

**UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MILWAUKEE
HELEN BADER SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WELFARE,
DOCTORAL PROGRAM IN SOCIAL WORK**

**SocWrk 952
Qualitative Research Methods in Social Work**

Semester/Year: Fall 2008
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Course Description

This doctoral-level three-credit seminar serves as an introductory course in qualitative research methodologies. The major focus of the course will be to survey qualitative methods of inquiry, including research designs, specific data collection methods, and analytic and interpretive procedures. A major element of the course will be a field experience where students work on a guided qualitative research project

Social work as a discipline rests historically on four foci: the empowerment of vulnerable and oppressed populations, social justice, an ecological framework, and clients' perspectives. Social work and social work research, therefore, is complex. With divergent sets of domains and areas of practices, social work research struggles with achieving a clear identity. Not only must we develop theories, models, and descriptions of clients' situations in their complexities, but we also are enjoined to develop and evaluate programs and policies that are responsive to the defining characteristics of social work. Also, we must transform our knowledge of client situations and effective interventions into effective training and education of social workers. Qualitative research can be of particular value in accomplishing these tasks.

The ethical standards in the NASW Code of Ethics holds for social work research (See: www.socialworkers.org/pubs/code.htm). No research project can compromise the well-being of research participants.

Pre-requisites

Students enrolled in this course must have doctoral student standing or signed permission of the instructor.

Specific Course Goals and Objectives

The goals of the social work doctoral program include preparing students to make contributions to the profession as researchers, scholars, and educators. Toward this end, the objectives of this course are for students to demonstrate the following:

- Familiarity with qualitative research paradigms, their epistemologies and theories;
- Ability to discuss and critique the underlying assumptions of qualitative research;
- Understanding of different research designs and procedures used in qualitative research;
- Understanding of various qualitative data collection methods, including interviewing, participant observation, and document analysis;
- Familiarity with the unique contributions of qualitative research and the appropriate applications of qualitative methods to the study of practice, including the depth and flexibility of qualitative methods and the significance of context in understanding human meaning;
- Understanding of methods for analyzing, interpreting, and reporting results of qualitative research.
- Ability to conceptualize, design, and implement a qualitative research study.

Teaching Methods

The activities of this course will include lecture, class participation, in-class group exercises, guest lectures by qualitative researchers, and a field experience with qualitative research.

Course Requirements

Of the many approaches to qualitative research, the heaviest emphasis in this course will be given to case study designs and to interview-based research. Students will discuss the role of qualitative methods in social science research, how qualitative methods build theory, appropriate qualitative research designs, and reliability and validity in qualitative work. Then they will learn a variety of specific methods such as interviewing techniques, oral history, focus groups, and observation. Some class sessions will focus on procedures for analyzing materials gathered in these ways, including analysis of themes, models, and frameworks in interviews; narrative analysis; and content analysis. We will also address issues of rapport, logistics and ethics in qualitative field research. Students will practice data-gathering and analytical skills in a series of assignments. It is expected that students will uphold the highest standards of ethical research as they carry out their studies.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING POLICY

Assignments--40% of grade, (each assignment = 10%)

Assignment 1: Logic of inquiry assignment (see page 10)

Assignment 2: Transcript of interview (see pages 11-13)

Assignment 3: Analysis of interview (see page 14)

Assignment 4: Content Analysis (see page 15)

Final Project--60% of grade

A detailed research proposal (10 single spaced pages) is your final project. For the final assignment, all students will work on an “exploratory” qualitative field research project that provides hands on experience with collecting and analyzing qualitative research. Students must meet with the instructor during the second week of class to design the field study. The field experience includes designing an interview protocol, interviewing people in the field, analyzing and writing-up the data from the field experience. A proposal for funding will be developed from the exploratory qualitative research project. The final project is due at the end of the semester. Research Journals are to be submitted with the proposal. (see pages 16-18)

Students consistently completing the assignments at the expected graduate level will receive a final grade of A-. Students completing outstanding assignments will receive an A. Students generally completing assignments, but not consistently meeting graduate level standards, will receive a B.

Late assignments will not be accepted. No incompletes will be given without the verbal permission of the instructor. Attendance is required.

Texts/Required Reading Sources

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2008). *Strategies of qualitative inquiry*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Gluck, S. & Patai, D. (Eds.) (1991) *Women's words*. London: Routledge

Feagin, J., Orum, A. & Sjoberg, G. (1991) *A Case for the Case Study*

Richards, L. (2005). *Handling qualitative data: A practical guide*. London; Sage.

Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative methods for the human sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stanfield, J. H. II & Rutledge M. D. (1993). *Race and ethnicity in research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Reading Packet (See Appendix A)

Support Texts:

(If you think you may be doing a lot of qualitative research, these are books you may want to add to your personal library.)

Becker, H. (1998) *Tricks of the trade*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Beebe, J. (2001) *Rapid assessment process*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Creswell, J. H. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing from five traditions (2nd. Ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.) (2002). *The qualitative Inquiry reader*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications

Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Ely, M. (Ed.) (1997). *On writing qualitative research: Living by words*. Routledge Falmer.

King, G., R. Keohane, O. & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. (2006) *Designing qualitative research (4th ed.)*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miles, M. & Huberman, A. M. (1994) *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded source book (2nd ed.)*. Thousands Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shank, G. D. (2006). *Qualitative research: A personal skills approach, 2nd Ed*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Van Maanen, J. (1988). *Tales of the field*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Windance Twine, F. and J. W. Warren. (2000) *Racing research, researching race: Methodological dilemmas in critical race studies*. New York: New York University Press.

University Policies

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has developed policies related to a variety of areas that are pertinent to the success of a students' academic career. The Secretary of the University Web site (<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/SecU/SyllabusLinks.pdf>) describes the following University policies on:

- Students with disabilities
- Religious observances

- Students called to active military duty
- Incompletes:
- Discriminatory conduct:
- Academic Misconduct:
- Complaint procedures:
- Grade Appeal procedures:

Course Overview

Part I. Research Design

week 1 Introduction to Course. A Brief History of Qualitative Research.

Course organization and requirements. How qualitative methods fit into contemporary debates over epistemology and methodology. Differences between qualitative and quantitative research. Varieties of qualitative research.

week 2 Research Design in Qualitative Research.

What kinds of questions can qualitative research best answer? How does qualitative research build theory? How can qualitative and quantitative approaches or “a mixed-methods approach” complement one another? What constitute reliability and validity in qualitative research? Triangulation of methods and sources.

Readings:

Denzin & Lincoln, *Strategies of qualitative research*, Chapters 1-3 & 10

Mills, excerpt from “The Sociological Imagination” (reader, 1)

Bertaux, “The Life-History Approach to the Transformation of Sociological Practice.” (reader, 2)

Ragin, “The Goals of Social Research” (reader, 3)

Gilgun and Abrams, “The nature and usefulness of qualitative social work research” (reader, 4)

Padgett, D.K. , “Does the glove really fit? Qualitative research and clinical social work practice.” (reader, 5)

Methods excerpts:

Beneria and Roldán, *The Crossroads of Class and Gender* (reader, 6)

Tiano, *Patriarchy on the Line* (reader, 7)

Nelson and Smith, *Working Hard and Making Do* (reader, 8)

Non-graded Assignment: Observe in a public place for a total of 30 minutes. This public place can be a mall, a coffee shop, a bus stop or any other place where you do not know the identities of the persons in the setting. Write both descriptive and reflective fieldnotes as discussed in class. Diagram the setting. Type up your fieldnotes and be prepared to discuss them in class 2

week 3 Logic of Inquiry: Case Studies.

An introduction to the case study. Issues of generalizability and relation to theory.

Readings:

Feagin et al., introduction and chapters 1-4, 7, 8 and conclusion.

Methods excerpts:

Thomas, *Citizenship, Gender and Work* (reader, 9)

Collins, *Threads*, (reader, 10)

week 4 Logic of Inquiry: Deductive Approaches..

A variety of theory-driven approaches.

Readings:

Burawoy, "Extended Case Method" (reader, 11)

Walton, "Making the Theoretical Case" (reader, 12)

Ragin, "Case-Oriented Comparative Methods" (reader, 13)

Marcus, "Ethnography In/Of the World System" (reader, 14)

week 5 Logic of Inquiry: Inductive Approaches

Building theory "from the ground up" in qualitative research.

Readings:

Straus and Corbin, Basics of Qualitative Research

Methods excerpt:

Glazer, *Women's Paid and Unpaid Labor* (reader, 15)

week 6 Ethics and Logistics of Research

Problems of establishing oneself in a field setting, rapport, relations to individuals and institutions, ethics.

Note: Each class member will need to complete the on-line training in human subjects research available through the UWM Graduate School web page by this date

<http://www.uwm.edu/Dept/EHSRM/IRB/tutorial/index.html>

Readings:

“The Belmont Report” (reader, 16)

“Guidelines for Human Subjects Research” (reader, 17)

Portelli, chs. 2 and 4

Iuhiwai, “Imperialism, History, Writing and Theory” (reader 18)

Macleod, “On the Making of ‘Ain’t No Makin’ It” (reader, 19)

Methods excerpt:

Milkman, *Farewell to the Factory* (reader, 20)

Logic of Inquiry Assignment DUE

Part II. Methods and Analysis

***week 7* Conducting Interviews**

The interview as a social setting and interactive process. How the interviewer's behavior affects results. How to formulate questions. Kinds of questions. Recording devices and conventions.

Readings:

Anderson and Jack, "Learning to Listen" in Gluck and Patai

Briggs, "Listen Before You Leap" (reader, 21)

Spradley, "Interviewing an Informant," "Descriptive Questions" (reader, 22 & 23)

Portelli, ch. 5

Methods excerpt:

Edin and Lein, *Making Ends Meet* (reader, 24)

Begin Interview Assignment. Turn in Research Proposal Topic

***week 8* Analyzing Interviews for Cultural Models**

Analyzing content and form of interview. Narrative structure. Key themes. Logical structure. Cultural models. The said and the unsaid.

Readings:

Anderson, “Studying Across Differences...” in Stanfield and Dennis

Borland, "That's Not What I Said" in Gluck and Patai

Chanfrault-Duchet, "Narrative Structures..." in Gluck and Patai

Etter-Lewis, "Black Women's Life Stories" in Gluck and Patai

Stevens, “Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird” (reader, 25)

Methods excerpt:

Cockburn, *Brothers* (reader, 26)

Interview Transcript DUE. In-class discussion of interviews.

week 9 Analyzing Interviews for History and Process

Analyzing linked chains of events in order to create interpretations of social process for case study research or comparative analysis.

Readings:

Rich, excerpt from poem "North American Time" (reader, 27)

Steinmetz, "What is Narrative?" and "Class Formation and Narrative" (reader, 28)

Somers, "Narrativity, Narrative Identity and Social Action" (reader, 29)

Bertaux, "Stories as Clues to Sociological Understanding" (reader, 30)

Portelli, chs. 7-11

week 10 Life History Approaches

Kinds of life histories. Elicitation and recording. The analysis and sociological use of life stories. Problems of memory. Special ethical issues in life history.

Readings:

Williams, W. C., excerpt from "Paterson" (reader, 31)

Portelli, chs. 1, 3 and 6

Interview Analysis DUE

week 11 Focus Groups

When to use focus groups. How to select participants. How to formulate questions. Special issues of group dynamics. How to analyze transcripts.

Readings:

Stewart and Shamdasani, "Group Dynamics and Focus Group Research" (reader, 32)

Albrecht et al., "Understanding Communication Processes in Focus Groups" (reader, 33)

Krueger, "Asking Questions in a Focus Group" (reader, 34)

Wilkinson, "Focus Groups: A Feminist Method" (reader, 35)

week 12 Content Analysis

How to analyze a variety of kinds of written (and visual) documents for themes, premises and logical structure.

Readings:

Kress and Hodge, "Transformations and Truth" (reader, 36)

Reinharz, "Feminist Content Analysis"* (reader, 37)

Lutz and Collins, "A World Brightly Different"* (reader, 38)

Part III. Managing Data and Writing Up

week 13 Writing Proposals for Qualitative Research

How to write proposals for funding agencies and graduate advisory committees. The components of a proposal. Communicating effectively about the design of qualitative research.

Readings:

Collins A and B (reader, 39 & 40)

Krippner (reader, 41)

Jaffee (reader, 42)

Watts, "The Holy Grail: In Pursuit of the Dissertation Proposal" (reader, 43)

Content Analysis Assignment DUE

week 14 Managing Qualitative Data

How to store, retrieve and analyze data using existing software programs. The logic of available software programs.

Readings: Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide (entire book)

Required visit to the Computer Lab to try out N-Vivo or N7. Bring your questions to class.

week 15 Writing Up Qualitative Research

Conventions for presenting qualitative research. Realist and other traditions. Reflexivity. Experimental writing. Incorporating multiple voices or perspectives.

Readings:

Clifford, "On Ethnographic Allegory" (reader, 44)

van Maanen, "Realist Tales" (reader, 45)

Abu-Lughod, "Writing Against Culture" (reader, 46)

Final Project DUE (Research Proposal).

Assignment 1: Logic of Inquiry

For this assignment, you should choose a piece of qualitative social science research in your field. It can be an article, or a full-length monograph, a recent or a classic piece. Think about the research design and the way that the author establishes the significance of the work. Is the methodology inductive or deductive?

If the work is a **deductive** case study, what does the author believe it is a case of? To what set of parallel instances does it belong? Does the author argue that the instance s/he is studying is typical, is deviant, or has special attributes that make it interesting for theory? How does the author move between observations and theory? What theoretically derived expectations did the author begin with? Do you believe that these expectations were “falsifiable”? Did the author confirm initial expectations, refute them, or “reconstruct” them in some way?

If the work is **inductive**, how would you characterize the author’s analytical techniques? Are they primarily interpretive, or does the author seek to build theory by categorizing and comparing? How does s/he move from the specific to the general? What claims to generality are made, and how are they supported? How does the author handle multiple meanings? contradictory evidence? To what set of instances do findings extend?

Whether the work is inductive or deductive, describe whether you believe the authors effectively use triangulation of methods and perspectives, and whether the work possesses “auditability” (that is, can you follow the researcher’s “decision trail”). Does the author attend to both participants’ meanings and theoretical meanings (the “double hermeneutic”)?

Write an essay of 2-3 pages that addresses those questions that are appropriate to the work you have chosen.

Assignment 2: Interview Project

Project Focus

In this project you will conduct a practice interview with a single individual. The interview should be related to your final project proposal. The goal is to give you practice in interviewing; thus, you should not expect to produce a "perfect" interview the first time around, but to learn from the exercise. The emphasis is on process, and not on outcome.

You should choose an individual and set up an appointment for the period between March 5 and March 11. Explain the purpose of the interview (that it is a course assignment), the range of topics that will be covered, and reach an agreement on the logistical features mentioned below. Arrange to spend from 20 minutes to 1 hour with the person. This will be a loosely-structured, exploratory interview; nevertheless, you will need to roughly define the focus of the conversation and develop a list of topics that you hope to cover.

Logistics

Timing and Location: You should schedule and locate the interview with regard to the convenience of the narrator. That is, you should arrange to meet them when and where it is convenient for them. You also need to be aware of questions of "ecological validity" in setting up the location--will the individual feel free to talk in the place you have chosen? You will need relative privacy and quiet.

Taping and Note-taking: You should tape the interview. When you set up the appointment, you should ask the person whether they have any objections to this procedure. (If they do, you will need to take notes instead). Note-taking should be as close to verbatim as possible, without unduly compromising the flow of the interview. Even if you are taping the interview, you may wish to make notes.

Asking Questions: As a general rule, you should begin with questions that are broad in scope but that ask for specifics (what we will discuss in class as "grand tour" questions). Some examples would be: "Can you describe what a typical day is like for you?" "Can you describe how you first came to know about your illness? Can you tell me about the first time you engaged in x political activity?" You can then move on to ask people how they understand or think about certain things ("What does due process mean to you?" "Are there any benefits to being a single parent?") or to provide examples of events or practices ("What happened when the workers confronted management with x demand?" "Can you give me examples of the experiences of harassment you are referring to")? It is up to you to decide (with the agreement of the person interviewed) whether to keep probing in one area, or to move on to cover some other topic.

Ask questions thoughtfully, with attention to validity concerns. Be sure you are asking something that you can reasonably expect the narrator to know about. Think about how this individual is "socially situated" and how their statements are likely to reflect that situation. Try to avoid simple evaluative questions ("is something good or bad, successful or unsuccessful, responsive or unresponsive) in favor of questions that will elicit examples of programs that worked or didn't, of doctors being sensitive or insensitive, of judges/lawyers demonstrating understanding or the lack of it, of communities working together or demonstrating factionalism. You will always face choices about whether to follow your list of questions, or to probe areas the narrator knows about and is interested in. Use your judgement, bearing in mind the goals of the interview, the potential relevance of the material to your theoretical concerns, and the degree to which your imposition of a rigid agenda will inhibit the narrator.

Appropriate Interview Behavior

*You must obtain informed consent (see attachment) and reach an agreement on the conditions of the interview (location, time involved, topics to be covered, method of recording).

*You must explain the purpose of the interview and answer any questions the narrator may have.

*You must provide for confidentiality if the narrator wishes (this includes not writing their name on tapes or notes and deciding what to do about any information included in the interview which may render them recognizable).

*Be polite and considerate at all times; do not pressure individuals if they do not wish to discuss an issue; respect the time limits they set and any limitations on topic they impose.

Transcript Assignment (to be turned in):

1. Provide a brief description of the interview (Who did you interview? What were the issues you intended to cover? What issues did you actually cover? Describe the circumstances of the interview, its length, your subjective assessment of the quality of interpersonal relations during the interview.

2. After listening to the tape, choose what you believe to be the most interesting or revealing part of the interview and transcribe it. (You should transcribe a block of 3-5 pages, or approximately 10 minutes of talk). Your transcription should be a single block--not a series of excerpts--in order to give a sense of timing, flow and interaction. The transcript should include your questions as well as the responses of the narrator. It should be an exact transcription of what was said--do not correct incomplete sentences or grammar mistakes; transcribe all the "you knows," "uhs" and other fillers; indicate pauses with ellipses (...).

3. Write a brief (1-2 page) summary of the interview as a learning experience, addressing the following points:

a) to what extent did you and the narrator share an understanding of the interview as a communicative setting? Did the narrator have his or her own goals for the interaction? What were these? Do you think they were met?

b) Was the narrator able to talk easily? If not, what do you think caused the difficulty?

c) Could you discern shifts in what Briggs calls "genre" during the course of the interview--from informal, friendly remarks to joking to storytelling to political rhetoric and other forms?

d) Did the narrator understand your questions? Which of your questions worked best? Which did not work so well? Why?

e) Did you understand the responses? Are there parts of the interview transcript you would like to go over with the narrator to have them explain what they meant or speak in greater depth?

SAMPLE INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW*

This is a class research project concerned with [explain goal of project in lay terms]. I will be asking you a series of questions about [summarize issues to be covered in interview]. In all, the interview should take about [estimate time]. [Specify if there will be a follow-up interview or any other further contact between yourself and the person you interview]. I would like to tape the interview, with your permission. All of your responses will be held confidential. In all probability, I will be writing a class paper about the results of the study, but this will in no way identify you as a participant [if true].

I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have now or you may contact me [your name] at _____later with questions.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you do not wish to answer any particular question, or if you wish to end the interview, you may say so at any time.

I have read the above and give my consent to participate in the study.

*Students who intend to use any data collected for this class project for any purpose other than completing the assignment (e.g., for research) must follow all UWM protocols regarding human subjects. Please contact the instructor for additional information if this is your intent.

Assignment 3: Analysis of Interview

This assignment is designed to help you practice analysis. You are not expected to produce a "definitive" interpretation; in fact, that would be inappropriate based upon a single interview or interview segment. At this point, you should be open to a variety of readings of the interview, and should be more aware of the questions that it raises than the issues it resolves.

Two Step Method

Based on our reading of Briggs, Riessman and others, your analysis should proceed in two steps. First, listen to the tape several times to get an overview of material in its context. Second, choose a section (it could be the section you turned in as your transcription, or another) to transcribe in a detailed way.

Transcription Conventions

Choose a transcription procedure that you feel comfortable with. (Riessman describes several options). Do not, however, eliminate any words or sounds (leave in features like "umh", "you know," as well as repetitions). Do not attempt to "correct" grammar.

Analyze Locational, Conceptual and Rhetorical Features

Based on methods described in class analyze the following features based on a 2-3 page transcribed segment of the interview. Your write up of this section should be 2-3 pages (in addition to transcription).

- A. Locational features
 - 1. vantage point
 - 2. voices
- B. Conceptual features
 - 1. key concepts
 - 2. themes (insider or outsider view?)
 - 3. cultural models
- C. Rhetorical features
 - 1. narrative structure
 - 2. transformations
 - 3. silences

Questions Raised by Interview

What are the 2-3 most important questions raised by this interview? What are the areas you would want to pursue in a follow-up session?

Assignment 4: Content Analysis

Choose a cultural document (a textbook, magazine issue, museum exhibit, television show, segment of MTV, graffiti in a public space, etc.). Perform a content analysis, following these steps.

1. Review the “document” for possible themes. You do not have to cover every theme--choose one or two. Decide whether you will choose a theme that seems most salient or important, or one that is of special interest to you. You may bring some expectations about possible themes to the project, in which case you will use this step to verify whether the themes you expect actually exist in the document.
2. Figure out what form the theme will take: what words, images, phrases, stories will indicate the presence of the theme.
3. Describe the theme(s) you have chosen, and describe in detail several (3-5) major instances in the document.
4. Locate and count instances of the theme.

In your **write-up**, present the results of steps 3 and 4, and answer the following questions:

- a. What is the nature of the cultural document you have chosen? Who produced it? For whom? For what purpose?
- b. How does the document fit into a “cultural conversation?” Does it represent a dominant perspective? Is it contestatory? Is it commercial?
- c. What have you learned from this exercise? Are there purposes for which you might want to use content analysis in your own research? How might you wish to integrate content analysis with other qualitative methods such as interviews or observations?

Final Project: Research Proposal
(Topic Due: Second Week of Class)

The research proposal should be 10 single spaced pages and should contain the following sections:

1. Research Problem. In this section you define the broad **question** that your research will address and the **context** within which you will investigate it. You need to convince readers:

- a) that the question is important in terms of its contribution to theory; and
- b) that the context you have chosen is appropriate. [1 p].

Question: This should not be purely descriptive (i.e., "what is out there?" "how does it work?"), but should have demonstrable links to theory. Explain to the reader where existing theory stops short, breaks down, or is in need of revision and how your project will contribute to fixing the situation.

Context: Explain why you expect to learn something novel and interesting from this case. Remember that you cannot argue that your single example is "typical" (that we can generalize from it). Rather, you should show how its special characteristics will provide unique insights into social process. Why is this a good window into the processes you are interested in?

2. Literature Review. In this section you explain at greater length the relationship of your research problem to the current state of knowledge in a given field. You need to demonstrate your knowledge of previous research on this topic (or closely related topics) that lays the groundwork for your study. You need to consider: a) works involved in building or reconstructing the same theory (but perhaps in different settings); and b) works in the same setting that have used other theoretical perspectives. Depending on your topic, there will be greater or lesser depth of material, and you will need to develop a way of deciding which works are most directly relevant. [Note: dissertation proposals sometimes have literature review of 20 pages or more. This is an abridged version. [2-3 pp].

3. Research Design, Methods, Analytical Procedures

Research Design: Explain how data will be brought to bear on theory (extended case method, comparative case study, interpretive case method, grounded theory, etc.). Tell the reader which method(s) will be used to address which questions.

Methods: Explain how the data collection procedures you have chosen will allow you to answer the questions you have outlined. You need to address questions of validity--are you asking the right questions? Are you asking the right people? Explain how you will use cross-checking or triangulation. Provide a clear outline of the different phases of the

research (from exploratory interviews to focused interviews, for example, or from structured questions directed to a large group of people to in-depth interviews with a chosen subset). Sometimes a diagram helps in explaining the relationships between different components of the research project, particularly in "multiple-method" research. You should provide a time line, estimating the amount of time that will be required for each procedure.

Analytical Procedures: Explain how you will record and process the data and how you will relate outcomes back to theoretical concerns. How will you know when you have answered the question? How will you deal with contradictory results? [4-5 pp].

4. Significance of Research. Return to questions of what this case will add to knowledge. What gaps will it fill in the literature? What outstanding theoretical questions will it answer? [1 p].

Keeping a Research Journal

It is very important to keep a record of the learning process over the course of a research project. This will allow you to reconstruct your questions and hypotheses and how they changed, how and why you made certain methodological choices, and when you gained new insights and interpretations. Even though many of you are only beginning to develop a research proposal, it is not too early to begin keeping such a journal. The journal should include the following four types of writing.

1) **theoretical notes:** you should keep notes on the questions you are asking and where these come from (reading a particular article, your own experience, discussion with someone acquainted with your research context). As these questions are modified over the course of the research project, you should note this fact: which ones are answered more or less definitively, which you decide are irrelevant or wrongly framed, which you sharpen for further investigation.

2) **methodological notes:** a description of all your methodological choices--how you go about choosing people to interview and events to observe, preliminary lists of questions you want to ask in interviews, notes on cross-checking and triangulation procedures, and your thinking about validity questions.

3) **logistics:** what Sanjek refers to as "the ethnographers's path." A running account of the process of establishing contact with the individuals/groups you are interested in, who you meet, individuals you are referred to, problems communicating or establishing rapport (and your best guesses as to why they are occurring), new sources of information that you discover.

Your research journal is separate from your field notes.

Appendix A
Readings Packet

- (1) C. Wright Mills. (1958). Chapter One, The Sociological Imagination. NY: Oxford pp. 5-11.
- (2) Daniel Bertaux. (1981). From the Life-History Approach to the Transformation of Sociological Practice. Biography and Society. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. pp. 31-45.
- (3) Jane F. Gilgun and Laura S. Abrams. (2002). The nature and usefulness of qualitative social work research. *Qualitative Social Work*. Vol. 1 (1) pp. 39-55.
- (4) Deborah K. Padgett. (1998). Does the glove really fit? Qualitative research and clinical social work practice. *Social Work*. Vol. 43.
- (5) Charles Ragin. (1994). Constructing Social Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. pp. 31-53.
- (6) Lourdes Benería and Martha Roldán. (1987). The Crossroads of Class and Gender: Industrial Homework, Subcontracting and Household Dynamics in Mexico City. University of Chicago Press: Chicago. pp. 27 – 30.
- (7) S. Tiano. (1994). Patriarchy on the Land: Labor and Gender Ideology in the women maquila workers in Mexicali. Temple University Press: Philadelphia. pp. 6-9
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