

ANT 425/MES498 Recorded interviewing techniques and methods

Syllabus

An online course offered by the University of Maine through Continuing and Distance Education
With monthly meetings in class or via compressed video.

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Course description: This course will introduce students to the theory and methodology of ethnographic and oral history fieldwork as it is practiced by social scientists and humanities researchers. Students will learn to prepare research plans, develop questions, and conduct and record interviews. They will learn how to navigate the essential practices of permissions, understand the concepts of copyright of research materials as it pertains to interviews, and fulfill the requirements of the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) - Required Training at the University of Maine. Students will learn about the practices of archiving research materials and how to interpret and incorporate interview research into a research paper or documentary. No prerequisites. May be taken for graduate credit. **3 credits**

Course Goals and Objectives:

- Students will know how to develop research questions, create a research plan, developing an intellectual framework for their projects whether they are social scientists or humanists or perhaps preparing some type of documentary or other public presentation.
- Students will understand the issues of intellectual property rights as they pertain to recorded interviews and publications/documentaries.
- Students will fulfill the requirements of the University's IRB training.
- Students will acquire the necessary skills to conduct high quality recorded interviews, including familiarization with the interview process and the technical and mechanical issues involved.
- Students will learn how recorded interviews are preserved for future research.
- Students will learn how to interpret and analyze recorded interviews and how to incorporate them into a research paper or documentary-public presentation (ie. web site, video ,etc.).

Instructional Materials and Methods

This course requires access to broadband internet access. Help with technical issues can be found by emailing CED Tech Help

You will also need access to a digital recorder—either audio or video. Both will require separate microphones. Equipment is available on loan from the Maine Folklife Center, the Fogler Library and other departments on campus so you are not required to purchase it. Standards for equipment that is acceptable for fieldwork recording will be posted on the web site. You should contact the professor if you own equipment and are not sure if it meets the acceptable standards.

Instructional Materials and Methods

Texts:

Nancy MacKay. *Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive*. Left Coast Press, 2007

Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: the Art of Hearing Data*. Sage Publications, 2005.

John A. Neuenschwander *A Guide to Oral History and the Law*. Oxford University Press, 2009.

- Additional readings will be posted on the web site
- List of resources including web sites will be listed on the web site

Grading and Course Expectations

- Participation in class discussions (reading responses, responses to other students' comments) 20%
- Writing assignments:
- Research plan 20%
- You will keep a fieldwork or project journal 20%
- Practice interview 20%
- Final paper or project 20% (Final paper or project will depend upon your discipline and your interests. The professor will discuss this with each of you individually to determine what the paper or project will consist of early in the semester when you prepare your research plan).

Weekly topics and assignments

NOTE: This syllabus is subject to change. Depending on the class majors and their interests, I may add or delete readings and assignments to meet the class's needs.

Week 1

Lecture: 1. Review of course requirements.

2. The research plan: what is your idea, project, hypothesis, what information do you seek? How do you get from point A to point B? What methods can you use to get there?

Readings: Rubin and Rubin Chapters 1 & 2.

Homework: Post on the class web site your idea, project, hypothesis or the kind of information you want to obtain.

Read Chapter 1: Setting the Stage in MacKay. Part of your plan should include a plan to archive the materials you collect. Where will you deposit the materials and what permissions will you need?

Week 2 Make your plan

Readings: Rubin and Rubin Chapters 3 & 4

Homework: Create a research plan: list your objectives, goals, how you might meet your objectives and goals. Post to the class web site.

Read Chapter 2 in MacKay: Archives Administration. What archives are you familiar with? Have you visited Special Collections in your library? The Maine Folklife Center? Other archives? Do you know how they are organized and how record keeping is done? What are the 5 tasks of an archivist?

Week 3 Interview preparation

Depending on your discipline, you may need to do library research or other background research on the topic you are investigating. What resources are out there? Who else has worked on the question or topic?

Reading: Rubin and Rubin Chapters 5&6

Homework: Submit a list of resources, publications or web sites that pertain to your project. Annotate them. That is, tell me what information the source will provide you, whether you agree or disagree with the source, whether there is information missing from the source, etc.

Read Chapter 3 in MacKay. Legal and Ethical issues

How do copyright laws affect the interview process? What is the difference between legal consent and deed of gift? How do copyright laws impact oral histories on the internet? What are the ethical responsibilities of the interviewer and the archives manager?

Week 4 Technology & practice

Lecture: Review of digital equipment for recording interviews

Homework Assignment: Do a practice interview with a friend or relative. The objective of the interview is to familiarize yourself with the equipment and discover where you might run into problems.

Submit a detailed log of the interview process including a description of the equipment, what went well, what didn't, problems you had, the success or failure of the interview, a list of the questions you asked and what information (data) did you obtain?

Read Chapter 5 in McKay: Transcribing. How do you plan to transcribe your interview? What are the alternatives to transcribing?

Week 5 Human Subjects Research Review

Lecture: navigating the IRB process

Reading: visit the University of Maine Human Subjects Research page and read the section on class projects carefully.

Assignment: Fill out and submit an application form for approval of research with human subjects. Provide a copy to the class website.

Read Chapter 6 in McKay: Cataloging. How are materials cataloged in an audio archives such as the Maine Folklife Center? The American Folklife Center? Oral History archives? Explore the appendices in the McKay book for sources and review these.

Week 6 Copyright questions

Readings: *A Guide to Oral History and the Law* By John A. Neuenschwander

Assignment: How does the law impact the work that you will be doing on this project? Who owns the project? The interview? How might you use the interview in the future? What will you use for a release form? What information do you need to provide to the interviewee?

Read Chapter 7 in McKay: Preservation

What is the situation with audio recordings in archives in this country? Why do we need to preserve them? How do changes in media technology impact preservation? How are digital materials preserved?

Week 7 The interview

Reading: Rubin and Rubin Chapters 7 & 8

Conduct an interview following the guidelines we have set forth in this class.

Assignment: Write a 2 page paper critiquing your own interview. You will need to listen to it and consider: did you get the necessary permissions? did you ask the right questions? Were you listening carefully? In listening to the interview did you realize new questions that you could ask in a follow-up interview? How is the sound quality?

Read Chapter 8 in McKay: Oral Histories on the Internet.

Is publishing material on the internet different than publishing it in a book? How? What is the difference between a web site and a digital archive? Do you plan to make your interview available via the internet? Have you obtained the correct permission to do so?

Week 8 the follow –up

Readings: Rubin and Rubin Chapter 9

Assignment: Prepare a list of questions that you could use in a follow-up interview.

Read Chapter 9 in McKay: Challenges of the 21st Century. How will technological advances and rights management interact in your research? What steps can be taken to meet the challenges of the future? What standards and best practices are available to guide researchers and archivists in this area?

Week 9 Analysis

Understanding the data: How to analyze the material you have collected.

Reading: Rubin and Rubin Chapter 10

Assignment: begin to code the data in your interview following the guidelines set forth in chapter 10

Week 10 Analysis 2

Reading: Rubin and Rubin Chapter 11

Assignment: write up your analysis from your interview. Critique your own and other students' work in our discussion folder.

Week 11 Next steps: the project. How will you present your data?

Reading: Rubin and Rubin chapter 12

Assignment: Write out a description of your final project. Read and critique the descriptions from your classmates

Week 12 Public presentations of recorded interviews

Readings: Choose one of the web sites listed and write a critique. How would you have constructed the web site? Is the presentation effective? How are the human subjects handled? Are their rights protected?

Week 13 Project presentations to class

Submit a draft of your final project to the class. Critique the other students' projects. Be sure to weigh in on what is well done as well as what could be improved.

Week 14 Final Project due to instructor.

Policies

All assignments are due on Sunday of the week they are assigned. Late assignments may be accepted if there is a valid reason (such as illness). However, keep in mind that much of the work of this class depends upon the interaction between students.

Academic dishonesty includes cheating, plagiarism and all forms of misrepresentation in academic work, and is unacceptable at The University of Maine. As stated in the University of Maine's online undergraduate "Student Handbook," plagiarism (the submission of another's work without appropriate attribution) and cheating are violations of The University of Maine Student Conduct Code. An instructor who has probable cause or reason to believe a student has cheated may act upon such evidence, and should report the case to the supervising faculty member or the Department Chair for appropriate action.

If you have a disability for which you may be requesting an accommodation, please contact Ann Smith, Director of Disabilities Services, 121 East Annex, 581-2319, as early as possible in the term.