

Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods
EDUC 1100
Spring 2020
Tuesdays 4-6:20 pm

Professor Hilary Levey Friedman

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Office Hours: Mondays 1-3 pm at 164 Angell Street (above Brown Bookstore), 2nd floor flex space

Quantitative data can tell us many things, like what people think or do. But it cannot tell us about processes: that is qualitative data's strength. In talking with people, or observing them, we can start to discover how and why people and institutions are the way that they are. This is very important in the field of education when so much is focused on numeric outcomes, and where the human element can sometimes feel overlooked. However, qualitative research is about more than one story; it is about telling many stories through systematic research design and analysis. In this course (designed for sophomores or juniors concentrating in education studies, but also open to other undergraduates interested in qualitative research methods), we will work together to design qualitative research projects, focusing on elements of good research, analysis, and writing.

***Enrollment limited to 20.*

Course Outline

January 28th - Introductory Meeting: How is Qualitative Research Different from Journalism? (Week 1)

February 4th - Identifying Research Topics and Questions (Week 2)

- Deterding, Nicole M. and Mary C. Waters. 2018. "Flexible Coding of In-depth Interviews: A Twenty-first-century Approach." *Sociological Methods & Research*. Pg. 1-32.
- Levey, Hilary. 2009. "Pageant Princesses and Math Whizzes." *Childhood*. 16(2): 195-212.

February 11th - Picking a Fieldsite (Week 3)

- Humphreys, Laud. 1975. "Chapter 1: Public Settings for 'Private' Encounters" and "Chapter 2: Methods: The Sociologist as Voyeur." Pages 1-44 in *Tearoom Trade: Impersonal sex in public places*. Hawthorne, NY: Aldine de Gruyter.
- Seidman, Irving. 2019. "Chapter 4: Establishing Access to, Making Contact with, and Selecting Participants." Pg. 45-61 in *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. New York: Teachers College Press.

February 25th - Skill Focus: Showing the People (Week 4)

- Liebow, Elliot. 1993. "Preface: A Soft Beginning" and "Introduction: The Women, the Shelters, and the Round of Life." Pages vii-21 in *Tell Them Who I Am: The Lives of Homeless Women*. New York: Penguin.
- Weiss, Robert S. 1994. "Chapter 4: Interviewing." Pg. 61-120 in *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press.

→ Human Subjects session

March 3- Skill Focus: Describing a Setting (Week 5)

- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. "Chapter 1: Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research." Pg. 1-20 in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Klinenberg, Eric. 2002. "Prologue: The Urban Inferno" and "Introduction: The City of Extremes." Pg. 1-36 in *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago.

March 10- Skill Focus: Using Quotations (Week 6)

- Erikson, Kai T. 1976. "Individual Trauma: State of Shock" and "Collective Trauma: Loss of Community." Pg. 156-245 in *Everything In Its Path: Destruction of Community in the Buffalo Creek Flood*. New York: Touchstone.
- Newman, Katherine S. 1999. "Chapter Three: Getting a Job in the Inner City." Pg. 62-85 in *No Shame In My Game: The Working Poor in the Inner City*. New York: Vintage.

March 17- Skill Focus: Depicting (and Explaining) Variation (Week 7)

- Small, Mario Luis and Jessica Feldman. 2012. "Ethnographic Evidence, Heterogeneity, and Neighbourhood Effects After Moving to Opportunity." Pg. 57-78 in *Neighbourhood Effects Research: New Perspectives*. Edited by Maarten van Ham, et al. Springer.
- MacLeod, Jay. 2008. Chapters 3-6 (pg. 25-112) in *Ain't No Makin' It: Aspirations and Attainment in a Low-Income Neighborhood*. Routledge (This book is in OCRA)

→Library session, learning about qualitative software

[This week begins focus of assignments on students' topics of their own choosing]

March 31- Skill Focus: Dialoguing with Literature and Theory (Week 8)

- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 2011. "Chapter 6: Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Memoing." Pg. 171-200 in *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Hochschild, Arlie. 1997. "Chapter 5: The Family Myth of the Traditional: Frank and Carmen Delacorte." Pg. 59-74 in *The Second Shift*. New York: Bard.
- Moore, Mignon R. 2008. "Gendered Power Relations among Women: A Study of Household Decision Making in Black, Lesbian Stepfamilies." *American Sociological Review*. 73(2): 335-56.

April 7- Skill Focus: Being Reflexive (Week 9)

- Levey Friedman, Hilary. 2013. "Appendix: Questioning Kids: Experiences from Fieldwork and Interviews." In *Playing to Win: Raising Children in a Competitive Culture*. Berkeley, CA: University of California. (This book is in OCRA)
- Reich, Jennifer A. December 2015. "Old methods and new technologies: Social media and shifts in power in qualitative research." *Ethnography*. 16(4): 394-415.

April 14- Skill Focus: Grappling with Generalizability (Week 10)

- Lareau, Annette. 2011. Chapters 3 and 4 in *Unequal Childhoods: Class, Race, and Family Life*. Berkeley, California: University of California. (This book is in OCRA)

- Stack, Carol. 1974. "Chapter 5: Child-Keeping: 'Gimme a Little Sugar.'" Pg. 62-89 in *All Our Kin*. New York: Basic.

April 21- Workshopping Paper Drafts (Week 11)

April 28- Skill Focus: Connecting Micro and Macro (Week 12)

- Kanter, Rosabeth Moss. "Chapter 7: Power." Pg. 164-205 in *Men and Women of the Corporation*. New York: Basic.
- Small, Mario Luis. 2011. "How to Conduct a Mixed Methods Study: Recent Trends in a Rapidly Growing Literature." *Annual Reviews in Sociology*. 37: 57-86.

May 5- Final Presentations (Week 13)

COURSE ORGANIZATION AND REQUIREMENTS

In addition to class time each week (2.5 hours), most weeks you should anticipate spending at least 8 hours to prepare for seminar (between readings and assignments). You should anticipate spending approximately 40 hours on the second writing assignment (doing research, analyzing, and writing, and meeting individually with me). Actual times will vary for each student; final grades are not determined by the amount of time a student spends on the course.

Course requirements consist of the following:

1. **WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS.** For eight weeks students will complete short assignments that will account for 40% of the final grade. These reflections should be submitted no later than 4 pm the day before class (Mondays) via Canvas. For the first half of the course the entire class will complete similar assignments (like observing in a coffee shop or grocery store, or interviewing students who attended a sporting event), and in the second half of the course weekly assignments will be geared toward students' final papers.
2. **FINAL PAPER.** This paper, of 15-18 pages, will be due **MAY 3** and will require that each student select a question related to education (broadly defined) that can be answered qualitatively. Original research will be expected—whatever is best suited to the topic so that could mean interviews or participant observation—along with synthesis of some secondary materials. During the final class period on **MAY 5**, each student will be required to present a brief (5 minute) summary of her or his paper. This paper assignment will count for 40% of the final grade.
3. **ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN DISCUSSIONS.** Because this is a seminar course, success depends on the interaction of students with each other. This means that each week, students need to come to class prepared to discuss issues raised in the readings and engage with one another; sitting attentively and silently absorbing what is being discussed is not sufficient. Therefore, attendance at weekly seminar meetings is necessary, and participation in discussions will count for 20% of the final grade. A student who misses more than two seminar meetings will not be able to pass the course. There will be no make-ups, including for athletic or other extracurricular absences. If

you miss a class you need to submit a 5-page discussion of the week's readings/documentaries before 5 pm the Friday after the missed class.

Due dates for assignments are firm. No exceptions or extensions will be granted without official letter from Dean or medical professional. Papers submitted late will be penalized. Any late paper will be marked down half a letter grade for each 12-hour period it is late (or portion thereof). If a paper is submitted more than five days late, without official excuse, it will be considered an F.

The evaluation of your papers will consider several elements. A strong paper will contain the following:

- a clear and specific **argument** that is developed over the course of the paper
- support for that argument based on **evidence** from primary and secondary sources
- a well-organized **structure**
- clear, accessible **writing**

Some additional requirements for the paper:

- Include a bibliography of all cited materials at the end of your essay. The bibliography should follow a consistent style, e.g., Last, First. *Title*. Place: Publisher, date.
- Type your paper in standard fonts in 12 point, 1-inch margins, and double spacing.
- Number your pages.

It is important to distinguish between your own work and the work of others. You need to reference the sources you have consulted, whether directly quoting, paraphrasing, or otherwise drawing on a given source. Plagiarism is unacceptable. Any plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment and referral to a dean so that the situation can be dealt with according to Brown's established policies for academic conduct.

No curve is involved in this course. You will receive the grade that you earn. I do not offer extra-credit either during the course or after receiving your final grade. Because grade disputes can become emotional for everyone, I require that all questions and concerns you have about grading to be conducted in writing. Please email me within 72 hours of grades being posted with detailed questions about any issues you have about your grade and I will respond accordingly.

HUMAN BEING NOTES

I want you to do well in this course. To do that you must take care of your basic needs. Some college students experience difficulties affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day. Some of you may feel you lack a safe or stable place to live. You may also be balancing paid work, childcare, or other family obligations. If any of this applies to you please know you can reach out to me (if you feel comfortable), and I can help you access resources, or that you can reach out to your Dean and/or advisor. If you have concerns about the non-tuition cost(s) of a course at Brown you may apply to the Dean of the College's Academic Emergency Fund. The Fund can be found in the Emergency, Curricular & Co-curricular Gap (E-Gap) Funds in [UFunds](#). More information is available at: <http://brown.edu/go/egap>. Students may also submit inquiries to egap-funds@brown.edu.

Finally, please inform me early in the term if you have a disability or other conditions that might require accommodations or modification of any of these course procedures. You may speak with me

after class or during office hours. For more information, please contact [*Student and Employee Accessibility Services*](#) at 401-863-9588 or [*SEAS@brown.edu*](mailto:SEAS@brown.edu). Students in need of short-term academic advice or support can contact one of the deans in the Dean of the College's office.

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