ED 507
Qualitative Research Methods
Spring 2013
Wednesdays, 4:50 - 7:30 PM
LeChase 148

Instructors:
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Office hours by appointment

Course Objective:
This required doctoral research methods course introduces doctoral students to qualitative research in education and social sciences. The course will offer students an opportunity to explore the theoretical and philosophical foundations of qualitative inquiry while applying these principles in a research project.

Warner’s Diversity and Inclusion Goals and Values:
The Warner Graduate School of Education and Human Development is dedicated to fostering a learning community that represents and builds on a rich diversity of human experiences, backgrounds, cultures, histories, ideas, and ways of living. Consistent with our dedication to education, leadership, counseling, and human development that can transform lives and make the world more just and humane, we recruit, support, and learn with and from students, staff, and faculty from the broadest spectrum of human diversity. Likewise, we seek the same through our interactions with the broader local and global community (http://www.rochester.edu/warner/warnerataglance/diversity.html). See http://www.rochester.edu/diversity/philosophy.html for the University of Rochester’s statements about diversity.

Classroom Environment:
We share, as a classroom community, the task of negotiating the dual priorities of authentic free speech and active regard for all others. Given the important work of leading social change, we need to have discussions in a safe, supportive, and anti-oppressive environment. In this course, an anti-oppressive environment means that we work against language, actions, interactions and ideologies that hurt people. It is important that we listen to each other about how our words and actions are affecting one another and that we talk about any class moment in which something may feel hurtful. Therefore, hate speech of any kind will not be permitted. This includes use of racial, sexual, gender, or abled slurs and personal attacks on others’ ideas. We will negotiate other guidelines about classroom discussions throughout the course.
Course Requirements:

1. **Research Project** (60% of grade): Either alone in or small groups, you will observe four times in a field site and, during one of those observations, interview at least one local participant. This is an informal observational study for purposes of experiencing the methods of qualitative research only. Sample locations may include tattoo parlors, beauty parlors, wineries, firehouses, sports teams, etc. We do NOT recommend using this project for dissertation studies. Exceptions must be discussed with course professors.
   - 1.1 **Site selection prospectus** (10%): The site selection prospectus will include a description of the selected site and a rationale for your selection.
   - 1.2 **Field note and interview data** (20%): Students will observe at their selected site four times for at least one hour per visit and transcribe those field notes. At least one interview must be conducted during one of those visits, audio recorded, and transcribed (one set of field notes will be from this interview).
   - 1.3 **Class presentation and final qualitative research papers** (30%): The final paper will consist of a report of the research project that includes: a clear statement of the question being investigated, the theoretical context in which the question and methodology are grounded (e.g., rationale for qualitative research and an analytic framework), a description of the context for the project and the methods used, a discussion of what the investigation found, and possible implications of those findings. Presentation of the project to the class will round out this part of the assignment.

   Students working alone will be divided into working groups of 3-4 students. Several class sessions (coordinated with due dates for fieldnote/interview data) will be devoted to working on research projects in your working and small groups.

2. **Research Journal** (30% of grade): Using the blog function on Blackboard, each student will be required to post one entry (2 points each) and respond to one other student’s posting (1 point each) each week for ten weeks. Posts should reflect your understanding of the readings, your developing understanding of qualitative research, and reflections on your research project. Later in the semester, you should use the entries as a space to write “analytic memos” where you reflect on emerging ideas from your data analysis. Each post should be no less than 500 words. Each comment on another student’s post should be a few spectacular sentences or a brilliant paragraph long.

3. **Class Participation** (10% of grade): This course is designed as a seminar with both a theoretical and practical component. Class periods will be spent discussing readings as a group and working on projects in small groups. The success of the course will depend upon the quality of your preparation for and participation in these discussions. It is therefore expected that you attend every class and speak to us in advance about any circumstances requiring you to miss a class; absences will affect your grade for the course.

**NO LATE ASSIGNMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED**
**Required Texts:**

Additional readings are posted on Blackboard.

**Grading:**
- Research Project: 60 points
  - (Site Selection Prospectus: 10 points*)
  - (Field note and Interview Data: 20 points*)
  - (Final Paper: 30 points)
- Research Journal: 30 points
- Class Participation: 10 points
- Total: 100 points

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* These assignments do not receive letter grades.
Class Schedule:

(1) January 16
   Overview of the Course

(2) January 23
   Introducing Qualitative Research
   Site selection prospectus draft due
   Readings:

(3) January 30
   Introduction to Fieldwork
   Readings:

(4) February 6
   Qualitative Study Design
   First impression field notes due
   Film: Farmingville
   Readings:
   Cresswell, J.W. (2012). Five qualitative approaches to inquiry (Chp. 4); Five different qualitative studies (Chp. 5); and Data collection (Chp. 7) Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed.) pp15-68. London: Sage.
   Nespor, J. (nd). Designing qualitative research proposals

(5) February 13
   Foundations in Interpretive Inquiry and Data Collection
   Readings:
   Cresswell, J.W. (2012). Five qualitative approaches to inquiry (Chp. 4); Five different qualitative studies (Chp. 5); and Data collection (Chp. 7) Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd ed.) pp. 69-128, 145-178. London: Sage.
   Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. Wittrock (Ed.) Handbook of research on teaching, (pp. 139*-161). Washington: AERA.
   *Note that this starting page is in the middle of the article. We recommend reading the whole piece, but require you read from page 139 starting with the “data collection” heading.
(6) February 20
**Focusing Your Study and Observing in Context**
Readings:

(7) February 27
**Interviewing**
Second *Field notes Due*
Readings:

RECOMMENDED:

(8) March 6
**Ethnography Across Settings**
Readings:

(9) March 13
**Getting Started with Data Analysis**
*Interview transcripts and field notes due*
Readings:

(10) March 20

Understanding Data Analysis: Coding and analyzing
Readings:

(11) March 27

Understanding Data Analysis: Transcription and Analyzing Talk and Discourse
Readings:

(12) April 3

Ethics
Coded interview transcripts and field notes due
Readings:

(13) April 10

Writing qualitative data
Readings:

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1 The readings in this chapter of Saldana are lengthy. Read through them first quickly to identify those coding strategies that make most sense for your study (theoretical framework, research questions, etc.). Focus your blog entry on that section of the chapter.

14) April 17
Qualitative Reflections
Readings:

15) April 24
Presentations of final projects

16) May 1
Presentations of final projects

May 3
Final papers due by 5PM