

Course Syllabus

Course Information

EPPS 6346 Qualitative Research Methods

Section 001

Fall 2016

Professor Contact Information

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PLEASE use regular UTD e-mail instead of eLearning to reach me. Thank you.

Office: GR 2.532

Office Hours: 2:30 – 4 p.m. Mondays, and by appointment

if these times do not fit your schedule

Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions

None

Course Description

Catalogue Description: This course provides an overview of qualitative research in the Economic, Political and Policy Sciences. Students will investigate the assumptions underlying qualitative research approaches and critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of such approaches. Possible topics may include participant observation, ethnographic interviewing, ethnomethodology, conversation analysis, case study, and the analysis of historical documents.

Our course provides a broad, theoretical, yet concrete and practical introduction to qualitative research framing qualitative research practice within the science of qualitative research and its multiple and alternative methods and approaches, examining advantages and limitations of the different available strategies. The course focuses on five main approaches, along with corresponding philosophical and research paradigms or views of society and social interaction associated with each approach. The approaches are, in the order in which they will be studied: narrative studies, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and the case study. The course also will take up content analysis, yet another approach.

Our course, particularly students' Research Design assignment, prepares students to conduct research for their dissertations and Master thesis in the follow-up course in Spring 2017: Qualitative Research Practicum, which will be run as a Special Topics course: EPPS 7V81 Special Topics in Social Science Research Methodology: Research Practicum. The follow-up course will introduce students to NVivo, a popular Qualitative Data Analysis (QDA) software suit used in analyzing qualitative data. Students will learn the software by applying it to their research data.

Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

The first course objective is to understand the scientific process of qualitative research data collection, analysis, and interpretation; each of the five main qualitative approaches; their differences, advantages and limitations; and how to apply them. The second objective is to understand how to design a qualitative research project, and to defend the design scientifically.

Required Textbooks and Other Readings

Course readings include two books: *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches*, by John W. Creswell (Sage), and *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research* (2nd ed., Pine Forge Press), by Carol A. Bailey. Both books are available at the UTD Bookstore and Off Campus Books.

Other readings include selected chapters from books on qualitative research and a publication by the National Science Foundation (NSF) placed on Electronic Reserve at the McDermott Library: 1) *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, by Uwe Flick, Editor (Sage Publications), 2) *Social Research Methods*, by Alan Bryman (Oxford University Press), and 3) "Workshop on Scientific Foundations of Qualitative Research." The password for E-Reserve is **method**.

Students will do additional reading on one of the main approaches in qualitative research from a scholarly source referenced by Creswell (above). Students also will read five scholarly sources on their research topic for the literature review section of their Research Design (below).

Assignments and Academic Calendar

- **Research Design.** Students will write a 15-to-20-page Research Design on their proposed research for a topic they choose and the course instructor approves. Students are encouraged to use the assignment to work on their research for their dissertation or Master Thesis.
- **Mid-Term Exam.** Students will write a Mid-Term exam, which essentially is a review of foundational information in qualitative research methods. The exam will be a short-answer and essay format. Exam questions will be handed out one week before the exam is due.

- Class Exercises. Students also will work together on and complete a series of Class Exercises.
- Group Discussion of students' Research Design Projects. Students will discuss with other members of their groups their Research Design Projects, offering helpful critiques and suggestions.

The Instructor will provide and go over all instructions. All instructions will be posted on eLearning.

August 22

Orientation to the Course

What Are Qualitative Research Methods, What Is the Importance of Theory in Qualitative Research, and How Is Qualitative Research Scientific?

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
 Chapter 1 "Introduction," and
 Chapter 2 "Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Frameworks"

Bailey, *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*: Chapter 1 "Introduction to Qualitative Field Research," pp. 1-7 and 11-12

Recommended Reading (NOTE: Not on Electronic Reserve):
 Bryman, *Social Research Methods*:
 Chapter 17 "The Nature of Qualitative Research"

Class Exercise #1

Qualitative Research and Public Policy

Read: Electronic Reserve:
 Wheelan, excerpt from *Introduction to Public Policy*

August 29

Designing a Qualitative Study and Ethical Issues

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
 Chapter 3 "Designing a Qualitative Study"

Bailey, *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*:
 Chapter 2 "Ethical Issues in Qualitative Field Research," pp. 16-19, 24-29, and
 Chapter 3 "Prelude to Qualitative Fieldwork," pp. 33-46

Class Exercise #2

The IRB Application

Students are required by the UTD IRB to complete training online and receive a certificate of completion through the link for the web training below before submitting an application.

<http://www.utdallas.edu/research/compliance/irb/training.html>

Students will complete the training, print the certificate of completion, and turn in the certificate on September 12 as **Class Exercise #3**.

The Main Qualitative Approaches

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
Chapter 4 “Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry”

Class Exercise #4

Topic for Research Design due

September 5 No Class: University Holiday: Labor Day

September 12

Narrative Study and Phenomenology Approaches

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
Chapter 5 “Five Different Qualitative Studies,” pages 111-116 only,
Appendix B: “A Narrative Research Study,” and
Appendix C: “A Phenomenological Study”

Electronic Reserve:

Flick, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*:
Chapter 14 “Narrative Analysis: The Constructionist Approach” by Esine,
Fathi, and Squire, and
Chapter 13 “Phenomenology as a Research Method” by Thomas S. Eberle

Class Exercise #5

Class Exercise #3 due; see information above under August 29th.

September 19

Grounded Theory, Ethnography, and Case Study Approaches

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
 Chapter 5 “Five Different Qualitative Studies,” pages 116-128 only,
 Appendix D: “A Grounded Theory Study,”
 Appendix E: “An Ethnography,” and
 Appendix F: “A Case Study”

Electronic Reserve:

Flick, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*:
 Chapter 11 “Grounded Theory and Theoretical Coding” by Kathy Charmaz and
 Thornberg,
 Chapter 3 “Analytic Inspiration in Ethnographic Fieldwork” by James A.
 Holstein, and Gubrium
 Chapter 7 “Qualitative Comparative Practices: Dimensions, Cases and
 Strategies” by Palmberger and Andre Gingrich

Class Exercise #6

September 26

Content Analysis

Read: Electronic Reserve:

Flick, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*:
 Chapter 12 “Qualitative Content Analysis” by Margrit Schreier, and
 Bryman, *Social Research Methods*:
 Chapter 13 “Content Analysis”

Recommended Reading (NOTE: Not on Electronic Reserve):

Hardy, Melissa A., and Alan Bryman. 2009. *Handbook of Data Analysis*. Sage
 Publications: chapter on “Content Analysis.”
 Walter, Maggie A. 2010. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press:
 chapter on “Content Analysis.”
 Flick, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*:
 Chapter 22 “Conversations and Conversation Analysis” by Merran Toerien.
 Bryman, *Social Research Methods*:
 Chapter 22 “Language in Qualitative Research” (Conversation Analysis and
 Discourse Analysis).
 Hardy, Melissa A., and Bryman, Alan. 2009. *Handbook of Data Analysis*.
 Sage Publications: chapters on “Conversation Analysis” and “Discourse
 Analysis.”
 Walter, Maggie. 2010. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press:
 chapter on “Discourse Analysis.”

Framing and Focusing Qualitative Research

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:

Chapter 6 “Introducing and Focusing the Study”

Discussion Groups: Research Design Projects

Mid-Term Exam questions handed out

October 3

Class Discussion of Mid-Term Exam / Foundation of Qualitative Research Methods

Class Exercise #7

Mid-Term Exam due

October 10

Data Collection

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
Chapter 7 “Data Collection”

Electronic Reserve:

Bryman, *Social Research Methods*:

Chapter 20 “Interviewing in Qualitative Research”

Flick, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*:

Chapter 20 “Analysing Interviews” by Kathryn Roulston

Bailey *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*:

Chapter 5 “Methodology,” pp. 63-77,

Chapter 7 “Interviews,” pp. 95-110,

Chapter 6 “Observations,” pp. 79-93, and

Chapter 8 “Field Notes and Leaving the Field,” pp. 113-122

Recommended Reading (NOTE: Not on Electronic Reserve):

Flick, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*:

Chapter 21 “Analysing Focus Groups” by Roslyn S. Barbour

Bryman, *Social Research Methods*:

Chapter 21 “Focus Groups,” and

Chapter 28 “E-research: Internet Research Methods”

Discussion Groups: Research Design Projects

October 17

Qualitative Data Analysis

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
Chapter 8 “Data Analysis and Representation”

Electronic Reserve:
Bryman, *Social Research Methods*:
Chapter 24 “Qualitative Data Analysis”

Bailey, Bailey *A Guide to Qualitative Field Research*:
Chapter 9 “Coding, Memoing, and Descriptions,” pp.125-138, and
Chapter 10 “Typologies, Taxonomies, Visual Representations,” pp. 143-158

Discussion Groups: Research Design Projects

October 24

Writing Qualitative Research

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
Chapter 9 “Writing a Qualitative Study”

Discussion Groups: Research Design Projects

October 31

“Validation”/Credibility/Trustworthiness and Evaluation

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
Chapter 10 “Standards of Validation and Evaluation”

November 7

Alternative Approaches to a Qualitative Study

Read: Creswell, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*:
Chapter 11 “Turning the Story and Conclusion”

Discussion Groups: Research Design Projects

November 14

Workshop on Students’ Research and Written Report

Discussion Groups: Research Design Projects

November 21: No Class: Fall Break / Thanksgiving Holiday

November 28

The Science of Qualitative Research Revisited

Read: Electronic Reserve:

Ragin, Nagel, and White, "Workshop on Scientific Foundations of Qualitative Research," published by the National Science Foundation (2004):

I. "General Guidance for Developing Qualitative Research Projects," pp. 9-16

II. "Recommendations for Designing, Evaluating, and Strengthening Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences," pp. 17-19

Session 1: "Defining Qualitative Research":

"Qualitative Versus Quantitative: What Might This Distinction Mean?" by David Collier, pp. 71-76

Session 2: "Qualitative Research and Theory":

"Thoughts on Alternative Pathways to Theoretical Development: Theory Generation, Extension, and Refinement" by David Snow, pp. 133-136, and "A Note on Science and Qualitative Research" by Sudhir Venkatesh, pp. 141-144

December 5

The Science of Qualitative Research Revisited Continued

Mixed Methods

Read: Electronic Reserve:

Ragin, Nagel, and White, "Workshop on Scientific Foundations of Qualitative Research," published by the National Science Foundation:

Session 3: "Designing Qualitative Research":

"Improving Qualitative Research Proposal Evaluation" by Vilna Bashi, pp. 39-43, and

"Designing Qualitative Research Projects" by Susan Silbey, pp. 121-125

Session 5: "Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods":

"Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Research" by Charles Ragin, pp. 109-115, and

“Complementary Articulation: Matching Qualitative Data and Quantitative Methods” by Robert Smith, pp. 127-132

Open Class Discussion of Qualitative Research

December 12

Research Design due

Note: Students will turn in their Research Designs in the Instructor’s office (GR 2.532) at 4 p.m. during the scheduled final exam period.

Grading Policy

The percentage distribution for each of the graded assignments, attendance, and class participation (total equals 100%) for the course grade follows.

30%: Research Design
 20%: Mid-Term Exam
 30%: Class Exercises
 10%: Group Discussion
 10%: Attendance and Class Participation

The grading scale follows.

A = 94-96
 A- = 90-93
 B+ = 87-89
 B = 84-86
 B- = 80-83
 C+ = 77-79
 C = 74-76
 C- = 70-73
 D+ = 67-69
 D = 64-66
 D- = 60-63
 F = 59 and below

Course and Instructor Policies

Attendance is required. Students automatically will be excused from one class; no documentation is required if students miss only one class. Students who miss more than one class will be excused if they have a legitimate reason (for example, being out sick) and provide documentation.

The intent of this policy is to help students perform well on assignments by keeping up with lectures and discussion.

Students must submit hard copies of all assignments on the due dates. Electronic submissions will not be accepted, unless the student has a legitimate reason for being absent from class to turn in assignments. Late papers will not be accepted without the prior approval of the instructor, with the exception of emergencies.

This requirement is intended to help students turn in their work on time and to promote fairness among students who submit their work on time.

University Policies

To view university policies on Student Conduct, Grade Appeals, Disability Services, Religious Holy Days, Campus Carry, Resources to Help You Succeed, and others, please go to the link that follows.

<http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>
