

Qualitative Research

MMC 6426 Section 004F
Time: Tuesday 9:30 am to 1:45 pm
Thursday 9:30 am to 12:15 pm
Location: Weimer Hall 1090
Summer 2022

Instructor

Dr. Huan Chen
huanchen@jou.ufl.edu
392-0447
2074 Weimer Hall
Office Hours: T/TH 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm

Course Description

MMC6936 provides a survey of qualitative research philosophies and methods. Its focus is on the use of qualitative research to understand phenomenon generally considered within the domain of communication. While philosophical foundations are referenced from time to time, the course places primary emphasis on the application of qualitative research methods. Of special interest are decisions and activities that the qualitative researcher must accomplish, such as selecting a phenomenon for study, determining research objectives and questions, choosing data sources, conducting an in-depth interview and a field observation, analyzing qualitative data, evaluating qualitative research, and writing a report of the results.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of MMC 6936, students should be able to:

- Explain the qualitative research path to knowledge about phenomena.
- Develop qualitative research objectives and research questions.
- Design and conduct a qualitative research project.
- Conduct in-depth interviews and field observations.
- Evaluate the rigor and contribution of qualitative research.
- Write a qualitative research manuscript.

Required Texts

Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maxwell, J.A. (2013). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Thousand, Oaks, CA: Sage.

Tentative Schedule (subject to change with adequate notice to participants)

Week 1

5/10 Introduction

Overview of course

Teacher/student introduction

Taylor, Ronald E., Mariea Grubbs Hoys, and Eric Haley (1996), "How French Advertising Professionals Develop Creative Strategy," *Journal of Advertising*, 14(1), 1-13.

5/12 What is qualitative research?

Creswell & Poth, Ch. 1

Pauly, John (1991), "A Beginner's Guide to Doing Qualitative Research in Mass Communication," *Journalism Monographs*, 125, 1-29.

Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (2005), "The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research," in Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1-32.

Morrison, Margaret A., Eric Haley, Kim Bartel Sheehan, and Ronald E. Taylor (2002), "A Qualitative View of the World: Theory and Data Analysis," *Using Qualitative Research in Advertising*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 16-28.

Week 2

5/17 Philosophical and Theoretical Foundation

Creswell & Poth, Ch.2

Berger, Peter L. and Thomas Luckmann (1967), "The Foundations of Knowledge in Everyday Life," *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*. New York: Anchor Books, 19-46.

Blumer, Herbert (1969), "The Methodological Position of Symbolic Interactionism," *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall,

1-60.

Geertz, Clifford (1973), "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 3-30.

5/19 Designing qualitative research

Creswell & Poth, Ch.3 & Ch. 4

Maxwell, Ch. 1 & Ch. 2

Week 3

5/24 Conducting qualitative interviews

Kvale, Steiner (1983), "The Qualitative Research Interview," *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology*, 14 (2), 171-196.

Morrison, Margaret A., Eric Haley, Kim Bartel Sheehan, and Ronald E. Taylor (2002), "Listening to Consumers: The Qualitative Interview," *Using Qualitative Research in Advertising*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 45-61.

Gray, Lia M., Gina Wong-Wylie, Gwen R. Rempel and Karen Cook (2020), "Expanding Qualitative Research Interviewing Strategies: Zoom Video Communications," *The Qualitative Report*, 25(5), 1292-1301.

5/26 No Class/Fieldwork: Conducting an in-depth interview

Week 4

5/31 Conducting observations

Barnard, H. Russell (2002), "Field Notes: How to Take Them, Code Them, Manage Them," *Research Methods in Anthropology*. New York: Altimira Press, 365-389.

Barnard, H. Russell (2002), "Direct and Indirect observation," *Research Methods in Anthropology*. New York: Altimira Press, 390-425.

Belk, Russell W., John F. Sherry, Jr., and Melanie Wallendorf (1988), "A Naturalistic Inquiry into Buyer and Seller Behavior at a Swap Meet," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14 (March), 449-470.

In-depth interview DUE

6/2 No Class/Fieldwork: Conducting an observation

Week 5

6/7 Writing qualitative research

Creswell & Poth, Ch. 9

Maxwell, Ch. 7

Richardson, Laurel (2000), "Writing: A Method of Inquiry," in Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 923-948.

Field observation is DUE.

6/9 Evaluating qualitative research

Creswell & Poth, Ch.10

Maxwell, Ch. 6

Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin (2008), "Criteria for Evaluation," *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 297-312.

Week 6

6/14 No Class/Finalize research proposal

6/16 Research proposal presentations

Each student is required to prepare a 10-minute presentation on qualitative research proposal.

Final research proposal is DUE.

Evaluation of Grades

Assignment	Total Points	Percent of Grade
In-depth interview	160	16%
Field observation	140	14%
Discussion leader	200	20%

Qualitative project proposal	400	40%
Participation	100	10%
TOTAL	1000	100%

Grading Policy

Score	Percent	Grade	Grade Points
934-100	93.4-100	A	4.00
900-933	90.0-93.3	A-	3.67
867-899	86.7-89.9	B+	3.33
834-866	83.4-86.6	B	3.00
800-833	80.0-83.3	B-	2.67
767-799	76.7-79.9	C+	2.33
734-766	73.4-76.6	C	2.00
700-733	70.0-73.3	C-	1.67
667-699	66.7-69.9	D+	1.33
634-666	63.4-66.6	D	1.0
600-633	60.0-63.3	D-	0.67
0-599	0-59.9	E	0.00

More information on grades and grading policies is here:

<https://catalog.ufl/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>

Class Attendance and Make-Up Policy

Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

Student Requiring Accommodations

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Course Evaluation

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Evaluations are typically open during the last two or three weeks of the semester, but students will be

given specific times when they are open. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results>

Class Demeanor

Students are expected to arrive to class on time and behave in a manner that is respectful to the instructor and to fellow students. Opinions held by other students should be respected in discussion, and conversations that do not contribute to the discussion should be held at minimum, if at all.

Materials and Supplies Fees

There are no additional fees for this course.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

Assignment Description

In-depth interview

Conduct an in-depth interview (at least 40 minutes long and preferably related to your research proposal) with someone you do not know or barely know. If your interview turns out to be less than 40 minutes long, you must redo it. Otherwise, you will not have enough data for analysis.

You could conduct your interview either face-to-face, in person or online. You will be asking your participants about their lived experience of a topic/question appropriate for qualitative analysis. For this assignment, you will create an interview guide, conduct,

record, and transcribe the interview; make a preliminary analysis of categories; summarize the findings; and write your reactions to the process.

Here is my suggestion on how to write this assignment:

- A reflection on the significance of your research (2 paragraphs)
- A description of your interview participant and the interview setting (1 or 2 paragraphs)
- The interview guide/protocol (1 page)
- Interview transcript marked up with notes from analysis (whatever it takes)
- A discussion of the findings and themes, with supporting quotes (whatever it takes)
- Your reflections on the experience. How well did the interview progress? What difficulties did you encounter? How would you change the process next time? What did you learn about interviewing? About yourself? About your comfort level with this method? (1 page or more)

Field observation

You will conduct one observation (preferably related to your research proposal) in a natural setting for one hour. Unless you have a particular research question in which you are interested, the question you need to address is: “What’s going on here?” Use the five minutes to write somewhat detailed description of the site. Then, pay attention to the people, how they look, how they interact, their behavior, etc. While on site, you will take condensed field notes (Those taken on the field: reminders to yourself of things seen and heard. If you are writing too much, you won’t be able to observe what is going on around you). Allow yourself the hour immediately after the observation to prepare your expanded field notes (These are extensive notes. Write all you remember, but try not to make value judgment). When taking notes, I recommended that you divide the page in two columns. On one column write your observations, on the other jot down your thoughts and feelings.

You should turn in:

- Your condensed field notes
- Your expanded field notes
- A brief account of your observations; did you find an answer to your initial question? If so, what is your answer? If not, what precluded you from answering the question?
- A written reaction to the project including: reflections on the experience of being an observer (what you learned about being an observer, about yourself, and about your comfort level with this method)

Discussion leader

You will lead discussion for one or two articles/book chapters (depending on enrollment) of your choice during the semester. As the discussion leader, you are supposed to facilitate the class to better understand the assigned article or book chapter and the topic of that day. You have the flexibility on the content and format of your presentation. Try to use different strategies and tools to engage the whole class and facilitate individual

and collective learning.

Qualitative Research Proposal

You will write a 10-page qualitative research proposal (not including cover page, abstract, reference, table etc.). The proposal should be thought of as the front end of a manuscript you intend to submit to a conference or journal. It should include an introduction that describes a phenomenon you wish to explore qualitatively and why understanding it more deeply is necessary for scholars, practitioners, and policy makers. It should describe literature and theories that you think a priori justify the need to conduct the research and may partially describe what might be going on within the phenomenon. This section will also include a phenomenon statement, research objective(s) and research question(s). Finally, the most important part will address methodology. This method section includes the following subsections: self-reflexivity, population and sample, data collection, data analysis, and quality control. At the end of the proposal, you will need to provide a timeline of procedure and a budget table.

The proposal will be evaluated on

- how well it complies with a solid premier journal manuscript style
- how precisely, clearly, and forcefully an argument is made to study a specific phenomenon
- how thoroughly and appropriately antecedent literature is considered
- how well the research design is explained and articulated
- the potential relevance of the proposed project to scholars, practitioners, and policy makers

Class Participation

This graduate seminar demands significant participation by each and every student. I am quite hard on this requirement. At this level, I absolutely do not reduce my expectations by taking into account cultural traditions or backgrounds or social/personality styles. You absolutely must be able to make your point in a professional, courteous yet forceful manner. These points should be well thought out and supported by sound scholarly logic and if possible, the literature read in the course. Participation can take the form of asking good questions, helping to clarify points from the readings for other students, or making statements about the readings or research process.

Behaviors I do not like to see include:

- Sitting quietly through a full three-hour session rarely contributing to the discussion

- Contributing at a cursory or superficial level merely for the sake of saying something and often demonstrating a lack of effort in trying to understand the material
- Being rude to anyone else in the room (or authors of the class materials for that matter) by making judgmental comments about people as opposed to the ideas represented, cutting other people off when they are speaking, not being aware of cultural differences or program level differences when using terms, slangs or phrases
- Being unprepared to engage the material for each session