

Fall 2015

EDFR 6715

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THE UNIVERSITY of NEW ORLEANS

EDFD 6715 Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling, and Foundations (ELCF)

Fall 2015

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Class times: Thursdays, 7:00PM-9:45 PM

Class location: Ed. Building: 310

Office Hours: Thursdays, 4:00-7:00 PM

Office Hours: The course instructor will hold regular office hours on Thursdays, 4:00-7:00 pm and by appointment. Recognizing that most doctoral students have work and family obligations during the times set aside for traditional office hours, the instructor will make every effort to be available to students at “non-traditional” times. Most contact should be via email or telephone; students are encouraged to contact the instructor whenever concerns or questions arise pertinent to the course.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE: This course is designed to provide an examination of qualitative research methods, with a focus on research in education, although others from different fields are equally welcome. In particular, students will learn the processes of conducting qualitative research, the main qualitative research genres, and the development and execution of a basic qualitative study. In this process, careful attention will be placed to the subjectivity of the researcher, the ethics of research, and the trustworthiness of a qualitative study. Moreover, this course seeks to also spur the student to begin to consider their own research stances, objectives, and their voice as a researcher. To conduct qualitative research, it is essential that students are familiar with the various ontological, epistemological, and methodological assumptions that guide research in the social sciences.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To understand your epistemological frame;
- To enrich your understanding of the major frameworks and world-views that inform many qualitative research studies, including implications for the conduct of qualitative inquiry
- To develop philosophical, theoretical, and methodological expertise with regard to qualitative research issues
- To develop a general understanding and appreciation of several traditions within qualitative research
- To explore the distinctions among, and the strengths, challenges, limitations, language, of data collection approaches, analysis strategies, and reporting approaches of these traditions
- To foster students’ personal research skills, competencies, and plans using a range of experiential and reflective learning strategies.



Conceptual Framework: Our conceptual framework, the theory-practice-research interaction model, permeates the programs preparing candidates for professional roles in school settings. As candidates progress through their professional studies, they are introduced to formal theories and concepts that are validated by research, which along with their personally held beliefs and assumptions, inform their professional practice. The roles and responsibilities set out the broad domains for developing competence of teacher candidates viewed through the lens of the theory-practice-research interaction model. As candidates engage in various clinical and field experiences included in their program of study, observation and study of professional practices inform and refine the educational theories and concepts they construct. Our goal is to have our candidates internalize the theory-practice-research interaction model, as they develop into reflective practitioners constantly reassessing the educational theories, beliefs, and assumptions they embrace.

Note: While the instructor will make presentations throughout the course and will help guide discussions, the course will be conducted to a large extent as a seminar. Students are expected to read assigned materials, attend class, and actively participate in class discussion. In the context of our seminar format, course readings will not be systematically discussed in each class session, but rather will be brought into discussion by the instructor and students alike as they pertain to ongoing discussion of course material.

Required Texts:

1. Lichtman, M. (2013). *Qualitative research in education: A user's guide* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
2. Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
3. American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed.). Washington D.C.: Author.

Other Required Readings: (Article will be posted on Moodle)

1. Atkinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (1998). Ethnography and participant observation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Strategies of qualitative inquiry* (pp. 110-136). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

2. Carter, S. M., & Little, M. (2007). Justifying knowledge, justifying method, taking action: epistemologies, methodologies and methods in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research, 17*, 1316-1328.
3. Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. *Educational Researcher, 19*(5), 2-14.
4. Creswell, J.W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
5. Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 12*(2), 219-145.
6. Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Introduction. In *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed., pp. 1-15). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
7. McCaslin, M. L., & Wilson Scott, K. (2003). The five-question method for framing a qualitative research study. *The Qualitative Report, 8*(3), 447-461.

GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS

You determine your grade by the number of points earned on the various course activities. With this approach, there is no pre-conceived distribution of grades.

Activities:

1. Quizzes (3)	15 points
2. Mid Term	10 points
3. Presentation of Research Methodology (Group)	10 points
4. Data Collections Assignments (Group)	50 points
5. Reflective Papers (3)	15 points
	Total 100

90 -100 points	A
80-89 points	B
70-75 points	C
74-70 points	D
Less than 69 points	F

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

1. **Quizzes:** The quizzes are timed and will require you to have a clear understanding of the textbook readings and assigned journal article readings. Participants are expected to complete all reading assignments and to actively use these readings to help stimulate and inform class discussions. It is the intent of these quizzes to encourage you to independently complete all assigned readings prior to class discussion. As a result, you will be better prepared to explore the subject in greater depth and detail.

2. **Mid Term:** This assessment will explore your nature of **TRUTH** and how you understand your position as a researcher. Understanding your positionality is important in qualitative research, it helps you evaluate your perspectives, biases, and assumptions that you bring to your research project. In addition, it is vital to examine how you construct your view of *knowledge* through ontology, epistemology, and methodology. For your midterm you will formulate a discussion about these topics, identify your particular paradigm of thought, and synthesize the connection to your research position.

3. **Presentation of Research Methodology:** As a team of two or three, you will develop a presentation of a research methodology. The presentation should **quickly** review the unique aspects of the methodology but **mostly focus on the methodological content of the articles you have selected**.

Each team will be responsible for one lecture and discussion pertaining to an epistemological approach for qualitative research. Each team must select two to three articles (based on number of teammates) from

their 10-15 article-annotated bibliographies. It is expected that the team presentation will consume about **35 minutes** of the class period on a particular class date (see below schedule of classes and assignments).

Articles (5 points): The selected articles (individually) must not exceed 40 pages of text, excluding references. Readings must include at least the following:

- a) A historical text or classic text **from an original author or famous scholar** about this approach;
- b) An example of a published qualitative research study using this approach; and c) at least one or more readings that highlight a current perspective or relevant aspect of the epistemology: e.g., modifications to it, understandings and applications of it in communication (or other disciplines), critiques of it by critics, dialogues about it found in academic journals, etc.
- b) Provide the class with an annotated bibliography of the most relevant (10-15) readings associated with the methodology

Presentation: The lecture/discussion must include the following components (which come from the assigned readings, as well as the additional resources you read and brought to class):

1. Introduction, history, original creators/scholars of approach, definitions
2. Any evolutions, changes in approach over time
3. Specific characteristics and criteria that make up the current rendition of approach
4. How data might be collected using the approach
5. How data might be analyzed according to approach (think of ways you can use actual data for this)
6. Strengths and weaknesses of epistemological approach for purposes of discipline-specific research (communication, or other disciplines represented in class)
7. Discussion and critique of at least one example of a published qualitative study that illustrates
8. Discussion of how the approach is distinguishable from other epistemological approaches discussed in class.

4. Data Collections Assignments Group: You will be gathering several types of qualitative research data throughout this semester. Essentially, you will learn through experiencing the research process from beginning to end. **All the data you collect must address the same research questions!**

Group A. NARRATIVE

- Focus of Study- To explore the lived experiences of XXXXXX
 - Develop a narrative story about this particular individual's life

Types of Data Collection and Analysis

- Interviews
- Participant Observations
- Triangulation of Data (other data sources)

Group B. PHENOMENOLOGY

- Focus of Study- To explore the structures of experience and consciousness of being XXXXX

Types of Data Collection

- Interviews
- Participant Observations
- Triangulation of Data (other data sources)

Group C. GROUNDED THEORY

- Focus of Study -Grounded theory allows the researcher to develop a theory (on, for example, the influential factors of XXXX) through a combination of data collection and analysis.

Types of Data Collection

- Interviews
- Participant Observations
- Triangulation of Data (other data sources)

Group D. ETHNOGRAPHY

- Focus of Study- To explore or analysis of the day-to-day lives, cultural practices, life histories, and educational trajectories of XXXX.

Types of Data Collection

- Interviews
- Participant Observations
- Triangulation of Data (other data sources)

Group E. CASE STUDY

- Focus of Study- To develop an in-depth and nuanced ethnographic analysis of XXXX

Types of Data Collection

- Interviews
- Participant Observations
- Triangulation of Data (other data sources)

Because you are collecting only a small amount of data, it is required that you study a “*homogenous group*”, i.e. a group that hold a similar role. Steps for completing this assignment include: (a) contact a willing interviewee; (b) inform that person of the purpose of this assignment (i.e., “to become initiated to the techniques of qualitative research”) and secure signed, informed consent (c) conduct the interview-observation session; (d) assemble acquired data (interview transcripts, data cards, and observation field notes); (e) conduct an content analysis of the data

Part 1: Purpose statement, significance, and research questions (5 points) (3 pages)

Part 2: Observation (10 points): The purpose of this exercise is to learn how to make and record observations of people and events, and how to negotiate the researcher and participant-observer role. For this exercise you need to choose a setting that connects to your research topic. Bring a notebook and maintain a presence there for 1 hour. Carefully observe and take notes on the setting- what do you see, hear, smell, and feel? What are people doing and saying? How are they interacting with others and/or you? What is the environment like? Note every detail, even the small ones, of what is happening around you. Upon returning home, try to immediately continue your reflection on the field experience: what larger impression do you have of the scene? What feelings did it stimulate in you? As a researcher, what kinds of questions were stimulated by your observation? Write up a **5-page** summary of your observation. Also, create a diagram of your setting.

Part 3: Interview (15 points): The purpose of this exercise is to learn how to negotiate a research relationship, create protocol questions, conduct a research interview, and critique your interviewing technique. You will interview one person for 30 minutes; transcribe the interview, critique the interview, and create a set of data analysis cards. Your interview must be recorded, transcribed

verbatim, typed. Write up a **3-page** method section and a **7-8-page** category construction section (1st draft of categories). **You must also bring your data cards to class on the scheduled date.**

Part 4: Analysis Exercise: (15 points) For this part of the *assignment*, you will complete a mini-case report with the purpose of providing an overview of research topic, significance of the topic, research questions, and a vicarious look at the experience of your participants, a descriptive understanding of the data collected (findings) for all the data, and a conclusion. You will compare data from all three exercises and provide a **10-12-page paper** that showcases an understanding of your participant's perspective across the data.

Part 5: Poster Session:(5 points) The culminating project in this course will require your group to create and present a poster that details the creation of your original student success theory. The poster must include the five aforementioned components of the student success theory. Be creative in how the information is presented but know that the poster should be succinctly written, aesthetically pleasing, free of grammatical and APA errors. Please refer to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=syo7_lfcFgU for information on how to create a poster, if needed. Each group will simultaneously present and discuss their research within a poster session format that is typical at national conferences. Professional dressed for the presentation is required as faculty, administration, and staff will be invited to attend. I must receive a word document AND PDF version of your poster via email at rosie.banda@tamucc.edu prior to the start of class on the designated due date.

5. Reflective Papers: In this course, you are required to turn in three reflective papers. These papers are based on your individualized experiences working with your research group. Your reflective papers are required to be analytical, reflective, and connect to the research literature. Reflective paper 1 will focus on your Part 2-observation of your group assignment, Reflective paper 2 will focus on Part 3- interview and, Reflective paper 3 will focus on Part 4- the analysis exercise.

Writing Requirements: *Suggestions for a Successful Paper:* A good paper requires a clear, strong thesis statement. Your paper should be unified and cohesive; there should be a close relationship between the beginning and the end. Keep in mind that you are graded not just on good writing (sentence structure, grammar, etc.), but on the evidence that you have presented strong elements of *critical thinking* (analysis, evidence, argument building). Please note that, "*surface level*" writing and analysis will be penalized! All written work **MUST** you use current **APA formatting**.

Class Attendance: If you must miss class, please let me know in advance by contacting me at amflowers@uno.edu before class meeting time. You are responsible for all materials covered in class and for completing any work assigned.

Late Work Policy: In order for new skills to be learned, they must be applied. All assignments are expected on the due date noted on the syllabus by 5:00 pm. **Unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor, late submissions will receive a reduction of points and after one week late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the professor.**

Incomplete Grade Policy: A student is eligible for a grade of **(I)** incomplete only when an emergency or other reason beyond his/her control prevents completion of a course near the end of an academic term. Students must meet the conditions outlined in the graduate student handbook.

Accommodating Students with Special Learning Needs: In accordance with University policy, students with documented sensory and/or learning disabilities should inform the instructor so that special needs may be accommodated. Students with disabilities should contact the Office of Educational Accessibility to make the necessary arrangements if modifications are required to facilitate the classroom teaching and learning process.

Plagiarism Policy: I have, unfortunately, encountered acts of plagiarism in some of my courses. I am quite confident that none of you will participate in this type of behavior; nevertheless I take plagiarism very seriously. Therefore:


- Anyone caught committing plagiarism on any assignment will receive an automatic “F” on the assignment and will not be given the opportunity to rewrite it. In addition, a report will be filed with the university with regard to the incident.
- Any student caught plagiarizing more than once will **FAIL** the course automatically.

Tentative Course Calendar: Appendix A contains a tentative course calendar. Please note that this calendar is subject to change. Any necessary amendments will be announced in class.

**APPENDIX A
TENTATIVE CALENDAR**

Course Schedule

DATE	TOPICS/READINGS	ASSIGNMENTS
8/20	Introduction/Overview of Course What is Qualitative Research?	
8/27	Introduction to Epistemology and the Scientific Revolution (Article) Carter, S. M., & Little, M. (2007). Justifying knowledge, justifying method, taking action: epistemologies, methodologies and methods in qualitative research. <i>Qualitative Health Research</i> , 17, 1316-1328.	
9/3	Introduction to Epistemology and the Scientific Revolution (Continue)	Quiz # 1
9/10	(Lichtman) Chapter 1 & Chapter 2	
9/17	(Lichtman) Chapter 3 (Maxwell) Chapter 3 (Article) McCaslin, M. L., & Wilson Scott, K. (2003). The five-question method for framing a qualitative research study. <i>The Qualitative Report</i> , 8(3), 447-461.	Quiz # 2
9/24	(Maxwell) Chapter 5 & Chapter 6 (Article) Creswell, J.W. (2007). <i>Qualitative inquiry and research design Choosing among five approaches</i> (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.	DC Assignment Part 1
10/1	(Lichtman) Chapter 4 (Ethnographic / Ground Theory) (Article) Atkinson, P., & Hammersley, M. (1998). Ethnography and participant observation. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Strategies of qualitative inquiry</i> (pp. 110-136). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.	Team Presentation <i>(Ethnographic)</i> Team Presentation <i>(Ground Theory)</i>
10/8	(Lichtman) Chapter 4 (Phenomenological/ Case Study) (Article) Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> , 12(2), 219-145.	Team Presentation <i>(Phenomenological)</i> Team Presentation <i>(Case Study)</i>
10/15	Fall Break	MID TERM DUE
10/22	(Lichtman) Chapter 4 & Chapter 5 (Narrative/Autoethnography) (Article) Connelly, F. M., & Clandinin, D. J. (1990). Stories of experience and narrative inquiry. <i>Educational researcher</i> , 19(5), 2-14.	Team Presentation <i>(Narrative)</i>

10/29	(Lichtman) Chapter 10 (Interviewing) Chapter 11 (Observations)	Quiz # 3
11/5	Field Work	
11/12	(Lichtman) Chapter 12 (Data Analysis) (Article) Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Introduction. In Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook (2nd ed., pp. 1-15). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.	DC Assignment Part 2 Reflective 1 Due
11/19	(Lichtman) Chapter 12 (Data Analysis) (Lichtman) Chapter 14 (Trustworthiness)	DC Assignment Part 3 * Bring Data Cards to Class Reflective 2 Due
11/26	HAPPY THANKSGIVING! 	
12/3	Data Collection Discussion	DC Assignment Part 4 Reflective 3 Due POSTER SESSION