# COM 609: Advanced Qualitative Research Methods in Communication Spring 2013 – Wednesdays 6-8:45 p.m. – STAUF A431

The Hugh Downs School of Human Communication, Arizona State University-Tempe

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## **Course Description**

Through presentation of scholarly readings and immersion into one's own in-depth research project, this course explores a variety of qualitative research approaches, taking into account issues of epistemology (ways of knowing), methodology (ways of examining), and representation (ways of writing and reporting). We will examine interpretive theory, and several intellectual traditions that constitute this field of research including participatory action research, sensemaking, symbolic interactionism, ethnography of speaking, and autoethnography. We will read exemplars of qualitative research that illustrate these particular theoretical traditions as well as examine key issues such as ethics, ethnography online, and qualitative quality.

Students will carry out their own research project, engaging in 25+ hours of field research. Through this project, students will have the opportunity to collectively enact and reflect upon the central phases of qualitative research such as: planning, negotiating access, observing, interviewing, creating field texts, analyzing field texts, writing, and making a public impact. The goal is that students will emerge from the class with first-hand qualitative research experience, a paper that is conference submission ready, and a significant understanding of qualitative methods that can serve as a basis for comprehensive exams and dissertations.

Because we are covering both the philosophies and methods of interpretive research, a significant amount of reading and research is involved in this course. The Tracy *Qualitative Research Methods* book will cover the nuts-and-bolts of qualitative research/analysis while handbook chapters and journal articles will provide further depth as well as exemplars.

Students should achieve the following objectives through the course:

- 1. Understand the value of qualitative research methods
- 2. Learn philosophical assumptions that inform qualitative research methods
- 3. Become adept at participant observation and in-depth interviewing and familiar with focus groups and mediated approaches.
- 4. Read and appreciate exemplar qualitative research studies
- 5. Design and conduct a qualitative research project of one's own
- 6. Practice and become comfortable with several ways to analyze qualitative data
- 7. Write a conference-ready qualitative research paper
- 8. Lay the groundwork for a successful qualitative comprehensive exam question and a final thesis/dissertation

#### **Course Readings**



*The following texts are recommended* (and should be on your long-term qualitative reading list):

- Bazeley, P. (2007). Qualitative Data Analysis with NVivo. Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Clair, R. P. (2003). Expressions of ethnography: Novel approaches to qualitative methods. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Ellingson, L. L. (2008). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira.
- Goodall, H. L., Jr. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press/Rowman & Littlefield.
- Goodall, H. B. (2008). *Writing qualitative inquiry: Self, stories, and academic life*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Lincoln, Y. S., & Guba, E. G. (1985). Naturalistic inquiry. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2010). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, 3<sup>rd</sup> *Edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Lofland, J., Lofland, L. H. (1995). *Analyzing social settings: A guide qualitative observation and analysis*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Madison, D. S. (2005). *Critical ethnography: Method, ethics, and performance* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative Data Analysis. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Prosser, J. (1998). *Image-based Research: A Sourcebook for Qualitative Researchers*. London: Falmer Press.
- Saldaña, J. (2013). The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. Los Angeles, Sage.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant observation. New York: Holt, Rinehart, Winston.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

## Class requirements (out of 500 pts total)

Each week, our readings include the "how-to" of qualitative methods, as well as theoretical treatments and exemplars. The reading assignments serve as the basis for class discussion, preparation for assignments, and an effective guide to your research.

Your final project should reflect 25 or more research hours (of participant observation, interviewing, focus groups, etc.). Each field hour is usually accompanied by 3-4 hours of recording, transcription, fact checking, and analysis, equating to about 5 to 8 hours each week associated with working on your own field project. The course assignments are specifically designed to help students conduct a significant study and break it up into bite-size pieces.

## Participation, Attendance, & Discussion Assisting/Posting (up to 100 pts)

Please complete assigned readings before class so you can participate in an enthusiastic and informed manner. Participation points are earned through discussion board posting, focused attention/attendance for the full class period, thoughtful and appropriate verbal participation (more does not always = better), listening alertly and taking notes, concentrating on course material rather than distractions, and providing supportive interaction with other class members (fostering collective focus). I will make notes about participation earned every week.

Students serve as "discussion assistant" for one unit. In this role, 1) thoroughly understand the course readings, 2) prepare a BRIEF summary of the readings, 3) develop and post several discussion questions to stimulate contemplation and dialogue, 4) browse the course activities / worksheets related to the Tracy text, and recommend one or more for leading in class. *Post discussion questions and activity recommendation to Blackboard by Sunday before class.* 

If there is an extenuating emergency or illness that interferes with your attendance or ability to keep up with work, please let me know. If you must miss a single class (for any reason), you can instead participate by reading an auxiliary article related to the topic and providing the class with an overview (verbally or written). If you plan to do this, please alert me so we can plan likewise.

## Practical Practica (up to 175 pts @ 10-30 pts each)

Please submit practica via blackboard before class, bring a paper or electronic copy to class for reference, and be prepared to share/workshop your ideas from these assignments with the class.

- 1. **Proposed Site & Phenomenon of Study (10 pts):** In 2-3 pages, describe three potential field sites and/or group of participants for your study. For each, discuss: 1) The site or people you want to work with and the general research issue(s) you want to explore; 2) How the site or people of interest are complementary with your theoretical, practical, or professional interests; 3) How your background and experience affects the ability to gain access to these contexts or people; and 4) Your plan of having access to this site by [specified time]. See Tracy, chapter one, for details.
- 2. **Theoretical / Social Issue or Problem (10 pts):** In 2-3 pages, describe a social and/or theoretical issue or "problem" you plan to explore in your research site. Phrase your approach in the form of one or more research questions (see Tracy chapter one). Describe why an emic qualitative study of this phenomenon is especially warranted and valuable. Explain several sensitizing concepts from past experience or research that align with your interests. How will these concepts help focus your research? As a bricoleur, what types of data could you piece together in order to answer your research questions? These research issues/problems/questions may change; this is a place to start. See Tracy, chapter two, for details.

- 3. Human Subjects Paperwork (10 pts): Become familiar with the university's human subjects requirements and turn in the application forms (available at <u>http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/humans</u>). Complete the training at <u>http://researchintegrity.asu.edu/training/humans</u> and print out or otherwise keep record of your certification. Your advisor or an active faculty member mentor should serve as PI (if he or she cannot, please consult with me). Turn in the forms and follow up regarding their approval. Reference Tracy, chapter five, for more information on human subjects training and certification.
- 4. **Map and Narrative Tour (15 pts):** Complete a detailed map and narrative tour of your site (or a key part of your site). Note key people (or types of people), artifacts, and objects and their relation to each other. Accompany the map with a narrative tour—a mini interpretation of the scene—that explains what the map says about research participants' values, rules, priorities, ways of being, status, power, etc. Ask the question: What does this tell me, conceptually about this place? (try to see things as "evidence" of certain arguments). Include as many "senses" (sight, sound, smell, taste, feel, mood) as possible Provide an updated version of your guiding research question(s) at the top of the practicum. See Tracy, chapter four, for details.
- 5. **Fieldnotes (15 pts):** Write a set of fieldnotes that represents at least 4 hours of participant observation and reflects tips and guidelines for good field records and observation. Provide an updated rendition of your guiding research question(s) at the top of the practicum. See Tracy, chapter six, for details.
- 6. **Interview Guide (15 pts):** Prepare an interview schedule or guide for use with your participants. Identify the a) ideal sample, b) the type (or types) of interviews you are likely to engage in, and c) the stance(s) that you will take. Explain why these approaches are most appropriate for your research. Then, write out the actual queries and probes in the order you foresee, identifying the types of questions (aim for a mix). Provide an updated rendition of your guiding research question(s) at the top of the practicum. See Tracy, chapter seven, for details.
- 7. **Research Proposal (30 pts):** Prepare a 10-12-page research proposal including: 1) title, abstract & key words; 2) introduction, purpose and rationale; 3) literature review/conceptual framework (point to current discussions, controversies, gaps and unanswered questions and how your study might address these issues); 4) research questions 5) proposed methodology, protocol and logistics, 6) timeline/budget. You can also hypothesize your findings. See Tracy, chapter five, for details.
- 8. Analysis Nuts and Bolts Practicum (15 pts): Choose one or more options from Tracy Exercise 9.1.
- 9. Advanced Analysis Practicum (15 pts): Choose one or more options from Tracy Exercise 10.1.
- 10. (A) Rough Draft (25 pts) & (B) Peer Review (15 pts) Turn in rough draft of entire paper, including findings, implications, limitations and future directions. Write a 2-3 page peer review of one of your colleague's papers, providing constructive advice and suggestions for further development.



## Inspiring Semester Research Paper & Presentation (up to 225 pts)

A ~25-30 page paper based upon your original qualitative research is the course's culminating assignment. This study involves locating a "site," immersing yourself in its social action, analyzing the significance of that social action for its participants, and constructing a significant scholarly account of how the phenomena implicates practice and theory.

Papers should open with a rationale, clear purpose, a review of relevant literature, research questions (or other specific issues to be analyzed), and methods. *The heart and most important part of the paper are the findings and analysis of data, as well as the theoretical and practical implications and contributions of the piece.* Please use APA style. Note: Although the final paper quality is often related to the quality (and evaluations) of practica, this is not always the case. The paper grade is based on the quality of the final paper.

You have the option to co-author your paper. If you work in a pair, each partner must still engage in 25 research hours, and complete practica #3, #4, #5, #8, #9 and #10b separately. You can pair up anytime up to practicum #10. Co-authored assignments will receive the same grade and may be slightly more expansive. If you are considering pairing up, the following article is very helpful for understanding the opportunities and challenges of collaborative ethnography:

Trujillo, N. (1999). Teaching ethnography in the twenty-first century using collaborative learning. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 28, 705-719

During one of the final class periods, you will give a 12-minute oral presentation of your final paper. Use this as an opportunity to practice a conference-quality presentation, complete with visual aids if appropriate. The presentation is worth up to 25 points.



Grading: Letter grades are figured as to the following guidelines (out of 500 pts)

Outstanding – above expectations	Good – above average	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Failing
A+ 485 - 500 pts	B+ 435 – 449 pts	C+ 385 - 399 pts		
A 465 – 484 pts	B 415 – 434 pts	C 350 – 384 pts	D 300–349 pts	E below 300 pts
A- 450 – 464 pts	B- 400 – 414 pts			XE - academic dishonesty

## **Class Policies and Procedures**



#### Norms of Civility:

Let's create an oasis of civility in this class by: arriving on time and staying for the entire class period, keeping an alert and enthusiastic presence, paying attention to course material rather than other distractions, listening supportively and attentively—speaking one at a time and helping others stay focused. Many of us are irresistibly drawn to our computerized devices. If this is the case for you, disable the temptations—put it away, turn off the social media/email alerts, etc.

#### Academic Integrity:

Although several graduate school papers may appropriately overlap in conceptual focus, **your course assignments should be original work devised for this class**. If you plan on using material prepared for a different course, please consult with me regarding appropriateness.

Assignments with integrity are written with clear and appropriate organization, full sentence structure, grammar and spelling. When referring to material from the text, class notes, or any other source (including Internet webpages), using quotation marks and appropriate citation is ethically and stylistically required.

Students are warned against cheating or plagiarizing on any assignment or exam, large or small. Plagiarizing includes copying from other students, past coursework, the Internet, the text, or other published sources without proper citation. It also includes excessive "help" or "editing" on assignments from others (if in doubt, ask me). Students found to be in violation of academic integrity guidelines will face disciplinary action which may include being suspended or expelled from the College or University, given an XE on the transcript, referred to Student Judicial Affairs and/or having his/her name kept on file.

## Unique Academic Needs:

Students with unique academic needs who desire special accommodations should contact me in the first couple sessions to discuss options and document their needs with ASU's disability resource center (<u>http://www.asu.edu/studentaffairs/ed/drc/lab/</u>).

## Absences, Due Dates, Late or Incomplete Work:

Assignments will be marked down up to 10% each day and will not receive points more than two weeks past their due date (and none will be accepted after April 26<sup>th</sup>). In-class work (e.g., presentations and class activities) will receive credit only on the day they are due. **All coursework must be completed in order to pass the class.** 

Incompletes are available to students who: 1) have finished more than half the coursework, 2) experience serious illness or personal emergency, 3) negotiate the incomplete before 4/19.

nents Due
onal Research. In N. K. (4 <sup>th</sup> ed., pp.43-60).
versies, contradictions, and (Eds.), <i>Handbook of</i> ge. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. -610). Thousand Oaks,
Scene 9, 18, 123-132.
w Boards, Instructors,
<i>tionism</i> <i>erpretation of cultures</i> . erns of role enactment in an ster bunny: Socialization 95.
e rom field to desk (ch 3) & ting Ethnographic
d shadowing to spect- , 115-133.

5	Planning the Interview					
2/6	T #7: Planning the Interview: Sampling, Recruiting and Questioning Recommended - Sample interview guides – BLACKBOARD					
	<ul> <li>Feminist Approaches and Relational Ethics</li> <li>T #3 – Feminist Approaches Section</li> <li>Trethewey, A. (1997). Resistance, identity, and empowerment: A postmodern feminist analysis of clients in a human service organization. <i>Communication Monographs</i>, 64, 281-301.</li> <li>Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate others. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 13, 3-29.</li> </ul>					
	Due: Practicum #4 – Map and narrative tour					
6	Participatory Action Research and Social Justice					
2/13	<ul> <li>T #3 – Participatory Action Research Section</li> <li>Brydan-Miller, M., Kral, M., Maguire, P., Noffke, S., &amp; Sabhlok, A. (2011). Jazz and the banyan tree: Roots and riffs on participatory action research. In N. K. Denzin &amp; Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Qualitative Research</i> (4<sup>th</sup> ed., pp.387-400). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</li> <li>Conquergood, D. (1991). Rethinking ethnography: Towards a critical cultural politics. <i>Communication Monographs</i>, 58, 179-194.</li> </ul>					
Tim Huffman guest	<ul> <li>Sensemaking &amp; Structuration</li> <li>T #3 – Sensemaking and Structuration Sections</li> <li>Pratt, M. G. (2000). The good, the bad, and the ambivalent: Managing identification among Amway distributors. Administrative Science Quarterly, 45, 456-493.</li> <li>Tracy, S. J., &amp; Rivera K. D. (2010). Endorsing equity and applauding stay-at-home moms: How male voices on work-life reveal aversive sexism and flickers of transformation. Management Communication Quarterly, 24, 3-43.</li> </ul>					
	Due: Practicum #5 – Full set of formal fieldnotes					
7 2/20	Eliciting experience through interviews & focus groups T #8: Conducting the Interview: Embodied, Mediated and Focus Group Approaches T Appendix B-Focus Group Guide and Appendix C- Interview Transcription Excerpts					
	<ul> <li>Virtual and Mediated approaches</li> <li>Garcia, A. C., Standlee, A. I., Bechkoff, J., &amp; Cui, Y. (2009). Ethnographic approaches to the internet and computer-mediated communication. <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography, 38,</i> 52-84.</li> <li>Lindemann, K. (2005). Live(s) online: Narrative performance, presence, and community in LiveJournal.com. <i>Text and Performance Quarterly, 25,</i> 354-372.</li> </ul>					
	Interview and Focus Group Workshop					
	Due: Practicum #6 – Interview Guide					
8	Playing with Data Analysis & an NVivo Sneak Peak					
2/27	T #9 –Data Analysis Basics: A Pragmatic Iterative Approach Charmaz, K. (2011). Grounded theory methods in social justice research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Qualitative Research</i> (4 <sup>th</sup> ed., pp.359-380). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.					
	Flyvbjerg, B. (2011). Case study. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), Handbook of Qualitative Research (4 <sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 301-316). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.					
	Recommended Timeline – Download NVivo and begin interviews and focus groups					

9	Moving Through (Amira De La Garza's) "Seasons" of Ethnography					
	Pitts, M. J. (2012). Practicing the four seasons of ethnography methodology while search for identity					
3/6	in Mexico. <i>The Qualitative Report</i> , <i>17</i> , 1-21. Available at <u>http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR17/pitts.pdf</u> .					
	Tracy, S. J. (Under submission, 2012). Buds bloom in a Second Spring: Storying the male voices project. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> .					
uest						
S. Malvini Redden Guest	<ul> <li>Back Story of a 609 Research Project, Conference Paper, and Publication</li> <li>Malvini Redden, S. (In Press). How lines organize compulsory interaction, emotion management, and "emotional taxes": The implications of passenger emotion management and expression in airport security lines. Management Communication Quarterly.</li> <li>Goodall, H. L., Jr. (2000). Writing the new ethnography. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press/Rowman &amp; Littlefield. Chapter Two, "Finding the Story in Ethnographic Words" pp. 45-62.</li> </ul>					
Ś	Due: Practicum #7 – Research Proposal					
3/13	Have a great Spring Break, full of laughter, vitality, relaxation and good cheer!					
10 3/20	Advanced Approaches for Analysis Data Texts					
J. Saldaña Guest	T #10 – Advanced Data Analysis: The Art and Magic of Interpretation Saldaña, J. (2013). <i>The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers</i> . Los Angeles, Sage. – Excerpts. NVivo materials – TBD					
Salda	Tips from Trisha on multiple ways to analyze and use data for various research projects					
	Recommended Timeline – Finishing up interviews and focus groups					
11 3/27	Evaluating Qualitative Inquiry – The Criteria Controversy and The Politics of Evidence					
Tara lead discussion	<ul> <li>T # 11 – Qualitative Quality: Creating a Credible, Ethical, Significant Study</li> <li>Bochner, A. (2000). Criteria Against Ourselves, <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 6, 266-272.</li> <li>Denzin, N. K. (2011). The politics of evidence. In N. K. Denzin &amp; Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of Qualitative Research</i> (4<sup>th</sup> ed., pp. 645-658). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</li> <li>Richardson, L. (2000). Evaluating ethnography. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 6, 253-256.</li> <li>Scarduzio, J. A., Giannini, G. A., &amp; Geist-Martin, P. (2011). Crafting an architectural blueprint: Seven principles of design for ethnographic research. <i>Symbolic Interaction</i>, <i>34</i>, 447-470.</li> </ul>					
L	Due: Practicum #8 – Data Analysis Nuts and Bolts					
12 4/3	Data Analysis and NVivo Workshop					
	Bring lap-top with Nvivo or be ready to use laboratory computers. Reread & bring 20 pages of data (e.g., mix of observations and interviews)—both hard copy and electronic. Activities may include metaphor/drawing analysis or an Nvivo teamwork period, among other things.					
	Due: Practicum #9 – Advanced Data Analysis					
13	Writing Part One					
4/10	T#12 - Writing Part 1: The Nuts and Bolts of Writing Qualitative Tales					
	Autoethnographic, Embodied, & Performative Approaches Fox, R. (2007). Skinny bones #126-774-835-29: Thin gay bodies signifying a modern plague. Text					
	and Performance Quarterly, 27, 3-19. Tillmann, L. M. (2009a). Body and bulimia revisited: Reflections on "A secret life." <i>Journal of</i> <i>Applied Communication Research</i> , 37, 98-112.					
	Vande Berg, L., & Trujillo, N. (2009). Cancer and death: A love story in many voices. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i> , <i>15</i> , 641-658.					

14	Writing Part Two				
4/17	T #13 - Writing Part 2: Drafting, Polishing, and Publishing				
t	Qualitative Resonance and Theory-Building				
Chase Clow Guest	Murray, S. D. (1971). That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. <i>Philosophy of the Social Sciences</i> , <i>1</i> , 309-344.				
se Clov	Weick, K. E. (2007). The generative properties of richness. <i>Academy of Management Journal, 50,</i> 14-19.				
Chas	Due: Practicum #10a Rough Draft				
	Due by Friday 4/19 5 p.m Practicum 10b – Peer Review of peer's rough draft				
	Going Public				
	T#14 – Qualitative Methodology Matters: Exiting and Communicating Impact				
15	Tracy, S. J. (2012). The toxic and mythical combination of a deductive writing logic for inductive				
4/24	qualitative research. Qualitative Communication Research, 1, 109-141.				
1/21	Workshop: Discuss Peer Reviews and Final Paper Considerations				
	Due by Friday 4/26 5 p.m Final Semester Paper				
ТВА	Final Paper Presentations				

Advice from past students:

- Negotiate access and begin data collection <u>ASAP</u>. The people who really succeed are those who get access to a site early and begin collecting data as soon as they have access. Some get access but procrastinate about data collection and later discover that the access isn't what they thought it would be.
- Just start. Don't wait until you feel comfortable, until you've read all the background literature, or until you think you've got all of your ducks in a row. That will be too late. Just put one foot in front of the other and go.
- Always have tentative research questions to guide you. Expect that these will change/evolve, but have them and think about them as you are doing participant observation.
- Very few people in the field are going to understand exactly what you're doing and why. That's okay, and it's probably a good thing. Nevertheless, rehearse ahead of time a (strategically ambiguous) answer to the inevitable "What are you doing here?" question.
- Do the reading. Take some notes along the way. Writing = learning.
- Take the practica seriously. If you do, you have a serious head start on your final project.
- If you are frustrated, or need research ideas or inspiration, go see Sarah. I felt lost and after chatting with her about the direction of my project, everything kind of came into focus.
- Always keep an audio recorder with you. When an idea about things you heard, things you saw, things you should look into, things to consider, speak record it before you forget.
- Learning is a fundamentally social process. When we share victories, defeats, and "best practices", we all learn more, and the process is more satisfying. Don't pretend that it's going any better or worse than it is.
- Don't hesitate to document your personal feelings, thoughts, and analysis in field notes—they make great data.
- Be driven by the dilemmas practitioners face. When the dilemmas of your participants are at odds with your research questions, sit up and pay attention.
- *Be prepared to be flexible* as there are many unforeseen surprises (most of them good ones!) that you'll encounter while interviewing or observing. One of the most surprising things that happened to me was that what I thought I'd be observing and writing about (my expectations) were not as interesting as what was happening (my observations). That was probably one of the biggest lessons as well as one of the most intriguing aspects of the course. While it was disconcerting that I had to "dump" my original lit review and scramble to find articles about what I was observing, it ended up in a much better project!