Qualitative Methods: Interviewing and Oral History
Lecturer: Andrea Peto, Department of Gender Studies (petoa@ceu.edu)

2015-2016 Winter Term
Total class hours: 22
Credit: 2
Cross listed with the Department of History
Guest lecturers: Laszlo Csirmaz, CEU Computing and Statistical Center, Ivett Molnar, CEU Library
Class meets: TBA
Office hours: TBA
Office: Zrinyi 15. Room 505

Course Description

This course is designed for those who want to use interviewing as a method collecting empirical material for their thesis. The course also discusses ethical dimensions of research and writing. Given that oral history is a technique and a way of constructing histories the course tries to offer an overview of different ways of how to construct the information and how to analyze it in a wider methodological context. The course consists of two parts: lectures are followed by seminars where participants will have the chance to practice making and analyzing interviews. Students will also develop interviewing and digital skills. Special sessions will introduce the students to available on-line interview data bases and qualitative software programs analyzing texts. The readings are available at the course website (moodle) and all assignments should be uploaded or posted there. If you have problems with the moodle (you uploaded the wrong file etc) contact Gabor Acs, acsg@ceu.edu directly.

Learning outcomes:
- Identifying the possibilities and limits of using interviews in historical research,
- Ability to apply qualitative data analysis/narrative analysis in research paper,
- Developing oral skills of presenting information, critical analysis and interviewing; creating compelling, original arguments that integrate theoretical perspectives and research findings and that advance reasonable conclusions,
- Using digital methods in doing and archiving interviews,
- Gaining confidence in critical writing and oral analysis;
- Applying different IT in collecting, analyzing and communicating findings from interviews.

Aim:
The course aims to enrich students’ ability to collect and analyze interview data by using different methods - biographical method, method of oral history, qualitative research software programs – in order to form an interdisciplinary approach to the social
problematic through text, conversation, visual materials and body language. The course uses interviews from the Visual History Archive (VHA) and from other digital archives.

Course requirement:
Enrolled students are required to regularly attend classes and to participate in the class discussions, which are based on the readings for that particular week, write two reflection papers for the class, to do one interview of 5 minutes with the necessary paperwork and write a paper. Each of the requirements must be satisfied for a passing grade. Students missing a class are requested to notify the instructor via email before the class.

Proposal (10%)
Write a brief proposal describing your interview project. Your proposal should not be longer than 1000 words, describing your general interest, why did you choose this topic, your question generating the study, and a brief description of the interviewing method to be used and the sample to be selected. Be sure that you have a research question and a brief description of what you expect from your research! In addition, submit the interview plan (max. 500 words) for your study on a separate sheet: what do you plan to know and how? Answer to the question: what is your approach – and general plan – for your research project and how do you address issues of essentialism and intersectionality? How will you employ sex/gender as analytical categories?

Reflection paper (20%)
Write reflection papers (2) about readings for that class of your choice. Ideally it is connected to your interview exercise but this is not a requirement. The length of your contribution should be 300-500 words, which means you can only develop one main point or argument in each reflection paper, supported by evidence and/or examples from the readings. The paper should be uploaded by Saturday 12.00 CET before that class. The class discussion will be structured around those issues mentioned in the reflection papers. As a preparation for the class students are requested to read the reflection papers of the others.

Interview exercise (30%)
Record an interview (no longer than 5 (five) minutes) with your computer or phone and post it on the moodle. Copy the link in the forum on the course site. The interview will be screened during the class when you are asked to give a short intro and to respond to the questions by other students. For recording and posting it on youtube see the following guideline: http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=57409

You should be submitting supporting documents (transcript, agreements, etc.) to the moodle.

Final paper: interview analysis (30%)
Based on the readings of the class write a min. 2000 word-long scholarly essay on the interview you made discussing theoretical and methodological issues and submit it to the
moodle. Ideally the paper will be using one of the softwares introduced in this course but that is not a requirement.

Class participation (10%)
It includes critical reflection on the readings, the assigned videos as well as interviews uploaded by the participants.

Reading Schedule

Week 1
Introduction, discussion of the assignments
Introduction to online interview databases available at CEU Library (Ivett Molnar)

Week 2
Oral History: Critical Developments

Introduction to qualitative research softwares (Laszlo Csirmaz)

Week 3
Politics of Oral History: Advocacy and Empowerment


Week 4
Intersections of social and personal


Week 5
Legal and Ethical Dilemmas


**Week 6**

**Practicalities**


**Week 7**

**Interviewing: Questions and Questioning**


**Week 8**

**Oral History and Narrativity**


Week 9
Deadline for uploading the links to your interviews to the moodle

Interpreting Memories

Week 10
Subjectivity and intersubjectivity
Interview screening and discussion

Week 11
Interview screening and discussion continues

Week 12
Interview screening and discussion continues, summary

Deadline for uploading the final paper to the moodle is 5 April, 12CET