NRE 501 056 2017 Interview Methods (1.5 credits)

Winter B 2017 Syllabus

Time and Location: Fridays 9AM to 12PM, Dana 3556

Instructor: Dr. Paige Fischer, Assistant Professor, SNRE, apfisch@umich.edu, 734-763-3830

Office hours: Fridays 1-4 or by appointment

Course overview: Interviewing is an important method for research and practice in the fields of sustainability management and environmental conservation. Interviews reveal detailed information about how and why people think and behave in the ways that they do, and the broader context in which people and organizations make decisions. Interviews also provide insight into how policy and planning can harness people’s motivations to engage in environmentally sustainable behavior. This course will introduce students to individual and focus group interviewing as research strategies and practical tools for gathering information. Through lectures, group activities and field projects, students will learn the art and practice of interviewing.

Expectations: This is a graduate level course geared toward master’s project and thesis students who are interested in research and practice in the fields of sustainability management and environmental conservation. The course will entail reading, writing, and hands-on work collecting and analyzing interview data. Students will develop and field test their own interview guides for use in their master’s project or thesis research. Class meetings will involve lectures by the instructor, in-class interviewing activities, and studio-style group feedback. Each student is expected to complete weekly reading and writing assignments, and conduct a term project involving the collection, analysis and interpretation of interview data.

Learning outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Explain the utility of interviewing as a method for data collection and analysis
2. Decide when interviewing methods would be beneficial for answering sustainability management and environmental conservation questions
3. Identify key techniques in successful interviewing
4. Develop an interview guide
5. Analyze interview data using traditional and software-aided techniques
6. Interpret the results of interview analysis to answer a project question

Assessment: Progress toward learning outcomes will be assessed through evaluation of five assignments relating to the interviewing project worth 20% each.

Assignments: Each week students will submit an assignment in a progressive interviewing project. These assignments are due by 11:59 PM on Wednesdays to allow time for other students to review them the next day in preparation for our in-class studios. One point will be deducted for every day late.

#1 Interview project proposal including project goals and/or research questions and an explanation of how interview methods are well-suited for pursuing them (Word document, one page max, single spaced)
Class participation: Students are expected to participate actively in class discussions and to attend every class unless arranged ahead of time.

Grading scheme: Minimum for A+=97, A=93, A-=90, B+=87, B=80, B-=80, C+=77, C=73, C-70, D+=67, D=63, D-=60, F=40

Accommodations for students with disabilities: Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately

Academic Honesty: Students are expected to be honest and ethical in their academic work. For more information about academic integrity and the University’s policies and procedures in this area please refer to the Student Conduct web site.

Readings (scanned chapters on Canvas)

# Course Schedule

**NRE 501_056 Interview Methods Winter B 2017**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Lecture topics</th>
<th>Other class activities</th>
<th>Assignments due Wednesday before class</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (3/10)</td>
<td>Introduction to course and method of interviewing</td>
<td>Introductions&lt;br&gt;Discussion of potential projects</td>
<td>Come prepared to describe research project and role of interviews</td>
<td>1) Understand course topic, goals, expectations and course schedule;&lt;br&gt;2) Become acquainted with key concepts in qualitative interview-based research</td>
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<td>2 (3/17)</td>
<td>Designing individual interviews</td>
<td>Project proposal studio&lt;br&gt;Individual interviewing exercises</td>
<td>Read Patton 2002 Ch. 7, Pp. 339-427; and Bernard 2006 Ch. 9, 210-250&lt;br&gt;Submit assignment #1 (project proposal)</td>
<td>3) Learn skills and techniques for effectively designing individual interviews</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 (3/24)</td>
<td>Designing focus group interviews</td>
<td>Interview guide studio&lt;br&gt;Focus group interviewing exercises</td>
<td>Read Weiss 1994 Ch. 4, Pp. 61-119, and Krueger and Casey, Ch. 1-3. Pp. 1-61&lt;br&gt;Submit assignment #2 (draft interview guide)</td>
<td>4) Learn skills and techniques for effectively designing focus group interviews</td>
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<td>4 (3/31)</td>
<td>Conducting individual and focus group interviews&lt;br&gt;Preliminary analysis</td>
<td>Revised interview guide studio&lt;br&gt;Weiss discussion</td>
<td>Read Patton 2002 Ch. 8, Pp. 431-539&lt;br&gt;Submit assignment #3 (revised interview guide)</td>
<td>5) Learn skills and techniques for effectively conducting interviews</td>
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<td>5 (4/7)</td>
<td>No Class due to Capstone Event</td>
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<td>6) Acquire hands-on experience conducting interviews</td>
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<td>6 (4/14)</td>
<td>Interpreting findings</td>
<td>Coding and memoing studio&lt;br&gt;Coding exercises</td>
<td>Submit assignments #5 (coded interview transcript and analytic memos)</td>
<td>7) Learn skills and techniques for analyzing interviews&lt;br&gt;8) Acquire hands-on experience analyzing interviews</td>
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