Course and Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. Natalie Boero

Office Location: Sweeney Hall 438

Telephone: 408-924-5345

Email: natalie.boero@sjsu.edu or via Canvas

Office Hours:
Mondays: 9:00-11:00am, 5:00-6:00pm
Wednesdays: 7:30am-10:30am

Class Days/Time: Monday 6:00-8:45pm

Classroom: Sweeney Hall 311

Canvas and Course Email

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. You are responsible for regularly checking email and Canvas to learn of any updates.

Course Description

This seminar course is designed to provide upper-level sociology students with hands-on field research experience. We will focus exclusively on interviewing, which is the most widely used qualitative research method. A large portion of the course will be focused on collecting, analyzing, and writing up data generated from in-depth, semi-structured interviews. We will also read and evaluate qualitative research.

Required Texts/Readings


Other Readings

I will post additional readings on the course Canvas page in PDF format. They will always be posted at least a week before they are due. In the course schedule below, these readings are designated with a (PDF).

Course Requirements and Assignments

SJSU classes are designed such that in order to be successful, it is expected that students will spend a minimum of forty-five hours for each unit of credit (normally three hours per unit per week), including preparing for class, participating in course activities, completing assignments, and so on. More details about student workload can be found in University Policy S12-3 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-3.pdf.

NOTE that University policy F69-24 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf states that “Students should attend all meetings of their classes, not only because they are responsible for material discussed therein, but because active participation is frequently essential to insure maximum benefit for all members of the class. Attendance per se shall not be used as a criterion for grading.”

Classroom Protocol

I expect that you will have each week's readings completed by class on Monday of each week. I have tried to make the reading interesting and manageable so that we can all participate in active discussions. Please bring your readings to class each day so that we can refer to them in discussions.

Participation is important and it helps make discussions livelier as well as to clarify materials. Coming to class is important as I will be lecturing on materials not included in the readings.

If you cannot come to class, it is your responsibility to get notes from one of your peers. If you miss any handouts or are not in class the day I return an assignment or an exam, I will have them available for you to pick up during my office hours. When you are in class, I expect all cell phones and electronic devices to be turned off and put away. Students may use laptops in class, but, to avoid distracting other students I ask that students using laptops please sit in the back rows of the classroom.

Office Hours, email and Canvas

I encourage all of you to come by my office hours (listed above). Even if you don't have a specific question, office hours are a great chance for me to get to know you better and for you to give me feedback on the course. If you are having any problems that could impact your success in the course, come see me as soon as possible. It is much easier to deal with problems early on. Please note that I do not give incompletes except in the most extreme situations, and even then only if a student has already completed a majority of the work for the course.

I am also available by email at the address above or through the Canvas site. However, given the large number of students in my classes, I may take a day or two to respond to emails. It is also important that you check your email as well as the “news” section of Canvas for any course updates. I will email the class of any changes in the schedule. If you do email me, please include your name and the course number and section in the subject line.
Assignments and Grading Policy

Students will work in small groups with two or three other students. Every student in the group will conduct five in-depth interviews on a topic they have selected. Many students may choose to build off of the interview projects they started in another class or for a thesis project. Each student will transcribe their interviews and share them with the group to give and receive feedback. Together group members will work with each other to code and analyze data, write individual final papers, and offer support throughout the research and writing process.

Course Objective and Goals

1. Understand steps involved in planning and designing an in-depth qualitative research project based on interviewing.
2. Analyze and discuss examples of sociological research utilizing interviewing as a method.
3. Examine the various issues surrounding semi-structured interviewing such as: ethics, the relationship between the researcher and the people s/he studies, developing, trust and rapport, etc.
4. Gain hands-on experience with: selecting a topic worthy of qualitative investigation; developing an interview guide; conducting in-depth, semi-structured interviews; transcribing interview data; coding and analyzing interview transcripts.
5. Explore various ways in which qualitative data is analyzed, evaluated, presented, and disseminated.

Course Organization

Given that this is an advanced research methods course, one of the central objectives of the course is to teach you how to develop your interviewing and researching skills. Thus, while I will lecture on occasion, the majority of the course will be based on in-class activities and exercises, group work, and discussions.

The course will be run in seminar format, which means that everyone is expected to participate in all class discussions and in-class work. I expect each student to make the commitment to:

1. **Attend class regularly.** The bulk of each class period will be comprised of in-class activities, exercises and discussions; we will also spend some class time working on portions of class assignments. Thus, a large portion of the work in this course will take place in class. We will also at times design assignments, change assignments and make other important decisions as a class. If you miss class on a regular basis, not only are you depriving yourself of key learning experiences and important information, but you are depriving the rest of the class of your voice, experiences, and input. If you do miss a class, it is up to you to obtain any notes or information from someone else in the class, as I do not make my notes available to students.

2. **Complete the readings assigned for each day.** Engaged discussion of the readings cannot happen unless students read. There is not an excessive amount of reading in this course in order to help ensure that students have time to complete all readings. Please bring the readings to class so that you may refer to them when asked to do so.

3. **Participate in class discussions and activities and give full attention to the material.** I view our classroom as a collaborative learning environment where we all have something to learn from each other.
I understand that it is sometimes uncomfortable or even painful for some people to speak publicly. I will do my best to create an environment where people feel comfortable speaking. I ask you to help create a positive classroom atmosphere by refraining from sleeping, reading outside materials, repeatedly coming to class late and/or leaving early, having side conversations with classmates, using a cell phone, listening to headphones, etc. Engaging in rude or disruptive behaviors will result in a lowered participation grade at the end of the course and may lead to other disciplinary action(s).

4. **Complete assignments in a thoughtful and timely manner.** The activities and writing assignments for this course are designed to help you better learn and understand qualitative research methods. I encourage you to put the time and energy into your work that is necessary for you to produce something that you can be proud of. Further, turning assignments in on time ensures that I will have adequate time to evaluate your work and give you necessary feedback. (See below for late work policy).

5. **Keep in touch with me if you are struggling or having problems.** If you are having ongoing personal or academic problems impacting your success in the class, I request that you let me know as soon as possible. You cannot disappear for days or weeks and expect that you will be able to make up everything that you have missed. (You do not, however, need to let me know if you will miss one or two classes.) I do not give incompletes except for in the case of an extreme emergency, and even then a student must have completed at least 70% of the course work (according to University Policy).

The best way to reach me is via email, as I check my email every weekday. I will usually respond to all emails that require a response within 24 hours (excluding weekends). Please note that I do not answer my phone during office hours if I am meeting with another student.

By following these six principles you give yourself the best opportunity to both learn and succeed in this course.

**Course Learning Assessments**

1. **Proposal:** In the third week of the semester you will turn in a short research proposal in which you discuss your topic, and your plan for conducting your interviews.

2. **Group work:** In groups, students will discuss their topics, construct/peer-review interview guides an interview guide, give and get feedback on preliminary analysis of data. Each group will meet with the professor at least twice throughout the course.

3. **Literature review:** Each student will write a literature review using at least 7 peer-reviewed articles on their research topic.

4. **Individual Interviews:** Each student will conduct and transcribe 5, 1-2 hour long semi-structured interviews.

4. **Research paper:** Each student will write their own paper presenting the findings from their interview projects.
5. **Class Participation/Class Activities**: Class participation will be evaluated on the following:

   a. Participation in course discussions
   b. Successful completion of various in-class activities
   c. Successful completion of several out-of-class assignments that are part of the larger course projects.

Research proposal: 10%
Literature review: 15%
Individual interviews: 10%
Research paper: 25%
Reading Presentation: 10%
Class presentation: 15%
Class participation: 15%

Total: 100%

Final letter grades for the course will be assigned based on the following scale:

- A = 93 – 100%
- B = 83 – 86%
- C = 73 – 76%
- D = 63 – 68%
- A- = 90 – 92%
- B- = 80 – 82%
- C- = 70 – 72%
- D- = 60 – 62%
- B+ = 87 – 89%
- C+ = 77 – 79%
- D+ = 67 – 69%
- F = 59% or less

**University Policies**

**General Expectations, Rights and Responsibilities of the Student**

As members of the academic community, students accept both the rights and responsibilities incumbent upon all members of the institution. Students are encouraged to familiarize themselves with SJSU’s policies and practices pertaining to the procedures to follow if and when questions or concerns about a class arises. See [University Policy S90–5](http://www.sjsu.edu senate/docs/S90-5.pdf) at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S90-5.pdf. More detailed information on a variety of related topics is available in the [SJSU catalog](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/catalog/rec-12234.12506.html). In general, it is recommended that students begin by seeking clarification or discussing concerns with their instructor. If such conversation is not possible, or if it does not serve to address the issue, it is recommended that the student contact the Department Chair as a next step.

**Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drop, grade forgiveness, etc. Refer to the current semester’s [Catalog Policies](http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html) section at http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html. Add/drop deadlines can be found on the current
academic year calendars document on the Academic Calendars webpage at http://www.sjsu.edu/provost/services/academic_calendars/. The Late Drop Policy is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/policy/. Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for dropping classes.

Information about the latest changes and news is available at the Advising Hub at http://www.sjsu.edu/advising/.

Consent for Recording of Class and Public Sharing of Instructor Material

University Policy S12-7, http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S12-7.pdf, requires students to obtain instructor’s permission to record the course and the following items to be included in the syllabus:

- “Common courtesy and professional behavior dictate that you notify someone when you are recording him/her. You must obtain the instructor’s permission to make audio or video recordings in this class. Such permission allows the recordings to be used for your private, study purposes only. The recordings are the intellectual property of the instructor; you have not been given any rights to reproduce or distribute the material.”
  - It is suggested that the greensheet include the instructor's process for granting permission, whether in writing or orally and whether for the whole semester or on a class by class basis.
  - In classes where active participation of students or guests may be on the recording, permission of those students or guests should be obtained as well.
- “Course material developed by the instructor is the intellectual property of the instructor and cannot be shared publicly without his/her approval. You may not publicly share or upload instructor generated material for this course such as exam questions, lecture notes, or homework solutions without instructor consent.”

Academic integrity

Your commitment, as a student, to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University Academic Integrity Policy S07-2 at http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S07-2.pdf requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/.

Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 at http://www.sjsu.edu/president/docs/directives/PD_1997-03.pdf requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the Accessible Education Center (AEC) at http://www.sjsu.edu/aec to establish a record of their disability.

Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center at http://www.sjsu.edu/at/asc/ located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and in the Associated Students Lab on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of
audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include DV and HD digital camcorders; digital still cameras; video, slide and overhead projectors; DVD, CD, and audiotape players; sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

**SJSU Peer Connections**

Peer Connections, a campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring, strives to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. You are encouraged to take advantage of their services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals.

In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the Writing Skills Test (WST), improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. A computer lab and study space are also available for student use in Room 600 of Student Services Center (SSC).

Peer Connections is located in three locations: SSC, Room 600 (10th Street Garage on the corner of 10th and San Fernando Street), at the 1st floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. Visit [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) for more information.

**SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter). For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook. (Note: You need to have a QR Reader to scan this code.)

**SJSU Counseling Services**

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling).
**Sociology 205 / Seminar: Qualitative Research Methods, Fall 2016, Course Schedule**

* You will be notified in advance through Canvas of any changes made to the schedule

**Course Schedule**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>8/24</td>
<td>No Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>8/29</td>
<td><strong>Introduction: What is Qualitative Research?</strong>&lt;br&gt;Reading: Warren &amp; Karner Ch. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9/5</td>
<td><strong>NO CLASS MONDAY, 9/5</strong>&lt;br&gt;Warren and Karner Ch. 2 King and Horrocks Ch. 1 (pdf), Geertz, Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture” (pdf),</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9/12</td>
<td><strong>Why Use Interviews? Research Topics</strong>&lt;br&gt;Research Topics due via Canvas Friday, September 16th&lt;br&gt;Becker Ch. 1 &amp; 2, Warren and Karner Ch. 6 &amp; 7, Edin and Kefalas &quot;Promises I can Keep” (pdf)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>10/3</td>
<td><strong>Interview Guides/Group Meetings</strong>&lt;br&gt;Bring a draft interview guide to class&lt;br&gt;No reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>10/10</td>
<td><strong>Issues in Interviewing/Evaluating Qualitative Research</strong>&lt;br&gt;Luker: Chapters TBA,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>10/17</td>
<td><strong>Evaluating Qualitative Research</strong>&lt;br&gt;Luker: Chapters TBA, Borland, That’s Not What I Said’: Interpretive Conflict in Oral Interviews” (pdf).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10/24</td>
<td><strong>Data Analysis</strong>&lt;br&gt;Transcripts of Interviews 1 and 2 due in class, bring copies&lt;br&gt;Warren and Karner TBA, King and Horrocks, Ch. 9 (pdf). Coffee and Atkinson, “Concepts and Coding” (wp)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>10/31</td>
<td><strong>Data Analysis</strong>&lt;br&gt;Literature Reviews due via Canvas Friday, November 4th&lt;br&gt;Reading: Becker Ch. 4, TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>11/7</td>
<td><strong>Guest Speaker</strong>&lt;br&gt;Reading: TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>11/14</td>
<td><strong>Writing up Research</strong>&lt;br&gt;Reading: TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>11/21</td>
<td><strong>Group Meetings</strong>&lt;br&gt;No Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>11/28</td>
<td><strong>Presentations</strong>&lt;br&gt;No Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>12/5</td>
<td><strong>Presentations</strong>&lt;br&gt;No Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Final Exam</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>