

Communication 6763
Qualitative Methods in Communication Research

Instructor:	Janice L. Krieger, PhD	Course Meets:	T/Th 7:05-8:25 pm
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Course Description

Through presentation of scholarly readings and immersion into one's own in-depth research project, this course explores a variety of qualitative research approaches, taking into account issues of epistemology (ways of knowing), methodology (ways of examining), and representation (ways of writing and reporting). We will examine interpretive theory, and several intellectual traditions that constitute this field of research. We will read exemplars of qualitative research that illustrate these particular theoretical traditions as well as examine key issues such as ethics and qualitative quality.

Students will carry out their own research project, engaging in 25+ hours of field research. Through this project, students will have the opportunity to collectively enact and reflect upon the central phases of qualitative research such as: planning, negotiating access, observing, interviewing, creating field texts, analyzing field texts, writing, and making a public impact. The goal is that students will emerge from the class with first-hand qualitative research experience, a paper that is conference submission ready, and a significant understanding of qualitative methods that can serve as a basis for comprehensive exams and dissertations.

Because we are covering both the philosophies and methods of interpretive research, a significant amount of reading and research is involved in this course. The required texts will cover the nuts-and-bolts of qualitative research/analysis while the supplementary chapters/articles will provide further depth as well as exemplars.

Students should achieve the following objectives through the course:

1. Understand the value of qualitative research methods
2. Learn philosophical assumptions that inform qualitative research methods
3. Become adept at participant observation, in-depth interviewing, and familiar with focus group approaches.
4. Read and appreciate exemplar qualitative research studies
5. Design and conduct a qualitative research project of one's own
6. Practice and become comfortable with several ways to analyze qualitative data
7. Write a conference-ready qualitative research paper
8. Lay the groundwork for a successful qualitative comprehensive exam question and a final thesis/dissertation

Course Reading and Software

Required:

Bohannan, P., & Van der Elst, D. (1998). *Asking and listening: ethnography as personal adaptation*. Prospect Heights, Ill.: Waveland Press.

Krueger, R. A., & Casey, M. A. (2009). *Focus groups: a practical guide for applied research*, 4th ed. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell Publishing.

Wolcott, H. F. (2009). *Writing up qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Electronic articles and scanned chapters available via password-protected course website.

NVIVO: <https://ocio.osu.edu/software/directory/slwin/>

Recommended:

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *Handbook of qualitative research*, 4th Ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ellingson, L. L. (2008). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Goodall, H. B. (2008). *Writing qualitative inquiry: Self, stories, and academic life*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed. (2010). Washington DC: American Psychological Association.

Spradley, J. P. (1980). *Participant observation*. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston.

Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Course Requirements

Passionate Participation & Attendance (20% of final course grade)

Please complete assigned readings before class so you can participate in an enthusiastic and informed manner. Participation points are earned through attendance and focused attention for the full class period, thoughtful and appropriate verbal participation (more does not always = better), listening alertly and taking notes, concentrating on course material rather than distractions, and providing supportive interaction with other class members.

Inspiring Semester Research Paper & Presentation (40% of final course grade)

A ~25 page paper based upon your original qualitative research is the course's culminating assignment. This study involves locating a "site," immersing yourself in its social action, analyzing the significance of that social action for its participants, and constructing a significant scholarly account of how the phenomena implicates practice and theory.

Your final project should reflect 25 or more field research hours (of participant observation, interviewing, focus groups, etc.). Each field hour is usually accompanied by 3-4 hours of recording, transcription, fact checking, and analysis, equating to about 5 to 8 hours each week over a 14 week semester associated with working on your own field project.

Papers should open with a rationale, clear purpose, a review of relevant literature, research questions (or other specific issues to be analyzed), and methods. The heart—and most important part—of the paper are the findings and analysis of data, as well as the theoretical and practical implications and contributions of the piece. During one of the final class periods, you will give an oral presentation of your final paper.

Integrating Ideas – Semester Exam (20% of final course grade)

A semester exam will assess understanding and integration of course concepts. *Part one* will be a take-home exam that will help students 1) prepare for comps, and 2) draft a methodology section that may later be integrated into the final paper. *Part two* will be an in-class, short-answer identification exam (key terms, key passages/quotations).

Practical Practica (20% of final course grade)

There will be ten practica assignments throughout the semester that will help you engage the ideas presented in class as well as help you prepare your final paper. Each assignment described below will be graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Passing all ten practica will result in a grade of "A" for this portion of your final grade, nine will result in a grade of "B+", and eight in a grade of "B-". Due dates for each practicum are located on the Class Schedule.

1. **Proposed Site & Phenomenon of Study:** In 2-3 pages, describe three potential field sites and/or group of participants for your study. For each, discuss: 1) The site or people you want to work with and the general research issue(s) you want to explore; 2) How the site or people of interest are complementary with your theoretical, practical, or professional interests; 3) How your background and experience affects the ability to gain access to these contexts or people; and 4) Your plan of having access to this site. See Tracy, chapter one, for details.

2. **Theoretical / Social Issue or Problem:** In 2-3 pages, describe a social and/or theoretical issue or “problem” you plan to explore in your research site. Phrase your approach in the form of one or more research questions (see Tracy chapter one). Describe why an emic qualitative study of this phenomenon is especially warranted and valuable. Explain several sensitizing concepts from past experience or research that align with your interests. How will these concepts help focus your research? As a bricoleur, what types of data could you piece together in order to answer your research questions? These research issues/ problems/ questions may change; this is a place to start. See Tracy, chapter two, for details.
3. **Human Subjects Paperwork*:** Become familiar with the university’s human subjects requirements and turn in the application forms. Complete the training and print out or otherwise keep record of your certification. Turn in the forms and follow up regarding their approval. Reference Tracy, chapter five, for more information on human subjects training and certification. **If a student does not wish to obtain IRB approval for their study, an alternate assignment will be made available upon request.*
4. **Map and Narrative Tour:** Complete a detailed map and narrative tour of your site (or a key part of your site). Note key people (or types of people), artifacts, and objects and their relation to each other. Accompany the map with a narrative tour—a mini interpretation of the scene—that explains what the map says about research participants’ values, rules, priorities, ways of being, status, power, etc. Ask the question: What does this tell me, conceptually about this place? (try to see things as “evidence” of certain arguments). Include as many “senses” (sight, sound, smell, taste, feel, mood) as possible Provide an updated version of your guiding research question(s) at the top of the practicum (see Tracy Ch. 4).
5. **Fieldnotes:** Write a set of fieldnotes that represents at least 4 hours of participant observation and reflects tips and guidelines for good field records and observation. Provide an updated rendition of your guiding research question(s) at the top of the practicum (see Tracy Ch. 6).
6. **Interview Guide:** Prepare an interview schedule or guide for use with your participants. Identify the a) ideal sample, b) the type (or types) of interviews you are likely to engage in, and c) the stance(s) that you will take. Explain why these approaches are most appropriate for your research. Then, write out the actual queries and probes in the order you foresee, identifying the types of questions (aim for a mix). Provide an updated rendition of your guiding research question(s) at the top of the practicum. See Tracy, chapter seven, for details.
7. **Research Proposal:** Prepare a 10-12-page research proposal including: 1) title, abstract & key words; 2) introduction, purpose and rationale; 3) literature review/conceptual framework (point to current discussions, controversies, gaps and unanswered questions and how your study might address these issues); 4) research questions 5) proposed methodology, protocol and logistics, 6) timeline/budget. You can also hypothesize your findings. See Tracy, chapter five, for details.
8. **Analysis Practicum:** You will have a choice of what to turn in, ranging from a coded data text to a matrix to a categorized Nvivo printout. Choose one or more of the options provided in chapter nine (Box 9.6) or ten (Box 10.5).
9. **9a. Rough Draft & 9b. Peer Review:** Turn in rough draft of entire paper, including findings, implications, limitations and future directions. Write a 2-3 page peer review of one of your colleagues’ papers, providing constructive advice and suggestions for further development.

Course Policies

Missed or Late Assignments: By definition, missed or late assignments are below average. Missed or late assignments create major time and scheduling conflicts, and are unfair to those who are prepared. For these reasons, make-ups and extensions for assignments will generally *not* be given. Late work will be penalized unless permission for extended deadlines is obtained beforehand. If, at any point, you are confused about assignments, expectations, or are getting lost in the course material, please set up a time to meet with me.

Classroom Civility: Our goal is to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. As such, I expect students to display respect for the professor, fellow students, and university facilities, pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities, avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., having private conversations, “chatting” online), and avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom. This is not an exhaustive list of behaviors; rather, they represent the minimal standards that help make the classroom a productive place for all concerned. Students may be asked to leave the classroom for engaging in incivility and final grades may be reduced by a third of letter grade for repeated instances of classroom incivility.

Academic Integrity: Students in this course accept responsibility for being held to the highest of academic standards as set forth by *The Ohio State University Office of Academic Affairs*. As such, academic dishonesty of any kind is unacceptable. Dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, plagiarism, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work previously used or that of another person, and tampering with the academic work of other students. For more information, see www.osu.edu/offices/oa/procedures/1.O.html. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the committee (Faculty Rule 3335-5-487).

Written Work: There are expectations that will be applied across all graded work. All written work should demonstrate your familiarity with the issues or concepts under discussion. Criteria for evaluation include: (a) scope and focus of your work, (b) conciseness and clarity, (c) organization, (d) knowledge of the topic, (e) depth of the investigation, (f) writing style, and (g) use of references. All written assignments must be typewritten and conform to APA style guidelines (6th ed). Please use double spacing and a font that is reasonable size (e.g., 12 in New Times Roman).

Grading: Graduate coursework should generally be at the B+ or better level, especially for doctoral candidates; please see me if it appears your work is dropping below that level. A B- or lower suggests a serious problem. Generally, papers fall into several groups which I rank-order from A on down to B (again, a grade less than B suggests significant problems that we should discuss). I use a grading scheme based on A=4.0. E.g., an A-/A is a 3.85, an A- is a 3.7, an A-/B+ is 3.5, and a B+ is 3.3.

Academic Support: Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please note that the Office for Disability Services (614-292-3307) in 150 Pomerene Hall can help coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Course Schedule	
Week	Topic / Readings (to have completed) / Assignments Due
1	<p>Tuesday, January 7: Introduction and Course Overview Bohannan #1: The Others Ericson, F (2011). A history of qualitative inquiry in social and educational research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of qualitative research</i> (4th ed., pp.43-60). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Tracy Prologue: Is this Book for Me? Tracy #1: Developing Contextual Research that Matters</p> <p>Thursday, January 9: Entering the Conversation of Qualitative Research That Matters Bohannan #2: Becoming You Gonzalez, M. C. (2000). The four seasons of ethnography: A creation-centered ontology for ethnography. <i>International Journal of Intercultural Relations</i>, 24, 623-650. Tracy #2: Entering the Conversation of Qualitative Research Wolcott #1: On Your Mark</p>
2	<p>Tuesday, January 14: Paradigmatic Reflections Bohannan #3: Ethnography before Anthropology Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of qualitative research</i> (4th ed., pp. 97-128). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Tracy #3: first half - Paradigmatic Reflections Wolcott #2: Get Going</p> <p>Thursday, January 16: Planning & Negotiating Access Bohannan #4: The Discovery of Culture... Goffman, E. (1989). On fieldwork. <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i>, 18, 123-132. Tracy #4: Fieldwork and Fieldplay: Negotiating Access & Exploring the Scene</p> <p><i>Due: Practicum #1: - Proposed Site & Phenomenon of Study</i></p>
3	<p>Tuesday, January 21: Proposing Research to Institutional Review Boards and Other Audiences Bohannan #5: The Beginnings of Ethnographic Fieldwork Tracy #5: Proposal Writing: Explaining Your Research to Institutional Review Boards, Instructors, Supervisory Committees, and Funding Agencies</p> <p>Thursday, January 23: Thick Description, Ethnography of Communication, and Symbolic Interactionism Bohannan #6: Participant Observation Philipsen, G. (1975). Speaking “like a man” in Teamsterville: Culture patterns of role enactment in an urban neighborhood. <i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i>, 61, 13-22. Tracy #3: Sections on thick description, ethnography of communication, and symbolic interactionism Wolcott #3: Keep Going</p> <p><i>Due: Practicum #2 – Theoretical / Social Problem</i></p>

4	<p>January 28: Field Roles, Fieldnotes and Field Focus Bohannan #7: Using Alien Ideas... Emerson, R. M.; Fretz, R. I. & Shaw, L. (1995). Writing Up fieldnotes I: From field to desk (ch 3) & Writing up fieldnotes II: Creating scenes on the page (ch 4) in Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Tracy #6: Field Roles, Fieldnotes and Field Focus & Appendix A, fieldnote</p> <p>January 30: Field Roles, Fieldnotes and Field Focus, Continued Bohannan #8: Comparing Cultures Gill, R. (2011). The shadow in organizational ethnography: Moving beyond shadowing to spect-acting. <i>Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management</i>, 6, 115-133.</p> <p>Due: Practicum #3 - Human Subjects Certification and Paperwork</p>
5	<p>February 4: Planning the Interview Bohannan # 9: The Morass of Cultural Relativism Tracy #7: Planning the Interview: Sampling, Recruiting and Questioning</p> <p>February 6: Feminist Approaches and Relational Ethics Bohannan #10: Premises and Ethnography Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate others. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 13, 3-29. Tracy #3: Feminist Approaches Section</p> <p>Due: Practicum #4 – Map and narrative tour</p>
6	<p>February 11: Participatory Action Research and Social Justice Bohannan #11: Their Culture---and Yours Conquergood, D. (1991). Rethinking ethnography: Towards a critical cultural politics. <i>Communication Monographs</i>, 58, 179-194. Tracy #3: Participatory Action Research Section</p> <p>February 13: Sensemaking & Structuration Bohannan #12: Does Ethnography Falsify Reality? Tracy #3: Sensemaking and Structuration Sections Tracy, S. J., & Rivera K. D. (2010). Endorsing equity and applauding stay-at-home moms: How male voices on work-life reveal aversive sexism and flickers of transformation. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 24, 3-43.</p> <p>Due: Practicum #5 – Full set of formal fieldnotes</p>
7	<p>February 18: Eliciting Experience through Interviews & Focus Groups Bohannan #13: Beyond Academe Tracy #8: Interview Practice: Embodied, Mediated, and Focus Group Approaches Tracy Appendix B-Focus Group Guide and Appendix C- Interview Transcription Excerpts</p> <p>February 20: Virtual and Mediated approaches Bohannan #23: The Internet: Non-Lineal Ethnography Lindemann, K. (2005). Live(s) online: Narrative performance, presence, and community in LiveJournal.com. <i>Text and Performance Quarterly</i>, 25, 354-372.</p> <p>Due: Practicum #6 – Interview Guide</p>

8	<p>February 25: Playing with Data Analysis Bohannan #14: Culture Shock Tracy #9: Data Analysis Basics: A Pragmatic Iterative Approach</p> <p>February 27: Playing with Data Analysis Continued Bohannan #15: The Aliens Next Door Charmaz, K. (2011). Grounded theory methods in social justice research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Qualitative Research</i> (4th ed., pp.359-380). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p>
9	<p>March 4: Analyzing Data Texts Bohannan #16: The Collapse of Colonialism Tracy #10: Advanced Data Analysis: The Art and Magic of Interpretation</p> <p>March 6: Analyzing Data Texts Bohannan #17: Who Speaks for Whom? Saldaña, J. (2003). Dramatizing data: A primer. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 9, 218-236.</p> <p>Due: Practicum #7 – Research Proposal</p>
	<p>March 10-14: Spring Break! No class.</p>
10	<p>March 18: Evaluating Qualitative Inquiry – The Criteria Controversy and The Politics of Evidence Bohannan #18: The Democratization of Ethnography Bochner, A. (2000). Criteria Against Ourselves, <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 6, 266-272. Tracy #11: Qualitative Quality: Creating a Credible, Ethical, Significant Study</p> <p>March 20: Evaluating Qualitative Inquiry Continued Bohannan #19: Ethnography and Applied Anthropology Denzin, N. K. (2011). The politics of evidence. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Qualitative Research</i> (4th ed., pp. 645-658). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p>
11	<p>March 25: Writing Part One Tillmann, L. M. (2009a). Body and bulimia revisited: Reflections on “A secret life.” <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research</i>, 37, 98-112. Tracy #12: Writing Part 1: The Nuts and Bolts of Writing Qualitative Tales Wolcott #4: Linking Up</p> <p>March 27: Writing Part Two Bohannan #21: Ethnography and Creativity Tracy #13: Writing Part 2: Drafting, Polishing, and Publishing Wolcott #5: Tightening Up Vande Berg, L., & Trujillo, N. (2009). Cancer and death: A love story in many voices. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 15, 641-658.</p> <p>Due: Practicum #8 – Data Analysis Practicum</p>

12	<p>April 1: Qualitative Resonance and Theory-Building Bohannan #22: Ethnography and the Government Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case study. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Qualitative Research</i> (4th ed., pp. 301-316). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Davis, M. S. (1971). That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. <i>Philosophy of the Social Sciences</i>, 1, 309-344.</p> <p>April 3: Qualitative Resonance and Theory-Building Continued Bohannan #24: Ethnocentrism in a Culture with Many Lifestyles Weick, K. E. (2007). The generative properties of richness. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>, 50, 14-19.</p> <p>Due: Practicum #9a Rough Draft</p>
13	<p>April 8: Going Public Bohannan #25: Ethnocentrism in a Shrinking World Tracy #14: Qualitative Methodology Matters: Exiting and Communicating Impact Tracy, S. J. (2012). The toxic and mythical combination of a deductive writing logic for inductive qualitative research. <i>Qualitative Communication Research</i>, 1, 109-141.</p> <p>April 10: Going Public Continued Bohannan #26: Tempocentrism and the Future Wolcott #7: Getting Published</p> <p>Due: Practicum 9b – Peer Review of peer's rough draft</p>
14	<p>April 15: Semester Presentations</p> <p>April 17: Semester Presentations Continued</p> <p>Due: Final Semester Paper</p>
	<p>Final Exam: Thursday, April 24 8:00-9:45 pm</p>