

CJT 764: Advanced Topics in Qualitative Methods
Spring semester 2011
Tuesday, 1:00-2:30 p.m.

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Office hours: Monday and Tuesday, 10:00—12:00 a.m., and by appointment

Course Description and Objectives

Description of CJT 764 from the UK Bulletin:

A focused treatment of one or more issues, topics, or problems in qualitative research methodology in communication, such as ethnography, discourse analysis, semiotics, or historical methods. Prereq: CJT 664 or consent of instructor

As this capsule description suggests, CJT 764 is intended to provide a deeper analysis of selected topics in qualitative methodology. This semester, we will engage almost exclusively with ethnography, defined very broadly as “the attempt to understand another life world using the self – as much of it as possible – as the instrument of knowing” (Ortner, 1995, p. 173). Specifically, we will devote most of our collective attention to these areas:

- Qualitative project design
- Issues of studying communicative action in, among, and through digital technologies
- Creative and multimodal methods of generating data
- Ethical and identity issues in conducting qualitative studies
- Coding, analysis, and interpretation of data
- Writing and evaluation of research texts

Our main objectives are as follows: 1) To foster greater competence in the design, analysis, and writing phases of qualitative research; 2) To gain a stronger understanding of the strategies and issues related to studying communication in digital technology contexts; and 3) To engage with questions concerning the criteria, standards, and value of qualitative communication research.

Please note that CJT 764 builds upon the knowledge of qualitative methodology that students bring to the seminar. If you are not already familiar with the basic theoretical underpinnings, data collection techniques, and analytical strategies of qualitative fieldwork, and its applications in the communication discipline, you would be better served by taking CJT 664 (Qualitative Methods in Communication Research).

Required Texts

The required books, listed below, have been ordered and should be available at the UK Bookstore and Kennedy Bookstore. Other required readings, shown in the semester schedule, are mostly available in electronic form on Blackboard.

Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts-informed perspectives*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Ellingson, L. L. (2009). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research: An introduction*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Golden-Biddle, K., & Locke, K. (2007). *Composing qualitative research* (2nd. Ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

Markham, A. N., & Baym, N. K. (2009). *Internet inquiry: Conversations about method*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Los Angeles: Sage.

Course Requirements

Detailed instructions will be distributed for each of the following assignments and discussed in class. See the semester schedule for the dates of these discussions.

Presentation of Reading (10%)

Everyone in class will take special responsibility for a particular reading and present it to the class. You should consider what “added value” you can achieve through your presentation. This might involve contextualizing the reading in relation to the literature (or theory) that the piece draws upon, other sources you’re familiar with, or other things the author has written. Alternately, you might relate the reading to an empirical problem, a moral dilemma, a societal or public policy issue, etc. You are encouraged to speak with me in advance about your strategy.

Reading Memos and Responses (20%)

On several occasions this semester, you will be expected to post a brief reading memo, maximum 400 words, on Blackboard. These should be posted to the Discussion Board feature of Blackboard, in the forum designated for the weekly seminar, by 5:00 p.m. Monday at the latest. Each student is expected to write a total of five memos this semester, according to one of these patterns: a) Three memos turned in before Spring break, two after the break; or b) Two memos turned in before Spring break, three after the break. Reading memos are informal comments on the key methodological questions you see in the assigned readings; issues you think are worthy of class discussion; and analytic problems, findings, and/or possibilities that

you'd like to expand upon. One purpose of these memos is to ensure that you've kept up with our common reading – especially in lieu of a formal participation grade. Another key purpose is to enable each of us, myself included, to see how other seminar participants are responding to the week's readings prior to our meetings.

In addition, for three of the weeks in which you are not posting reading memos of your own, you are expected to post *informed responses*, maximum 200 words, to the memos written by other students. These responses should be posted to Blackboard's Discussion Board by the time that class for the designated forum begins – i.e., 1:00 p.m. Tuesday at the latest.

Research Memo (5%)

You will write a research memo in which you propose a substantive question or area to focus on that is suitable for qualitative research. You will relate the rest of the course assignments to this research area.

Journal Article Review (15%)

In this assignment, you will find three articles in communication journals (or journals in allied fields) that relate to the question/area stated in your research memo, using library databases such as EBSCOhost. The articles should primarily use qualitative methods and different ones so that you can compare them. You will write a short paper comparing the articles' methodological approaches.

Pilot Study (20%)

For this assignment, you will carry out a pilot study implementing an approach suitable for the research interest articulated in the research memo and the journal article review. One option for the pilot study is a very short-term ethnography (utilizing, for example, participant observation), which would include discussion of site selection, access, rapport, field notes of observations, and preliminary findings. Another option is a qualitative interview study involving two or three participants, which would include recruitment, rapport, informed consent, your interview schedule, transcript, and preliminary findings. Still other options might include some of the alternative and/or creative methods we are examining this semester. Completion of the online IRB certification, and approval of your study by the IRB, is pre-requisite to doing this assignment if you plan on presenting the results of your work in a public venue.

Final Project (30%)

For the final project in CJT 764, you will extend the research process already initiated in the research memo, journal article review, and pilot study assignments into one of the following directions:

1. **Empirical study**. You will enlarge upon the pilot study by generating additional data (using the same or additional methodological strategies), perform a more thorough data analysis and interpretation, find and utilize more references, and produce a journal article-length paper.

2. **Methodological analysis.** You will enlarge upon the journal article review by examining a much larger body of scholarly literature, sharpen your identification of a subject area in which you might be able to make an insightful contribution, perform a careful analysis of the literature, and write a journal-article length essay.

You have the choice of developing your project individually or in a duo. Should you choose the latter, I will expect a longer and/or more complex treatment, along with some other requirements (to be explained later).

All students will give a presentation of their work-in-progress of the final project during the last week of the semester.

Attendance and Participation

Attendance in this class is mandatory; only dire illness, personal or family emergencies, religious observances, or University-related obligations are acceptable reasons for not attending. One absence is permitted without any grade penalty (albeit not for a class meeting in which you are scheduled to make a presentation); each subsequent absence will result in a 10% reduction of your final grade in CJT 764.

Ongoing verbal participation by everybody is very important to the success of this seminar. Although this component of the course will not be evaluated formally, I'd like to encourage an open, relaxed seminar atmosphere in which everybody feels free to contribute. Please remember that the comments of your colleagues deserve your attention and respect, just as you deserve theirs.

Procedures, Policies, and Advice

1. **To get through the term happily and successfully, you should keep up with readings and assignments.** You will find that I am "digression-friendly," up to a point; our class time is actually a scarce resource and needs to be allocated wisely. So, as you read the class texts, think about questions or issues that can be the basis for productive discussion. Don't be shy about asking questions. If you're not "getting it," it's quite possible – in some cases, likely – that others aren't either.
2. **Check your e-mail at least once before every class** for class-related messages, sent to you via an e-mail address list.
3. **It is important to arrive on time and stay for the duration of the seminar.** The first and last 10 minutes of class are frequently when important announcements are made and handouts distributed. We'll have a break midway during class; if it appears as though I am forgetting to take the break, don't hesitate to remind me!
4. All assignments are due on the day indicated in the syllabus. **I do not accept late papers,** except in the case of a documented emergency.

5. All written work for this class should be prepared in the formats and style of the latest edition of the **APA Manual**.
6. **There is no assurance that I will allow you to take an I (Incomplete)** if your work is not finished at the end of the semester. Incompletes are definitely *not* conducive to a healthy graduate student life, so you should talk with me sooner rather than later if you experience difficulties in completing (or understanding) assignments.
7. **Feel free to contact me** if you want a confidential, one-on-one discussion about any aspect of CJT 764. My office hours this fall are Monday and Wednesday, 10:00—12:00 a.m., and by appointment. My office phone number is 859-257-4242. My e-mail address is: lindlof@uky.edu. I'll read and respond to your e-mails with reasonable dispatch during the week; on weekends, I may not always be able to reply to your e-mail.

CJT 764: Advanced Topics in Qualitative Research Methods Course Schedule

All of the articles can be accessed as Word or PDF files from the Assignments feature of Blackboard, except for a few that are accessible via Web links (with the **URL** shown under the reference entry). Read all of the assigned readings before class – except for Week 1.

Week 1 (January 18)

Introduction and course overview.

Presentation of reading assignment discussed

Reading memos assignment discussed

Readings:

Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2010). Introduction to qualitative communication research. In *Qualitative communication research methods* (pp. 1-32). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

Week 2 (January 25)

Qualitative research in digital communication contexts.

Introduction to qualitative research design.

Research memo assignment discussed

Readings:

Internet inquiry: Introduction: Making smart choices on shifting ground (pp. vii-xix)

Internet inquiry: QUESTION FIVE: How can qualitative researchers produce work that is meaningful across time, space, and culture? (pp. 131-171)

Internet inquiry: QUESTION SIX: What constitutes quality in qualitative Internet research? (pp. 173-197)

Garcia, A. C., Standlee, A. I., Bechhoff, J., & Cui, Y. (2009). Ethnographic approaches to the Internet and computer-mediated communication. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 38, 52-84.

Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts-informed perspectives*. **Read Chapters 1, 2, 3.**

Week 3 (February 1)

Design choices in qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative, and arts-based models.

Journal article review assignment discussed

Readings:

Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts-informed perspectives*. **Read Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.**

Boylstein, C., Rittman, M., & Hinojosa, R. (2007). Metaphor shifts in stroke recovery. *Health Communication, 21* (3), 279-287.

Buzzanell, P. M., & D'Enbeau, S. (2009). Stories of caregiving: Intersections of academic research and women's everyday experiences. *Qualitative Inquiry, 15*, 1199-1224.

Lahrman, M. K. E., Geist, M. R., Rodriguez, K. L., Graglia, P. E., Richard, V. M., & Schendel, R. K. (2010). Poking around poetically: Research, poetry, and trustworthiness. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*, 39-48.

Week 4 (February 8)

Design choices in qualitative inquiry, continued: Single-site and multi-site ethnography. Case study and case selection. Multi- (mixed-) methods research. Problems of boundary definition in digital communication studies.

Research memo due

Readings:

Internet inquiry: QUESTION ONE: How can qualitative internet researchers define the boundaries of their projects? (pp. 1-32)

Hannerz, U. (2003). Being there . . . and there . . . and there! Reflections on multi-site ethnography. *Ethnography, 4*, 201-216.

Roth, W. D., & Mehta, J. D. (2002). The Rashomon effect: Combining positivist and interpretivist approaches in the analysis of contested events. *Sociological Methods and Research, 31*, 131-173.

Bryman, A. (2006). Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: How is it done? *Qualitative Research*, 6, 97-113.

Quandt, T., & von Pape, T. (2010). Living in the mediatope: A multimethod study on the evolution of media technologies in the domestic environment. *Information Society*, 26, 330-345.

Van Wynsberghe, R., & Khan, S. (2007). Redefining case study. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 6 (2), Article 6.

http://www.ualberta.ca/~iiqm/backissues/6_2/vanwysberghe.pdf

Seawright, J., & Gerring, J. (2008). Case selection techniques in case study research: A menu of qualitative and quantitative options. *Political Research Quarterly*, 61, 294-308.

Week 5 (February 15)

Observational and documentary methods – with special emphasis on capturing and explicating disembodied, dynamic, mobile, and/or sensual social action

Pilot study discussed

Readings:

Internet inquiry: QUESTION FIVE: How can researchers make sense of the issues involved in collecting and interpreting online and offline data? (pp. 33-68)

Garcia, A. C., Standlee, A. I., Bechkoff, J., & Cui, Y. (2009). Ethnographic approaches to the Internet and computer-mediated communication. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 38, 52-84. **Re-read "Online Participant Observation," pp. 57-60, and "The Nature of Data for Online Participant Observation," pp. 60-66.**

Buscher, M., & Urry, J. (2009). Mobile methods and the empirical. *European Journal of Social Theory*, 12, 99-116.

Hookway, N. (2008). "Entering the blogosphere": Some strategies for using blogs in social research. *Qualitative Research*, 8, 91-113.

Osterlund, C. S. (2008). Documents in place: Demarcating places for collaboration in healthcare settings. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work*, 17, 195-225.

Warren, S. (2008). Empirical challenges in organizational aesthetics research:

Towards a sensual methodology. *Organization Studies*, 29, 559-580.

Week 6 (February 22)

Interviewing, visual, and material culture methods

Journal article review due

Readings:

Knapik, M. (2006). The qualitative research interview: Participants' responsive participation in knowledge making. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5 (3), Article 6.

http://www.ualberta.ca/~ijqm/backissues/5_3/pdf/knapik.pdf

Garcia, A. C., Standlee, A. I., Bechhoff, J., & Cui, Y. (2009). Ethnographic approaches to the Internet and computer-mediated communication. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 38, 52-84. **Re-read "Interviewing in Online/CMC Research," pp. 66-67.**

James, N., & Busher, H. (2006). Credibility, authenticity and voice: Dilemmas in online interviewing. *Qualitative Research*, 6, 403-420.

Singhal, A., Harter, L. M., Chitnis, K., & Sharma, D. (2007). Participatory photography as theory, method and praxis: Analyzing an entertainment-education project in India. *Critical Arts: A South-North Journal of Cultural & Media Studies*, 21, 212-227.

Musello, C. (1992). Objects in process: Material culture and communication. *Southern Folklore*, 49, 37-59.

Week 7 (March 1)

Ethics of qualitative research. Identity issues and dilemmas in the conduct of fieldwork.

Final project discussed

Readings:

Internet inquiry: QUESTION THREE: How do various notions of privacy influence decisions in qualitative internet research? (pp. 69-98)

Shea, C. (2000). Don't talk to the humans. *Lingua Franca*, 10 (6), 27-34.

<http://mailer.fsu.edu/~njumonvi/irb-article.htm>

Internet inquiry: QUESTION FOUR: How do issues of gender and sexuality influence the structures and processes of qualitative internet research? (pp. 99-130)

Garcia, A. C., Standlee, A. I., Bechkoff, J., & Cui, Y. (2009). Ethnographic approaches to the Internet and computer-mediated communication. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 38, 52-84. **Re-read "Access and Identity in Online Environments," pp. 68-73, and "Ethical Dilemmas in Online Ethnographic Research," pp. 73-77.**

Jordan, A. B. (2006). Make yourself at home: The social construction of research roles in family studies. *Qualitative Research*, 6, 169-185.

Lykkeslet, E., & Gjengedal, E. (2007). Methodological problems associated with practice-close research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17, 699-704.

Week 8 (March 8)

No class. Consultations about pilot studies and/or final projects will be scheduled for this week.

Week 9 (March 22)

Analysis/interpretation – with emphasis on the grounded theory method. Validity, reliability, and generalisability.

Readings:

Butler-Kisber, L. (2010). *Qualitative inquiry: Thematic, narrative and arts-informed perspectives*. **Re-read selected chapters TBA.**

Elsbach, K. D. (2003). Assessing creativity in Hollywood pitch meetings: Evidence for a dual-process model of creativity judgments. *Academy of Management Journal*, 46 (3), 283-301.

Cho, J., & Trent, A. (2006). Validity in qualitative research revisited. *Qualitative Research*, 6, 319-340.

Week 10 (March 29)

Analysis/interpretation: Coding and managing data

Pilot study due

Readings:

Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*.

Week 11 (April 5)

Crystallization: A new approach to qualitative communication research – Bridging qualitative analysis and writing via dendritic crystallization.

Readings:

Ellingson, L. L. (2009). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research: An introduction*.

Week 12 (April 12)

Writing: Practices of Reporting and Storytelling in Academic Contexts. Traditional Genres and Formats

Readings:

Golden-Biddle, K., & Locke, K. (2007). *Composing qualitative research* (2nd. Ed.)

Paveglio, T., Carroll, M. S., Absher, J. D., & Norton, T. (2009). Just blowing smoke? Residents' social construction of communication about wildfire. *Environmental Communication, 3*, 76-94.

Week 13 (April 19)

Writing: Nontraditional Genres and Formats

Readings:

Dicks, B., Soyinka, B., & Coffey, A. (2006). Multimodal ethnography. *Qualitative Research, 6*, 77-96.

Jenkins, M. M. (2010). Ethnographic writing is as good as ten mothers. *Qualitative Inquiry, 16*, 83-89.

Vannini, P., & Vannini (2008). Of walking shoes, boats, golf carts, bicycles, and a slow technoculture: A technography of movement and embodied media on Protection Island. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14, 1272-1301.

Week 14 (April 26)

Project presentations

Final exam week (May 4)

Final project due