

EDP 384: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS (Unique no. 10965)
Fall 2014

Instructor: Ed Emmer
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Office hrs: M 2-3, Tu 1-2, Th 11-12, and by appointment
Text: Corbin, J. & Strauss, A., (2008). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Course description

This course examines research methods that are descriptive, field-based, interpretive, and discovery-focused, in contrast to methods that use quantitative summaries of data in order to test null hypotheses or to produce numerical indicators of pre-determined constructs. The two main objectives of the class are to prepare you to conduct qualitative research and to be able to evaluate published qualitative research. Topics covered include varieties of qualitative research (emphasizing grounded theory, but also including case studies, ethnography, and phenomenology), identifying questions and phenomena for research, planning and conducting qualitative research, coding and other analytic procedures, developing an interpretation, and trustworthiness concerns in qualitative inquiry. We will emphasize approaches that are more suited to smaller scale, lower budget projects conducted by a single investigator. Class sessions will be devoted to discussions of the text and of selected articles and chapters illustrating different forms of qualitative research in several disciplines. We will also do some limited fieldwork, conducting interviews and observations. Later in the semester after work has begun on individual projects, we will use some class time to discuss issues, problems, and insights gained from the project activities.

Grading policy and related matters:

Evaluation: The course grade will be based on the project and some short assignments (60%), a take-home final exam (30%), and participation (10%). Incompletes (X) will not be given except for medical necessity or other equally compelling reasons. Not completing the project is not grounds for an incomplete; think of the paper as a project progress report.

Project description:

The course project will be to conduct a small qualitative study, including data collection, analysis, report, and oral presentation. Learning about qualitative research is greatly aided by immersion in the process, because it provides the researcher a close-up view of the issues, potential, and problems associated with the approach. A semester is a short time to complete all the phases of a study, so some reasonable limits on the extensiveness of the sample, data collection, and analysis will be established. A fuller description of the course project will be provided in class.

IRB Requirements

If the class project is part of some other research activity (e.g., funded project, professor you work for), the project will need IRB approval, typically as an amendment to the original proposal to IRB. If the project is independent work, and you are fairly sure that you'll use the project as the basis for an article or presentation at a professional meeting, you'll also need IRB approval. Get started early! Note: A project that is done only for this class with no intention of subsequent publication does not require IRB approval.

Other matters:

If you have a condition that will require some accommodation during instruction, exams, or for assignments, please let me know ASAP, and at least before the end of the second week of classes. The University of Texas provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259.

Course Topics and Readings (note—items in parentheses will be the subject of small group reports to the class)

DAY	TOPIC	READING
9/8	Introduction	
9/15	Characteristics of qualitative research	C&S ch 1-2; Creswell, ch. 4; Lasser & Tharinger; Paul & Hayes
9/22	More on characteristics; paradigms and analytic tools;	C&S ch. 3-4; Ponterotto; Schraw, Wadkins, & Olafson; (Woodruff & Schallert); (Polaschek, et al.); (Tyson, et al.)
9/29	Data collection: interviewing; <i>Interview 1</i>	C&S ch 5; Bogdan & Biklen ch 3:94-104; Spradley 55-68; (Forsey); (Fontana & Frey)
10/6	Beginning data analysis, coding <i>Interview 2</i>	C&S ch 6; Webster-Stratton & Spitzer 1-33
10/13	Fieldwork and observation	C&S ch 7; B&B ch 3: 73-93; Harry; (Vaught); (Allen)
10/20	Ethics; More on fieldwork and analysis <i>Field Observation</i>	C&S ch 8-9; Punch; (Levinson & Sparks); (Booher-Jennings); (Garrity)
10/27	Validity matters	Lincoln & Guba; Ekins; (Hood); (White, Oelke; & Friesen);
11/3	Phenomenology	Giorgi & Giorgi; Robinson; (Martinnson, et al.); (Anderson & Spencer)
11/10	Case studies	Stake; Cambone; (Brown & Rodriguez) (Fournier)
11/17	Context; Student reports	C&S ch10
11/24	Process; Student reports	C&S ch11
12/1	Integration, Student reports	C&S ch12

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