

New York University
The Steinhardt School of Culture, Education, and Human Development
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences

E10.2140.002 Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry
Spring 2009
30 Hours, 3 credits

Instructor: Elizabeth Norman PhD, Professor

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Office hours: By appointment

246 Greene St, Room 508

Time: Wednesday 11:00-1:45pm

Location: 194 Mercer, Rm 210

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). This semester, the qualitative work we do will revolve around the broad theme of community at NYU and will be designed to answer the broad question: What do community and community-building look like at NYU? In the settings and people students choose to study, students will make this question their own. Students might choose to study, for instance, online communities and social networking, some facet of residence life, the tensions between NYU and its surrounding local community, classroom community-building, communities of staff (e.g., in dining halls), or student community-building through (for instance) 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

Creswell, John W. (2007). Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design. Thousand Oaks, California; Sage Publications.

McDowell, W.H. (2002). Historical Research: A Guide. New York: Longman, Pearson.

Wolcott, H. (2009). Writing Up Qualitative Research. (3rd edition). Thousand Oaks CA: Sage Publishers

Suggested Texts:

Booth, W., Colomb, G., & Williams, J. (2008). The Craft of Research. 3rd edition. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

Williams, J. (2008). Style: The Basic of Clarity and Grace. 3rd edition. New York: Longman Publishers.

Suggested Websites

Please check the Blackboard site for this course under the external links tab.

Online tutorial on "Understanding Plagiarism":
<http://education.indiana.edu/~frick/plagiarism/item1.html>

Course Requirements and Grading

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/ucaih/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.

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.

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), data analysis (NVivo, Atlas, QDA miner), interview analysis (DT search).. You can work in teams of three students. I need to approve your choice of software in-class or via email.

See Assignment tab on Blackboard for more details See External Links tab on Blackboard for qualitative software sites.

DUE: February 11 before class

Participant Observation (15%) students will conduct a two-hour observation of a public setting at New York University. Students will choose a setting that allows them to engage with some aspect of the broad question about community and NYU (see above). See Blackboard Assignment tab for more information on this assignment, and for a handout on this activity. Prior to this observation *post on Blackboard* discussion, 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: February 25th before class

Field notes: (15%)

After students conduct their two-hour observation they will *post field notes on Blackboard Discussion*. 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. See Assignment tab on Blackboard for more details

DUE: March 4th before class

Interview (15%)

Students will conduct one interview with a member of the class or someone else in the NYU community. You must inform the subject that information will only be used in this class, and you must give your subject anonymity. See Assignment tab on Blackboard for more details. Prior to the interview, you will *post your questions on Blackboard Discussion*.

DUE: March 11th before class

Discourse/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. See Assignment tab on Blackboard for more details.

DUE: April 1st before class

Final paper (20%)

Using the semester assignments as a foundation, design a qualitative research study. See Assignment tab on Blackboard for more details. 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: April 29th

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.
1. *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, 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.
3. If you are not familiar with the current Bobst data bases and how-to search, sign up for a free library class: <http://library.nyu.edu/forms/research/classes.html>. Or complete a tutorial: <http://library.nyu.edu/research/tutorials/>

WEEKLY COURSE SCHEDULE

1. January 21st Introduction

Readings:

1. Creswell, p. 211-214 “Evaluation criteria, Qualitative perspectives.”
2. Tamboukou, M. (2008). Re-imagining the narratable subject. Qualitative Research, 8 (3) 283-292. Bobst link on Blackboard under Bobst reading list.

Suggested reading: Boothe, p. 87-100, “Engaging sources actively.”

2. January 28th. Qualitative Approaches to Research

Readings :

1. Creswell, “Introduction” p. 1-14; “Philosophical, Paradigm, and Interpretive Frameworks” p. 15-34; “Designing a Qualitative Study” p. 35-52, “Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry” p. 53- 100.
2. Qualitative Study: Creswell “ Constructions of Survival” p. 90, 285- 308.

Assignment: set up team to review software (assignment #1, due Feb 4th)

3. February 4th. The Tools of Qualitative Research. Getting organized. Standards of Validation and Evaluation

Readings:

1. Creswell. "Comparing qualitative software," p. 164- 174
2. Wolcott, H. "Introduction and Getting Going" p. 1-48.
3. Qualitative study. Creswell "Cognitive representations" 88; 265-283

4. February 11th Overview of Qualitative Methods: interviewing, discourse/content analysis, and participation observation. Discussion of student evaluation of software.

Readings:

1. Creswell, "Data Collection", p. 117-145.
2. Wolcott, H. "Linking Up" p. 70-106.
3. Qualitative study: Bowen, G. (2008) Naturalistic Inquiry and the saturation concept: A research note." Qualitative Research, 8(1), 137-152. Link on Blackboard under Bobst reading list.

Assignment: To be posted on Blackboard Discussion Forums before class —Assignment #1 evaluation of software.

5. February 18: Ethnography and Participant Observation

Readings:

1. Creswell, "Ethnography", p. 68-72 (review), 91; 103-107, 112, 122-128, 131,161,217, 228.
2. Wolcott, H. 32; 38- 40; 84-93.
3. Review participant observation notes on Assignment tab.
4. Qualitative Study: Creswell, "Rethinking Subcultural Resistance" p. 91;309-336.

6. February 25. Ethnography and field notes

Readings:

1. Wolfinger, N. (2002) "On Writing Field notes" Qualitative Research, 2(1), 85-95. Link on Blackboard Bobst reading links tab.

2. Maslin book review “So Plugged in, yet so Disconnected: Field Notes from Wired America.” NYTimes, January 12, 2009, C7 or Link on Blackboard Bobst readings links tab.
3. Qualitative study--Caldwell, Melissa L., (2004). “Domesticating the French Fry: McDonald’s and Consumerism in Moscow” Journal of Consumer Culture, 4:1, 5-26 (available via Bobst E- Journals or on Blackboard under Bobst reading tab)

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

7. March 4 Case Study and interviewing

(Joint class taught by Prof. Michael Norman and Prof. Beth Norman)

Readings:

1. Review interviewing notes on Blackboard assignment tab

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

8. March 11th Case study and interviewing

1. Creswell, “Case Study” p. 9-10 (review); 73-75 (review);103-107;112; 122; 125; 129; 132; 141;163;195;218;225
2. Qualitative study Creswell “Campus response,” 92; 337-353.

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

9. March 18th Spring break

10. March 25th Historical research and discourse/content analysis.

Readings:

1. McDowell, Historical research, p. 1-92
2. Qualitative study. Weiner, Mark. (2002) “Consumer Culture and Participatory Democracy: The Story of Coca Cola During World War II”. Food in the USA: A Reader. Ed. Carole Counihan. Routledge: New York 123- 141. (Blackboard in Bobst reading tab)

11. April 1. Historical research and discourse/content analysis

Readings:

1. Wilson (1993). Towards an Integration of Content Analysis and Discourse Analysis. (PDF on Blackboard Bobst reading tab)
2. Qualitative study. Wraga, (2009). “Latin literacy redux: The Classical investigation in the United States.” 1921-1924. History of Education, 38(1), 79-98. Link on Blackboard Bobst reading.

Assignment: To be posted on Blackboard Discussion Forums before class —Assignment #5 interview analysis.

12. April 8 Narrative research and data representation.

Reading:

1. Creswell, p. 9-10; 54-57 (review); 94;103-106 (review); 110; 119-123;126;131;155-158;183-185;213-215.
2. Qualitative Study: Creswell, “On the Bus with Vonnie Lee”, p.86; 251-263.

13. April 15 Combined class with 001 section. University Committee Activities Involving Human Subjects (UCAIHS)—ethical issues with qualitative research.

Assignment: Human Subjects Tutorial on-line <http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihstutorial/> .

14. April 22 Narrative research and writing.

1. Wolcott, p. 49-69.
2. Qualitative study: Ollerenshaw, J, Creswell J. (2002). “Narrative Research : A comparison of two restorying data analysis approaches.” Qualitative Inquiry,8, 329-347.
(Link on Blackboard in Bobst reading tab).

15. April 29th. Summary and Future Challenges for Qualitative scholars.

Assignment: Final paper due