

Qualitative Research Methods

JRSM 7085-001, M50

Fall 2019

Class meeting: T, 5:30-8:30 p.m., MJ 106

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Familiarization with in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and content analysis; practical experience in collecting and analyzing qualitative data.

Prerequisite/Corequisite

JRSM 7050 Mass Communication Theory

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Berg, B. L. (2009). Qualitative research methods for the social sciences (7th ed. at least). New York: Allyn & Bacon.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Qualitative data analysis (2nd ed. at least). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Other readings will be assigned and delivered via eCourseware.

Classroom format

This is a graduate seminar with lecture and class discussion. Each week, we will discuss a new topic and I and/or designated discussion leaders will be responsible for presenting the class with ideas for debate from the readings or examples from the field, and critically analyzing the week's methodological concepts. There will be in class exercises that will cover skills to conduct research, interviewer bias and interpretation concerns, reflexivity, and participant meaning making. Please note that failure to attend class or to actively take part – even if all your assignments are turned in on time and done acceptably - could significantly affect your final grade. Be sure you have read the material BEFORE class and come prepared to discuss it.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.
3. In the Term Year course list available to you, click on the link for JRSM XXX - XXX to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course Requirements

Research Colloquium

Graduate students must attend and write a one-page reflection paper about at least one Research Colloquium sponsored by the Department. Attendance and papers will count for at least 2% of your course final grade. Those who cannot attend will receive instructions about remote viewing from your instructor. Students enrolled in more than one course may write multiple reflections of one research presentation as long as the topic is customized to the individual class.

Hybrid Classroom Format

This class will use Blue Jeans, a web-based video conferencing platform. Students in the M50 section will receive an invitation to join Blue Jeans from your instructor. All students, whether in the on campus or online section, will be in class synchronously, with everyone meeting at the same time. Online students must have a stable Internet connection, speakers and a microphone (or a headset with a built-in mic). Headsets can be purchased for approximately \$20. Students will need to be able to have video turned on for the entire class. Online students will not be permitted to attend class using a cellphone.

Repetition of Courses and Coursework

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the resume and logo).

Quality of Work

All work in this course should follow AP Style, including proper spelling, grammar, and language. A large part of effective communication is having a polished written concept of what you are communicating. This includes all class work and presentations. Although line editing is unlikely, problems in these or other areas will result in the deduction of points.

I expect your work to be good and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources you should use APA formatting. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

Your papers will be graded on content, including writing quality, comprehensiveness of research, adherence to complete and proper citation style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. All of these will be analyzed to determine a final paper grade. Avoid overusing long or block quotes. Within your paper, you will have an introduction, a review of pertinent literature, research questions or hypotheses, method, findings and discussion.

Questions About Grades

If you would like to ask about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time, as I will not discuss grades via email or during class. If you have a question or problem with a grade, exam question, or in-class assignment, you have 48 hours after the assignment is returned to you to contact me, or the grade stands. Your question or appeal must be stated in writing, citing your position

and why you feel the mark is incorrect. The appeal should be turned in to the professor or sent via email within the stated time frame.

Additionally, you are responsible for tracking your grade online and meeting with me early in the semester if you are concerned about your overall grade. Meeting with me early and often can help both parties involved find ways to improve student-professor understanding and quality of work.

Grading and Course Assignments

This is meant as a general guideline to the major assignments within the class. More detail will be provided in class and on eCourseware. Deadlines are also listed in the Class Schedule. All work should be turned in as a Word document or PDF via Dropbox in eCourseware. All work is due at the start of class, 5:30 p.m. Central on the assigned Tuesday, unless otherwise noted.

Weekly Questions

To enhance discussions, please write at least three questions you have about the readings assigned for each week. They can be about any aspect of the readings—choices made by the researcher, questions about methodology or how they translated findings into the discussion, reflexivity and the role of the researcher, or any other aspect of the reading that is relevant to the course.

Students MUST post these questions to the Discussion Board on eCourseware by an hour before the start of class that week (4:30 p.m. Central on the appropriate Tuesday) to give the professor time to review them before class. Questions will be included into class discussion for that evening. If it becomes necessary to cancel class for any reason, questions will still be required for that batch of readings and will be included in the next class session.

Article Critique

Part of this course focuses on critiquing qualitative research, and to do so, each student will read an article of their choosing that describes qualitative research and lead a class critique on it. This will also help model published qualitative research and what elements are important for publication.

On your chosen week, you are to come to a class ready to evaluate the research article from a methodology perspective. Presentations should last no more than 15 minutes plus class discussion. Students should will upload the article to eCourseware for all students to have as a resource and use the questions below to lead the class in discussion. If the article does not provide the information, discuss what is missing and why it matters that it is missing.

1. What is the study's statement of purpose and/or the research question(s) it addresses? Does this support the author's choice of qualitative methods to answer these questions?
2. Does the article include a description of the research design and offer justification for choosing it? What does that justification look like? Do you agree with the choices?
3. How many participants and how are they described? What is the evidence that the investigator(s) adequately represented the participants?
4. Are there issues of bias? If so, how were they handled, and how would you have handled them?
5. How were data analyzed? Is there an adequate description of the process?
6. How are the findings presented?
7. Discuss any signs of validity and reflexivity for the research.

You are welcome to create a visual presentation (PowerPoint, etc.), but that is not required; however, some creativity and engagement of the class is expected. You will be graded on that engagement, plus how in-depth and detailed your critique of the methodology is, and how well you apply class readings and vocabulary/concepts.

Cultural Artifact

Culture, and cultural differences, greatly impact how we view participants in qualitative research. The different personal lenses we bring to the research setting interact with the different lenses our participants bring. We need to become better listeners of culture in order to be better researchers. We also better need to understand our own cultural perspectives that may influence our research design and interpretations. To that end, each student will bring to class and present something that represents a culture they identify with, and the other students will listen sensitively and ask questions about the cultural example. The artifact could be something that represents a nationality, ethnicity, age, sexuality, or gender, or any other cultural grouping—some part of you that identifies with a group or community that has constructed their own customs, symbols, and traditions. Bring to class one example of a symbol, food, or tradition that represents one of your many cultural identities. The artifact presentations should not take more than five minutes.

Interview Transcripts, Memo, and Analysis

Two interviews, minimum of 30 minutes each, will be conducted and fully transcribed by you during the semester. If it is an interview that is useful for your semester research project, great; if your method for that project is not interviewing, you will need to develop a topic and find two people willing to speak with you about it. If it is part of your research project, it should be included in your IRB application; if it is outside of your project, IRB is not required since it is for a class project only.

The audiotapes or sound files recorded by you for the interview, and contact information for the participants, will also be turned in as part of the assignment.

The memo is an integral and essential component of qualitative studies; therefore, the process of memo writing is critical to learn. The memo should be written in a way that reflects three periods of time: prior to the interviews; immediately after the interviews; after the analysis has been written. Memos should consider addressing the following questions:

1. What are your preconceptions about your research topic and/or participants?
2. What are your assumptions about qualitative research in general?
3. What are the ways in which your identity/personality/attitudes/culture/etc. influence your current research?
4. What did you notice about your participants beyond their words (body language, tone, excessive pauses, etc.)? Should you and/or how can you reflect this in your analysis?
5. How do you respond to the transcript after some time away? How is this different from your response immediately after the interview? Why did these differences occur, and what impact might they have on the project as a whole?

Analysis of the interviews will include a discussion of your coding process, and any initial results you may find. While it is impossible to draw significant conclusions from two interviews, it is possible to note

themes and perhaps even in vivo codes that will tell you something about how people relates to the topic.

Research Paper

Complete a research paper based upon individual research conducted by each student. Research must be original. The front half of the paper may come from another class, but the research questions must indicate qualitative research methodology, and the interpretation of the findings must reflect an appropriate review of the literature. (In other words, make sure the front half of the paper you bring in makes sense for this class/your project.) Ideally, this completed project will be useful to you in your thesis, practicum, or project, or something you could submit to a conference (AEJMC Southeast will be in Memphis in March 2020!).

Since IRB (Institutional Review Board) usually requires several weeks for approval, I strongly suggest that your research not include interviewing human subjects. A textual analysis or a historical analysis, for example, would not require IRB approval.

The paper should include appropriate citations, the bulk of which must be from books or academic journals. You are to read the original research (don't cite someone who is in turn citing somebody else). Papers should synthesize major conclusions and themes stemming from the research conducted. APA style must be followed, for formatting, in-text citations and the reference list.

You will have several mini deadlines before the final paper is due. You will turn in the method (including research questions), the findings, and the discussion (including relevant literature), plus a final paper (including the front half) and a presentation to the class. Additional details and direction will be given in class.

Research Colloquium Response Paper

Graduate students must attend (either in person or via BlueJeans), and write a 1-2 page reflection paper about, at least one research colloquium sponsored by the Department. All are from noon to 1 p.m. in Meeman 202. Lunch is typically provided by the Department.

Students enrolled in more than one course in the department may write multiple reflections of one research presentation as long as the topic is customized to the individual class. For example, for JOUR 7050, a student should reflect on the theory/concepts discussed, while for 7530, a student should reflect on the use of visuals. Papers must be turned in by 5:30 p.m. CT on the Tuesday following the colloquia.

Grading Scale

There are 800 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class average will be calculated and fractions will be rounded to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below.

Weekly Questions	11 weeks, 10 points each	110 points
Article Critique		100 points
Cultural Artifact		25 points
Research Colloquium Response Paper		15 points
Interview Transcripts, Memo, and Analysis		100 points
Research Paper		

Method	100 points
Findings	75 points
Discussion	75 points
Final paper (including front half)	150 points
Presentation	50 points
Total	800 points

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4%
 B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4%
 C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4%
 D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4%
 F 0-59.4%

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a basic schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, please understand that some material may require more or less discussion and class time. Thus, changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced in class.

Week 1: August 27: Syllabus/Course Overview, What is qualitative research?

Week 2: September 3: Qualitative research in action

Readings: Berg Chapters 1 and 2, Miles & Huberman Chapter 1
 Assignments: Cultural artifact due (five minutes max)

Week 3: September 10: Validity, reliability, and ethics

Readings: Kvale (eCourseware), Berg Chapter 3, Kirk & Miller (eCourseware), Janoske (eCourseware)

Week 4: September 17: Interviews

Readings: Berg Chapter 4, Rubin & Rubin (Chapters 2, 6; eCourseware)

Week 5: September 24: Textual and document analysis

Readings: Berg Chapter 11, Altheide & Schneider (eCourseware), Fernback (eCourseware)
 Assignments: Method due

Week 6: October 1: Data analysis (Round One)

Readings: Miles & Huberman Chapters 2, 3, 4; Book Chapter (eCourseware)

Week 7: October 8: Writing qualitative research (Round One)

Readings: Miles & Huberman Chapter 10; Berg Chapter 12

Week 8: October 15: Fall break!

Week 9: October 22: Focus groups and case studies

Readings: Berg Chapters 5, 10; Lindsay & Hubley (eCourseware)

Assignments: Interview Transcripts, Memo, and Analysis due

Week 10: October 29: Ethnography

Readings: Berg Chapter 6, Ellis (eCourseware); 5 articles, be sure to read in order)

Week 11: November 5: Cultural and critical studies

Readings: Kleinman (eCourseware), Collins (eCourseware), Liao (eCourseware), Gray (eCourseware)

Assignment: Findings due

Week 12: November 12: Data analysis (Round Two)

Readings: Miles & Huberman Chapters 5, 6, 7, 8

Week 13: November 19: Research Meetings

No official class meeting or readings; schedule a one-on-one with MJM for some time this week instead.

Assignments: Discussion due; bring as much of the paper as you have to your research meeting

Week 14: November 26: Writing qualitative research (Round Two)

Readings: Miles & Huberman Chapter 12, Wolcott (eCourseware)

Week 15: December 3: Research paper presentations!

Tuesday, December 10 at 5:30 p.m. Central

Assignment: Full final papers due via eCourseware

Wednesday, December 18 at 5 p.m. Central

AEJMC Southeast Colloquium submission deadline

JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

Portfolio requirement

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or SquareSpace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives,

via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

Email

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor, and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's

online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the résumé and logo).

Academic integrity

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

Online SETEs

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray "Student" tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the "Submit" button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

Deadlines

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

AP Style and grammar

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

Disability and accommodations

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

Diversity and inclusivity

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

Weather policy

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the University is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day's work.

Student support

Students who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.