

Qualitative Research Methods SOC 365 – P

Professor Information

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Class Information

Place: JS 166
Time: TR 4 – 5:50 PM
Office Hours: TR 2 – 3:30 p.m. &
MW 1 – 3:30 p.m.

OVERVIEW

Welcome everyone! This class is designed to introduce you to a variety of qualitative methods. We'll learn about these approaches by examining the design, ethics, and presentation of qualitative research, reading about various data gathering and analysis techniques, creating open-ended questions and conducting in-depth interviews, doing fieldwork and writing field notes and notes-on-notes, practicing coding and memoing about emerging themes in qualitative data, and writing up a research report based on collectively gathered data.

We'll begin the course by discussing research design and the University of Tampa's Institutional Review Board. In following weeks, we will read about and discuss fieldwork, interviewing, focus groups, archival and historical research, and content analysis. During this part of the course, you will collect data for a group qualitative project and turn in an IRB form.

We will then turn our attention to analysis, focusing on coding qualitative data (both via traditional methods and the use of qualitative software packages such as N'Vivo) as well as theoretical sampling, saturation, and theory construction. During this part of the course, you will also turn in one assignment demonstrating your ability to code, sort, and memo. We will end the course by discussing how to write up qualitative research and giving short presentations.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the conclusion of the course, students who are successful will be able to:

1. Discuss the benefits, ethics, and limitations of qualitative research methods.
2. Design and apply qualitative research designs to empirical realities.
3. Understand, analyze, contrast, and critique qualitative methods and analyses.
4. Evaluate the findings and structure of different types of qualitative research.
5. Construct and present qualitative research projects.

REQUIRED READINGS

Kathy Charmaz. *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Academic Articles that may be accessed online in the “content” area of the course website.

Suggested (though not required) supplement: Bruce Berg. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*, 7th edition.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

All course requirements must be completed for a passing grade in this course. Grades will be posted on the course website. Final Grades will not be rounded up.

Course Requirements:

Participation	20%
5 Qualitative Assignments	50%
Final Project	30%
Total	100%

Grading Scale:

A	92 – 100%	4.0
AB	89 – 91%	3.5
B	82 – 88%	3.0
BC	79 – 81%	2.5
C	72 – 78%	2.0
CD	68 – 71%	1.5
D	60 – 67%	1.0
F	<60%	0.0

PARTICIPATION ACTIVITIES (20%)

This class is built upon a discussion model, and thus active attendance and participation are important for full integration into the course and subject material. Simply put, your attendance and participation will be evaluated in every class meeting by asking (1) do you appear to have done the readings as measured by comments, questions or formal quizzes and writing assignments; (2) do you contribute to class discussions of the readings and other materials; (3) do you treat other members of the class with respect and courtesy; (4) are you on time for each class and do you stay the full time period; and (5) do you participate in class activities we engage in throughout the course.

FIVE QUALITATIVE ASSIGNMENTS (50%)

There are a series of FIVE qualitative assignments that are due in class, and are connected to the larger group project for the class. I will post detailed instructions for each of these on the course website.

1. The first is completing an IRB form concerning the use of human subjects. This involves designing a research project, coming up with basic research questions, writing interview questions, dealing with ethical issues, etc. We'll go over this in class and I'll make available some examples to follow.
2. The next THREE assignments are data collection exercises. One requires you to conduct, tape record, and transcribe an hour-long interview and write a reflection of the process of interviewing and what themes or interesting things came up in the interview. The second one requires you to observe a group for at least one hour and write up complete field notes (5-10 single spaced pages). The final exercise requires you to analyze documentary materials. All of these exercises are time consuming and so you should be prepared: it generally takes 3-4 hours transcribing an hour long interview and it can easily take this long writing up fieldnotes.
3. The last assignment is an exercise in which you will demonstrate your ability to analyze data via coding and memoing.

FINAL PROJECT

For this course, each student will contribute to a group dataset, and based on the materials in this dataset, students will work in smaller groups to develop a qualitative analysis paper. Drawing on the data sources collected by the class, each group will write a 10 – 12 page research report based on analysis of the materials. Detailed instructions and a grading rubric will be posted on the course website.

We will regularly discuss this project throughout the semester to talk about data collection processes, emerging themes in the data, and coding processes.

CLASSROOM CULTURE

Organization of Class Time: During class sessions, we will discuss and practice the skills, tools, and concepts outlined in the course readings. In this manner, we will use qualitative research methods and discuss these experiences throughout the course. Since my goal is to engage students in active discussions and practical qualitative training, you will be required to take notes on issues as we discuss them and be responsible for asking clarifying questions when necessary.

Classroom Courtesy: Classroom courtesy is necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to learn without distractions. Here are some basic rules of conduct for our class meetings. Students must not be late or leave early. You should be sitting in your seat as class begins. If this is a problem, drop this class immediately. Cell phones, mp3 players, laptops, and other electronic devices must be turned off before class begins. Students should not be reading other materials, talking or whispering with each other when others are talking, or sleeping during class. Importantly, no student should attack other students for their political or religious beliefs, personal appearance, race / ethnicity, gender, gender identification, sexuality, age, or abilities. Moreover, students should not

come up to the front of the room to ask me questions during class time (do so before and after the class meeting). If you require a cell phone to receive emergency calls from children, partners, or family members, keep it on vibrate throughout the class.

Consistently violating the rules will affect your participation grade and may lead to your dismissal from the class.

COURSE POLICIES

Academic Integrity: In the event that a student violates any provision of the University of Tampa's policy on academic integrity spelled out in the student handbook, I reserve the right to assign any grade for the course I deem to be appropriate (including an F) without regard for a student's accumulated points in the class. Any violation of academic integrity will be handled in accordance with the University's policies. **You are responsible for knowing and observing the University's Academic Integrity Policy**, which you may find at <http://www.ut.edu/provost>.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Plagiarism consists of passing off the work and / or ideas or someone else as your own. As such, you are committing plagiarism if you copy someone else's work and turn it in as your own. This means that if you wish to quote someone else, you must reference or cite them in your papers. It is **YOUR** responsibility to properly cite any materials you use in your writing assignments (for example, the articles and books used in this course are properly cited in this syllabus), and to be aware that I may use software to see whether portions of writing assignments have been taken from other places (such as books, journals, and websites). If you do plagiarize, you will receive **ZERO credit and I WILL REPORT YOU**.

Attendance: I do not take attendance in my classes, but I do give regular, random participation activity assignments over the course of the semester. Basically, participation activities serve as an informal method for taking attendance. It is **YOUR RESPONSIBILITY** to come to class. Therefore, you **CANNOT MAKE UP** participation activities. If you do miss class, it is **YOUR** responsibility to keep up with happenings in the course. Specifically, you are responsible for all materials covered in class while you were gone as well as any in-class exercises, videos schedule changes, and / or deadlines announced or given during the class you missed. **REMEMBER**, everything we do in class is fair game on assignments.

Blackboard: I use blackboard to facilitate materials for this class. Specifically, I will post the syllabus, lecture notes, and anything else I think will be useful for the course on the course website. Further, some of your reading assignments must be downloaded from the blackboard website (these are titled Online Article in the schedule below). You will thus need to enroll in Blackboard ASAP!!! To accomplish the best results in this class, you should make a regular habit of checking blackboard before each class for lecture notes and any other postings, announcements, or materials.

Assignment Submission Procedure: Your written assignments (both the group project and the written report of the journal project) **MUST** be turned in electronically via email

or Blackboard (I will let you know which method for each assignment). **I DO NOT ACCEPT HARD COPIES UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES.** You **MUST** complete **TWO** steps when submitting your assignments: (1) Upload your document in Microsoft Word format; and (2) Copy and paste your document text into the submission text box or email. By doing both of these steps, you will safeguard your assignment. For example, if your attachment does not open you will still be safe because I will have proof that you turned it in on time). If you do not know how to submit assignments via Blackboard or email, you should ask me well in advance of the first due date.

Your assignments **MUST** easily open in Microsoft Word. All assignments must be typed in Times New Roman font with 1 inch margins and 12 point font.

Late Papers: If you are unable to turn in a paper on time, it will only be accepted if (1) you contact me by phone, email, or in person **BEFORE** the due date, and (2) you provide a written doctor's note stating that you were incapacitated and unable to turn in the paper. As stated above, I **DO NOT** accept hard copies of papers, and thus you should not attempt to slip a paper in my mailbox or under my door. I will not accept paper copies! That said, you will know the deadlines on all assignments well before the deadline, and thus if you miss the deadline you will not receive credit.

Extra Credit: I generally do not offer or allow extra credit in my classes. That said, I may occasionally offer an extra credit opportunity. When this does happen, I will give the assignment in class and only those in class that day will be allowed to gain extra credit. My advice to each of you, however, is to do things right the first time because I am not likely to offer many (if any) opportunities to make up points.

Accommodations: If there is any student who has special needs due to a disability, please go directly to the Academic Center for Excellence in North Walker Hall. You may phone 813-258-7251 or email jdelvalle@ut.edu to report your needs and provide documentation of your disability for certification. Jennifer Del Valle is the associate director of the Academic Center for Excellence, Student Disability Services. Please feel free to discuss this issue with me in private if you need more information.

Email: If you wish to reach me via email, you should allow for at least 24 hours for a response. This time may be even longer during weekends or vacations, although sometimes I may respond sooner. Please keep in mind that email is not the best way to discuss course material at length, and thus you should come to my office hours or schedule an appointment if you need to go over course materials and / or grades.

Adverse Weather/Emergency Situations: In case of any adverse condition or situation that could interrupt the schedule of classes, each student is asked to access www.ut.edu for information about the status of the campus and class meetings. In addition, please refer to ut.blackboard.com for announcements and other important information. You are responsible for accessing this information.

Syllabus Change Policy: Changes to the Syllabus Topics may vary a bit from the

schedule, below, depending upon the pacing of lectures and the interests of the class. However, students should keep up with the posted reading schedule unless I instruct you otherwise. I also reserve the right to modify this syllabus as conditions warrant. ***You are responsible for schedule or assignment changes whether or not you are in class when they are announced.*** All schedule, assignment, or other syllabus-related changes will be posted on our Blackboard site.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic	Assignment
September 1	Course Introduction	Syllabus
September 3		Sumerau and Mathers Online Reading
September 8	Research Design and Ethics	Charmaz 1 – 21
September 10		No Required Reading Suggested Supplement Berg Chapter 3 Selection of Groups Must be Submitted by Sunday September 14th at 11pm
September 15	Fieldwork	Charmaz 22 – 44
September 17		No Required Reading Suggested Supplement Berg Chapter 6 Qualitative Assignment 1 due by September 21st at 11pm
September 22		Kleinman and Copp Online Reading
September 24		Nowakowski Online Reading
September 29	Documentary Data	Charmaz 45 – 54
October 1		No Required Reading Suggested Supplement Berg Chapters 8 and 9 Qualitative Assignment 2 due by October 5th at 11pm
October 6	Interviewing	Charmaz 55 – 82
October 8		No Required Reading Suggested Supplement Berg Chapter 4
October 13		Charmaz 83 – 108
October 15	Focus Groups	No Required Reading Suggested Supplement Berg Chapter 11
October 20	Nvivo Introduction	Nvivo Online Handout 1
October 22		Nvivo Online Handout 2
October 27		No Required Reading
October 29		No Required Reading
November 3	No Class	No Required Reading Qualitative Assignment 3 due by November 4th at 11pm
November 5	No Class	Groups should meet to

		discuss fieldwork and interview patterns for final project
November 10	Coding and Memo Writing	Charmaz 109 – 137 Suggested Supplement Berg Chapter 11
November 12		Charmaz 138 – 161
November 17		Charmaz 162 – 191
November 19		Charmaz 192 – 224 Qualitative Assignment 4 due by November 23rd at 11pm
November 24	No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday	No Required Reading
November 26	No Class – Thanksgiving Holiday	No Required Reading
December 1	Theory Construction	No Required Reading
December 3		No Required Reading
December 8	Writing Qualitative Reports	Charmaz 285 – 340
December 10		No Required Reading Suggested Supplement Berg Chapter 12
Thursday, December 17, 3:45 – 5:45 pm	Presentations and Course Wrap Up	No Required Reading Final Papers due by December 17th at 11pm