

## **PPOL 628: Advanced Qualitative Methods**

Professor: Hilary Schaffer Boudet  
Class Meetings: T 8:30-11:50a, FAIR 304  
Credits: 4  
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### **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:
  - Initiate contact and gain access to a research site
  - Design interview, participant observation and/or focus group questions
  - Schedule and conduct interviews, participant observation and/or focus group discussions
  - Conduct field observations and write field notes
  - 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

Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz and Linda L. Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. University of Chicago, 1995.

Lofland, John, David Snow, Leon Anderson and Lyn H. Lofland. *Analyzing social settings: a guide to qualitative observation and analysis*. Wadsworth, 1984.

Maxwell, Joseph A. *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Sage, 2004.

Weiss, Robert S. *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. Simon and Schuster, 1995.

### 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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.
- b) Friedman, Milton. "The Methodology of Positive Economics." *Essays in positive economics*. Vol. 231. University of Chicago, 1966, pp. 3-43.
- c) Geertz, Clifford. *The interpretation of cultures*. Vol. 5019. Basic books, 1977. Chapter 1, pp. 3-30.
- d) Glaser and Strauss, Chapters 1-2, 10.
- e) Weber, Max. "Objectivity in the Social Sciences and Social Policy." In Dallmayr, Fred Reinhard, and Thomas A. McCarthy, eds. *Understanding and social inquiry*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977. pp. 24-37.

### **Recommended Reading**

- a) Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. In N. Denzin (Ed.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 200. pp. 163-188.

## **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**

- a) Allen, C. "Spies Like Us: When Sociologists Deceive Their Subjects." *Lingua Franca*, 7(1997): 30-39.
- b) Sin, Chih Hoong. "Seeking Informed Consent: Reflections on Research Practice." *Sociology*, 39 (2005): 277-294.
- c) Weiss, Chapters 1-2.
- d) Lofland *et al.*, Chapters 1-3.

### **Recommended Reading**

- a) Clark, T. On 'being researched': Why do people engage with qualitative research? *Qualitative Research*, 10.4 (2010): 399-419.
- b) Hamzeh, M.Z., & Oliver, K. Gaining research access into the lives of Muslim girls: Researchers negotiating Muslimness, modesty, Inshallah, and Haram. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 23.2 (2010):165-180.

### **\*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.
- c) Lieberman, Evan S. et al. 2004. "Symposium: Field Research," *Qualitative Methods*. 2, 1:2-14.

### **Week 5: Competing approaches to qualitative research**

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

- a) Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton, 1994.
- b) George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. MIT Press, 2005.
- c) Brady, Henry E., and David Collier. *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2010. (Available online at EBL reader through Valley Library Website)

#### **Required Reading**

- a) Mahoney, James. "After KKV: The new methodology of qualitative research." *After KKV: The new methodology of qualitative research* 62.1(2009): 120.

### **\*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.
- b) Bloor, M. Techniques of validation in qualitative research: A critical commentary. In G. Miller & R. Dingwall (Eds.), *Context and method in qualitative research* (pp. 37-50). London: Sage. 1997.

#### **Recommended Reading**

- a) Altheide, D. L., & Johnson, J. M. Criteria for assessing interpretive validity in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.) *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (pp. 485-499). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 1994.

- b) Adcock, R & Collier, D. "Measurement Validity: A Shared Standard for Qualitative and Quantitative Research," *American Political Science Review* 95.3 (2001): 529-546
- c) Becker, H. S. Problems of inference and proof in participant observation. *American Sociological Review*, 23 (1958): 652-660.
- d) Kirk, J. & Miller, M. L. *Reliability and validity in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. 1986

### **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**

- a) Drisko, J.W. Writing up qualitative research. *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Social Services*, 86.4 (2005): 589-593.
- b) Rhodes, C. Ghostwriting research: Positioning the researcher in the interview text. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6.4 (2000): 511-525.

### **Week 9: Mixed and Novel Methods**

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

- 1) Mixed Methods
  - a) Jick, T. "Mixing Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Triangulation in Action," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 24.4 (1979): 602-611.
  - b) Datta, Lois-Ellin. 1997. "A Pragmatic Basis for Mixed-Method Designs," *New Directions for Evaluation*, 74 (1997): 33-45.
  - c) Jennifer Greene and Valerie J. Caracelli. "Crafting Mixed-Method Evaluation Designs," *New Directions for Evaluation*, 74 (1997): 19-32.
  - d) Tarrow, Sidney. "Bridging the Quantitative-Qualitative Divide in Political Science." *American Political Science Review*, 89.2 (1995): 471-474.
  - e) Bridges, George S., and Sara Steen. "Racial disparities in official assessments of juvenile offenders: Attributional stereotypes as mediating mechanisms." *American Sociological Review* (1998): 554-570.
- 2) Fuzzy set/Qualitative Comparative Analysis
  - a) Ragin, Charles C. *Fuzzy-set social science*. University of Chicago, 2000.
  - b) Wright, Rachel A., and Hilary Schaffer Boudet. 2012. "To Act or Not to Act: Context, Capability, and Community Response to Environmental Risk." *American Journal of Sociology* 118.3 (2012): 728-777.
- 3) Expert Elicitation / Delphi Method

- a) Murry Jr, John W., and James O. Hammons. "Delphi: A Versatile Methodology for Conducting Qualitative Research." *Review of Higher Education* 18.4 (1995): 423-36.
- b) Miguel de França Doria, Emily Boyd, Emma L. Tompkins, W. Neil Adger. Using expert elicitation to define successful adaptation to climate change. *Environmental Science & Policy*, Volume 12, Issue 7, November 2009, Pages 810–819.
- 4) Photovoice
  - a) Wang, Caroline, and Mary Ann Burris. "Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment." *Health Education & Behavior* 24.3 (1997): 369-387.
  - b) Bell, Shannon Elizabeth. "Photovoice as a strategy for community organizing in the central Appalachian coalfields." *Journal of Appalachian Studies* (2008): 34-48.
- 5) Q methodology
  - a) Van Exel, Job, and Gjalte de Graaf. "Q methodology: A sneak preview." *Online document*. <http://www.qmethodology.net/PDF/Q-methodology> (2005).
  - b) Webler, Thomas, and Seth Tuler. "Four perspectives on public participation process in environmental assessment and decision making: Combined results from 10 case studies." *Policy Studies Journal* 34.4 (2007): 699-722.
- 6) Qualitative GIS
  - a) Elwood, Sarah, and Meghan Cope, eds. *Qualitative GIS: a mixed methods approach*. Sage Publications Limited, 2009.
  - b) Wridt, Pamela. "A qualitative GIS approach to mapping urban neighborhoods with children to promote physical activity and child-friendly community planning." *Environment and planning. B, Planning & design* 37.1 (2010): 129.

### **Week 10: Final Presentations**

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