



EPPS 6346: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH ORIENTATION

Updated 1/12/2025

INSTRUCTOR
DR. BRENDA GAMBOL

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COURSE
EPPS 6346
JAN 21 - MAY 9, 2025
In-Person Course
W 4-6:45p
AD 3.214

PROF. G's OFFICE HOURS
TU/WED 12-1p
Please email to schedule.
GR 3.520

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This course will introduce you to the theoretical, ethical, and practical aspects of interview-based sociological research with a focus on in-depth interviewing. We will also discuss qualitative methods in sociology more broadly, including (but not limited to) ethnography, content analysis, and community engaged research. Issues of subjectivity, reflexivity, and power will be central in our understanding of sociological research methods. Related to these issues are the intersecting social locations and identities of researchers and participants. In addition, we will consider the implications for research design, data collection, analysis and the content and form of findings.

The student goals for this course are:

- Use qualitative methods to further their research agenda;
- Conduct in-depth interviews and participant observations;
- Collect quality data and analyze for findings;
- Persuasively argue how their findings contribute to relevant literature;
- Prepare a compelling and engaging conference presentation;
- Craft a research article, identify a possible journal for publication, and compose a letter to the editor;
- Offer helpful and meaningful feedback on peer work;
- Become a key member in a community of scholars.

Important Note About Syllabus: Professor Gambol's syllabus is a **LIVE** document. Thus, Professor Gambol reserves the right to alter the syllabus at any time. Any changes will be made directly on the google doc. Students should **ALWAYS** access the syllabus via the link provided.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Listening to People: A Practical Guide to Interviewing, Participant Observation, Data Analysis, and Writing It All Up by Annette Lareau

Qualitative Research for the Social Sciences by Marilyn Lichtman. Online copy available at UTD's library.

GRADING

Course Breakdown

40% Final Paper

30% Research Data

10% Final Presentation

10% Assignments (including Discussion Board)

10% Quality of Engagement and Contribution

Grading Scale

A: 90-92.9 (-); 93-97.9; 98-100 (+)

B: 80-82.9 (-); 83-87.9; 88-88.9 (+)

C: 80-82.9 (-); 83-87.9; 88-88.9 (+)

D: 60-62.9 (-); 63-67.9; 68-69.9 (+)

Research Data: You will conduct at least 10 interviews and transcribe them. You will choose one of interviewees to observe. You must conduct at least 5 one-hour observations of this interviewee.

Final Paper: You will write a paper (8,000-10,000 words) based on the data you collect. Be aware that you will prepare drafts of portions of your final paper during the semester. (This final paper includes the literature review you write.)

Final Presentation: You will present your final paper. Your presentation should be no more than 15 minutes.

Assignments

CITI Certificate: Complete the CITI training for Social-Behavior-Educational research. You begin here: <https://www.citiprogram.org/members/index.cfm?pageID=51&institutionID=2506&update=1#view> (If you have a certificate that is current—that is, it hasn't expired—you do not have to take the course again. Simply upload your certificate to eLearning.)

Drafts of Final Paper Sections: You will write drafts of sections of your final paper. You will receive feedback from your peers. You are to revise according to their feedback.

Discussion Boards: You are to update how you are progressing in your research study each week.

Positionality Statement: Drawing on the positionality readings, craft a statement that discusses your particular socio-historical position and how it may affect you as a researcher. (Around 1000 words)

“On-Demand”: You may be asked to complete additional assignments in and outside of class. Assignments are based on the needs of the class.

Engagement and Contribution: You will be awarded a grade from 0-10. Top scores will be awarded to students who attend all class meetings, engage and contribute to class discussions, turn all assignments on time, and respond to peer and instructor feedback and apply what feedback is helpful in their work. A key element to your engagement and contribution score is your progress in class and growth in reading and writing.

COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Absences: Attendance does not factor into your grade, but your engagement and contribution grades will be affected by non-attendance.

Late Work/Make-Up: I will accept late work. However, how often your work is late and the quality of your late work will impact your engagement and contribution score.

Academic Honesty: As stated by UTD, “Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, facilitating academic dishonesty, fabrication, failure to contribute to a collaborative project and sabotage...Students who fail to conform to the established standards of conduct are subject to one more or of the disciplinary sanctions listed in the UT Dallas *Handbook of Operating Procedures...*” (for more on this, visit <https://conduct.utdallas.edu/faculty/academic/>).

Plagiarized assignments will receive an automatic failing grade. That means any work that you turn in that you claim as yours and it’s not will be considered plagiarized.

FYI: Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) (e.g. ChatGBT and Grammarly) is PROHIBITED in this course. I consider its use plagiarism. Any detection of AI in your work will be considered academic dishonesty. Students utilizing AI will be subject to disciplinary actions as per UTD policies.

OTHER IMPORTANT NOTES

- If you arrive more than 20 minutes late, do not come into the classroom. If you do, I will mark you down 1% from your total course grade.
- I revise the syllabus throughout the semester to meet student needs.
- As your instructor, I will not:
 - Record seminar sessions.
 - Give students extra points on their average to maintain or boost their current GPA.
 - Create extra credit when asked to do so at the end of the semester.
 - Give students a rundown of what happened in class when they were absent. (They can contact a classmate for that.)
 - TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF. Beyond academics, I stress the importance of taking care of yourself. One way to do this is to seek counseling if need be (which I have done countless times!). UTD offers FREE services for those who want it. You can schedule an appointment ---

or even chat! --- with a mental health professional. Visit the Student Counseling Center's site for more info: <https://counseling.utdallas.edu/>

LEADING CLASS DISCUSSION

Prepare a presentation (around 10 minutes) that covers the following:

1. Tell us your name, title of the reading, who the author is. (If it is an article, please also state where the piece was published and when it was published. You do not need to do this if you are assigned to a textbook reading.)

2. Explain the reading.

FOR A TEXTBOOK READING: Succinctly walk us through the author's main points.

FOR SCHOLARLY WORK: Succinctly walk us through the author's main arguments.

3. "SIGNIFICANIZE."

FOR A TEXTBOOK READING: Explain the significance of the main points of the chapter. It may help to draw on concepts we've already discussed in class (e.g. reflexivity, positionality)

FOR SCHOLARLY WORK: Explain the significance and the importance of the arguments on the relevant body of knowledge.

4. In your conclusion, raise 3-4 compelling, open-ended questions or prompts to your peers. What you raise should not be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."