

Soc 7420 Qualitative Research Methods (3 credit hours)

Thursdays, 11:30-2:30, 335 Isbister

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Office Hours (307 Isbister): Mondays 2:30-3:30 p.m. or by appointment

This course is designed in particular for graduate students who plan to undertake qualitative thesis research projects. The **purpose** of this course is twofold: 1) to provide graduate students with an introduction to the range of qualitative research traditions and their ontological, epistemological and methodological underpinnings; and 2) to provide students with guidance in and opportunities for practicing qualitative data collection, and analysis and interpretation. Classes will integrate traditional lecture, free-writing, group and pair discussion, and guest presentations.

The **required text** for this course is van den Hoonaard's *Qualitative Research in Action: A Canadian Primer* (2012). **Additional required readings** will be made available through hard copy or electronic course reserve. Students are encouraged to seek out additional supplemental readings to meet their needs.

After taking this course and completing required readings and assignments, and through participating in class discussions, **you will be able to:**

1. Generate a clear, feasible research question amenable to qualitative inquiry
2. Distinguish and appreciate paradigmatic foundations underlying qualitative inquiry traditions
3. Design sampling strategies appropriate to your research question
4. Identify ethical issues in qualitative research as well as strategies to address these
5. Design appropriate data collection procedures for your research question; estimate challenges you may face collecting data and identify techniques for addressing these
6. Explain the value of, and specify procedures for, documenting qualitative research procedures, analytic decisions and thought processes through research logs/memos
7. Identify challenges associated with transcription and management of data and how these can be addressed
8. Demonstrate a working knowledge of qualitative data coding and other forms of analysis
9. Develop and extend theoretical insights through qualitative research
10. Explain the debates around qualitative research validity and reliability and identify ways to promote rigour throughout the research process
11. Engage with and critically evaluate existing qualitative research studies

Schedule and Required Readings

Date	Topic	Readings
Jan 10	Introduction to Qualitative Inquiry	Chapter 2 and Bryman, A. (2004). Introduction. In Bryman, A., <i>Quantity and Quality in Social Research</i> . New York, NY: Routledge. Tracy, S.J. (2010). Qualitative quality: eight "big tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> , 16(10), 837-851.

Jan 17	Research Questions & Design; Rigour.	Chapter 3 (p.44-50) and Cresswell, J.W. (2013). Philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks. Chapter 2 pp.15-41, in Cresswell, J.W., <i>Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among five approaches</i> (3 rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Maxwell, J.A. (2013). Research questions: what do you want to understand? Pp. 73-86 in Maxwell, J.A. <i>Qualitative Research Design: An interactive approach</i> (3 rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Jan 24	Logistics, research logs, reflexivity, and ethics.	Chapter 10 and Mauthner, N.S., and Doucet, A. (2003). Reflexive accounts and accounts of reflexivity in qualitative data analysis. <i>Sociology</i> , 37(3), 413-31. Pillow, W.S. (2003). Confession, catharsis or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. <i>Qualitative Studies in Education</i> , 16(2), 175-96.
Jan 31	Fieldwork Traditions: Observation and Ethnography	Chapter 4 and Coffey, P., Atkinson, A., and Delamont, S. (2003) Participant observation and interviewing. Chapter 4, pp.97-117 in (same authors), <i>Key Themes in Qualitative Research: Continuities and Changes</i> . Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira. Beach, D. (2005). From fieldwork to theory and representation in ethnography. In Troman, G., Jeffrey, B., and Walford, G. (Eds.), <i>Methodological Issues and Practices in Ethnography (Studies in Educational Ethnography, Volume 11)</i> , Emerald Group Publishing, 1-17.
Feb 7	Interview Traditions: Phenomenology, Interpretive Inquiry, and Grounded Theory	Chapter 5 and Charmaz, K. (2008). Constructionism and the grounded theory method. Chapter 20 pp.397-412 In Holstein, J.A., and Gubrium, J.F., <i>Handbook of Constructionist Research</i> . Guilford Press, New York, NY. Gubrium, J.F., and Holstein, J.A. (2000). Analyzing interpretive practice. In Denzin, N.K., and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds), <i>Handbook of Qualitative Research</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Feb 14	Textual Traditions: Discourse Analysis, IE and documents *Data Collection Assignment due in-class today*	Chapter 6 and p.150-151 and p.157-162 and De Vault, M. (2006). Introduction: What is institutional ethnography? <i>Social Problems</i> , 53(3), 294-8. Ainsworth, S., and Hardy, C. (2004). Critical discourse analysis and identity: why bother? <i>Critical Discourse Studies</i> , 1(2), 225-259.
Feb 28	Critical and Anti-Oppressive Traditions: Participatory Action and Indigenous Research	Heron, J., and Reason, P. (1997). A participatory inquiry paradigm. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> , 3(3), 274-94. Potts, K., and Brown, L. (2005). Becoming an anti-oppressive researcher. Pp.255-286 in Brown, L., and Strega, S. (Eds.), <i>Research as Resistance</i> . Canadian Scholars Press, TO.
Mar 7	Creative Traditions: Arts Based Inquiry and Creative Analytic Practices	Bochner, A.P., and Ellis, C. (2003). An introduction to the arts and narrative research: art as inquiry. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> , 9(4), 506-14. Richardson, L. (1998). Writing: a method of inquiry. Pp.345-71 in Denzin, N.K., and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), <i>Collecting and Interpreting Qualitative Materials</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA:

		Sage.
Mar 14	Data management and analysis *voluntary withdrawal deadline March 20*	Chapter 7 and Morse, J.M. (1994). 'Emerging from the data': the cognitive processes of analysis in qualitative inquiry. Pp.23-43 in Morse, J. (Ed.), <i>Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Welsh, E. (2002). Dealing with data: using NVIVO in the qualitative data analysis process. <i>Forum: Qualitative Social Research</i> , 3(2), Art.26
Mar 21	Analysis: Coding and beyond Group presentations I	Coffey, C., and Atkinson, P. (1996). Concepts and Coding. Chapter 2, pp.26-53 in Coffey, A., and Atkinson, P., <i>Making Sense of Qualitative Data: Complimentary research strategies</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Wolcott, H.F. (1994). Description, analysis, and interpretation in qualitative inquiry. Chapter 2 pp.9-54 in Wolcott, F., <i>Transforming Qualitative Data: Description, analysis and interpretation</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Mar 28	Interpretation and Theory Building Group presentations II *Data analysis assignment due in-class today*	Ely, M., Vinz, R., Downing, M., and Anzul, M. (1997). Working in interpretive modes. Chapter 5 (pp.223-73) In Ely, M., et al., <i>On Writing Qualitative Research: Living by Words</i> . Philadelphia, PA: Falmer Press. Schwandt, T.A. (1999). On understanding understanding. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> , 5(4), 451-464.
Apr 4	Writing and Representation Group presentations III *Take-home exam given out today*	Chapter 8

Apr 11th : Final Take-Home Exam Due

Evaluation

Evaluation will be based on grades assigned for each of the following components:

In-Class Group Presentation on a Research Tradition (exact due date TBA). 15%

In groups of THREE: you will be assigned one qualitative *methodological* approach or tradition (e.g., ethnography, social phenomenology, grounded theory, action research, case study, etc.). Locate 9 journal articles reflecting research using that approach; divide these readings up, and prepare a 15 minute in class group presentation that summarizes what you learned about the approach, drawing on examples from the articles (e.g., what kinds of research questions are associated with the methodology; what kind of knowledge is generated and how (e.g. data collection and analysis); and strengths and weaknesses of the approach.

Data Collection Experience. 25% due in-class February 14, 2012. Choose ONE of either:

a) **Observation Assignment:** Conduct at least two hours of inconspicuous observation in a public area of your choice *on campus*, addressing a research question of your choice (with approval of instructor). Submit your field notes and about a 4-6 page (double spaced) reflection on: the process and what it was like for you as an observer, the challenges you faced, and what

you learned about your research question based on your initial reflection. Cite class readings where applicable.

OR

b) **Interview Assignment:** Conduct about a 1-2 hour-long, primarily open-ended interview *with a class-mate* to address a research question of your choice (with approval of the instructor). Submit your notes and about a 4-6 page (double-spaced) reflection on the interview and what the process was like for you as an interviewer, the challenges you faced during the interview, and what you learned about the research question based on your initial reflections. Cite class readings where applicable.

Data Analysis Experience. 25% due in-class March 28, 2012

In this project you will code an interview transcript (provided in-class) by hand, using an “open coding” approach for open-ended interviews. Submit your coded transcripts, a summary description of each of your codes, and about a 4 page double spaced paper describing what the process was like for you, challenges you faced, and the ideas that emerged for you while coding the interview. Cite class readings where applicable.

Participation. 10%

This will be based on a combination of a) your contributions to class discussions (quality and quantity); b) your contributions to regular free-writing activities (you will be required to share selected sections with your peers and to create, in-class, a summary of your progress at the end of term), and the extent of your contribution to the group presentation project (as evaluated by yourself and your peers).

Final Exam (take home, choice of 2/4 essay questions). 25%

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme: The following letter/percentage grading scheme will be adopted: A+=90% and above (Exceptional); A=80-89% (Excellent); B+=76-79% (Very Good); B=70-75% (Good); C+=66-69% (Satisfactory); C=60-65% (Adequate); D=50-59% (Marginal); F=under 50% (Failure).

Disruptions: Disruptions due to excessive or persistent talking/whispering, late arrivals or early departures are especially distracting in large classes. Respect your classmates and your instructor. If you prefer to talk with your classmates, please leave the class for its duration (or I will ask you to do so). Persistent disruption may result in disbarment from the course. Any student with a legitimate reason for leaving class early should inform me at the beginning of class.

Statement of Consequences of Missed Tests: Failure to complete a test will result in a mark of zero for that test. Except under exceptional circumstances (e.g., medical issues accompanied by a valid doctor’s note) missed tests cannot be re-taken at a later date. If a make-up test is approved (and this will be a *different* test), you must attend at the scheduled time.

Statement of Consequences of Late Assignments: Late assignments will receive a penalty of a 15% deduction from your total mark. In exceptional circumstances an extension may be

granted if you receive my permission in advance and provide documentation (e.g. medical note).

Campus and Disability Services: If you are experiencing difficulties with your studies or assignments, or have a disability or illness which may affect your learning or assessment, you should discuss these issues with me and/or one of the following Student Affairs offices: Disability Services; Student Counselling and Career Centre; University 1; Learning Assistance Centre.

Faith Holidays: I should be notified of your intended absence at least three weeks in advance, where special arrangements are needed to avoid jeopardizing your studies.

Academic Integrity: Acquaint yourself with the University's policies on "Personation at Examinations" and "Plagiarism and Cheating" found online under "Section 8" in "University Policies" at the University of Manitoba's Academic Calendar and Catalog (www.umanitoba.ca/calendar). Also see the "Academic Integrity and Student Conduct" tutorials at <http://umanitoba.ca/student/advocacy>. The Faculty of Arts reserves the right to submit student work that is suspected of being plagiarized to Internet sites designed to detect plagiarism.

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