

CJT664-01
Qualitative Methods in Communication Research

Instructor: Dr. Elaine Wittenberg-Lyles **Office Address:** B357, BBSRB
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Office hours: Wednesday 2-3pm (I will be using Dr. Sellnow's Grehan office)

Course Description: Goals, epistemology and methods of qualitative inquiry in communication. Strengths and limitations of different qualitative research methodologies. Distinctive contributions of qualitative research to theory and practice of communication. **Prerequisites:** Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Student Learning Outcomes: After completing this course, the student will be able to:

1. Understand the basic assumptions underlying qualitative research
2. Know rationales for selecting naturalistic research methods to study communication, the types of questions that can and cannot be answered using these methods, and the strengths and limitations of these methods
3. Understand the basic methods of data collection in qualitative research
4. Conceptual and practical understanding of the analysis techniques associated with qualitative research utilizing software
5. Develop ability to critique qualitative research
6. Understand and practice the writing of qualitative communication research

Required Materials:

Creswell, J. W. (2013). Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Articles as listed on the course syllabus (you are responsible for accessing through UK library).

You are **REQUIRED** to log on to Blackboard in this course. It is your responsibility to determine your Blackboard login and password. All course assignments will be electronically submitted through Blackboard. All written assignments are due on the dates indicated on the schedule. Grades (including final course grades) will ONLY be posted on Blackboard and will not be given via e-mail.

Helpful Resources:

The Qualitative Report (an online journal dedicated to qualitative research):

<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/aindex.html>

Lindlof, T.R., & Taylor, B. C. (2011). Qualitative communication research methods (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

<http://www.dedoose.com/> (free 30 day trial)

Description of Course Activities and Assignments

(1) Class discussion leader and participation (15%): Each week we will concentrate on a small set of readings. You should plan to spend quality time closely reading each assigned article/chapter so that you are prepared to discuss them during class that week. Know them well enough that if asked on the

spot to give a cursory overview of the author's points, you could do so.

Each week, one of you will "lead" the discussion of selected readings (marked with a * in your course schedule). You'll sign up for designated articles on the first day of class. The discussion leader's task is to direct, encourage, and inspire his or her classmates to discuss, debate, and critique, the marked articles. You'll know you've been successful if the discussion has been lively and interesting from the start of class until the break. (articles marked with *)

Just because you're not the discussion "leader" on a given week does not excuse you from participation. Being present and actually participating are minimum requirements for a "B" level participation grade. For any grade higher than that, your participation grade will depend on the quality of your contributions. Quality comments include: adding new insights to the readings, offering a different, unique, and relevant perspective on an issue, contributing to moving the discussion and analysis forward, extending rather than repeating others comments, and demonstrating reflective thinking. (Presentation=25 pts; Discussion=50 pts)

(2) Individual Literature Review (15%): In preparation for your qualitative research study (see below), you should choose a topic of interest that pertains to your research project and become an expert on that topic. If applicable, work with your partner to ensure there are no article duplications. You will need to write a 6-8 page summary that reviews the current literature on your topic (12-16 pages for student pairs). (**NOTE: THIS IS NOT AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**). ***Please get your topic approved by me prior to starting this assignment.*** This assignment is due **February 6**.

(3) Qualitative Research Study and Presentation (60%): Working alone or as a pair, students will conduct a detailed qualitative research study using data provided by the instructor or already collected data gathered through another project (a project sponsored by a faculty member). On the first day of class, an overview of qualitative data sets will be available to choose from, and on-line IRB training certification will be required for use and access to this data. Furthermore, data will only be available for class project purposes and a detailed authorship guide reviewed in class. *Exemplary course projects will be selected for further development suitable for publication in a peer-reviewed journal according to the authorship guidelines.*

Students will use the data to conduct original qualitative data analysis. This task will entail narrowing or broadening a research focus, creating an interesting research question, determining the appropriate method to answer the question, analyzing the data, and writing a report. This assignment will be comprised of:

a) Prospectus and Presentation

Students will revise their individual literature review assignment based on instructor feedback (student partners will also compile their individual literature review assignments) to develop and comprise a 12-16 page project prospectus and present it to the class in a well-organized oral report using 6 powerpoint slides. The prospectus should include projected research questions for the research study (see text chapter 6). On **February 27** the project prospectus is due to Blackboard and presentations will be given in class.

b) A methods section that addresses the specifics of the methodology employed in the study and includes the following subheadings: participants, procedure, and qualitative approach/data

analysis. If applicable, it should also include a description of the coding framework and a table of participant demographics. This assignment is due **March 27**.

- c) Transcription/Analysis – Depending on the data set selected and the approach taken, students may need to transcribe audio/video recordings. To ensure timely completion of the project, data transcription must be completed by **April 1**. Analysis will be conducted using dedoose qualitative analysis software through a free 30 day trial in the month of April or through a website hosted by the Department of Communication.
- d) Final Research Paper which will include all of the above, plus a detailed data analysis and discussion section written in APA (6th Edition) style. This assignment will be due on **Wednesday, May 1**. Detailed specifics on writing a qualitative research study will be reviewed in class.
- e) Research Paper Presentation will be given in class (**Wednesday, April 24**). Students should prepare a poster format handout (provided by the instructor) in class and provide a 10 minute presentation that highlights the major aspects of the paper (a small discussion of the lit review, methods, and a major focus on the analysis and discussion of findings).

Papers should be of convention-submissable quality, approximately 20-25 pages in length (no more!), and should conform to APA style as delineated in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition.

(4) Seminar Participation (10%): You cannot do well in this class if you do not attend regularly. Absences are taboo in graduate courses. It is assumed that you will attend class and be on time for each class session. If you miss MORE THAN ONE CLASS MEETING you will be encouraged to withdraw from the course. **Attendance** will be taken at every course session and points will be lost if you arrive late to class, miss class without an excused absence, or leave class early. **Participation** will be evaluated weekly, with specific emphasis on verbal interaction with classmates/instructor, readiness for class, and knowledge of the week's reading. My expectations for your contributions to class discussion include these: come to class having thoroughly prepared yourself by reading and thinking about the assigned readings; volunteer your responses and opinions in a reasoned, responsible, and rhetorically sensitive manner, neither dominating or being dominated. Participation points will be decreased if I must speak to you about text messaging during class or reading non-relevant course material during the seminar. It is possible to receive 0 points for this element of course evaluation. Evaluating this component of your grade is a decidedly subjective process, but I'll be happy to discuss your seminar participation with you at any time during the semester.

Course Assignments

There are no optional assignments. **Each** of the course assignments must be completed in order to receive a passing grade for the course. Your grade is based on the total points you earn throughout the semester. The following assignments are required for a grade in this course:

Class discussion leader and participation	75 points (15%)
Presentation	25 points
Discussion	50 points
Individual Literature Review (6-8 pages)	75 points (15%)
Research Project (20-25 pages) and Presentation	300 points (60%)
Prospectus and Presentation	100 points
Method Section	50 points
Final Paper	100 points

	Presentation	50 points
Seminar participation		50 points (10%)
Total Course Points:		500 points

Grades, Assignment Values, and Grading Procedures:

I hope that grades will not be a major preoccupation for students in this course, but I know that neither the students nor I can be unconcerned about them. For my part, I work hard to be as objective, fair, and impartial as I can. For the student's part, do not hesitate to speak with me about any of your concerns in this area. I welcome and invite your questions.

Course Grading

Grades will be assigned by points using a standard grading system (90-100% A, 80-89% B, etc.). The final point scale is based on 500 points possible and is as follows:

450 - 500	A
400 - 449	B
350 - 399	C
300 - 349	D
299 - 0	F

Evaluation Policies - Grades

- A** This grade is reserved for work that is of outstanding caliber and far exceeds the minimum requirements for a course or assignment. For a course, the grade indicates that the student achieved mastery of the subject. For a paper, for example, the grade indicates that the work has potential for publication.
- B** The average graduate school grade. It indicates that the minimum requirements for a course or assignment have been met.
- C** The minimum requirements for a class or assignment were not met. Some examples would include: paper assignment was poorly organized, poorly written, not well researched, or a content area was not completed. The grade may also be awarded as a penalty for unprofessional behavior (e.g., failing to meet deadlines, incomplete assignments, etc.).
- D** This grade means the student did not perform at a graduate level. The student may not have demonstrated the necessary skills for graduate school, several assignments may not have exhibited graduate level work, or sub par performances may have been combined with unprofessional behavior.
- F** This grade indicates that the student has failed to attempt an assignment, to complete a project, or has compounded poor performance with unprofessional behavior.
- W** Awarded to any student who believes that circumstances have prevented or will prevent the student from completing the requirements or accomplishing a satisfactory grade. The university has strict guidelines and dates; it is the responsibility of the student to be aware of these dates.

I For some extraordinary reason, the student is unable to complete a final assignment or evaluation; work is incomplete. The grade is *rarely* awarded. Under extenuating circumstances the professor will meet with the student for consideration.

UK Syllabus Requirements:

Excused Absences:

Students need to notify the professor of absences prior to class when possible. S.R. 5.2.4.2 defines the following as acceptable reasons for excused absences: (a) serious illness, (b) illness or death of family member, (c) University-related trips, (d) major religious holidays, and (e) other circumstances found to fit “reasonable cause for nonattendance” by the professor.

Students anticipating an absence for a major religious holiday are responsible for notifying the instructor in writing of anticipated absences due to their observance of such holidays no later than the last day in the semester to add a class. Information regarding dates of major religious holidays may be obtained through the religious liaison, Mr. Jake Karnes (859-257-2754).

Students are expected to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed (excused or unexcused) per university policy.

Verification of Absences

Students may be asked to verify their absences in order for them to be considered excused. Senate Rule 5.2.4.2 states that faculty have the right to request “appropriate verification” when students claim an excused absence because of illness or death in the family. Appropriate notification of absences due to university-related trips is required prior to the absence.

Academic Integrity

Per university policy, students shall not plagiarize, cheat, or falsify or misuse academic records. Students are expected to adhere to University policy on cheating and plagiarism in all courses. The minimum penalty for a first offense is a zero on the assignment on which the offense occurred. If the offense is considered severe or the student has other academic offenses on their record, more serious penalties, up to suspension from the university may be imposed.

Plagiarism and cheating are serious breaches of academic conduct. Each student is advised to become familiar with the various forms of academic dishonesty as explained in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Complete information can be found at the following website: <http://www.uky.edu/Ombud>. A plea of ignorance is not acceptable as a defense against the charge of academic dishonesty. It is important that you review this information as all ideas borrowed from others need to be properly credited.

Part II of *Student Rights and Responsibilities* (available online <http://www.uky.edu/StudentAffairs/Code/part2.html>) states that all academic work, written or otherwise, submitted by students to their instructors or other academic supervisors, is expected to be the result of their own thought, research, or self-expression. In cases where students feel unsure about the question of plagiarism involving their own

work, they are obliged to consult their instructors on the matter before submission.

When students submit work purporting to be their own, but which in any way borrows ideas, organization, wording or anything else from another source without appropriate acknowledgement of the fact, the students are guilty of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes reproducing someone else's work, whether it be a published article, chapter of a book, a paper from a friend or some file, or something similar to this. Plagiarism also includes the practice of employing or allowing another person to alter or revise the work which a student submits as his/her own, whoever that other person may be.

Students may discuss assignments among themselves or with an instructor or tutor, but when the actual work is done, it must be done by the student, and the student alone. When a student's assignment involves research in outside sources of information, the student must carefully acknowledge exactly what, where and how he/she employed them. If the words of someone else are used, the student must put quotation marks around the passage in question and add an appropriate indication of its origin. Making simple changes while leaving the organization, content and phraseology intact is plagiaristic. However, nothing in these Rules shall apply to those ideas which are so generally and freely circulated as to be a part of the public domain (Section 6.3.1).

Please note: Any assignment you turn in may be submitted to an electronic database to check for plagiarism.

Accommodations due to disability:

If you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please see me as soon as possible during scheduled office hours. In order to receive accommodations in this course, you must provide me with a Letter of Accommodation from the Disability Resource Center (Room 2, Alumni Gym, 257-2754, email address: jkarnes@email.uky.edu) for coordination of campus disability services available to students with disabilities.

Final Exam Information:

Wednesday, May 1, 3:30pm, 223 Grehan Building

Course Policies:

Writing Skills. You should be able to compose grammatically correct sentences, write well-developed paragraphs, and express your ideas in a well-organized, coherent manner. For all assignments you should use the APA (6th Edition) writing style using correct citation and notation.

Completion of Assignments. It is assumed that you will turn in your assignments on time. All written assignments are due on the dates and time indicated on the schedule. **All assignments must be electronically submitted through Blackboard.** All assignments should be proofread carefully before turning them in, and no late work will be accepted without penalty. Late work will be accepted only if you clear it with me in advance, and work that I do accept will be reduced at least a letter grade. I will not accept assignments in hard copy or to my personal email address.

Readings and Participation: All readings should be done prior to the assigned class period. Students are expected to participate fully and productively in class discussions and activities.

General Attendance Policy: Students are expected to withdraw from the class if more than 20% of the classes scheduled for the semester are missed (excused or unexcused) per university policy.

Missed or Late Assignments: By definition, late assignments are below average. Missed or late assignments create major time and scheduling conflicts for the instructor, and are unfair to those students who completed work on time. For these reasons, any late assignment will have 10 percent deducted from the score as a penalty for each day it is late (including weekends) and the clock starts at 3:30 the day it is due. An assignment is considered late when it is submitted after the stated deadline, and deductions will be taken beginning with the missed deadline. For example, if an assignment is due on Wednesday deductions will begin immediately following the *beginning* of class. The only exception to this policy will be documented and university accepted excuses (see Students Rights and Responsibilities Code).

Reasonable Accommodation Policy: Any person in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations necessary to ensure full participation and facilitate your educational opportunities. Any student with a disability who is taking this course and needs classroom or exam accommodations should contact the Disability Resource Center, 257-2754, room 2 Alumni Gym, jkarnes@uky.edu.

Course Schedule (*The last day to withdraw is 1/15 and the last day to drop is 1/30*)

Note: Schedule subject to change to accommodate the pace of the class

* denotes article for Class Leader assignment

WEEK 1 – January 9

Course Overview and Introductions; assignments, syllabus, projects

WEEK 2 – January 16

Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods

Read: Creswell Ch 1

Jackson, R. L., Drummond, D. K., & Camara, S. (2007). What is qualitative research? *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 8, 21-28.

Reisetter, M., Yexley, M., Bonds, D., & Nikels, H. (2003). Shifting paradigms and mapping the process: Graduate students respond to qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8, 462-480.

* Kassing, J.W., & Sanderson, J. (2009). “You’re the kind of guy that we all want for a drinking buddy”: Expressions of a parasocial interaction on floydlandis.com. *Western Journal of Communication*, 73, 182-203.

WEEK 3 – January 23

Philosophical Assumptions

Read: Creswell Ch 2

* Droogsma, R. A. (2007). Redefining Hijab: American Muslim women’s standpoints on veiling. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 35, 294-319.

* Charmaz, K. (1999). Stories of suffering: Subjective tales and research narratives. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9, 362-382. Doi: 10.1177/104973239900900306

* Lynch, O. H. (2009). Kitchen antics: The importance of humor and maintaining professionalism at work. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 37, 444-464.

WEEK 4 – January 30

Designing a Qualitative Study

Read: Creswell Ch 3

* Blee, K. M. (1998). White-knuckle research: Emotional dynamics in fieldwork with racist activists. *Qualitative Sociology*, 21, 381-399.

* DeSantis, A. D. (2002). Smoke screen: An ethnographic study of a cigar shop’s collective rationalization. *Health Communication*, 14, 167-198.

* Wanat, C. L. (2008). Getting past the gatekeepers: Differences between access and cooperation in public school research. *Field Methods*, 20, 191-208.

WEEK 5 – February 6

Instructor out of town – Review your data set and become familiar with context.

Begin transcription, data organization

Due: Individual Literature Review via Blackboard

Read: Creswell Ch 4-5

WEEK 6 – February 13

Five Qualitative Approaches/Studies

Read: Creswell Ch 4-5, and at least two Appendices (B, C, D, E, or F)

Recommended:

Sandelowski, M., & Barroso, J. (2003). Classifying the findings in qualitative studies. *Qualitative Health Research*, 13(7), 905-923.

To prepare for our course meeting on 2/20, please take notes on your reflection/responses to the Ahern article and the 7 steps of Preparation that are necessary to refining your research question.

WEEK 7 – February 20

Introducing and Focusing the Study

Read: Creswell Ch 6

- Finlay, L. (2002). “Outing” the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative Health Research*, 12(4), 531-545.
- Ahern, K. J. (1999). Ten tips for reflexive bracketing. *Qualitative Health Research*, 9, 407-411.
- Morse, J. M. (2000). Determining sample size. *Qualitative Health Research*, 10, 3-5.

WEEK 8 – February 27

Due: Prospectus and Presentation

Data Collection

Read: Creswell Ch 7

WEEK 9 – March 6

Data Analysis and Representation

Read: Creswell Ch 8 [software overview]

Review Table 8.1 and Table 8.2 – consider your data and determine best approach. Be prepared to share in class, including rationale and potential application. Start thinking about methods!

March 13 – SPRING BREAK *students should work on data transcription, data cleaning/organization*

WEEK 10 – March 20

Standards of Validation and Evaluation/Rigor in Qualitative Research

Read: Creswell Ch 10

*Banks, S. P., Louie, E., & Einerson, M. (2000). Constructing personal identities in holiday letters. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 17, 299-327.

* Orbe, M. P., & King, G. (2000). Negotiating the tension between policy and reality: exploring nurses’ communication about organizational wrongdoing. *Health Communication*, 12, 41-61.

*Elwood, W. N., Greene, K., & Carter, K. K. (2003). Gentlemen don’t speak: Communication norms and condom use in bathhouses. *Journal of Applied Communication Research*, 31, 277-297.

Recommended:

Whittemore, R., Chase, S. K., & Mandle, C. L. (2001). Validity in qualitative research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 11, 522-537.

WEEK 11 – March 27

Defining Data/Data Collection

Due: Methods

- Corbin, J., & Morse, J. M. (2003). The unstructured interactive interview: Issues of reciprocity and risks when dealing with sensitive topics. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(3), 335-354.
- Mulhall, A. (2003). In the field: Notes on observation in qualitative research. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 41(3), 306-313. Available online at: <http://ceres.fss.uu.nl/files/observation.pdf>
- Hesser, A. (2004, October 24). “The way we eat. Shop write: American eating habits one grocery list at a time.” *New York Times*, 58. Available online at: <http://select.nytimes.com/gst/abstract.html?res=FA0B11FD395E0C778EDDA90994DC404482>
- Kitzinger, J. (1995). Introducing focus groups. *BMJ*, 311, 299-302. Available online at: <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2550365/pdf/bmj00603-0031.pdf>

WEEK 12 – April 3

Writing a Qualitative Study

Read: Creswell Ch 9, 11

*Lundy, L. K., Ruth, A. M., & Park, T. D. (2008). Simply irresistible: Reality TV consumption patterns. *Communication Quarterly*, 56, 208-225.

*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.

Sandelowski, M., & Leeman, J. (2012). Writing usable qualitative health research findings. *Qualitative Health Research*, 22, 1404-1413.

WEEK 13 – April 10

Qualitative interviewing

Kosny, A. (2003). Joint stories and layered tales: Support, contradiction and meaning construction in focus group research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8, 539-548.

* Herzog, H. (2005). On home turf: Interview location and its social meaning. *Qualitative Sociology*, 28, 25-47.

Noy, D. (2009). Setting up targeted research interviews: A primer for students and new interviewees. *The Qualitative Report*, 14, 454-465.

* Tracy, S. J., Lutgen-Sandvik, P., & Alberts, J. K. (2006). Nightmares, demons, and slaves: Exploring the painful memories of workplace bullying. *Management Communication Quarterly*, 20, 148-185.

WEEK 14 – April 17

Individual Meetings with students – please make an appointment with instructor

WEEK 15 – April 24

Due: Presentation in class

FINAL EXAM PERIOD -- Wednesday, May 1

Due: Final Paper by 6 pm via Blackboard