E10.2140.001 Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry
Fall 2010 30 Hours, 3 credits

Instructor: Elizabeth Norman PhD, Professor
Contact info: (212) 998-5412
Elizabeth.Norman@nyu.edu
Office hours: By appointment and Tuesday 10-12n
246 Greene St 3R

Time: Tuesday 2:00 – 4:45
Location: Waverly 435

Course Description:

This course introduces students to the group of approaches to social science and humanistic research known as qualitative inquiry. These approaches include historical research, ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology, case study, and narrative research, and employ methods of interviewing, discourse/content analysis, and participation observation. Emerging technology used includes digital analog recorders, videotape, voice recognition software, and software such as NVivo, Atlas, and dtsearch for data ‘mining’ and coding. The course is designed as an introductory training course for students who plan to conduct qualitative research for theses or dissertations. Students will explicate studies that employ these approaches; discuss assumptions of qualitative inquiry; evaluate current technology; discuss standards of sampling, ethics, and validity, and design a qualitative research proposal.

This course is the first in the qualitative series offered at Steinhardt. It is geared toward first or second year doctoral students who have not yet begun their dissertation research but plan to use qualitative methods in their work. This course is the prerequisite to the more advanced and specialized qualitative methods courses offered in the school. It is not meant to constitute the entirety of students’ methods training. Rather, it provides an introductory treatment of the range of methods that students might employ if they are interested in researching a question that lends itself to a qualitative approach.

The course will be a combination of learning about and reading examples of the methods we study – drawing from anthropology, sociology, history, and cultural studies – and of “hands on” training in some of these methods (interviews and observation). In the settings and people students choose to study, students will apply these methods, for instance, online communities, classrooms and identity-focused clubs.

Course Format

The course design includes lectures, discussions, in-class workshops, out-of-class reading and writing assignments. Each week we will explicate readings to uncover the researcher’s argument, how it is supported throughout the text, and what types of data sources are used. We will spend a portion of each class discussing the progress of each student’s research project.

Required Texts


**Suggested Texts:**


**Suggested Websites**

Please check the Blackboard site for this course under the external links tab. There are links to qualitative software sites, and NYU Human Subjects information and tutorial. I’ve also included two links I find particularly helpful for doctoral students: UNCs dissertation advice and Rutgers Writing and Grammar sites.

**Course Requirements and Grading**

*See assignment tab on Blackboard for more information*

**Human Subjects Tutorial. (No grade but required to complete the course)**
Federal law mandates that all researchers complete a short module on involving human subjects in research. Go to: [http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/tutorial/](http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/tutorial/)
Complete the tutorial, print out your grade (A minimum score of 80 is required), and hand in this page. If you have already completed this tutorial, you do not have to repeat it. Simply provide evidence of your grade.
Due: November 30th (or earlier)

**Class Attendance and Participation (10%)**
Class attendance is required for this course. If you must miss or arrive late to a class for any reason, please let me know in advance. I expect that everyone will participate in seminar discussion. I also expect that this participation will be based on an informed familiarity and thoughtful engagement with the assigned reading.

**ALL BLACKBOARD POSTINGS ARE DUE BEFORE CLASS**

1. **Analysis of qualitative software (10%)**
*Post on Blackboard Discussion*, a 250 word evaluation of: a bibliographic software program (Refworks, EndNote or others), Voice recognition software (dragonfly naturally speaking), data organization (treepad, NoteMap by LexusNexus), data analysis (NVivo, Atlas), interview analysis (DT search) or other software program. You can work in teams of two or three students. I need to approve your choice of software in-class or via email. **Answer the questions listed on page 174 in Creswell plus add the cost of the software.** See External Links tab on Blackboard for qualitative software sites.
DUE: September 28

2. Participant Observation (15%) students will conduct a two-hour observation of a public setting at New York University or another setting with prior approval. Students will choose a setting that allows them to engage with some aspect of the broad question of their interest. Prior to this observation post on the Blackboard Discussion Forums an outline of how you plan to organize your observation, define the population you will observe, and present a rationale for your choice of population on the Discussion Board.
DUE: October 12

3. Field notes: (15%) After students conduct their two-hour observation they will post field notes on Blackboard Discussion Forums. Researchers maintain a record or diary which details the events of the observation, reactions to these events, and changes in the researchers view over time. These notes become the foundation of developing (or refining) research questions, concepts, theories, and provide the basis for answering research questions.
DUE: October 19

4. Interview (15%) Students will conduct one interview with someone in the NYU community or someone who represents a population of their interests. You must inform the subject that information will only be used in this class, and you must give your subject anonymity. Prior to the interview, you will post your questions on the Blackboard Discussion Forums.
DUE: November 9

5. Content analysis (15%) Students will post the transcript of their interview as an attachment on Blackboard Discussion and using software (see above) and their own review, present an analysis on their interview.
DUE: November 23

6. Final paper (20%) Using the semester assignments as a foundation, design a qualitative research study. Maximum length 10 pages. Points will be reduced if the paper exceeds this length. Does not include reference pages or appendices. Paper must be formatted in APA or Chicago. No formatting errors. No spelling errors. No grammar errors.
DUE: December 14

Deadlines and Policies:

1. All assignment deadlines are firm.

   a. Blackboard assignments on the discussion tab MUST be posted by 12 noon on Tuesday so there is time to read them before our Wednesday class.
b. **I will not grant extensions**, except in the case of absolute emergency. For each day that an assignment is late, the final grade will be lowered by one-third of a grade (e.g., an A- becomes a B+ if an assignment is one day late). **Assignments also are considered late if they do not meet the time deadline** (e.g., an assignment due at 12 p.m. is due promptly by 12 p.m.).

2. **Special Accommodations**: Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, and visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980, 240 Greene Street, [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd).

3. If you are not familiar with the current Bobst data bases and how-to search, sign up for a free library class: [http://webapps.library.nyu.edu/classes](http://webapps.library.nyu.edu/classes)
   Or complete a tutorial: [http://library.nyu.edu/research/tutorials/](http://library.nyu.edu/research/tutorials/)

### WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

1. **September 7. Introduction**

   **Readings:**

2. **September 14. Qualitative Approaches to Research**

   **Readings:**
   1. Creswell; “Philosophical, Paradigm, and Interpretive Frameworks” p. 15-34; “Designing a Qualitative Study” p. 35-52, “Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry” p. 53-100; 211-214 “Post Positivism” “Evaluation criteria, Qualitative perspectives.”

   **Assignment:** set up team to review software (assignment #1, due September 28)


   **Readings:**
3. Qualitative study. Creswell “Cognitive representations” 88; 265-283


Readings:

B. Taylor and Coffey (2010) “Qualitative research and methodological innovation.”
Links on Blackboard under Weekly Reading List.

Assignment: To be posted on Blackboard Discussion Forums before class — Assignment #1 evaluation of software. Post as a group. In narrative or outline form. Your group will also be presenting in class. You can use PowerPoint slides.

5. October 5. Ethnography and Participant Observation

Readings:

2. Wolcott, H. 27-29 (review);34-36 (review);78-81 (review)
3. Review participant observation notes on Assignment tab.

6. October 12. Ethnography and field notes

Readings:


Assignment: To be posted on Blackboard Discussion Forums before class — Assignment #2 Participant Observation Guides.

7. October 19. Case Study and interviewing

Readings:

1. Review interviewing notes on Blackboard assignment tab
2. Creswell p. 135-136, 140-141
3. Boothe, p. 87-100, “Engaging sources actively.”

**Assignment:** To be posted on Blackboard Discussion Forums before class — Assignment #3 Field notes.

8. **October 26. Case study and interviewing**
   1. Creswell, “Case Study” p. 9-10 (review); 73-75 (review); 103-107; 112-113; 125; 129; 132; 141; 150-151; 163; 195-199; 218; 225
   2. Qualitative study Creswell “Campus response,” 92; 337-353.

9. **November 2. Historical research and content analysis.**

**Readings:**


10. **November 9. Historical research and content analysis**

**Readings:**

2. “Content Analysis.” (Link on Weekly reading list)
3. “Cassie-notes on an evacuation” (Link on Weekly reading list)

**Assignment:** To be posted on Blackboard Discussion Forums before class — Assignment #4 interview questions

11. **November 16. Phenomenology**

**Readings:**
1. Creswell 59-62;89;103;105-111;121;131;142;59-160;170;187-189.
2. Qualitative study. Creswell “Cognitive representations” 88; 265-283

12. November 23. Narrative research and writing

**Readings:**
1. Wolcott, p. 49-69.
2. Creswell, p. 9-10; 54-57 (review); 94;103-106 (review); 110; 119-123;126;131;155-158; 183-185;213-215.

**Assignment:** To be posted on Blackboard Discussion Forums before class — Assignment #5 content analysis of interviews.

13. November 30 University Committee Activities Involving Human Subjects (UCAIHS)—ethical issues with qualitative research.

**Assignment:** Human Subjects Tutorial on-line [http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/tutorial/](http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/tutorial/). I only need to see your score to know that you’ve completed the tutorial. If you are a PhD student know that UCAIHS requires a minimum score of 80.


**Reading:**

**December 14. Assignment:** Final paper due on Blackboard.

08/10 EN