

**QUAL 8520: Interviewing Research
(formerly ERSH 8520)
College of Education
University of Georgia**

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Class times: Monday-Friday
2.00-4.45 pm
Room 319 Aderhold

Course Description

This course examines interviewing in educational research: the conceptual frameworks that inform it, the approaches associated with various disciplines and schools of inquiry, the forms and structures that it takes, the criteria developed to assess it, and its practice across a variety of situations. Topics include interviews and research designs, relationships between interviewers and respondents, kinds of respondents and their selection, interview contexts, content, and structures, recording, analyzing, and reporting interview data, ethical issues in interviewing, evaluating interview studies, and theories of and research on interviewing methods. Prerequisite: QUAL 8410 or POD

Course Objectives

As a learner in this course you will investigate methodological possibilities and various ways of dealing with procedural, philosophical, analytical and ethical issues related to undertaking qualitative interview projects.

Specifically, you will:

1. Reflect on your own presuppositions and subjectivities in regard to the educational research processes.
2. Participate in an interview project that includes both individual in-depth interviews and moderation of a focus group.
3. Discuss different theoretical frameworks informing the use of interviews and articulate the theoretical framework informing your own research.
4. Analyze ethical dilemmas in qualitative interview research.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of issues related to differing participant populations (race, social class, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation, etc.)
6. Recognize, develop and demonstrate high quality interview skills in different interview formats.
7. Understand the transcription process as theory and be able to construct transcriptions of interview data.

8. Understand data analysis/interpretation procedures for making meaning of interview data.

Required Texts and Materials

Barbour, R., S., & Kitzinger, J. (Eds.). (1999). *Developing focus group research: Politics, theory, and practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Briggs, C. (1986). *Learning how to ask: A sociolinguistic appraisal of the role of the interview in social science research*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J., F. (1995). *The active interview*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Morgan, D. L. (1996). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. (2nd ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Additional readings are available in course reserves in GIL.

You may access Electronic Reserve items, through the Course Reserve module in GIL (<http://gil.uga.edu>).

The password to access E-Reserves documents for this course is **interview**.

A tape recorder that uses standard or micro-sized audiocassettes.

- An external microphone will ensure higher quality recordings
- Digital recorders are acceptable (submit audio-recordings on CD)
- One (1) audiocassette
- One (1) videocassette (digital or VHS)

Recommended texts

Publication manual of the American Psychological Association (2001). (5th ed.). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Gubrium, J., & Holstein, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Handbook of interview research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Course Policies and Procedures

Discussion List

The discussion list in WebCT will be used for posting messages for the duration of the class. Please check this daily. You may post comments, questions or references which may be of interest to others to the list.

Email

If you need to get in touch with me, send messages via the email facility in WebCT. I will check this daily. For urgent messages, call me at (706) 542 4060.

Accommodations for Qualified Individuals with Disabilities

It is the policy of The University of Georgia to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and desire accommodations to complete your course requirements, please notify the course instructor as soon as possible to discuss your request.

Free and Open Exchange of Ideas: Classroom Climate

As a graduate student at The University of Georgia, the free discourse of ideas should be expected. I believe the open exchange of ideas is necessary for learning. I have opinions, and will express those. You are free to express either agreement or disagreement without fear of consequences. This does not mean of course, that I may not challenge your views or disagree with them. But it does mean that you will experience no consequences for disagreeing with me. If you feel that I am violating this commitment, please arrange an appointment to discuss the issue.

Please be sensitive not to unfairly dominate class discussions by talking too much or talking too loudly. The goal is to create a psychologically safe space in which everyone feels that they can participate in the discussion. This does not mean people cannot disagree. This does not mean people cannot have emotions connected to their words. What it does mean is that we all need to be sensitive, appreciative, and respectful, no matter how strongly we might disagree.

Academic Honesty

The University of Georgia seeks to promote and ensure academic honesty and personal integrity among students and other members of the University community. A policy on academic honesty has been developed to serve these goals. Academic honesty is defined broadly and simply -- the performance of all academic work without cheating, lying, stealing, or receiving assistance from any other person or using any source of information not appropriately authorized or attributed. Where suspected violations of the academic honesty policy occur, appropriate procedures are designed to protect the academic process and integrity while ensuring due process. The academic honesty system is an academic process, not a court of law.

All students are responsible for maintaining the highest standards of honesty and integrity in every phase of their academic careers. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe and ignorance is not an acceptable defense. *“All academic work must meet the standards contained in “A Culture of Honesty.” Each student is responsible to inform themselves [sic] about those standards before performing any academic work”* (from page 1, Course Syllabus Policy, Academic Affairs Policy Statement Number 13, University of Georgia).

Further Information

http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/culture_honesty.htm

Course Expectations

I will engage in lectures, demonstrations, discussions, small group activities, use of audio and videotape, and various participatory experiences.

Expectations and evaluation of learners:

1. I expect regular attendance and will take excessive absences (missing more than 6 hours of a 3-credit course) into account in the final course grade. Your participation in class discussions and course activities is essential. If you have a conflict with a session due to prior commitments, please see me privately (so as not to use our limited class time with individual scheduling concerns).
2. Please be prompt to class.
3. Have assignments completed on time. Points will be deducted from late assignments: 1 point per day.
4. I expect you to come to class prepared and to contribute to class discussions and activities. Frequent lack of preparation or failure to contribute will also be taken into account in the final course grade.

Note: *“The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary”* (from page 1, Course Syllabus Policy, Academic Affairs Policy Statement Number 13, University of Georgia).

Class activities and projects

You will be reading about, conducting, and analyzing interviews. By the end of the course, I expect to see a substantial growth in both your knowledge and skill in the theory, methodology, and method of qualitative interviewing.

Research project

You have the option of engaging in interviews for

- (1) an authentic project for which IRB approval has been received;
- (2) your own research project, for which you have already obtained IRB approval; or
- (3) a research study you propose for the purpose of fulfilling the course requirements.

1. An authentic project

This is a qualitative evaluation study for a client group at the Student Learning Center at UGA, “Student and staff perceptions of the learning environment at the UGA Students Learning Center.” This qualitative study of student staff perceptions of the SLC seeks to provide information students’ and staff’s experiences of and perspectives of the Student Learning Center as an environment for learning.

Class members involved in this project will meet with the clients from the Student Learning Center to provide a preliminary report of what they have found in interviews.

Class projects that will contribute to this study will include conducting two (2) individual interviews; and participation in the facilitation of one (1) focus group. All interviews are expected to be of one hour's duration.

Individual interviews will be arranged for Week 2: May 23-27.

Focus groups will be arranged for Week 3: May 30-June 3.

The interviews for the authentic project will be conducted outside class time and you will each transcribe one individual interview. For the second interview – you will provide a list of topic areas covered in the interview that provides a guide to responses. Depending on the number of volunteers recruited for this project, the focus groups for the authentic project may be conducted as a group project, with group members participating in different roles (moderator; observer; recorder). The group will be responsible for a partial transcription of the focus group. As a class group, we will conduct preliminary analysis, and meet with clients from the SLC to provide feedback.

2. Individual research project

If you have an active IRB application, you may prefer to work on your own research project. You will need to submit a copy of your current IRB authorization to the instructor. This will entail conducting two (2) individual interviews of one hour's duration with participants in your study. Interviews conducted prior to the class are not permitted for this course. If you are using focus groups in your study, you will need to facilitate a one-hour face-to-face focus group during the course. If you are not using focus groups for your individual research project, you may audio-record a “mock” focus group of one hour's duration and submit this for assessment purposes.

You will submit the transcription of one individual interview, in addition to a list of topic areas covered in the 2nd interview that provides a guide to responses. You will submit a partial transcription of one focus group.

3. Research project for class

You may design a research proposal for the purposes of this class (due May 19); that includes two individual interviews and one focus group, all of one hour's duration. Your research study should meet the following requirements:

- 1. NO MINORS:** The project cannot include minors or any other vulnerable populations like pregnant women, prisoners, those who lack the capacity to consent, non-English speaking individuals, etc.
- 2. NO MORE THAN MINIMAL RISK:** "Minimal risk" is the probability and magnitude of harm that is normally encountered in the daily lives of healthy individuals. This also precludes the study of any illegal activities.
- 3. NO DECEPTION:** The project cannot include any deception. Individuals must be fully informed and given the opportunity to voluntarily consent to participation.
- 4. NO PUBLICATION:** You may not use data from the study for publication or for thesis/dissertation research.
- 5. NO VIDEOTAPING:** Audiotaping is allowed if the recording is erased upon transcription or no later than the end of the semester.

A consent form should be included with your application as specified by the IRB.

<http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso/Sample.leic.doc>

In your research proposal, include the following items:

Title of study

Problem abstract (rationale; research questions; significance of study)

Research design and methods (sampling; selection and recruitment; procedures; interview guide)

Consent form

You will submit the transcription of one individual interview, in addition to a list of topic areas covered in the 2nd interview that provides a guide to responses. You will submit a partial transcription of one focus group.

You may not use data generated from this project for publication purposes.

Other activities

In preparation for engaging in this research project, you will undertake a number of class projects that will develop your skills. These projects include an audio-taped bracketing interview to assist you in getting a better understanding of your own subjectivities, and a videotaped focus group interview conducted during class time.

Bracketing interview

You will conduct a 15-20 minute bracketing interview with a class member centering on the interviewee's research interests. This will be audio-recorded. After listening to the audio-taped of the interview, present a 5-6 page statement including

1. a summary of the content of the interviewee's reflections;
2. suggestions to the interviewee about issues and/or readings to do with their topic that they might consider further; and
3. a reflection (1 page) on your skills as an interviewer.

Provide one copy of sections 1 and 2 of your report to your interviewee, and one copy of all sections to the instructor.

Videotaped practice focus group

You will conduct a 30-minute focus group on a topic of your choice in class time. This will be videotaped. After viewing the video of the focus group interaction, present a 4 page statement including

1. a summary of the content of the focus group interaction; and
2. a self critique of your skills as a moderator. Issues to consider include:
 - what kind of interactions were generated? (eg. did participants express their opinions? were exchanges conversational?)
 - what challenges did you face? (eg. did you have individuals who were dominant speakers/non-participants?)
 - what were your responses as a moderator?
 - what did you do well?
 - what would you change in future focus groups?

Readings

Each class member will be responsible for posting two readings summaries to the discussion list on WebCT. Sign up lists will be available at the beginning of the course. These should be posted on the day the reading is set for class, be 200-250 words in length, and summarize the key points in the article or chapter you have read. Include the full reference in your posting. Complete the posting by posing a question concerning the reading that might be taken up further by other class members via the discussion list. By the end of the course, these readings summaries will constitute an annotated bibliography that the whole class will have access to. Your participation in on-line discussion of readings will be taken into account in the “participation” grade.

Evaluation

All students are required to complete the following written assignments with the final grade based on the distribution indicated below:

Project	Due Date	Points Possible
Research proposal (individual projects)	5/19	Not graded
Readings Summaries	Intermittent	10
Bracketing Interview Summary	5/23	10
Individual Interview Project one full transcription one topic list	5/31	20
Practice Focus Group Summary	6/3	10 (not transcribed)
Focus Group Project	7/3	20 (partial transcription)
Report of preliminary findings Oral presentation + 2-page summary	7/3	10
Final Reflection	7/3	10
Attendance/Participation	N/A	10
Total Points		100

Letter grades will be determined as follows:

90 - 100 points = A

80 - 89 points = B

70 - 79 points = C

Evaluation criteria:

Written assignments should show:

Understanding and use of the relevant readings

A critical engagement with the ideas presented

Clear organization and structure, fluent and accurate writing.
APA formatting

Course Schedule and Topical Outline

Week one

Tuesday May 17 Introduction to course and research interviewing

Theoretical frameworks and research design for interview studies
Overview of research approaches

Consideration in designing interview studies

Kinds of respondents
Recording interview data

Wednesday May 18 Orientation to authentic research project

Tour of the Student Learning Center for students participating in evaluation project

Meet at 2.00 pm at the SLC, 1st floor, by the Grand Staircase

Tour: Ms. Carolyn Cason, Student Learning Center

Please familiarize yourself with the following SLC websites prior to this visit:

http://www.slc.uga.edu/press/slc_rockeagle.ppt

<http://www.slc.uga.edu/>

Whole class: meet at 3.15 pm in Aderhold

Holstein & Gubrium, Chs. 1-3

Briggs, Introduction and Chapter 1, 2, and 3, pp. 1-60

Thursday May 19 Bracketing interviews and subjectivities

Briggs, Chapter 4, 5, 6, pp. 61-125

Holstein & Gubrium, Chs. 4-6

Review

Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity: One's Own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(7), 17-22.

Individual research proposals due (where applicable)

Friday May 20 In-depth Phenomenological Interviews/Individual Interview Practice

Seidman, I. (1998). *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. (2nd ed.). New York: Teachers College Press. Chapter 2, pp. 9 – 21; Chapter 7, pp. 72 – 84

Review

DeMarrais, K. (2004). Qualitative interview studies: Learning through experience. In K. DeMarrais & S. D. Lapan (Eds.), *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences* (pp. 51-68). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Week two

Monday May 23 Feminist Interviewing

Reinharz, S. (1992). Feminist Interview Research, pp. 18 - 45

Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms. In H. Roberts (Ed.), *Doing feminist research* (pp. 30-61). London: Routledge.

Wilkinson, S. (1999). Ch. 5. How useful are focus groups in feminist research? In Barbour & Kitzinger

Bracketing interview summary due

Tuesday May 24 Ethnographic interviewing/Considering transcription

Heyl, B. S. (2001). Ethnographic interviewing. In P. Atkinson & A. Coffey & S. Delamont & J. Lofland & L. Lofland (Eds.), *Handbook of ethnography* (pp. 369-383). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Poland, B. D. (2002). Transcription quality. In N. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of interview research: Context and method* (pp. 629-650). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Wednesday May 25 Focus Group Interview Design

Demonstration focus group

Morgan, Chapters 1-7, pp. 1-74

Thursday May 26 Focus Group Interviewing

Barbour & Kitzinger: Chapters 1-3

Focus group interviews conducted in class

Friday May 27 Focus Group Interviewing

Barbour & Kitzinger: Chapters 4, 6, 7

Week three

Monday May 30 Memorial Day Holiday

Tuesday May 31 Focus Group Interviewing

Barbour & Kitzinger: Chapters 8, 9, 11

Individual interview project due

Wednesday June 1 Focus Group Interviewing

Barbour & Kitzinger: Chapters 10, 12, 13

Thursday June 2 Theoretical perspectives of interviewing & data analysis

- Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review*, 28(1), 13-33.
- Rapley, T. J. (2001). The art(fulness) of open-ended interviewing: Some considerations on analysing interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 1(3), 303-323.
- Roulston, K., Baker, C., & Liljestrom, A. (2001) Analyzing the interviewer's work in the generation of research data: The case of complaints. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6), 745-772.
- Analyzing interview data: emic and etic coding; taxonomies; domains and structures; meanings; componential analysis; themes and patterns

Friday June 3 Writing it up

- Richardson, L. (1995). Narrative and sociology. In J. Van Maanen (Ed.). *Representation in ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 198-221.

Samples from "interview studies"

Practice focus group summary due

Monday June 6 Considering interview studies & learning to interview

- Atkinson, P., & Silverman, D. (1997). Kundera's *Immortality*: The interview society and the invention of the self. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(3), 304-325.5
- Roulston, K., deMarrais, K. & Lewis, J. (2003). Learning to interview in the social sciences. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(4), 643-668.

Tuesday June 7 - Presentation of preliminary findings

Report of preliminary findings

Focus Group Project Due (partial transcription required)

Final reflections due

Additional References on Interviewing

- Brenner, M., Brown, J. & Anters, D. C. (Eds.). (1985). *The research interview: Uses and approaches*. New York: Academic Press.
- Carin, A. & Sund, R. B. (1978). *Creative questioning and sensitive listening techniques: A self-concept approach*. Second edition. Columbus, Ohio: Merrill.
- Dilley, P. (2000). Conducting successful interviews: Tips for intrepid research. *Theory into Practice*, 39(3), 131-137.
- Douglas, J. D. (1985). *Creative interviewing*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.
- Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J., F. (1995). *The active interview* (Vol. 37). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2000). *Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Litoselliti, L. (2003). *Using focus groups in research*. London: Continuum.
- McCracken, G. (1988). *The long interview*. Beverley Hill, CA: Sage.
- Mishler, E. G. (1986). *Research interviewing: Context and narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Morgan, D. L. (Ed.). (1993). *Successful focus groups: Advancing the state of the art*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Morgan, D. L., & Krueger, R. A. (1998) *The focus group kit*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Moustakas, C. (1994). *Phenomenological research methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Puchta, C., & Potter, J. (2004). *Focus group practice*. London: Sage.
- Puchta, C., & Potter, J. (1999). Asking elaborate questions: Focus groups and the management of spontaneity. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 3, 314-335.
- Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Scheurich, J. J. (1995). A postmodernist critique of research interviewing. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 8(3), 239-252.
- Smithson, J. (2000). Using and analysing focus groups: Limitations and possibilities. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 3(2), 103-119.
- Spradley, J. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.
- Sudman, S. & Bradburn, N. M. (1989). *Asking questions: A practical guide to questions of design*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc.
- Thompson, C. J., W. B. Locander, H. R. Pollio. (September, 1989). Putting consumer experience back into consumer research: The philosophy and method of existential-phenomenology. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16, 133-146.
- Vaughn, S., Schumm, J.S., & Singagub, J. (1996). *Focus group interviews in education and psychology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Whyte, W. (1984). Interviewing strategy and tactics/recording, indexing and evaluating interview data. *Learning from the Field*, 97-127.
- Wilkinson, S. (1998). Focus group methodology: A review. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 1(3), 181-203.