

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**  
**Department of Sociology**

**Sociology 382 (Section 005)**  
**Sociological Methods: Qualitative Research**  
Winter 2015, Term 1

**Instructor: Debra Pentecost, Ph.D**

**Office:** ANSO 156

**Office hours:** Wednesdays, 12:00 – 1:30 pm (or by appointment)

**Office phone:** 604-822-5625 (no voicemail)

**Email:** Debra.Pentecost@ubc.ca

**Lectures:** Mondays and Wednesdays, 2:00 – 3:30 pm

**Location:** LSK 460

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed to provide students with a basic understanding of qualitative methodological approaches to sociological inquiry. We will begin the course with an exploration of the ethics of social research, consider the importance of reflexivity, and explore key approaches to qualitative research employed by sociologists. For each of the methods reviewed, we will review: 1) the method itself and examine when it is used; 2) how to do the method; and 3) examples of research utilizing the method in question.

Students will gain hands-on research experience by conducting an in-depth interview. In addition, students will learn methods of analysis and practice analyzing the interview data they have collected. Students will also learn how to design a qualitative study and to write a research proposal.

The course is organized around the tasks and related decisions that researchers face at each stage of a systematic research programme. These include: identifying a topic and formulating research questions; considering ethical issues of research with human subjects; writing good field notes; generating data through observation, unstructured interviews, focus group discussions, oral histories and varied textual and visual qualitative research methods; and management and analysis of qualitative data.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course is designed to enhance your capacity to:

- Identify research topics that are suitable for qualitative research and transforming these topics into productive research questions;
- Carry out ethically sound research with human subjects, particularly on topics that are sensitive and emotionally-laden;
- Generate observational data;
- Conduct open-ended interviews and facilitate group discussions;
- Organize and analyze interview transcripts
- Assess published qualitative research

## ORGANIZATION

The course will be organized as a combination of lectures, class exercises, and class discussions. Attendance is an essential component of the course. Therefore, students are expected to read all assigned readings and to come to class prepared to *actively* participate both in the large lecture format and in small groups. Lectures will introduce material to provide context for, or supplement, required reading material. Group activities, such as discussions and problem solving, will reinforce and assess understanding of both required reading and lecture material.

## REQUIRED READING

In order to try and keep costs to a minimum, only one textbook has been assigned. This text is supplemented by required readings that can be downloaded from Connect. The **required** textbook is available at the UBC Bookstore.

Berg, Bruce L. and Howard Lune. 2012. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 8<sup>th</sup> ed. Boston: Pearson.

## COURSE EVALUATION

- Midterm exam 25% (Week 6, Wed, Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>)
- In-Depth Interview Assignment
  - Interview Guide 5% (Week 7, Wed, Oct 21<sup>st</sup>)
  - Transcribe Interview 30% (Week 12, Wed, Nov 25<sup>th</sup>)  
+ Thematic Analysis
- Take Home Final Exam 30% (Distributed Wed, Dec 2<sup>nd</sup>)  
**Due:** Mon, Dec 14<sup>th</sup>, 4:00 pm
- Class Attendance/Participation 10%
  - **Lecture Log:** (Optional) Comprised of journal entries where you write down comments/questions that arise for you during our class time. Many students will not be avid contributors to class discussion and the lecture log is a place to keep track of your responses to the course content. Please note: the lecture log **is not** comprised of your lecture notes.

## COURSE POLICIES

### Attendance:

Following UBC regulations, regular attendance is expected of students. Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructor on return to classes.

- The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre.
- The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and exams.
- Please let Debra Pentecost know in advance, preferably in the first two weeks of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds.

- Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume that they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

### **Graded Work:**

Students should **retain a copy of all submitted assignments** (in case of loss) and should also **retain all their marked assignments** in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. Students have the right to view their marked final exams with their instructor, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades. This review is for pedagogic purposes. The exam remains the property of the university and will not be returned to the student.

### **Late Assignments / Deferred Exam Policy**

Hard copies of assignments must be handed in, in class, at the **BEGINNING** of the scheduled class on the due date. A **2% penalty** will be applied if an assignment is submitted after the lecture, through to midnight of that first day.

There will be a **3% penalty per day** for late assignments – unless there is a valid emergency or health reason for the delay. As detailed below, verification of this will be required.

If you are going to be absent on the date an assignment is due, you must have someone deliver your work to the Sociology Department at UBC prior to the beginning of class. The paper/assignment **must** be date-stamped and deposited in the **student paper drop-off box** located outside of the General Office in the ANSO building.

**Please DO NOT slide assignments under my office door.**

### **Missed exams**

You are expected to attend all exams at the appropriate time and date unless there is a valid emergency or health reason for not doing so. You should always phone if you are unable to attend an exam. If you are unable to get a hold of Dr. Debra Pentecost in her office, please contact by email. You will be expected to provide written, formal proof of the problem you experienced (e.g.: doctor's note, service station bills, towage fees, obituaries etc.). In all cases, it is your responsibility to contact Dr. Pentecost **PRIOR TO** the scheduled exam, unless an emergency precludes this, and arrangements will be made for a make-up exam.

If medical, emotional or personal problems affect your attendance or academic performance, please contact the faculty of **Arts Academic Advising** Office, Buchanan D111, phone (604) 822-4028.

### **Early Alert:**

In addition to the services provided by Arts Academic Advising, the university has launched a website, "**Early Alert**," designed to aid students who are facing difficulties. During the term I will do my best to reach out and offer support if I am concerned about your academic performance or wellbeing. You are also encouraged to speak with me should you need assistance.

Faculty may identify concerns that we have about students 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 will provide students with the earliest possible connection to resources like

academic advising, financial advising, counseling, or other resources and support to help you get back on track.

The information will be treated confidentially and would be sent because faculty care about student academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit [www.earlyalert.ubc.ca](http://www.earlyalert.ubc.ca).

### **Respectful Learning Environments**

We will work to maintain the highest standards of respect inside of the SOCI 382 classroom. This includes respect towards each other, towards me, and extending from me to each of you.

I am here to support your academic learning and welcome opportunities outside of official class time for students to review course material. This support can take place during official office hours or by appointment. Email is generally not a good place to discuss substantive questions or engage in debates concerning course material.

### **Use of Laptops & Electronic Devices**

Carrying on with our discussion of respectful learning environments, much has been discussed about the distracting and disruptive potentials of cell phones and laptops in the classroom. Recognizing that it can be very hard to resist checking email, viewing posts, texting, or surfing the web in class, **please refrain from doing so**. Professors do know when students are not paying attention and are engaged elsewhere. Such use is also distracting for your fellow students and this is not respectful of their learning space. **Please do not use your laptop for anything other than taking notes and activities related to class**. Please also refrain from using any handheld devices during class and remember to put these devices on silent mode and keep them out of sight for the duration of the class.

### **Academic Dishonesty - Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the use of another author's research, ideas or language without proper attribution. There are many ways to do plagiarism. Plagiarism is a serious form of academic misconduct. Please review the UBC Calendar "Academic regulations" for the university policy of cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty.

For detailed information, visit the UBC Library Plagiarism Resource Centre or the Faculty of Arts Academic Integrity website. <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism>

## **COURSE SCHEDULE & REQUIRED READINGS**

I will assume that students have read the assigned readings *before* class meetings, and lectures and class activities will aim to amplify (rather than simply repeat) what is covered in these readings.

Dates indicated below may be adjusted. If so, changes will be announced in class.

### **Weeks:**

### **Course Content**

1) Sept 9

Introduction to Course

2) Sept. 14/16

What is qualitative research?

Comparing Qualitative and Quantitative Research

- Readings:
- Berg & Lune: Chapter 1
- 3) Sept 21/23      Ethics in Qualitative Research  
Readings:
- Berg & Lune: Chapter 3
- 4) Sept 28/30      Designing Qualitative Research  
Conceptual Frameworks + Research Questions  
Readings:
- Berg & Lune: Chapter 2
- 5) Oct 5/7      In-Depth Interviewing  
Readings:
- Berg & Lune: Chapter 4
  - Lofland, John, David A. Snow, Leon Anderson, and Lyn H. Lofland. 2006. 4<sup>th</sup> 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) (located on UBC Connect website)
- 6) Oct 12      **Class Cancelled – Thanksgiving Holiday**
- Wed, Oct. 14<sup>th</sup>      \*\*\* **Midterm Exam** \*\*\* (in class)
- 7) Oct 19      What is already known? Online Searches
- Wed, Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>      Getting Ready for Fieldwork  
Readings:
- Maxwell, Joseph. 2013. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Los Angeles: Sage. "Methods: What Will You Actually Do?" (pp. 87-120) (located on UBC Connect website)
- 8) Oct 26/28      Observing Social Life Through Field Research:  
Ethnography / Participant Observation  
Readings:
- Berg & Lune: Chapter 6
  - Whyte, William Foote. 1993. "Revisiting Street Corner Society." *Sociological Forum* 8, 2: 285-98. (located on UBC Connect website)
- 9) Nov 2      Focus Group Interviewing  
Readings:
- Berg & Lune: Chapter 5
- Wed, Nov. 4      Social Historical Research and Oral Traditions  
Readings:
- Berg & Lune: Chapter 9

- 10) Nov 9                    Action Research  
Readings:  
• Berg & Lune: Chapter 7
- Wed, Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>            **\*\*\* Class Cancelled – Remembrance Day \*\*\***
- 11) Nov 16/18            Textual & Visual as Qualitative Data  
Readings:  
• Warren, Carol & Tracy Karner. 2015. *Discovering Qualitative Methods: Ethnography, Interviews, Documents, and Images*. New York: Oxford University Press. “The textual and the visual as qualitative data.” (pp. 169-207) (located on UBC Connect website)
- 12) Nov 23/25            Data Analysis  
Readings:  
• Glesne, Corrine. 2016. 5<sup>th</sup> edition. *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*. Boston: Pearson. “Finding Your Story: Data Analysis.” (pp. 183-217) (located on UBC Connect website)
- 13) Nov 30/Dec 2        What Kind of Story Can I Tell With My Data?  
Readings:  
• Berg & Lune: Chapter 12

**\*\* TAKE HOME FINAL EXAM DISTRIBUTED IN FINAL CLASS \*\***