

CCI 643: Qualitative C&I Research Methods II

Fall 2014

Class Location/Time	Communications Building, COMM 420, Wednesdays 1:25 – 4:15 p.m.
Instructor	Abbey Levenshus, Ph.D.
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Office Hours	TBD

Catalog Description Advanced theory and application of qualitative research methods to communication and information research

Course Description & Goals

This is a follow-up course to CCI 635: Qualitative C&I Research Methods I, an introductory qualitative methods course. Its overall goal is to increase students' understanding of qualitative epistemology and methodology. Therefore, this advanced course will focus on **developing proficiency in conducting qualitative research by deepening the theoretical and practical understandings** of:

- Paradigmatic differences, including their influence on research design, data collection, organization and analysis
- Qualitative methodologies (e.g., ethnography, case study, etc.)
- Qualitative methods (e.g., participant observation, focus groups, document analysis)
- Inductive and deductive data analysis approaches and strategies
- Issues specific to quality of qualitative inquiry such as credibility, rigor, transparency, ethics and reflexivity

While the course cannot cover all aspects in sufficient depth for students to walk away as qualitative research experts, successful outcomes will also include:

- Demonstrated ability to conduct and critically discuss, evaluate and present qualitative research
- Completed conference-quality research paper
- Collaboratively developed Qualitative Research Handbook with clearly synthesized theoretical and practical reference guides covering epistemological and methodological approaches, as well as practical how-to techniques, tips and trends

Strategies

- Use course readings and assignments that, to the extent possible, coordinate with students' data collection, analysis and writing timelines
- Enlist students to help select readings and lead workshop-style discussions on topics and techniques related to the iterative research process and dilemmas that may emerge
- Provide hands-on, practical training and tips in workshop-style classes – led by the instructor, students and even guests
- Spotlight examples of published qualitative studies in their “before” and “after” stages – to highlight strategies for various research stages – including the submission and revision process
- Guide students to complete by the end of the semester a finished conference-quality research paper that uses qualitative methods (either individual or class-based)
- Host a mini-conference where students present and discuss posters to share their research with their peers and guests (will depend on conference paper assignment we choose)

Course Format & Required Texts

Considerable readings and materials will be assigned throughout the semester that will be made available via UT Course Reserves, UT library databases, web or Blackboard

Books (Available at the UT Bookstore)

Required

- American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual* (6th edition).
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2013). *The landscape of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.
- Dewalt, K. M., & Dewalt, B. R. (2011). *Participant observation: A guide for fieldworkers* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Recommended

- Guest, G., & MacQueen, M. (2008). *Handbook for team-based qualitative research*. New York: AltaMira.
- Wolcott, H. E. (2009). *Writing up qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage.

CCI Diversity Statement: CCI recognizes and values diversity. Exposing students to diverse people, ideas and cultures increases opportunities for intellectual inquiry, encourages critical thinking, and enhances communication and information competence. When all viewpoints are heard, thoughtfully considered, and respectfully responded to, everyone benefits. Diversity and fairness unite us with the wider professional and global community.

Disability Accommodation Statement: “Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 865-974-6087 in 2227 Dunford Hall to document their eligibility for services. ODS will work with students and faculty to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.”

University Civility Statement: Civility is genuine respect and regard for others: politeness, consideration, tact, good manners, graciousness, cordiality, affability, amiability and courteousness. Civility enhances academic freedom and integrity, and is a prerequisite to the free exchange of ideas and knowledge in the learning community. Our community consists of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and campus visitors. Community members affect each other’s being and have a shared interest in creating and sustaining an environment where all community members and their points of view are valued and respected. Affirming the value of each member of the university community, the campus asks that all its members adhere to the principles of civility and community adopted by the campus: <http://civility.utk.edu/>.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

This course adheres to the university’s Academic Standards of Conduct and Honor Statement, as presented in the student handbook *Hilltopics*:

“An essential feature of the University of Tennessee is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the University, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.”

All students are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of students and scholars. All work in this course should be the **student's original work**. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course, dismissal from the program and dismissal from the University. Since dishonesty harms the individual, all students, and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced. Scholastic dishonesty includes **plagiarizing**, which according to Merriam-Webster is “[using] the words or ideas of another person as if they were your own words or ideas.” Therefore, handing in work that contains material written by someone else, whether it is a current or former student or a secondary source, and presenting it as your own efforts is a clear instance of plagiarism.

APA Ethics Code Standard 8.11, Plagiarism: This course also adheres to the American Psychological Association’s ethics code regarding plagiarism and self-plagiarism (pp. 15-16, APA Publication Manual, 6th edition). “Just as researchers do not present the work of others as their own (plagiarism), they do not present their own previously published work as new scholarship (self-plagiarism)” (p. 16). This includes work completed for a previous class or any other circumstance including work, conference paper, book chapter, book or personal reasons, and any material under review for presentation or publication. If you have questions about this, see the instructor right away.

ADDITIONAL POLICIES

- As noted previously, this course adheres to the university’s Academic Standards of Conduct and Honor Statement, as presented in the student handbook *Hilltopics*.
- Students are expected to attend all classes, arrive on time, and participate in class discussion.
- In general, students are not allowed to make up missed work without advance notice. Plans should be made to turn in assignments early if you are traveling to a conference or university sanctioned event. Rare exceptions may be made at the discretion of the instructor.
- The syllabus is subject to change as the instructor deems appropriate and necessary.
- Please silence and put away all mobile devices that are not being used for course-related reasons. Other uses such as email, instant messaging, browsing generally or on social networks are very disrespectful.

GRADING

Students will be evaluated in this course based on the following:

1. Conference-quality research paper (60%)
2. Research spotlight presentation, discussion and handout (15%)
3. Epistemological approach presentation, discussion and handout (10%)
4. Techniques workshop presentation, discussion and handout (10%)
5. Participation (5%)

Assignment Descriptions

Conference-Quality Individual Research Paper (60%)

Students will design and carry out a national conference-quality study over the course of the semester. Students have the option to write the paper with a partner. If selecting the partner option, students are expected to contribute equally to the paper and select an approach that requires two researchers in order to complete it within a semester. Students will work with the instructor to determine that the paper meets the workload expectations.

To complete the paper in time, students will need to develop research topics, questions, methods, etc. before classes begin. Students are welcome to use a previous proposal as a starting point, but they are expected to update and refine the initial proposal. Students will secure IRB approval during the summer. The first part of the paper will be due in September, so students can receive early feedback and so we can discuss in class the components of the paper while they engage in the writing process.

Paper Grade Breakdown

Draft of introduction, literature review and methods section (15%)*

Poster session presentation and handout (10%)

Final completed paper (35%)

*If already completed in a previous class, students would work with the instructor to determine whether to significantly refine the previous proposal or to if an alternative assignment would be needed for this portion of the grade.

Research spotlight presentation, discussion and handout* (15%)

Once during the semester, each student will sign up to give a research spotlight presentation and lead a related discussion. The purpose of this assignment is to get additional interview experience and to develop and pass on key takeaways about conducting publishable qualitative research. Each student will identify and interview an author about one of his or her published qualitative research studies. The student will give a 10-minute presentation, lead a brief 5-7 minute discussion and provide a related handout that spotlights the process of doing qualitative research. Students are strongly encouraged to focus their interview questions and takeaways on aspects related to the week's course topics.

Epistemological approach presentation, discussion and handout* (10%)

Each student will sign up to help guide one class discussion on a qualitative research epistemological approach. For each assigned approach, students will pick 2-3 additional peer-reviewed journal articles or book chapters to supplement the instructor's selected readings on that epistemological approach.

Students must provide the instructor with the readings at least two weeks in advance, so they can be posted on Blackboard with enough time for students to read them.

The presentation/discussion should last 60-75 minutes and include one class activity or exercise to apply or demonstrate the approach. A handout is required. Students may also use audiovisual materials such as Prezi or PowerPoint, but they are not required. The presentation, discussion and activity can cover the following components, which may come from assigned readings or outside sources the student consulted in preparation:

- Introduction, history, original creators/scholars, definitions
- Evolutions, changes, trends
- Specific characteristics/criteria - what distinguishes it from other approaches discussed in class
- How data can be collected
- How data can be analyzed
- Strengths, weaknesses for the purpose of discipline-specific research (e.g., communication)
- Discussion and critique of at least one example of a published study that illustrates the approach (at least one piece must have been part of the assigned reading)

Techniques workshop presentation, discussion and handout* (10%)

Over the course of the semester, students will get hands-on, practical training and tips in workshop-style classes or portions of a class. Workshops will be led by the instructor, students and even guests and will focus on specific aspects of the qualitative research process. Each student will pick a technique workshop from a list of topics and assigned dates. Students will prepare a handout and lead an interactive, hands-on activity that workshops the particular technique or skill. They will likely need to conduct additional research but may also reference related course readings. After researching the topic, students should plan a hands-on interactive workshop that overviews and applies the workshop techniques/tips. Students should also develop a handout.

Participation (5%)

As in any advanced, quick-moving graduate seminar, students will not succeed without coming to each class having fully prepared to discuss and engage with the day's readings and topics. Students share the responsibility with the instructor and their peers of creating a shared space of engaged, meaningful discourse about the topics. Multiple viewpoints are encouraged.

*This course requires students to produce three handouts. We will compile these documents over the course of the semester into a collaborative Qualitative Research Handbook that will serve as a useful future reference for students.

Class Schedule

(Note: This is a guide for the semester and is subject to change.)

****Readings should be completed before the session during which they are discussed****

Week 1 (Aug. 20): Introduction to Course & Qualitative Research: Syllabus, qualitative research experience, overview of epistemological approaches, discuss paper topics and IRB process

Landscape of qualitative research: Ch. 1 (Intro), Part I Intro. (pp. 43-53), Part II Intro. (pp. 189-198)

Week 2 (Aug. 27): Theoretical and Philosophical Considerations Connected to Research Design

Case study research: Ch. 1-2

Basics of qualitative research: Preface, introduction, Ch. 1-2

Qualitative data analysis: Ch. 1-2

Week 3 (Sept. 3): Qualitative Pillars

Week 4 (Sept. 10): Qualitative Pillars

Week 5 (Sept. 17): Data Analysis

Miles and Huberman

Week 6 (Sept. 24): Data Analysis – Case Study

Yin

Week 7 (Oct. 1): Data Analysis

Week 8 (Oct. 8): Grounded Theory / Constructivist

[Add PRSA Educators Academy dates.]

Week 9 (Oct. 15): More Grounded Theory

Week 10 (Oct. 22): Critical Theories/ Cultural Studies Approaches

Week 11 (Oct. 29): Participatory Action Research & Symbolic Interactionism

Week 12 (Nov. 5): Phenomenology & Ethnomethodology

Week 13 (Nov. 12): Writing Up Qualitative Research

Week 14 (Nov. 19): Beyond the Classroom/Paper presentations: Preparing conference presentations, converting conference papers to journal articles, and grant writing

Note: I will travel Nov. 20-23 to present research at NCA.

Week 15 (Nov. 26): Last Day of Class/Day Before Thanksgiving: Paper Presentations

Final Conference Paper Due Via Email at Final Exam Time
(Not yet posted to http://registrar.tennessee.edu/academic_calendar/)