**Course Code & Title**: LISS216 Biographical Methods

**Convenor(s)**: Alvina Hoffmann

**Institution**: King’s College London

**Department**: LISS DTP

**Academic Year**: 2020-21

**Term**: Summer

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of sessions</th>
<th>Research Platform</th>
<th>Qualitative Research (QuL)</th>
<th>Length of Session(s)</th>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>2 hours</td>
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<tr>
<th>Day, Date</th>
<th>Start : End</th>
<th>Room Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 1 June 2021</td>
<td>15:00-17:00</td>
<td>Via Zoom</td>
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<td>Tuesday 8 June 2021</td>
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<td>Tuesday 15 June 2021</td>
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<td>Tuesday 29 June 2021</td>
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**Enrolment Links**: [Click here](#) to register for this course on Skillsforge. You may be prompted to log in.

**Course Description**:

This course will introduce students across the social sciences to biographical methods, with a focus on biographical interviews and collective biographical analysis. The course will first introduce biographical methods and its broad employment in the social sciences, cover debates in oral history and sociology around the introduction and reflexive use of biographical data in research, and finally put to use biographical interviews and/or collective biographical analysis in students’ own projects.

The first hour of each session will introduce the week’s topic and central questions, followed by a discussion of the assigned (short) text(s). The second hour will be focused on students’ own projects and help them design a strong research strategy to engage in and with biographical research reflexively.

**Session 1: Introduction to Biographical Methods**

The interdisciplinary use of biographical methods: Explaining the social world through individual life experience?


**Session 2: Biographical Data as Oral History**

What is at stake for history in integrating biographical data, according to Passerini?

Session 3: Biographical methods in/and sociology: A focus on Pierre Bourdieu

What is ‘the biographical illusion’? Do you agree with Bourdieu’s critical engagement with biography?


Session 4: Biographical interviews

How to conduct biographical interviews – An example.

This is a biographical interview in which socio-legal scholar Yves Dezalay reflects on his own academic/life trajectory (prompted by the interviewers) and the biographical methods he and his co-author Bryant Garth employ.


Session 5: Collective Biographical Analysis

How to conduct more structural and collective biographical analysis.


Take a look at chapter 2 in Bourdieu’s Homo Academicus as an example of collective biographical analysis:


Reading List:

Readings will be provided for each week.

Eligibility:

The course is open to all PhD students in the social sciences, specifically to those who consider conducting interviews and/or have identified a coherent class of actors they would like to study more systematically.

You must be a PhD student registered at King’s College London, Queen Mary, or Imperial College.
Pre-course preparation:

There is no need to prepare for the course, but it might be helpful to start building a list of potential interviewees or names of actors students would like to study. The convenor will circulate short texts and tasks in advance.

Number of students:

Minimum number required to run: 5

Maximum number of places available: 20