



Course Code & Title	LISS216 Biographical Methods				
Convenor(s)	Alvina Hoffmann				
Institution	King's College London	Department		LISS DTP	
Academic Year	2020-21	Term		Summer	
Number of sessions	5	Research Platform	Qualitative Research (QuL)	Length of Session(s)	2 hours
Day, Date		Start : End		Room Location	
Tuesday 1 June 2021 Tuesday 8 June 2021 Tuesday 15 June 2021 Tuesday 22 June 2021 Tuesday 29 June 2021		15:00-17:00		Via Zoom	
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?

- Bornat, Joanna (2008) 'Biographical methods' in Alasuutari, Pertti, Leonard Bickman and Julia Brannen (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Social Research Methods*. London: Sage

Session 2: Biographical Data as Oral History

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

- Passerini, Luisa (1979) 'Work Ideology and Consensus under Italian Fascism' *Working Paper*,



History Workshop: 84-108.

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?

- Bourdieu, Pierre (1986) 'The Biographical Illusion' in Hemecker, Wilhelm and Edward Saunders (eds.) (2017) *Biography in Theory* de Gruyter.
- Marie Kolkenbrock (2017) 'Life as Trajectory: Pierre Bourdieu's 'The Biographical Illusion' in Hemecker, Wilhelm and Edward Saunders (eds.) (2017) *Biography in Theory* de Gruyter.

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.

- Bigo, Didier and Antonin Cohen (2020) 'Investigating the Internationalisation of State Nobility: A Reflexive Turn to Double Game Strategies – An interview with Yves DEZALAY (Part One)' *Political Anthropological Research on International Social Sciences* 1 (2020). 103-116.
- Bigo, Didier and Antonin Cohen (2020) 'Investigating the Internationalisation of State Nobility: A Reflexive Turn to Double Game Strategies – An interview with Yves DEZALAY (Part Two)' *Political Anthropological Research on International Social Sciences* 1 (2020). 306-336.
- Beerli, Monique (Forthcoming) 'Biographic interviews' in Badache, Fanny, Emilie Dairon, Leah R. Kimber and Lucile Maertens (eds.) *Introduction to International Organization Research Methods* Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press.

Session 5: Collective Biographical Analysis

How to conduct more structural and collective biographical analysis.

- Broady, Donald (2002) 'French prosopography: definition and suggested readings' *Poetics* 30: 381-385.

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

- Bourdieu, Pierre (1988) *Homo Academicus* Cambridge: Polity Press (Chapter 2: The Conflict of the Faculties)

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.



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Advanced Research Methods in Social Sciences

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