Sc 558 Qualitative Research Methods: The Practice of Qualitative Research
SPRING, 2010

Monday 12-2:30
McGuinn: 415
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an introduction to qualitative research methods. You will learn a range of qualitative approaches, including qualitative mixed methods designs and the integration computer software programs designed for assisting with the analysis of qualitative data. You will learn the elements of qualitative research proposal designs, including formulating of a qualitative research question and literature review.

Readings are concerned with the basic procedures of participant observation, intensive interviewing and focus group interviewing, as well as content analysis and Web 2.0 data collection techniques such as online interviewing. We will address the theoretical, ethical and practical issues that arise in the conduct of qualitative research. This course takes a "hands on" approach. This course is "practice-oriented" with the a basic philosophy that methods skills are best taught through linking theory with practice.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class Participation and Attendance: 15 percent

Your engaged participation in the discussion of class readings is a vital part of the seminar. Our seminar format requires that each student make informed contributions and therefore it is important that you read all relevant articles before the class in which they will be discussed. Students are responsible for the assigned readings, for taking part in class discussions. Since the course meets once a week class attendance will be required for each class. If you miss a class, part of your participation grade will be compromised by 5% for each class missed.

Two (2) Seminar Presentations: 20 percent

Students are required to lead TWO (2) seminars. Your presentation should take around 20 to 30 minutes. You are required to prepare a class handout of your SEMINAR –LED talk plus discussion questions. You must provide these materials to students the Friday before the Monday seminar.

Three (3) Methods Assignments: 40 percent

Methods Assignments (more detailed handouts will be provided in-class)

Assignment number ONE: Observation and Participant Observation
You will receive a separate handout on this assignment. You will be asked to select a field site (setting) where you can gather information either through direct observation or participant observation. You will be asked to log in field notes and write up your findings in a short paper. I will provide a detailed description of this assignment in class.

Assignment number TWO. Data Collection: Intensive Interview OR Focus Group Interview.

You will receive a separate handout on this assignment as well. You can carry out either an intensive interview with an individual or focus group.

You should plan to submit a complete record of your data collection materials. I encourage you to explore an area of research you are interested in working on for either a master’s paper/thesis or Ph.D. project, etc. I will provide a detailed outline of this assignment in class.

Some additional notes: For assignments 1 and 2, please see me early so that we can discuss your project and make sure it is within the time limits of the course.

Assignment number THREE: Analysis Assignment: You will be asked to analyze in detail the interview you collected using a range of analysis techniques discussed in class. More information will follow in a separate handout.

Research Proposal. 25 Percent.

Prepare a 10 page research proposal on a topic of your choice (qualitative or mixed methods should be used). You may work on a previous proposal and fine tune the qualitative aspects of this proposal, etc.

I will meet individually with students to discuss where they are in their proposal process.

NOTE: If you are not comfortable, writing a proposal at this stage of your academic career, you can substitute the proposal for a review of the literature paper or another type of paper that we can discuss. See me soon if you decide on this option.

REQUIRED READINGS AND RECOMMENDED READINGS:

Required Texts:


Recommended:

Additional Course Readings:

Additional readings will be posted on BLACKBOARD

COURSE OUTLINE AND READINGS:

Part I: Locating the Field of Qualitative Research: Major Paradigms and Perspectives

Weeks 1 & 2. (JANUARY 18TH AND 25TH) Introduction/Overview; Qualitative Research Paradigms

RESEARCH TASK:
By Week 2. Select a Research Partner (if possible).
Decide on Dates for your in-class presentation
Do this by coming to class with a sheet of your top four dates for presenting and I will try to give you your first and second choices where possible.

WE WILL NOT MEET WEEK 1 (MLK HOLIDAY). PLEASE READ OVER THESE READINGS and we will discuss weeks 1 and 2 the second week of the semester.

Going over the Syllabus and assignments and general introduction to the field of qualitative methods.
Research paradigms and orientations in social research
Research questions and designs


Chapters 1 & 2.

• Guba and Lincoln, "Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues." In Qualitative Approaches, Chapter 1. BLACKBOARD


Part II: Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry

Week 3 (FEBRUARY 1st) : Research Design and Ethical Dilemmas in Qualitative Research

Developing research questions
Combining Qualitative/Quantitative
Ethical and political considerations

RESEARCH TASK:
Week 3. Select a Field Site to Observe and hand it a short paragraph on your plans
paragraph on your plans AND hand in to me and your research partner.

- Thome, Barrie. " 'You still takin' Notes?' Fieldwork and Problems of Informed Consent" Chapter 7 in QUALITATIVE APPROACHES

Recommended:

PART III Methods of Collecting Qualitative Data.

**Week 4 (FEBRUARY 8TH) : ETHNOGRAPHY**

- Entering/exiting the field
- Research/researcher relationship
- Representing the "other" and studying across difference : gender/race/class/sexuality

**RESEARCH TASK**

Week 4. Select a field partner and share Field Notes for Discussion/Exchange with your field

Readings for Week 4:

- Hesse-Biber and Leavy, The Practice of Qualitative Research, Chapter 8. Ethnography
- Reay " Rethinking Social Clas: Qualitative Perspectives on Class and Gender. Hesse-Biber and Yaiser BLACKBOARD

**Ethnographic EXEMPLAR Readings:**


Week 5 (FEBRUARY 15TH): Nuts and Bolts of Conducting and Ethnography: Issues in the Field

Issues and challenges in keeping a journal
Field Notes
Writing and rewriting
Issues of validity and reliability

RESEARCH TASKS:
Assign #1 task Week 5. BRING TO CLASS A conceptual memo to share with the class by Jot down no more than a half page on suggestions for analysis

Research Proposal Task Week 5. Come up with your PROPOSAL research question/s for your proposal.

Example of Taking Field Notes:

• Bailey, C. A. A Guide to Field Research. (Chapter 3)


BLACKBOARD

EXEMPLARY READINGS: SELECT ONE


• Bring in Field Notes for Discussion/Exchange in class Carry out a preliminary analysis of field notes and bring in conceptual memo to share with the class. Try jotting down no more than a half page on suggestions for coding, etc.

Week 6 (FEBRUARY 22ND) In-Depth Interviewing & on-line interviewing.

ASSIGNMENT#1 OBSERVATION IS DUE TODAY.

RESEARCH TASKS:
Week 6. Research Tasks (1) Select interview subject /focus group subject (2) Create a research question (preferably one from your tentative research proposal to form the basis of your interview protocol. (3) HAND DRAFT OF your complete semi-structured interview protocol share with your reseach partner by Friday of week 6-- Feb 26th

• Hesse-Biber and Leavy, The Practice of Qualitative Research. Chapter 5
READ: Theory of on-line interviewing : Salmons: Chapters 1 & 2
SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:


- Devault, Marjorie. "Talking and Listening from Women's Standpoint: Feminist Strategies for Interviewing and Analysis." Hesse-Biber and Yaiser  AVAILABLE ON BLACKBOARD

**EXEMPLARY INTERVIEW READINGS : ( SELECT ONE)**


**SELECT ONE ON-LINE EXEMPLARY ON-LINE READING:**

Exemplary Application: Salmons: Chapters 6 OR 7

**WEEK 7. SPRING BREAK MARCH 1-5TH  NO CLASS ON MONDAY MARCH 1ST**

**WEEK 8. (MARCH 8TH) : Focus Group Research**

**RESEARCH TASKS:**

Week 8. FINALIZE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL and hand to your research respondent who will make comments to you by end of week 9.

Proposal Task Week 8: Prepare a short literature review section of your proposal. Share with research partner who will provide feedback to you by end of week 8, Friday March 12th.

- Hesse-Biber and Leavy. The Practice of Social Research Chapter 7


**Exemplary Readings: ( select 2 of the following)**

- Peter McDermott and Julia Rothenberg " Why Urban Parents Resist Involvement in Their Children’s Elementary Education. " Chapter 14 In Hesse-Biber and Leavy, Approaches to Qualitative Research. BLACKBOARD


**Week 9 (MARCH 15TH) Mixed-Methods Research**

**RESEARCH TASKS:**

Week 9 Hand in your final protocol in class on Week 9 and conduct interview/focus group by end of week 9, March 19th.

PROPOSAL WORK Week 9: Formulate the research design of your proposal—methods of data collection/sampling, etc. Share with design with your research partner who will provide written feedback by the end of week 9 March 19th.
Hesse-Biber and Leavy, the Practice of Qualitative Research, chapter 9.

Exemplars:
Mark R. Rank: “The Blending of Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Understanding Childbearing Among Welfare Recipients. Hesse-Biber and Leavy, Approaches to Qualitative Research. BLACKBOARD

Deborah L. Tolman and Laura Szalacha, “Dimensions of Desire: Bridging Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in a Study of Female Adolsecent Sexuality. Hesse-Biber and Leavy, Appraoches to Qualitative Research BLACKBOARD

PART III. DATA ANALYSIS AND REPRESENTATION

Week 10 (MARCH 22ND) : What is Qualitative Data Analysis?

RESEARCH TASK: Week 10: Come up with analysis plan for your data. Share with your research partner who will provide you with feedback by the end of week 10 March 26th.

What is Qualitative Data Analysis?
Hesse-Biber and Leavy, The Practice of Qualitative Research Chapter 12
Bernard and Ryan, Chapter 1, 3 and 4.

Exemplary Reading:

HYPERRESEARCH BOOKCAMP WILL BE HELD THIS WEEK: ATTENDANCE AT SPECIAL WORKSHOP (TBA) IS OPTIONAL.

Week 11 (MARCH 29TH) What is Grounded Theory?

INTERVIEW ASSIGNMENT #2 IS DUE TODAY, MARCH 29TH.

RESEARCH TASK: Week 11. DATA ANALYSIS ASSIGNMENT #3. Share and discuss your preliminary data analysis rationale for your interview with your partner and hand in a one page analysis rationale of how you intend to analyze your interview.

What is Grounded Theory?
How do I conduct a grounded theory analysis?

• Bernard and Ryan, Chapter 12.
• Charmaz, Kathy. "Grounded Theory." Chapter 23 Approaches to Qualitative Data. BLACKBOARD.
SELECT TWO EXEMPLARY Readings:


Week 12: [APRIL 5TH: NOTE MONDAY IS EASTER MODAY AND WE WILL NEED TO FIND ANOTHER TIME TO MEET THIS WEEK TO MAKE UP FOR EASTER MONDAY]

**WEEK 12 (TIME OF CLASS TBA) APRIL 5TH: Content Analysis**

**RESEARCH TASK:** Week 12. Conduct your data analysis and share your analysis with your research partner for feedback.

What is content analysis? How do I conduct a content analysis and why?

Bernard and Ryan, Chapter 13.


WEEK 13  April 12th.  Representation and Write- up of a Qualitative Study

**ASSIGNMENT # 3 DATA ANALYSIS IS DUE TODAY, April 12th  IN CLASS.**

How do I write up Qualitative Research? What is the format? How do I assess the validity of my qualitative interpretation?

• Denzin, Norman K. 'The Art and Politics of Interpretation." In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln  Hesse-Biber and Leavy, Approaches to Qualitative Research BLACKBOARD

• Chapter 4 “Linking Up.” Harry Wolcott. 2ND EDITION--*Writing Up Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, Sage BLACKBOARD

**SELECT ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:**

• Katherine Borland " That’s Not What I Said": Interpretive conflict in Oral Narrative Research." in Hesse-Biber and Leavy chapter 24. BLACKBOARD
Week 14: (APRIL 19TH) PATRIOT’S DAY. NO CLASS BUT... ARRANGE A ONE-ON-ONE MEETING WITH YOUR RESEARCH PARTNER

Research Task:

ROUGH DRAFT OF YOUR POPOSAL DUE TO RESEARCH PARTNER (INCLUDING ABSTRACT) BY Monday April 19th. Arrange a ONE-ON-ONE meeting with your research partner this week to discuss your research rough draft proposal and obtain written feedback before your one-on-one meeting. Please hand in research partner’s comments with your final proposal.

Email to me an ABSTRACT OF YOUR PROPOSAL to me by Friday, APRIL 23rd

WEEK 16 AND 17TH (APRIL 26TH AND MAY 3RD) APRIL 26TH AND MAY 3RD.
CATCH UP AND PROPOSAL PRESENTATION

STUDENTS WILL FORMALLY PRESENT THEIR PROPOSAL PROJECTS OVER WEEKS 15 & 16.

DUE DATES FOR CLASS PROJECTS/ASSIGNMENTS/PROPOSAL

NOTE: WEEKLY DUE DATES OVERLAP FOR ASSIGNMENTS SO BE SURE TO READ OVER ALL STEP BY STEP DUE DATES AS SEVERAL THINGS MAY BE DUE ON ANY GIVEN WEEK.

By Week 2. Select a Research Partner (if possible) by end of this week. Decide on Dates for your in-class presentation (in class activity) Bring to class a sheet of your top four dates for presenting and I will try to give you your first and second choices where possible.

ASSIGNMENT # 1: OBSERVATION DUE WEEK 6: FEBRUARY 22nd–
STEP BY STEP DUE DATES FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT:

Week 3. Select a Field Site to Observe and hand it a short paragraph on your plans and also give a copy to your research partner for comment.

Week 4. Select a field partner and share Field Notes for Discussion/Exchange with your field note partner. Begin to carry out a preliminary analysis of field notes.

Week 5. BRING TO CLASS A conceptual memo to share with the class AND Jot down no more than a half page on suggestions for analysis

ASSIGNMENT # 2: INTERVIEWING IS DUE WEEK 11. March 29TH.
STEP BY STEP DUE DATES FOR THIS ASSIGNMENT.
Week 6.  (1) Select interview subject /focus group subjects.  
(2) Create a research question (preferably one from your tentative research proposal to form the basis of your interview protocol and by end of week 6, please complete a semi-structured interview protocol draft to share with your research partner.

WEEK 8. FINALIZE INTERVIEW PROTOCOL and hand to your research respondent who will make comments to you by end of week 8.

Week 9. Hand in your final protocol in class on Week 9 and conduct interview/focus group by end of week 9

ASSIGNMENT #3 DATA ANALYSIS. IS DUE WEEK 13: APRIL 12TH.
Step by Step:

  Week 11. Share and discuss your data analysis rationale with your partner and hand in a one page rationale of how you intend to analyze your interview.

  Week 12. Conduct your data analysis and share your analysis with your research partner for feedback by end of week 12.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE: WEEK 15: APRIL 26TH.

STEP BY STEP PREPARATION DEADLINES

  Week 5. Come up with and you’re your research question/s for your proposal.

  Week 8. Come up with a short literature review of your proposal. Share with research partner who will provide feedback by end of week 7.

  Week 9. Formulate your research design section of your proposal—methods of data collection/sampling, etc. Share with research partner and obtain feedback from them by end of week 9.

  Week 11: Come up with analysis plan for your data. Share with your research partner who will provide you with feedback by the end of week 11.

  Week 14: Share a draft of your research proposal INCLUDING ABSTRACT with your research partner by Monday and arrange to meet with your research partner one-on one during week 14. Your RESEARCH partner WILL PROVIDE WRITTEN comments on the rough draft of your proposal at the time of your meeting. PLEASE be sure to hand in your research partner’s comments with your final proposal.

  Email me an ABSTRACT OF YOUR PROPOSAL by Friday, April 23rd of that week.