25%):
Due October 29

* You must hand in a certificate of completion of online Human Subjects training on Tuesday, September 24 to complete the interview assignment (or you will receive a zero). If you have already completed the TCPS2 tutorial, you may give me your certificate and do not need to take it again.

- **Final Research Proposal** (12-15 pages) (35%)
Due December 6
- **Class Participation** (10%)
See below

Aboriginal Research and Reconciliation Assignment: UBC will be cancelling classes on Wednesday, September 18, 2013 to allow students to attend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada National Event at the PNE. All students in the class are expected to attend the event, focusing on the testimony of survivors' experiences in the Indian Residential Schools. This assignment asks you to compare some of the issues raised at the event with ongoing issues of ethics in research involving Aboriginal peoples in Canada, and to reflect sociologically on what you observed at the national event. The details of the assignment are provided at the end of the syllabus.

Book Discussion Group Presentations: The course will be divided into discussion groups of approximately 4 people. A member of each group will be assigned one of the following four books which adopt the different methodologies we will cover in this class. The designated group member should read the entire book, give an oral presentation on the book to his or her discussion group (about 20 minutes), and hand out to group members a short reflective summary of the book. Further information about the summary is available at the end of the syllabus. An electronic copy of the summary should be uploaded before class to TurnItIn.com (see below) and a hard copy should be handed in to me at the beginning of class.

Please write down the names and contact information for your group members below. If for any reason you miss class or have questions about the course, please contact your group members first.

Interview-Based Research – October 10

Roth, Wendy D. 2012. *Race Migrations: Latinos and the Cultural Transformation of Race*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Ethnography and Participant Observation – October 22

Hanser, Amy. 2008. *Service Encounters: Class, Gender, and the Market for Social Distinction in Urban China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Focus Groups – November 7

Childs, Erica Chito. 2005. *Navigating Interracial Borders: Black-White Couples and their Social Worlds*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Case Study – November 14

Newman, Katherine S., Cybelle Fox, David Harding, Jal Mehta and Wendy Roth. 2004. *Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shootings*. New York: Basic Books.

Name: _____

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Interview Assignment: You will gain hands-on interviewing experience by conducting an in-depth interview of an international student at UBC, as part of the ongoing International Student Study. You should identify an international student who is eligible for the interview, conduct an interview following an interview guide created for the class, and transcribe the interview. Eligible students are those who are not Canadian citizens, who plan to get a degree from UBC (i.e. are not visiting students), who did not attend all their high school or secondary school in Canada, and who have not previously participated in an interview for this study. The interview guides, forms, and various instructions will be available on the course website. The class on September 24 will be devoted to discussing this assignment (don't miss it!).

By October 29, you should complete and transcribe the interview (using the transcription format guidelines on the website); e-mail any digital files to me at wendy.roth@ubc.ca or upload and send them to me using www.sendspace.com (or hand in cassettes); e-mail me an electronic copy of the transcript; and hand in all interview forms.

Final Research Proposal: The final project for the class is a 12-15 page proposal for a qualitative research study that you have designed. It can focus on any topic of sociological interest and can use whatever qualitative research methodologies you think are most appropriate for answering your research questions. Further details about the proposal are provided at the end of the syllabus.

Class Participation: You should complete all readings in advance of the class for which they are assigned, and attend class prepared to discuss the readings. This is a very hands-on class, not the kind of lecture where you just sit back and listen. It is my hope that you will learn new ideas and perspectives from your classmates, and that is only possible when everyone contributes.

You are responsible for all material presented in class (including announcements). If you are unable to attend class on a given day, you should obtain notes from a classmate on material covered and any class announcements that may have been made.

The class participation component of your grade will be based on your attendance, preparation, and participation. It is particularly important that you attend class when Book Discussion Groups are meeting, out of respect for the student making the presentation. In addition, this course will have several in-class exercises. These exercises do not require special advance preparation other than doing the assigned readings. Your active participation during these exercises will be reflected in your class participation grade.

COURSE POLICIES

E-mail Addresses: All e-mails to students will be sent out through the Faculty Service Centre. This uses whatever e-mail address you gave to the university. It is your responsibility to make sure that this address is current and that you actively check it or forward it to another account. You are responsible for checking this e-mail account regularly, including the evening before class.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism occurs when one person presents as one's own the words or ideas of another. This includes quoting sources, paraphrasing, or summarizing source material without indicating through the use of proper citation methods that the specific material in question was quoted, paraphrased, or summarized from a given source. Plagiarism of any form, even unintentional, will not be tolerated.

Many students think they know all about plagiarism and are not in danger of committing it. Surprisingly, most of the students I have found committing plagiarism have said exactly this. For this reason, I recommend that every student take UBC's online tutorial in Academic Integrity and Plagiarism. This is available online at: <http://help.library.ubc.ca/planning-your-research/academic-integrity-plagiarism/>

Sources: In writing the Final Research Proposal, you should rely primarily on published academic sources. Some academic sources such as peer-reviewed journals and e-Books may be accessed online through the library website. All online sources used should be peer-reviewed, or provided on government websites (such as StatisticsCanada). You should not use Google, Yahoo, MSN or other search engines to find sources for assignments. Under no circumstances should Wikipedia or similar articles be used as sources of analysis or factual information.

In preparing the Book Discussion Group Summaries, you may not use external sources. Your summary should display your own thoughts and reflections on the book.

TurnItIn.com: To deter and detect plagiarism, this course will make use of UBC's subscription to TurnItIn.com. This is a service that checks textual material for originality. **In addition to submitting a hard copy in class, you will be required to upload your Aboriginal Research & Reconciliation Assignment, your Discussion Group Presentation Summary, and your Final Research Proposal electronically to TurnItIn.com by the due date.** By taking this course, you agree that your papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to TurnItIn.com. All submitted papers will be included as source documents in the TurnItIn.com reference database solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the TurnItIn.com service are described on the TurnItIn.com website.

* To access the course on TurnItIn.com, you will need this information – Class ID: **6878321**; Class Name: **SOCI 382-002, Fall 2013**; Enrolment Password: **snowballing**

* UBC asks that you do not use your real name in your TurnItIn.com account. However, to allow me to identify who you are, for this class you should create an account that consists of the first three letters of your last name followed by the first three letters of your first name (EX: RotWen).

Lateness and Extensions Policy: Unless otherwise stated, hard copies of all assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class on the due date. Those which must also be submitted to TurnItIn.com must be uploaded *before* the beginning of class (2:00pm) on the due date. **Assignments which are late in either of these ways will be penalized 5 points per day (out of 100), including weekends. Handing one in on time but not the other does not**

avoid the lateness penalty. Lateness will not be excused without a valid written reason (e.g. doctor's note, letter of consideration/standing deferred from Arts Advising).

Similarly, extensions will not be granted without a valid written reason from a doctor or from Arts Advising. This is to ensure that all students are evaluated equally and none are given advantages not offered to the rest of the class.

Late assignments should be time stamped and dropped in the dropbox outside the sociology department mailroom. Please do not slide late papers under my door.

Use of Laptops & Electronic Devices: I know that it is very hard to resist the urge to check your e-mail, text, or surf the web in class. You may think that your other professors and I don't notice when you are doing these things, but we do. They are often very distracting, and can sometimes be very rude. At times they even distract other students. And believe it or not, studies show that they negatively affect your retention of information and your class performance. **Please do not use your laptop for anything other than taking notes and activities related to class.** If you use your laptop for other purposes, I may ask you to put it away, ask you not to bring it to class any more, or...even worse...I may call on you!

No other electronic devices will be allowed in class. Please turn off all cellular phones before the start of each class.

Returned Assignments and Marks: I will do my very best to return all assignments to you quickly. In some cases, however, it may not be possible to return assignments until all students in the class have submitted the assignment. This may cause return delays for the whole class when some papers are handed in late.

Aside from computational or other minor errors on my part, all marks assigned are final. I will not discuss assignments in the first 24 hours after they are returned so that students can spend that time reflecting on the comments.

Early Alert: During the term, I will do my best to reach out and offer support if I am concerned about your academic performance or wellbeing. I also encourage you to come and speak with me if you need assistance. In addition, I may identify my concerns using Early Alert. The program allows academic, financial, or mental health concerns to be identified sooner and responded to in a more coordinated way. This provides you with the earliest possible connection to resources like academic advising, financial advising, counselling, or other resources and support to help you get back on track. The information is treated confidentially and is sent because I care about your academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit earlyalert.ubc.ca.

Conservation Policy: In order to conserve paper, I encourage you to print assignments on both sides of the page or to use paper that has already been used on one side. What is printed on the opposite side will not affect the evaluation of the assignment.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1:

Sept. 5: *Introduction to Class*

No reading assignment.

Week 2:

Sept. 10: *Comparing Qualitative and Quantitative Research*

Bryman, Alan and James J. Teevan. 2005. *Social Research Methods*, Canadian edition. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press. "The Nature of Qualitative Research," Pp. 144-163.

Sept. 12: *Choosing a Topic, a Question, and a Research Design*

Berg, "Designing Qualitative Research," Pp.19-27, 34-49.

Week 3:

Sept. 17: *Ethics in Qualitative Research*

Berg, "Ethical Issues," Pp.53-82.

Sept. 19: *Ethics in Qualitative Research: Assessing the Issues*

Weiss, "Confidentiality Dilemmas," pp.131-134.

Allen, Charlotte. 1997. "Spies Like Us: When Sociologists Deceive their Subjects." *Lingua Franca* 7(9): 31-39.

Week 4:

Sept. 24: *International Student Study*

Berg, "A Dramaturgical Look at Interviewing," Pp.89-92, 114-133

***ASSIGNMENT DUE:** Complete the Tutorial for the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2) Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans . Hand in hard copy of certificate of tutorial completion at the beginning of class.

Tutorial available at: <http://www.ethics.gc.ca/eng/education/tutorial-didacticiel/> This tutorial should take about two hours to complete. You can save your work and come back to it later if necessary. If you

have previously completed the TCPS2 tutorial, you may give me your certificate and do not need to take it again.

Sept. 26: *Interview-Based Research: What Is It?*

Weiss, "Introduction" and "Respondents: Choosing Them and Recruiting Them," Pp.1-33.

***ASSIGNMENT DUE: Aboriginal Research & Reconciliation Assignment. Hand in at the beginning of class & upload to TurnItIn.com.**

Week 5:

Oct. 1: *Interview-Based Research: How Do You Do It? – Conducting Interviews*

Lofland, John, David A. Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. 2006. 4th edition. *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing. "Data Logging in Intensive Interviewing: Guides and Write-Ups," pp. 99-108.

Weiss, "Issues in Interviewing," pp.136-150.

Oct. 3: *Interview-Based Research: How Do You Do It? – Developing & Practicing Skills*

Weiss, "Interviewing," pp.61-119.

Week 6:

Oct. 8: *Interview-Based Research: How Do You Do It? – Designing a Study*

Roth, Wendy D. 2013. *Race Migrations: Latinos and the Cultural Transformation of Race*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Pp.203-219: "Appendix: Notes on Methodology"

Oct. 10: *Interview-Based Research: Examples*

** Recommended for Book Group presenters; required for everyone else:*

Roth, Wendy D. 2010. "Racial Mismatch: The Divergence Between Form and Function in Data for Monitoring Racial Discrimination of Hispanics." *Social Science Quarterly* 91(5): 1288-1311.

Book Discussion Group Presentations:

Roth, Wendy D. 2013. *Race Migrations: Latinos and the Cultural Transformation of Race*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Week 7:**Oct. 15:** *Ethnography/Participant Observation: What Is It?*

Whyte, William Foote. 1984. *Learning from the Field: A Guide from Experience*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. "Participant Observation: Rationale and Roles," pp.23-33.

Berg, "Ethnographic Field Strategies," Pp.171-179.

Oct. 17: *Ethnography/Participant Observation: How Do You Do It?*

Berg, "Ethnographic Field Strategies," Pp.184-186, 192-215.

***Guest presentation from Prof. Amy Hanser (UBC Sociology)**

Week 8:**Oct. 22:** *Ethnography/Participant Observation: Examples*

** Recommended for Book Group presenters; required for everyone else:*
Geertz, Clifford. 1973. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York: Basic Books. "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," pp.412-453.

Book Discussion Group Presentations:

Hanser, Amy. 2008. *Service Encounters: Class, Gender, and the Market for Social Distinction in Urban China*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Oct. 24: *Ethnography/Participant Observation: Stories from the Field*

Whyte, William Foote. 1984. *Learning from the Field: A Guide from Experience*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications. "Observational Methods," pp.83-96.

Week 9:**Oct. 29:** *Interviewing Reflections*

No reading assignment.

***ASSIGNMENT DUE: Interview Assignment. Bring 1 hard copy of transcript, tapes (if any), and all interview forms to class. E-mail electronic copy of transcript and digital audio files to wendy.roth@ubc.ca (or send them using www.sendspace.com) before start of class.**

Oct. 31: *Writing Research Proposals and Reports*

Silverman, David. 2005. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. "Writing a Research Proposal," pp. 139-145.

Weiss, "Writing the Report," pp.189-204.

Week 10:**Nov. 5: *Focus Groups: What Are They and How Do You Do Them?***

Berg, "Focus Group Interviewing," pp.144-167.

Nov. 7: *Focus Groups: Examples*

* *Recommended for Book Group presenters; required for everyone else:*

Shively, JoEllen. 1992. "Cowboys and Indians: Perceptions of Western Films Among American Indians and Anglos." *American Sociological Review* 57:725-734.

Book Discussion Group Presentations:

Chito Childs, Erica. 2005. *Navigating Interracial Borders: Black-White Couples and their Social Worlds*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.

Week 11:**Nov. 12: *Case Study Research: What Is It and How Do You Do It?***

Berg, "Case Studies," pp.283-300.

Nov. 14: *Case Study Research: Examples*

* *Recommended for Book Group presenters; required for everyone else:*

Harding, David, Jal Mehta and Katherine Newman. 2003. "No Exit: Mental Illness, Marginality, and School Violence in West Paducah, Kentucky." Pp. 132-162 in *Deadly Lessons: Understanding Lethal School Violence*, edited by Mark H. Moore, Carol V. Petrie, Anthony A. Braga, and Brenda L. McLaughlin. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press.

Book Discussion Group Presentations:

Newman, Katherine S., Cybelle Fox, David Harding, Jal Mehta and Wendy Roth. 2004. *Rampage: The Social Roots of School Shootings*. New York: Basic Books.

Week 12:**Nov. 19:** *Analyzing Qualitative Data*

Babbie, Earl. 2001. *The Practice of Social Research*, 9th ed. Toronto: Wadsworth Thomson Learning. Chapter 13: “Qualitative Data Analysis,” pp. 358-381.

Nov. 21 *Coding Data*

Miles, Matthew B. and A. Michael Huberman. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. “Codes and Coding,” pp.55-69.

Week 13:**Nov. 26:** *Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*

Neuman, W. Lawrence and Karen Robson. 2009. *Basics of Social Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Canadian edition. Toronto: Pearson Education. “Mixing Quantitative and Qualitative Methods,” pp.351-370.

Nov. 28: **NO CLASS**

Use this time to work on your final research proposals.

***Final Research Proposals are due by Friday, December 6, 2013. Upload electronic copy to TurnItIn.com before 3pm and put hard copy in the drop box outside the Anthropology and Sociology main office by 3pm. You must time stamp your paper before dropping it in the box.**

Aboriginal Research and Reconciliation Assignment

For this assignment, you should:

- a. Read the following excerpts from TCPS2 Chapter 9 on Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples of Canada: from the beginning through section 9.8 and sections 9.12-9.17. This is available at: <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/chapter9-chapitre9/>
- b. Attend the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada National Event Hearings at the PNE on Wednesday, September 18 (all UBC classes are cancelled that day so that you can attend)
- c. Answer the following questions in approximately 3-5 pages (double spaced, 12pt Times New Roman font, 1 inch margins):
 1. What are the central ethical concerns for research involving Aboriginal peoples in Canada? How do they differ from general ethical concerns as they apply to qualitative research for all people in Canada?
 2. What similarities do you see between the ethical considerations that guide the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Hearings and the ethical considerations in research involving Aboriginal peoples? What are some central differences?
 3. What similarities are there between public testimonies and qualitative data (e.g. qualitative interviews)? What are some key differences?
 4. From a sociological perspective, what is the most interesting or surprising thing you learned from attending the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Hearing?
 5. What observations did you make of the people attending the event, their behaviour, their interactions? If you were to do a participant observation exercise at a hearing such as this, what might you focus on?

Book Discussion Group Summaries

The group member assigned to a particular book should hand out to group members a short reflective summary of the book (2 pages maximum, single spaced, Times New Roman 12pt font, 1 inch margins).

The summary should specify:

- 1) the research question or purpose;
 - 2) the author's argument;
 - 3) the research design and methodology (e.g., the populations studied, locations, type of samples, how samples were obtained, etc.);
 - 4) the findings; and
 - 5) your reflections on the work – for example the appropriateness of the methodology to the research question, whether other methods would have been suitable or appropriate, the benefits or shortcomings of the work or methods.
- Your summary can be either in paragraph form or can make use of outlines and bullet points. However, regardless of the form you use, you should write in complete sentences. It should be clear exactly what you mean just from reading the handout (i.e., don't just treat this as an outline for your oral presentation).
 - Don't use too many direct quotes! It's usually better to explain the material and put it into your own words to show you understand it than to just cite it verbatim.
 - Although you need to provide page numbers for direct quotes, you don't need to use citations to the book too frequently. For this type of summary, it's clear that the material is coming from the book.
 - Grammar and spelling does matter!
 - Avoid use of the passive voice. It's always important to specify who is the actor in each sentence. This is particularly important when you provide your own reflections on the book. Make it clear when it's your own criticism. Don't be afraid to take a stand if there's something you disagree with.

An electronic copy of the summary should be uploaded before class to TurnItIn.com and a hard copy should be handed in to Prof. Roth at the beginning of class.

Your oral presentation to your group (~20 minutes) can be based on this summary but should go into more detail. Develop some discussion questions for your group members. Part of your role is to guide the conversation and keep it going.

Final Research Proposal Assignment

The final project for the class is a proposal for a qualitative research study that you have designed. It can focus on any topic of sociological interest and can use whatever qualitative research methodologies you think are most appropriate for answering your research questions.

The proposal should be approximately 12-15 pages, double spaced, in Times New Roman 12pt font, with 1 inch margins.

Below is a description of the types of issues that your paper should cover. While this list is not meant to be exhaustive or to limit you, these are important topics that you should address.

Short overview of research topic (about 1-2 pages)

- Statement of research question
- Statement of hypotheses as appropriate (or why you don't have hypotheses)
- Brief overview of research methodology you will use to address your question
- Discussion of the expected significance of your research, or justification of why your research question is important or interesting

Literature Review (about 4-5 pages)

- Review at least 5 sources relevant to your research topic. These should not be readings assigned for the class. You may, however, cite course readings to justify why you chose the research design or methodology you selected.
- Illustrate your knowledge of existing research
- Demonstrate where gaps exist in the literature that justify your research

Research Design (about 4-5 pages)

- Describe in detail and justify what method you will use
- In very practical terms, how will you sample or collect your data?
- A non-exhaustive list of issues you should cover:
 - o How large will your sample be?
 - o What characteristics will you sample on?
 - o If you compare different groups, why did you select those groups?
 - o If you focus on a geographic region, why did you choose that region?
 - o What support will you seek in achieving your goals (e.g. gatekeepers, institutional affiliations or permission)
- Overview of types questions you will ask/themes you will examine
- How do you plan to analyze your data?

Ethical Issues (about 1-2 pages)

- Describe how your research procedures will be consistent with the expectations of a Human Subjects review board.
- How will you ensure confidentiality? How will you obtain informed consent? How will the data be maintained and who will have access to it?
- Discuss any issues that might raise ethical concerns
- What kinds of ethical issues may arise from your research?

- Why are any risks you're taking justified?

Bibliography of sources you refer to in your literature review or anywhere else in your proposal

Appendix 1: List of Interview Questions or Potential Research Themes/Codes

Appendix 2: Consent form (for projects involving human subjects)

Assessment

Assessment of the final paper project will be divided as follows (based also on the issues noted above):

Overall presentation (18 points): grammar, spelling, organization, clarity and appropriateness of writing style, formal bibliography, coherence, referencing. Use of evidence to back up your assertions.

Overview (14 points): Formulation of research question, description of research project & clear, focussed articulation of your interest in the subject area; time frame, geographical location, scope. Value of research topic to the literature and to sociological knowledge.

Literature review (18 points): Location of your research project in relevant literature (at least 5 secondary sources from outside class readings); thorough and analytical discussion of secondary sources; identification of gaps or weaknesses in literature; discussion of how your proposal is informed by, differs from, and seeks to extend this literature.

Research Design (24 points): Discussion of research methods you will use and why they are appropriate; presentation of primary research methods for gathering data; detailed description of design (e.g. samples, scope, locations, methods of recruiting participants, topics to be covered, analytical approach); any comparisons you plan to draw; discussion of how research methods will help you address your research goals, questions, hypotheses, etc.

Ethical Issues (12 points): Description of the steps that will be taken to protect the rights and interests of human subjects; discussion of ethical issues that may arise during research and how you will address them; display familiarity with the requirements of human subjects review committees; justification of research procedures from an ethics standpoint.

Appendices (14 points): Inclusion of detailed appendices as appropriate for the project being proposed.