

SOC6713S Qualitative Research Methods II:  
Qualitative Interviewing, 2022-2023  
Dr. Ping-Chun Hsiung

**Statement of Land Acknowledgement**

The land on which we gather is the traditional territory of the Wendat, Anishinabek (ah-nish-nah-bek) Nation, the Haudenosaunee (ho-den-oh-sho-nee) Confederacy, the Mississaugas of Scugog (skoo-gog), Hiawatha (hi-ah-wah-tha), and Alderville First Nations and the Métis (may-tee) Nation. This territory was the subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement between the Iroquois Confederacy and the Ojibwe and allied nations to peaceably share and care for the resources around the Great Lakes. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work in the community, on this territory.

Date: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10:00-12:00  
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**Course Objectives and Description**

This seminar analyzes the politics and practices of qualitative interviewing in local and global contexts. By addressing both its technical and theoretical aspects, the course examines:

- 1) the roles of qualitative interviewing in knowledge production and reproduction;
- 2) the constructive process and the inter-subjective dynamic of qualitative interviewing;
- 3) the technical aspects of asking questions and beyond;
- 4) doing reflexivity, hearing data, and interpreting silences.

Using primary interview data about immigrant families from the Caribbean, China, Italy, and Sri Lanka, students will acquire first hand experience of doing qualitative interviewing by:

- 1) reading, commenting on, and revising good examples and mistakes from transcripts of 39 immigrant interviews;
- 2) carrying out and reflecting upon an in-class interview practicum;
- 3) analyzing interview process, coding interview transcript, and writing reflective essays;
- 4) engaging in and opening to constructive criticism.

**Reading**

Required readings:

- 1) Ping-Chun Hsiung  
Lives and Legacies: A Guide to Qualitative Interviewing (LL hereafter)  
<http://www.utoronto.ca/~pchsiung/LAL/>
- 2) Additional selected readings are listed below.

### **Organization**

- 1) The class will be dedicated to lectures and discussions. Students are responsible for doing the assigned reading, active participation, and carrying out in-class exercises. As integral parts of the teaching and learning process, in-class exercises and weekly tasks are designed to take students step by step toward the completion of your final paper.
- 2) Students will carry out two rounds of interview practicum to acquire hands-on experience of qualitative interviewing. For each round, each student will take turns as the interviewer and as the informant. Participation is mandatory because the interviewing experiences and transcripts form an integral part of the teaching and learning. The central themes of the interview are graduate students' experiences or doing gender in reproductive functioning. The specific focus will be decided in class. Each student will complete three components: (1) designing a qualitative interview guide; (2) conducting two 40–50-minute tape recorded interviews; (3) transcribing the interviews in which you are the interviewer. For teaching/learning purposes, the unedited transcripts will be posted and shared on the Quercus. On rare occasion and upon discussion with instructor, an edited version of the transcripts will be posted and shared.
- 3) Constructive criticism is an essential aspect of teaching and learning in this seminar. Students need to acquire skills to provide AND to receive constructive criticism. Professional respect and openness are expected.
- 4) All course related information is posted on the Quercus, which you need to use your UTORid to access (Any UTORid related enquiries, please consult <https://www.utorid.utoronto.ca>). Other URL related information for the Blackboard will be available in the first week.
- 5) All assignments should be submitted to Quercus. **Late submissions** will be penalized **1% of the FINAL GRADE** per day, including weekend and holidays. An assignment not submitted by a week after its due date will automatically receive a grade of zero. Legitimate, documented reasons beyond your control for late submission should be discussed with the instructor. No written comments will be provided on late submissions.

### **Evaluation**

<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	<i>Due dates</i>
Punctuality and participation	10%	NA
Reading journals	20%	Fridays or Tuesdays, noon
Reflective essay #1	20%	May 24
Reflective essay #2	20%	May 31
Final paper	30%	June 12
Total	100%	

### **Instruction and marking schemes**

- 1) *Punctuation & participation:*

- A. Instruction: Attendance is mandatory. Punctuation and student participation are crucial to the quality of the collective and individual learning of this seminar. Students should be ready to participate by having completed the assigned reading prior to attending the class. Participation in the in-class exercises and discussions is also essential.
- B. Marking schemes:
- 1) Does the student arrive on time and prepared for in-class discussions and exercises? (50%)
  - 2) How much of a constructive but critical contribution has the student made? (50%)
- 2) *Reading Journals:*
- A. Instruction: The journals are intended to facilitate in-class discussion and to help students develop analytical skills. Your journal (~300 words in total) should include: an analytical summary of the assigned readings; issues you find interesting or informative; and questions for in-class discussion. You need to submit a total of nine weekly journals (sessions # 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11) for the respective assigned readings. Your journal should be posted on the Quercus by Fridays or Tuesdays, noon.
- B. Marking scheme: 1% of the final grade is given to every journal submitted on time and 0% is assigned to missing submission or journal submitted after the deadline. In addition, 11% of the final grade is used to assess the insight and analytical quality of the entire set of journals.
- 3) *Reflective essay #1:* This assignment asks you to reflect upon your experiences of the interview practicum.
- A. Instructions:
1. Some issues you may want to consider as you reflect upon your interview practicum are shown below. Feel free to address any additional ones.
    - a) As the interviewer:
      - a. What does “sense making” mean to you?
      - b. What is the strength, and what is the weakness, of the interview?
      - c. What are the implications, if any, for your relationship with the informant and for the interview topic of your location or position?
    - b) As the informant:
      - a. What does “sense making” entail for you as an informant?
      - b. What does “being heard” mean? Did you feel that you were “being heard”? If so, how? If not, how not?
      - c. What have you learned from being the informant, and by closely examining this experience?
    - c) Overall:
      - a. How has the interview practicum facilitated your understanding of qualitative interviewing? What have you learned from this reflective exercise?
  2. Format: Your essay must be typed, single-spaced, and in 12pt. font, and be no more than four pages, with your interview transcript and pre- and post-interview journals attached as appendix.
  3. Submission: a hard copy is due in class, with an electronic version to be submitted via the Blackboard.

B. Marking schemes:

1. Has enough thought been put into the reflection? (25%)
2. To what extent have the skills of qualitative interviewing been used to address the strength(s) and weakness(es)? (20%)
3. How well is the interviewer's experience analyzed? (25%)
4. How well is the informant's experience analyzed? (25%)
5. Is the essay presented in a professional manner? Have the pre- and post-interview journals been attached (5%)?

4) *Reflective essay #2:*

A. Instructions:

1. Open code two selected pages from the transcript where you were the interviewer. Review the entire transcript based upon what you learn from the open coding. Write an essay to address issues pertinent to "hearing the data and interpreting the silences." Below are some questions you may use to guide your essay writing. Feel free to address any additional ones.
  - a) On "hearing the data":
    - Is failing to "hear the data" an issue, and if so, how?
    - How has the open coding helped, or failed to help (or both), you identify the missed opportunities?
  - b) On "interpreting the silences":
    - Is "the silence" an issue, and, if so, how?
    - How is "the silence" employed or interpreted by the interviewer and interviewee?
    - How has the open coding helped, or failed to help, you identify the "the silence"?
  - c) Overall
    - What overall methodological or epistemological lessons have you learned?
    - Compared with your reflective essay # 1, have you made any progress? If so, how? If not, explain.
2. Format: Your essay must be typed, single-spaced, and in 12pt. font, and be no more than four pages.
3. Submission: a hard copy is due in class, with an electronic version to be submitted via the Blackboard.

B. Marking schemes:

1. Has enough thought been put into the reflection? (20%)
2. How well are the assigned readings being used? (20%)
3. How well are the notions of "hearing the data," and "interpreting the silences" addressed? (30%)
4. How well is the overall issue analyzed? (25%)
5. Is the essay presented in a professional manner? (5%)

5) *Final paper:*

A. Instructions:

1. Open code two selected pages from your second interview transcript where you were the interviewer. Review the entire transcript based upon what you learn from the open

- coding. Compare and contrast your coding and your understanding of the substantive issues with your first interview. Write an essay to address issues pertinent to the technical and theoretical aspects of qualitative interviewing:
- a) The roles of qualitative interviewing in knowledge production and reproduction;
  - b) The constructive process and the inter-subjective dynamic of qualitative interviewing;
  - c) The critical, reflective attributes of doing qualitative interviewing.
2. Format: Your final paper must be typed, single-spaced, and in 12pt. font, and be no more than four pages.
- B. Marking schemes:
1. Has enough thought been put into the reflection? (20%)
  2. How well are the assigned readings being used? (20%)
  3. How well are the technical and theoretical issues addressed? (55%)
  4. Is the essay presented in a professional manner? Have the pre- and post-interview journals been attached (5%)?

### **Academic Integrity Clause**

Copying, plagiarizing, falsifying medical certificates, or other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated. Any student caught engaging in such activities will be referred to the Dean's office for adjudication. Any student abetting or otherwise assisting in such misconduct will also be subject to academic penalties. Students are expected to cite sources in all written work and presentations. See this link for tips for how to use sources well:

(<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources/how-not-to-plagiarize>).

According to Section B.I.1.(e) of the Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters it is an offence "to submit, without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere."

By enrolling in this course, you agree to abide by the university's rules regarding academic conduct, as outlined in the Calendar. You are expected to be familiar with the *Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters* (<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/osai/The-rules/code/the-code-of-behaviour-on-academic-matters>) and *Code of Student Conduct* (<http://www.vicereprovoststudents.utoronto.ca/publicationsandpolicies/codeofstudentconduct.htm>) which spell out your rights, your duties and provide all the details on grading regulations and academic offences at the University of Toronto.

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation website (<https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>).

### **Accessibility Services**

It is the University of Toronto's goal to create a community that is inclusive of all persons and treats all members of the community in an equitable manner. In creating such a community, the University aims to foster a climate of understanding and mutual respect for the dignity and worth

of all persons. Please see the University of Toronto Governing Council “Statement of Commitment Regarding Persons with Disabilities” at <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/Assets/Governing+Council+Digital+Assets/Policies/PDF/ppnov012004.pdf>.

In working toward this goal, the University will strive to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities, participate in the full range of activities that the University offers, and achieve their full potential as members of the University community. We take seriously our obligation to make this course as welcoming and accessible as feasible for students with diverse needs. We also understand that disabilities can change over time and will do our best to accommodate you. Students seeking support must have an intake interview with a disability advisor to discuss their individual needs. In many instances it is easier to arrange certain accommodations with more advance notice, so we strongly encourage you to act as quickly as possible. To schedule a registration appointment with a disability advisor, please visit Accessibility Services at <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>, call at 416-978-8060, or email at: [accessibility.services@utoronto.ca](mailto:accessibility.services@utoronto.ca). The office is located at 455 Spadina Avenue, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Suite 400.

Additional student resources for distressed or emergency situations can be located at [distressedstudent.utoronto.ca](http://distressedstudent.utoronto.ca); Health & Wellness Centre, 416-978-8030, <http://www.studentlife.utoronto.ca/hwc>, or Student Crisis Response, 416-946-7111.

### **Equity and Diversity**

The University of Toronto is committed to equity and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect. As a course instructor, I will neither condone nor tolerate behaviour that undermines the dignity or self-esteem of any individual in this course and wish to be alerted to any attempt to create an intimidating or hostile environment. It is our collective responsibility to create a space that is inclusive and welcomes discussion. Discrimination, harassment and hate speech will not be tolerated.

Additional information and reports on Equity and Diversity at the University of Toronto is available at <http://equity.hrandequity.utoronto.ca>.

### **Copyright**

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor’s intellectual property covered by the *Copyright Act*, RSC 1985, c C-42. Course materials such as PowerPoint slides and lecture recordings are made available to you for your own study purposes. These materials cannot be shared outside of the class or “published” in any way. Posting recordings or slides to other websites without the express permission of the instructor will constitute copyright infringement.

### **Schedule**

<b><i>Dates</i></b>	<b><i>Topics</i></b>
May 1	Introduction and Situating Qualitative Interviewing

(session 1)	<p><i>Readings</i> 1) LL, What is Qualitative Research</p> <p><i>In-class discussion &amp; exercise</i> *contexts, strengths, and limitations of qualitative interviewing *Individual student's research interest/topics</p> <p><i>Weekly task</i> *Reading and writing weekly journal</p>
May 3 (session 2)	<p>Politics of, and rich narratives in, qualitative interviewing</p> <p><i>Readings</i> * Bodil Hansen Blix, 2015, "'Something Decent to Wear': Performances of Being an Insider and an Outsider in Indigenous Research," <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> 21(2):175-83. * Erin E. Seaton, 2008, "Common Knowledge: Reflections on Narratives in Community," <i>Qualitative Research</i> 8(3):293-305. *Kathryn Roulston, 2010, "Considering Quality in Qualitative Interviewing," <i>Qualitative Research</i> 10(2):199-228. *James A. Holstein and Jaber F. Gubrium, 2000, "Narrating the Self," chapter 6 in <u>The Self We Live By: Narrative Identity in a Postmodern World</u>, p. 103-23, Oxford University Press. *LL, Characteristics of Good Interviews *LL, The Complexity of Rich Data</p> <p><i>In-class discussion &amp; exercise</i> *"Critical perspectives in qualitative interviewing" *"What is in a story?" *"What is in an image?"</p> <p><i>Weekly task</i> *Reading and writing weekly journal</p>
May 8 (session 3)	<p>Research ethics</p> <p><i>Readings</i> *Jeannine A Gailey and Ariane Prohaska, 2011, "Power and Gender Negotiations during Interviews with Men about Sex and Sexually Degrading Practices," <i>Qualitative Research</i> 11(4):365-80. *Galia Sabar, Naama Sabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2017, "I'll sue you if you publish my wife's interview': Ethical Dilemmas in Qualitative Research Based on Life Stories," <i>Qualitative Research</i>, 17 (4): 408-423. *Ethics Review at University of Toronto</p> <p><i>In-class discussion &amp; exercise</i> *Discussing ethical issues pertinent to your research *Drafting your consent form for the interview practicum</p> <p><i>Weekly task</i> *Completing your consent form</p>
May 10	Interview guide

(session 4)	<p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Hannah Deakin &amp; Kelly Wakefield, 2014, "Skype Interviewing: Reflections of two PhD Researchers," <i>Qualitative Research</i>, 14 (5): 603-616.</li> <li>*Mark Anthony Castrodale, 2018, "Mobilizing Dis/Ability Research: A Critical Discussion of Qualitative Go-Along Interviews in Practice," <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, Vol 24 (1): 45-55.</li> <li>*LL, Phrasing Questions and Other Techniques</li> <li>*LL, Fieldnotes</li> </ul> <p><i>In-class discussion &amp; exercise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Finding your interview partner for the interview practicum</li> <li>* Drafting your interview guide for the interview practicum</li> </ul> <p><i>Weekly task</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Completing your interview guide for the interview practicum</li> <li>*Writing pre-interview journal</li> </ul>
May 15 (session 5)	<p>Interview practicum</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*LL, Conventions for Transcribing Interviews</li> <li>*Blake D. Poland, "Transcription Quality," eds. J. F. Gubrium &amp; J. A. Holstein, <i>Handbook of Interview Research: Context &amp; Method</i>, p. 629-649, Sage, 2001.</li> </ul> <p><i>In-class discussion &amp; exercise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Carrying out the interview practicum</li> </ul> <p><i>Weekly task</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Writing post-interview journal</li> <li>*Transcribing your interview</li> <li>*Posting your transcript by 5:00pm, May 17 (Wed)</li> </ul>
May 17 (session 6)	<p>Politics of research and re-searching</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*LL, Reflexivity</li> <li>*Andrea Doucet, 2008, "From Her Side of the Gossamer Wall(s)?: Reflexivity and Relational Knowing," <i>Qualitative Sociology</i> 31:73-87.</li> <li>*Phil C. Langer, 2016, "The Research Vignette: Reflexive Writing as Interpretative Representation of Qualitative Inquiry—A Methodological Proposition," <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, Vol 22 (9): 735-744.</li> <li>*Ruth Nicholls, 2009, "Research and Indigenous Participation: Critical Reflexive Methods." <i>International Journal of Social Research Methodology</i> 12(2):117-26.</li> </ul> <p><i>In-class discussion &amp; exercise</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Examining one's personal location</li> </ul> <p><i>Weekly task</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Review and reflection</li> </ul>
May 24 (session 7)	<p>Hearing the data and interpreting the silences</p> <p><i>Readings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>*Tracy Morison &amp; Catriona Macleod, 2014, "When Veiled Silences Speak: Reflexivity, Trouble and Repair as Methodological Tools for Interpreting the Unspoken in Discourse-based Data," <i>Qualitative Research</i>, 14(6): 694-711.</li> </ul> <p><b>Reflective essay #1 due,</b></p>



<p><b>May 24, 9:00am</b></p>	<p>*Dorit Roer-Strier &amp; Roberta G. Sands, 2015, “Moving Beyond the ‘Official Story’: When ‘Others’ Meet in a Qualitative Interview,” <i>Qualitative Research</i> 15(2):251-68.  <b>In-class discussion &amp; exercise</b>          *Issues related to hearing data and interpreting silences  <b>Weekly task</b>          *Reflecting upon hearing data and interpreting silences</p>
<p>May 29 (session 8)</p>	<p>Open coding and focused coding          Readings          *Julie Kaomea, 2016, “Qualitative Analysis as Ho‘oku‘iku‘i or Bricolage: Teaching Emancipatory Indigenous Research in Postcolonial Hawai‘i,” <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, Vol 22 (2): 99-106          *Tova Hartman, 2015, “‘Strong Multiplicity’: An Interpretive Lens in the Analysis of Qualitative Interview Narratives,” <i>Qualitative Research</i>, 15 (1): 22-38          *LL, Analysis — introduction, finding a focus, possible research topics, open coding, focused coding, and developing an analytical lens  <b>In-class discussion &amp; exercise</b>          *Doing open and focused coding  <b>Weekly task</b>          *Doing open coding on a selected transcript and writing reflective essay #2</p>
<p>May 31 (session 9)</p> <p><b>Reflective essay #2 due, May 31, 9:00am</b></p> <p><b>Reflective essay #1 return</b></p>	<p>Examining failures  <b>Readings</b>          Karen Naim, Jenny Munro and Anne B. Smith, 2005, “A Counter-narrative of a ‘Failed’ Interview,” <i>Qualitative Research</i>, 5(2): 221-44.          *Tea Torbenfeldt Bengtsson, Lars Fynbo, 2018, “Analysing the Significance of Silence in Qualitative Interviewing: Questioning and Shifting Power Relations,” <i>Qualitative Research</i> 18 (1): 19-35.  <b>In-class discussion &amp; exercise</b>          *Debriefing on hearing data and interpreting silences          *discussing exposing failures and exploring contexts          *preparing for the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview  <b>Weekly task</b>          *Working on interview guide</p>
<p>June 5 (session 10)  <b>Carrying out the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview practicum by June 2 (Friday)</b></p>	<p>Exploring contexts          * Andrea Ducet, 2018, “Fathers and Emotional Responsibilities,” chapter 4 in <i>Do Men Mother?: Fathering, Care, and Parental Responsibilities</i> (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), p. 107-34.          *Sweet, Paige L., 2019, “The Sociology of Gaslighting,” <i>American Sociological Review</i>, 84(5): 851-875.  <b>In-class discussion</b>          *Juxtaposing narratives with contexts  <b>Weekly task</b>          *Carrying out the 2<sup>nd</sup> interview practicum</p>

<p>June 7 (session 11)</p>	<p>Validity and sample size in qualitative interviewing</p> <p><b>Readings</b></p> <p>*Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce, Laura Johnson, 2006, “How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability,” <i>Field Methods</i>, 18(1): 59-82.</p> <p>*Mark Mason, 2010, “Sample Size and Saturation in PhD Studies Using Qualitative Interviews,” <i>Forum: Qualitative Social Research</i>, 11(3), article 8.</p> <p>*Meghan Lynch, Catherine Mah, 2018, “Using Internet Data Sources to Achieve Qualitative Interviewing Purposes: A Research Note,” <i>Qualitative Research</i>, 18(6): 741-52.</p> <p><b>In-class discussion</b></p> <p>Individual projects and Q &amp; A</p>
<p>June 12 (session 12)</p> <p><b>Final paper due</b></p>	<p>From learning to using qualitative interviewing: Looking back and moving forward</p> <p><b>In-class discussion</b></p> <p>*Individual and collective reflections</p>