Spring 2014 Syllabus  
Oregon State University  

PPOL 628: Advanced Qualitative Methods  

Professor: Hilary Schaffer Boudet  
Class Meetings: T 8:30-11:50a, FAIR 304  
Credits: 4  
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Office Hours: Tuesdays, 1-3pm  

Course Description  

In this advanced methodology course, the focus will be on epistemological approaches, research design, data analysis techniques and critiques of qualitative research. It aims to familiarize students with the different ways of knowing and doing qualitative research on a more advanced level, culminating in the written and oral presentation of a qualitative research proposal, including preliminary results from fieldwork conducted during the course. We will consider a range of methodological approaches considered to be qualitative, but special emphasis will be placed on observational and interview-based research.  

This course is conducted as a seminar. Therefore, its success depends on the students’ active participation and constructive engagement. Students are expected to contribute experiences, questions, and beliefs to the classroom discussions, in order to enrich the learning experience. This course is especially geared towards those who plan to employ qualitative methods in their own research. You are welcome, in fact, encouraged to use this course to further your work on your dissertation or essay.  

If you plan to use the data you collect during this course in your dissertation or a formal research publication, you must complete the IRB process prior to data collection. See http://oregonstate.edu/research/irb/ for additional information.  

Student Learning Outcomes  

By the end of the term, you should be able to:  
1. Understand competing paradigms in research  
2. Design and carry out a qualitative research project, including the following tasks:  
   o Initiate contact and gain access to a research site  
   o Design interview, participant observation and/or focus group questions  
   o Schedule and conduct interviews, participant observation and/or focus group discussions  
   o Conduct field observations and write field notes  
   o Transcribe interviews, participant observation and/or focus group discussions
- Code and search for themes in field notes and transcripts
- Formally present a qualitative research proposal, including preliminary results, both orally and in writing
3. Critically assess the reliability and validity of qualitative work
4. Understand the benefits and challenges of integrating qualitative research into a mixed methods design
5. Be familiar with mixed and novel methods of research design.

**Required Texts**


**Grading**

10% Participation
30% In-class individual / team presentations of readings
10% Research spotlight presentation
50% Research proposal
  1. Memo about topic & proposed design (10%)
  2. Interview protocol (5%)
  3. Coded interviews (5%)
  4. Literature review (5%)
  5. Final paper and presentation (25%)

*I reserve the right to give an essay exam during the quarter and add its score to students’ evaluation of the course if it seems the majority of students are not keeping up with the readings and/or not discussing them during class.*

**Participation (10%)**

The participation component of your grade in this course will include frank and in-depth discussions in class, as well as active involvement in all in-class activities. It is expected that all students will come to every class fully prepared and actively involved. There are no make-ups for participation points that are accrued in class.
Participation and in-class activities will be worth 10% of the final grade for this course. Please note that this 10% could be the difference between an A and a B grade in this course!

_In-class individual / team presentations of readings (30%)_

Depending on the number of students in the course, students will lead one of the starred (*) course meetings individually or as a team. Meetings will be assigned in week 1. It is expected that the lecture/discussion will consume about 2 hours of the class period on that particular class date. For these presentations, you can assume that the other students will have read the course material, and your role is to _briefly_ summarize it, while spending the majority of the class period facilitating discussion. Don’t forget to leave time to summarize and conclude the discussion.

In addition, students will work in teams to present a subset of the readings in Weeks 2 and 10. For these presentations, the other students will _not_ have read the same material and your role will necessarily include more summarization.

_Research spotlight presentation (10%)_

In week 8, each student will give a 5-10 minute report (no visuals necessary) on an exemplary peer-reviewed journal article or book employing qualitative methods. This report should briefly summarize the journal article/book and then explain why the research is exemplary (e.g., extremely well executed methods section, outstanding theory development, novel data collection method, etc.). The presentation should also focus on the reliability and validity of the approach, as well as the write up. By week 7, students must forward to me the full citation of the article/book they have chosen and an electronic copy of it, if possible.

_Research proposal (50%)_

1. Memo about topic & proposed design (10%): 3-5 pages describing your research site and why you chose it, as well as offering a preliminary list of research questions you hope to answer with your research. Use the exercises in Maxwell Chapters 1-5 to guide the writing of this memo.
2. Interview protocol (5%): 1-2 pages of interview questions / topics
3. Coded interviews (5%): Three sets of field notes or transcribed interviews with analyses (limit of 15 pages double-spaced)
4. Literature review (5%): 5-7 pages placing your research within the relevant literature
5. Final Paper and Presentation (25%): 25-30 pages and 15-minute presentation about your proposed research and preliminary findings from the field work conducted during class. Use Maxwell Chapter 7 as a guide for the paper and presentation.
Requirements for All Written Work

All written work must be typed, double spaced, printed in black ink, and be in 12-point type with one-inch margins. Points will be deducted if these criteria are not met. In addition, errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling will hurt your grade. Most importantly, all work will be graded on comprehensiveness of ideas, depth of analysis, rigor of effort, whether all directions were followed accurately, in terms of both content and format requirements, and whether the assigned work was handed over on time.

Policy on Late Assignments

Except for documented illness or family emergency, any student expecting to miss an assignment or other course deadline must have my approval at least one week in advance. Students who miss an assignment or a deadline due to illness or family emergency must notify me within 2 days of the assignment or deadline in question. Failure to meet a deadline or turn in an assignment at the scheduled time without explicit approval by me and without notification to me within 2 days of the assignment will result in a score of 0 on this assignment.

Policy on Incompletes

The grade of “incomplete” is given only to a student whose work in a course has been qualitatively satisfactory, and when, because of illness or other circumstances beyond his/her control, he/she is unable to complete some small portion of the course work. In no case will a grade of “incomplete” be recorded for students who have not completed major course assignments in this class.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to conduct themselves in compliance with the university’s guidelines regarding civility. Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty. For further information, visit the university’s comprehensive website at: http://oregonstate.edu/studentconduct/regulations/index.php#acdis

Students with Disabilities

Accommodations are collaborative efforts between students, faculty and Disability Access Services (DAS). Students with accommodations approved through DAS are responsible for contacting the faculty member in charge of the course prior to or during the first week of the term to discuss accommodations. Students who believe they are eligible for accommodations but who have not yet obtained approval through DAS should contact DAS immediately at (541) 737-4098. See http://ds.oregonstate.edu/home/ for more information.
Etiquette and electronics

Technology impacts the norms that regulate it. In the not-so-distant past, no one would need to be told that cell phones, music players, and other electronics should be turned off in the classroom. These were generally not available. But in the 21st century, professional etiquette is not always clear on acceptable use of personal electronics in the classroom. Out of respect for everyone in the class, please turn off all your electronics devices prior to class. Students using laptop computers to take notes should sit in the back or to the side. If their use of the computer distracts others, including the teacher, then they will be asked to move or desist from using their laptops.
**Week 1: Description, Prediction, Explanation, Interpretation, Understanding**

Due: Select week for discussion leadership.

**Required Reading**
- a) Creswell, Chapter 2.
- d) Glaser and Strauss, Chapters 1-2, 10.

**Recommended Reading**

**Week 2: Research Design**

Due: Memo and 10-minute presentation on research topic and proposed design.

**Required Reading**
- a) Maxwell, Chapters 1-5.

*Week 3: Ethics/Gaining Access*

**Required Reading**
- c) Weiss, Chapters 1-2.
- d) Lofland *et al.*, Chapters 1-3.

**Recommended Reading**
*Week 4: Getting Organized & Gathering Data*

Due: Interview protocol

**Required Reading**

a) Interview research: Weiss, Chapters 3-5.
b) Observation research: Emerson *et al.*, Chapters 1-5.

*Week 5: Competing approaches to qualitative research*

Due: One-hour team presentations on one of the following texts:


**Required Reading**


*Week 6: Analyzing Data*

**Required Reading**

a) Lofland *et al.*, Chapter 9.
b) Emerson *et al.*, Chapter 6.

*Week 7: Validity and Reliability*

Due: Coded interviews and/or field notes (up to 15 pages), citation (and electronic copy, if possible) of article/book for research spotlight presentation

**Required Reading**

a) Maxwell, Ch. 6.

**Recommended Reading**


**Week 8: Writing Up**

Due: Research Spotlight Presentation

**Required Reading**

a) Lofland *et al.*, Chapter 10.

b) Emerson *et al.*, Chapter 7.

c) Weiss, Chapter 7.

d) Maxwell, Chapter 7.

**Recommended Reading**


**Week 9: Mixed and Novel Methods**

Due: 30-minute team presentations on one of the following methodologies:

1) Mixed Methods

2) Fuzzy set/Qualitative Comparative Analysis

3) Expert Elicitation / Delphi Method


4) Photovoice

5) Q methodology

6) Qualitative GIS

**Week 10: Final Presentations**

Due: Final paper (including all of its components) and a 15-minute presentation on your research design and proposal.