COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the purposes, methods, and limitations of qualitative research.

MATERIALS

Books

- *Learning From Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies* by Weiss
- *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes (2nd Edition)* by Emerson et al.
- *How Professors Think: Inside the Curious World of Academic Judgment* by Lamont

Recording equipment

You will need to be able to record at least two interviews. Most students use their smartphone, tablet, or computer. You may also check out a recorder from Margaret in the main sociology office. There is no need to purchase new recording equipment for the course.

Software

Depending on student interest, we will use Dedoose to assist with analysis. Dedoose provides a free 30-day trial. If you need it longer than that, you will have to purchase a one-month subscription, which will cost about $10-12.

BRIEF ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

There are 200 points available to earn over the course of the semester. Half of the points are allotted to assignments that will help you prepare for the final paper. For that reason, they are graded on a pass/fail basis (see the Assignment Description document for details). The other half of the points are allotted to your final paper, which will be graded on quality—quality of design, execution, data, argumentation, and writing. If your commitment to the assignments is lackluster but you manage to squeak out passing
marks, then your score on the final paper will likely suffer, since the assignments are designed to help you develop a high-quality paper.

**Assignments – 100 pts (50%)**

There are 16 assignments that you will submit to me during the course. For a description of the assignments, see the handout titled “Assignment Descriptions.”

**Final Paper – 100 pts (50%)**

One way to think about the course is as a workshop that is oriented around the development of, and culminates in, a research paper that uses qualitative methods. As a research methods course, everything we do in class will be pointless if it doesn't translate into your ability to produce high quality research. For this reason, the final paper accounts for 50% of your grade. More details on what this paper should look like will be provided as the semester progresses.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

**Qualitative Research Epistemology**

Students will be able to explain the epistemological assumptions of qualitative research methods, how to select the appropriate qualitative research method to address a research question, and the criteria for evaluating qualitative research methods.

**Qualitative Research Methods: Design and Data Collection**

Students will be able to design and conduct an in-depth interview study, an oral history interview study, a focus group study, an ethnography, a qualitative content analysis study, a qualitative case study, and a mixed-method study.

**Qualitative Research Methods: Analysis**

Students will be able to code and interpret qualitative data. (This may include the use of qualitative data analysis software.)

**Writing and Representation of Qualitative Research**

Students will be able to write a qualitative methods and findings section, as for a qualitative research article.

**POLICIES**

**Online Priority**

I will try to make as few changes to the syllabus as possible. That said, it is possible that some modifications will be necessary. I will announce any changes and alter the online
content accordingly, but I will not reprint paper copies of the syllabus. Students should therefore give priority to the online official course documents over the printed documents distributed at the beginning of the semester.

Attendance

It is the responsibility of students who miss class to get lecture notes from someone who was in class. I do not provide my notes or slides to students, and I do not regard it as my responsibility to fill them in on what they missed.

Late work

Instructions for submitting assignments are on the syllabus or will be given in class. If there is a problem uploading/sending an assignment, then the you should notify me by phone or email before the start of class. Work received after the assignment has been collected, or after the due date and time has passed, is considered late. Work will be penalized that is submitted by hard copy when electronic copies are requested.

Technology

Turn off cell-phone ringers. Do not use cell-phones at all during class (i.e. no text-messaging, games, etc.). Laptops are permissible as long as students use them to take notes. I will revoke this allowance on a case-by-case basis if a student uses a laptop to play games, visit social media sites (Facebook, Google+, Twitter, etc.), check email, or carry on any activity that is not related to the class (or is in any way distracting to other students)—regardless whether he/she is also taking notes.

Grading Scale

A (93-100), A- (90-92.9), B+ (87-89.9), B (83-86.9), B- (80-82.9), C+ (77-79.9), C (73-76.9), C- (70-72.9), D+ (67-69.9), D (63-66.9), D- (60-62.9), F (59.9 or lower)

Classroom Behavior

I expect all class members to interact with their fellow students in a professional, respectful, and considerate manner.

Contesting Grades

Regardless of the assignment, all grade contestations must be made within 10 days of the grade being posted/distributed (regardless of when, if at all, the hard copy of the assignment, quiz, or exam is returned). After these 10 days, the grade is considered final and no changes to it can be made. If students want to contest a grade, they need to express their complaint(s) in writing. Send complaints in the form of an email to me.
Sexual Harassment

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 prohibits sex discrimination against any participant in an educational program or activity that receives federal funds. The act is intended to eliminate sex discrimination in education and pertains to admissions, academic and athletic programs, and university-sponsored activities. Title IX also prohibits sexual harassment of students by university employees, other students, and visitors to campus. If you encounter sexual harassment or gender-based discrimination, please talk to your professor or contact one of the following: the Title IX Coordinator at 801-422-2130; the Honor Code Office at 801-422-2847; the Equal Employment Office at 801-422-5895; or Ethics Point at http://www.ethicspoint.com, or 1-888-238-1062 (24-hours).

Student Disability

Brigham Young University is committed to providing a working and learning atmosphere that reasonably accommodates qualified persons with disabilities. If you have any disability which may impair your ability to complete this course successfully, please contact the University Accessibility Center (UAC), 2170 WSC or 422-2767. Reasonable academic accommodations are reviewed for all students who have qualified, documented disabilities. The UAC can also assess students for learning, attention, and emotional concerns. Services are coordinated with the student and instructor by the UAC. If you need assistance or if you feel you have been unlawfully discriminated against on the basis of disability, you may seek resolution through established grievance policy and procedures by contacting the Equal Employment Office at 422-5895, D-285 ASB.

Academic Honesty

The first injunction of the Honor Code is the call to “be honest.” Students come to the university not only to improve their minds, gain knowledge, and develop skills that will assist them in their life’s work, but also to build character. “President David O. McKay taught that character is the highest aim of education” (The Aims of a BYU Education, p.6). It is the purpose of the BYU Academic Honesty Policy to assist in fulfilling that aim. BYU students should seek to be totally honest in their dealings with others. They should complete their own work and be evaluated based upon that work. They should avoid academic dishonesty and misconduct in all its forms, including but not limited to plagiarism, fabrication or falsification, cheating, and other academic misconduct.

Plagiarism

Intentional plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft that violates widely recognized principles of academic integrity as well as the Honor Code. Such plagiarism may subject the student to appropriate disciplinary action administered through the university Honor Code Office, in addition to academic sanctions that may be applied by an instructor. Inadvertent plagiarism, which may not be a violation of the Honor Code, is nevertheless a form of intellectual carelessness that is unacceptable in the academic community. Plagiarism of any kind is completely contrary to the established practices of higher
education where all members of the university are expected to acknowledge the original intellectual work of others that is included in their own work. In some cases, plagiarism may also involve violations of copyright law. Intentional Plagiarism—Intentional plagiarism is the deliberate act of representing the words, ideas, or data of another as one's own without providing proper attribution to the author through quotation, reference, or footnote. Inadvertent Plagiarism—Inadvertent plagiarism involves the inappropriate, but non-deliberate, use of another's words, ideas, or data without proper attribution. Inadvertent plagiarism usually results from an ignorant failure to follow established rules for documenting sources or from simply not being sufficiently careful in research and writing. Although not a violation of the Honor Code, inadvertent plagiarism is a form of academic misconduct for which an instructor can impose appropriate academic sanctions. Students who are in doubt as to whether they are providing proper attribution have the responsibility to consult with their instructor and obtain guidance. Examples of plagiarism include: Direct Plagiarism—The verbatim copying of an original source without acknowledging the source. Paraphrased Plagiarism—The paraphrasing, without acknowledgement, of ideas from another that the reader might mistake for the author's own. Plagiarism Mosaic—The borrowing of words, ideas, or data from an original source and blending this original material with one's own without acknowledging the source. Insufficient Acknowledgement—The partial or incomplete attribution of words, ideas, or data from an original source. Plagiarism may occur with respect to unpublished as well as published material. Copying another student's work and submitting it as one's own individual work without proper attribution is a serious form of plagiarism.

Honor Code

In keeping with the principles of the BYU Honor Code, students are expected to be honest in all of their academic work. Academic honesty means, most fundamentally, that any work you present as your own must in fact be your own work and not that of another. Violations of this principle may result in a failing grade in the course and additional disciplinary action by the university. Students are also expected to adhere to the Dress and Grooming Standards. Adherence demonstrates respect for yourself and others and ensures an effective learning and working environment. It is the university's expectation, and my own expectation in class, that each student will abide by all Honor Code standards. Please call the Honor Code Office at 422-2847 if you have questions about those standards.