

Qualitative Inquiry Program

Course title: **QUAL 8410, Designing Qualitative Research**
Instructor: **Melissa Freeman**
Office: **329 River's Crossing**
Phone: **706/542-3613**
Email: freeman9@uga.edu
Office Hours: **Thursdays 2:30 – 3:30 pm; or by appointment**

Class Times: **Wednesday 4:40 – 7:40**
Location: **Aderhold Room 625**
Spring 2006: **January 11, 2006 – April 26, 2006**
Credits: **3.0**

“I believe that one can principally state: there can exist no statement that is absolutely true.... There exists no statement that can grasp only from the content that it presents, if one wishes to grasp it in its truth. Every statement is motivated. Every statement has its presuppositions that it does not express.”
(Hans-Georg Gadamer)

Course Description

Disciplinary origins and cross-disciplinary uses, variations, applications, and evaluations of methods of collecting qualitative data. Choice of methods in the overall construction of qualitative designs, practice in selecting and collecting qualitative data for educational research, and examination of naturalistic data in the educational literature.

Prerequisites and cross-listings

Prerequisite: ERSH/QUAL 8400

Required Texts (Available UGA Campus Bookstore)

Madison, D. Soyini (2005). *Critical ethnography: Method, ethics, and performance*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rossmann, Gretchen B. & Rallis, Sharon F. (2003). *Learning in the field: An introduction to qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
0761926518

Additional Readings

All additional readings are available at the Reserve Desk at the Main Library, and all have been scanned and are available electronically as PDF files. To access the documents, go to the Course Reserve module in GIL (<http://gil.uga.edu>). The password access is: qualdata

Nature of this Course

This course on qualitative data collection addresses both theoretical and practical dimensions of conducting qualitative research. Data collection concerns are embedded within the larger processes of qualitative research methods and must be considered in holistic ways. For example, data collection decisions are inherently tied to particular epistemological stances of the researcher as well as the research focus. In addition, data collection processes are interwoven with analysis and often occur simultaneously. Therefore, this course examines data collection issues within the larger framework of qualitative research.

We assume that most students enrolled in this course have a desire to acquire the knowledge and methodological skills that are part of qualitative research methods for application within your academic program, for writing a doctoral dissertation and/or for your future career. The course is designed with flexibility so that you will be able to develop projects that will suit your own academic and professional needs. The workload in the course is extensive; however, we hope that you will find the course intrinsically interesting and valuable.

An important aspect of the course will be ongoing collaborative interactions with your classmates. You will be working in a collaborative group for many of the class activities and projects. You will be learning a great deal from each other, and will need to make an effort to contribute constructively both to your group work and to the entire class. We view ourselves as both learners and teachers in the class, and expect each of you will also participate in both of those roles. The quality of your participation both in the whole class and in your collaborative group will be considered as part of your grade in the course.

Objectives

1. Students can conceptualize appropriate research problems and design a qualitative research approach to examining such problems using observation, interviewing, document analysis, or other related methods. They can prepare a proposal for a qualitative project using the format of the UGA Institutional Review Board (human subjects review). They can identify the common

- qualitative data collection methods, specify how data are formulated into units, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different methods and formulations.
2. Students can reflect on the personal and conceptual presuppositions and assumptions that they bring to their proposed research project and compose a subjectivity statement to be reviewed by their peers.
 - a. They can project the ethical issues and dilemmas that may be associated with various phases of their proposed research and discuss how they expect to handle such challenges.
 - b. They can identify their conceptual frameworks and connect such frameworks to scholarly theories and pedagogies.
 3. Students can analyze their skills in conducting high quality qualitative research interviews, in taking detailed field notes during observations in field placements, and in collecting and interpreting archival data. They can design and conduct a plan to improve their skills in these areas. They can select and assess different means for recording qualitative data: prerecorded, recorded (manual and automatic), and nonrecorded (from human memory).
 4. Students can apply the qualitative research skills they are developing in critically analyzing their own and others' proposals and completed studies. They can identify and apply the alternative standards used to assess qualitative research.
 5. Students can work collaboratively in research group design and interpretation activities.

University of Georgia Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy

All academic work must meet the standards contained in "A culture of Honesty." All students are responsible for informing themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. Learning to appropriately quote and paraphrase and to cite and attribute sources is a skill that is key to honest and creative scholarship. All students should review the guidelines at the website http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/academic_honesty/culture_honesty.htm. If you have questions about what would be considered violations of the standards, please raise them in class or ask me.

Need for Editorial Assistance

This course requires substantial writing. Students who need editorial assistance are encouraged to make such arrangements. A good place to start is the UGA Writing Center:

<http://www.english.uga.edu/~writingcenter/home.html>.

Expectations and Evaluation of Learners

1. I expect regular and punctual attendance and will take excessive absences (missing more than 2 classes) into account in the final course grade. If you have a conflict with a session due to a prior commitment, please email or see me privately (so as not to use our limited class time with individual scheduling concerns).
2. I expect people to come to class prepared and to contribute to class discussions and activities. Your participation in these activities is essential. Frequent lack of preparation or failure to contribute will also be taken into account in the final course grade.
3. I expect all assignments to be turned in by the due date. Points will be deducted for papers submitted after the due date. Remember that both the content and the quality of your writing will be assessed.
4. All students are required to use the WebCT services that support this course. Some course material will be available only on the course WebCT site. We will use WebCT to post messages, ask questions, and for sharing resources on specific topics. Assignments are to be submitted on the WebCT site. For access go to: <http://www.uga.edu/> click on "My WebCT," then log in using your UGA MyID.
5. All students are required to complete the following written assignments with the final grade based on the distribution indicated below:

Project	Points	Due Date
Ethnographic Methods Project		
1. IRB/Description of Study	10 Points	1/18
2. Observation Project	20 Points	3/8
3. Interview Project	20 Points	4/5
4. Final Paper	20 Points	4/26
Critical Book Review	20 Points	2/8
Attendance and Participation	10 Points	

Total:

100 Points

Assessment Criteria

Written assignments should show:

- Understanding and use of relevant readings
- A critical engagement with the idea presented
- Clear organization and structure, fluent and accurate writing

Descriptions of Assignments

Ethnographic Methods Project (70)

This project is an opportunity to practice some of the data collection skills associated with conducting fieldwork. The project should be conducted in a setting you already have IRB approval for or one that you can gain access to with relative ease. You should plan to spend at least 3-4 hours in the field, which amounts to about one hour per week for 4 weeks. During this time you will be doing participant observation and validating your perceptions of the cultural context. You will also conduct two one-hour interviews with two participants from your site, and write an essay on a methodological or ethical issue of significance to your study.

1. IRB/Description of Setting (10) Due 1/25

You will submit a *Human Subjects Research Application*. If you already have one on file, you should submit a copy of that application with the permission of anyone else listed on the application. Otherwise, your research should meet the following requirements:

- NO MINORS:** the project cannot include minors or any other vulnerable populations like pregnant women, prisoners, those who lack the capacity to consent, non-English speaking individuals, and such.
- NO MORE THAN MINIMAL RISK:** Minimal risk: is the probability and magnitude of harm that is normally encountered in the daily lives of healthy individuals. This also precludes the study of any illegal activities.
- NO DECEPTION:** The project cannot include any deception. Individuals must be fully informed and given the opportunity to voluntarily consent to participation.
- NO PUBLICATION:** Data from student projects approved under this fast tract review category cannot be used for publication or for thesis/dissertation research.

- e. **NO VIDEOTAPING:** Audio taping is allowed if the recording is erased upon transcription or no later than the end of the semester.

The IRB has given the instructors of QUAL 8410 the right to grant approval for your research project as part of the course requirements. We will spend time in the early part of the course to ensure that you are clear on your research purposes and questions and that you understand the whole IRB process. Links to the IRB webpage, IRB guidelines and sample consent forms, and human subject applications may be found on our WebCT site under “Useful Links.” The addresses of the above sites are as follows:

IRB webpage: <http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso>

IRB guidelines and sample consent forms:
<http://www.ovpr.uga.edu/hso/guidelines.html>

Human Subjects forms: <http://www.ovpr.uga/forms/app.04-2004.doc>

Finally, you will also take and complete the online IRB Training, a requirement for researchers conducting human research. To register and take the CITI course, go to <http://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp>

2. Participant Observation (20 Points) Due 3/8

You will develop and refine your participant observation skills through this part of your project. You will observe in your setting for a total of 3-4 hours (at least 3 separate times/dates). The time, date, and location should head each entry as well as your general purpose for being there. You will take condensed field notes (those taken in the field) and expanded field notes (those constructed at your computer immediately following your fieldwork). You will submit your expanded field notes, a short reflection (2-3 pages) on the process of gaining access and your role as a participant observer over the course of several observations, and a short analytic/interpretive essay (2-3 pages) of emerging themes and patterns observed in the setting.

3. Interview Project (20 Points) Due 4/5

After you have spent several weeks observing in your setting, you should begin to focus on the people in the setting and identify one or two individuals for interviewing. This project involves creating an interview guide, conducting two interviews, transcribing your tapes,

and writing a reflection on the process. Your reflection should describe how you selected and invited the participants to be interviewed, how you felt the interviews went in terms of rapport and content of information, what, if anything, you would do differently next time, and a short analytic essay on what these interviews contribute to your developing understanding of your topic and to your participant observation notes. Your interview guide should be clearly focused on a topic relevant to your study or that has emerged out of the analysis of your observations. I strongly urge you to transcribe your own interview tapes so as to become intimately involved in your participants' stories. Transcription involves making analytic choices, and some scholars argue that it is the first stage of analysis. For this project you will submit your two transcripts and a short 3-5 page essay covering the topics listed above.

3. Final Project Paper (20 Points) Due 4/26

You are free to choose any form of representation to communicate what you have found so far in your fieldwork. You need to find the "story" you wish to tell as a result of conducting your study. Your paper should include a statement of the problem and research questions, a methods, literature, findings, and discussion section but these should not limit the way you use your study process and findings. For example you might wish to write up your participants' experiences as stories, or write an analytic essay on an ethical or methodological issue that you became interested as a result of your study, or use your study experience to write up a comprehensive methods section for a qualitative dissertation. As will become apparent from reading about writing qualitative research, there is no right way to write (or represent) and you will have considerable freedom in how you do this. A description of what you intend to do will be required earlier in the semester. This is a 10-20 page article with methodological and theoretical references.

Critical Book Review (20 Points) Due 2/8

Select a complete study (a list is provided but there are many others to choose from). I am not interested in the subject matter of the study although you should provide enough information in your essay so the details of the study design makes sense to the reader. Instead your 3-5 page paper should provide a critical analysis of the design of the study. How was the data collected, organized, and represented? Why was it organized this way? What choices were made? What was gained or lost as a result of these choices? What ethical dilemmas were faced? How were these resolved? How, if at all, has this study contributed to its field? How were these contributions made credible?

For the class book fair on 2/8, come prepared with your book and enough copies of a one or two page descriptive handout for your classmates. The complete citation for the book should be listed on your handout. Try to make your handout interesting – this handout is meant to advertise the content of your book – what a reader can expect on the topic, style and method if he/she reads it. Come also prepared to provide your classmates a 2 minute overview and answer questions.

Grading

Grading follows the University of Georgia policy:

100 - 90 = A 79 - 70 = C below 60 = F
 89 - 80 = B 69 - 60 = D

Accommodations for Qualified Individuals with Disabilities

It is the policy of The University of Georgia to make reasonable accommodations for qualified individuals with disabilities. If you are a person with a disability and desire accommodations to complete your course requirements, please notify the course instructor as soon as possible to discuss your request.

Syllabus Changes

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.

Schedule of Class Meetings

Date	Topic	Readings Due	Assignment Due
PART I: Introduction to Qualitative Research Design			
W.	Introduction and		

1/11	Research Interests		
W. 1/18	Qualitative Research as Learning	Rossman & Rallis, Chs. 1, 2, 3 Sampson (2004)	IRB Training
W. 1/25	Designing Qualitative Studies	Rossman & Rallis, Chs. 4, 5 Donelson & Rogers (2004)	IRB/Description of Setting
W. 2/1	Validity in Qualitative Research	Wolcott (1990) Weinstein (2004) Koro-Ljungberg (2004)	
PART II: Ethnographic Methods and Traditions			
W. 2/8	Book Fair	Your choice ethnography	Due Wednesday 2/8 Critical Book Review
W. 2/15	Entering the Field	Rossman & Rallis, Ch. 6 Murray (2003) Way (2005)	
W. 3/1	Gathering Data in the Field	Rossman & Rallis, Chs. 7, 8, 9 Vanderstaay (2005)	
W. 3/8	Document Analysis	Hodder (2000) Cheng (2002)	Due Wednesday 3/8 Observation Project
W. 3/15	Spring Break No Class		
W. 3/22	Interviewing	Madison, Chs. 1, 2 Atkinson & Coffey (2003) McCormack (2000) I & II	
W. 3/29	Postpositivist Methodologies	Madison, Ch. 3 Charmaz (2003) Churchill, Jr. (2005)	
W. 4/5	Methods and Ethics	Madison, Ch. 4, 5, 6 Smith (1990)	Due Wednesday 4/5 Interview Project
PART III: Data Analysis and Representation			
W.	Data Analysis	Rossman &	

4/12		Rallis, Chs. 10, 11, 12 Scheurich & McKenzie (2005)	
W. 4/19	Performance Ethnography	Madison, Chs. 7, 8, 9 Clough (1999)	
W. 4/26	Final Presentations		Due Wednesday 4/26 Final Papers

Course Readings

Atkinson, Paul & Coffey, Amanda (2003). Revisiting the relationship between participant observation and interviewing. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns* (pp. 415-428). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Charmaz, Kathy (2003). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns* (pp. 311-330). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cheng, Maria (2002). The standoff – what is unsaid? A pragmatic analysis of the conditioned marker ‘if.’ *Discourse & Society*, 13(3), 309-317.

Churchill, Jr., Christian J. (2005). Ethnography as translation. *Qualitative Sociology*, 28(1), 3 – 24.

Clough, Peter (1999). Crises of schooling and the “crisis of representation”: The story of Rob. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 5(3), 428-448.

Donelson, Randal & Rogers, Theresa (2004). Negotiating a research protocol for studying school-based gay and lesbian issues. *Theory Into Practice*, 43(2), 128-135.

Hodder, I. (2000). The interpretation of documents and material culture. In N. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 703-715). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Koro-Ljungberg, Mirta (2004). Impossibility of reconciliation: Validity in mixed theory projects. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(4), 601-621.

McCormack, Coralie (2000). From interview transcript to interpretive story: Part 1 – viewing the transcript through multiple lens. *Field Methods*, 12(4), 282-297.

McCormack, Coralie (2000). From interview transcript to interpretive story: Part 2 – developing an interpretive story. *Field Methods*, 12(4), 298-315.

Murray, Susan B. (2003). A spy, a shill, a go-between, or a sociologist: unveiling the ‘observer’ in participant observer. *Qualitative Research*, 3(3), 377-395.

Sampson, Helen (2004). Navigating the wave: The usefulness of a pilot in qualitative research. *Qualitative Research* 4(3), 383-402.

Scheurich, James Joseph & McKenzie, Kathryn Bell (2005). Foucault’s methodologies. In N. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 841-868). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Smith, Louis M. (1990). Ethics, field studies, and the paradigm crisis. In E. G. Guba (Ed.), *The paradigm dialog* (pp. 139-157).

Vanderstaay, Steven L. (2005). One hundred dollars and a dead man: Ethical decision making in ethnographic fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 34(4), 371-409.

Way, Niobe (2005). Striving for engagement: Reflections from a qualitative researcher. *Journal of Adolescent Research*, 20(5), 531-537.

Weinstein, Matthew (2004). Randomized design and the myth of certain knowledge: Guinea Pig narratives and cultural critique. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 246-260.

Wolcott, Harry F. (1990). On seeking – and rejecting – validity in qualitative research. In E. W. Eisner & A. Peshkin (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry in education* (pp. 121-152). NY: Teachers College Press.