

## **Qualitative Research**

MMC 6426 Section 0636  
Time: Tuesday 7-9 periods (1:55 pm to 4:55 pm)  
Location: Weimer Hall 1098  
Spring 2020

### **Instructor**

Dr. Huan Chen  
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Office Hours: T/TH 10:30 am to 11:30 am

### **Course Description**

MMC 6426 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. We spend the majority of the time comparing and contrasting five approaches to qualitative research – narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography, and case study to illustrate the variations on qualitative research available. 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, selecting a qualitative research design, choosing data sources, conducting a long 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 6426, students should be able to:

- Explain the qualitative research path to knowledge about phenomena.
- Explain the similarities and differences between alternative qualitative research traditions.
- 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. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> 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: Introduction 1/7/20**

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.

**Week 2: What is qualitative research? 1/14/20**

Creswell, 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 3: Philosophical and theoretical foundation 1/21/20**

Creswell, 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.

#### **Week 4: Designing a qualitative research 1/28/20**

Creswell, Ch.3 & Ch. 4

Maxwell, Ch. 1 & Ch. 2

The qualitative state of your field is DUE.

#### **Week 5: Phenomenology 2/4/20**

Creswell, 75-82, 349-364, 114-116, 201-202, 238-240, 271-273.

Polkinghorne, Donald E. (1989), "Phenomenological Research Methods," in Ronald S. Valle and Steen Halling, eds. *Existential Phenomenology Perspectives in Psychology*. New York: Plenum Press, 41-60.

Thompson, Craig J., William B. Locander, and Howard R. Pollio (1989), "Putting Consumer Experience Back into Consumer Research: The Philosophy and Method of Existential-Phenomenology," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 16 (September), 133-146.

#### **Week 6: Conducting qualitative interviews 2/11/18**

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

McCracken, Grant (1988), *The Long Interview*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1-29.

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.

Article critique is DUE.

#### **Week 7: Grounded Theory 2/18/20**

Creswell, 82-90, 365-383, 116-117, 203-204, 240-243, 273-276.

Glaser, Barney G. and Anselm L. Strauss (1967), *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1-43.

Suddaby, Roy (2006), "From the Editors: What Grounded Theory is Not," *Academy of Management Journal*, 49 (4), 633-642. 2/23/16

**Week 8: No Class/Conducting an in-depth interview 2/25/20**

**Week 9: Spring Break 3/3/20**

**Week 10: Ethnography 3/10/20**

Creswell, 90-96, 384-406, 118-119, 204-206, 243-246, 276-279.

Fetterman, David M. (1998), "Walking in Rhythm: Anthropological Concepts," *Ethnography*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 16-30.

Gold, Raymond (1997), "The Ethnographic Method in Sociology," *Qualitative Inquiry*, 3(4), 388-402.

In-depth interview is DUE.

**Week 11: Conducting observations 3/17/20**

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.

**Week 12: No Class/Field Work: Conducting an observation 3/24/20**

**Week 13: Narrative Research 3/31/20**

Creswell, 67-74, 329-348, 113-114, 198-200, 233-238, 269-271.

Polkinghorne, Donald E., (1988), "Practice and Narrative," *Narrative Knowing and the Human Sciences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 157-184.

Spector-Mersel, Gabriela, (2010), "Narrative research: Time for a Paradigm," *Narrative Inquiry*, 20(1), 204-224.

Field observation is DUE.

**Week 14: Case Study 4/7/20**

Creswell, 96-103, 407-422, 119-121, 206-207, 246-249, 279-280.

Yin, Robert K. (2003), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 1-18.

Baxter, Pamela and Susan Jack (2008), “Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers,” *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559.

**Week 15: Writing qualitative research 4/14/20**

Creswell, 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 (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 923-948.

**Week 16: Research proposal presentations 4/21/20**

Each student is required to prepare a 15-minute presentation on his/her qualitative research proposal

Final research proposal is DUE.

**Evaluation of Grades**

<b>Assignment</b>	<b>Total Points</b>	<b>Percent of Grade</b>
The qualitative state of your field	100	10%
Long interview	100	10%
Field observation	100	10%
Article critique	100	10%
Discussion leader	200	20%
Qualitative project proposal	300	30%
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/](http://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. Please avoid the use of cell phones and restrict eating to outside of the classroom. 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**

#### **The qualitative state of your field**

Select three journals in your field. Define your field in any way you choose. Examine the **three** journals for the past five years for qualitative research articles. Write a four-page report on the status of qualitative research in your field. Consider the topics addressed, authors, methods used, trends, explanations of qualitative approaches, whatever appears interesting and relevant. Make page 5 of your report a bibliography of articles located. Minimum number of articles is eight. If you find fewer than eight, search wider (more journals) or deeper (more years).

#### **Long interview**

Conduct an in-depth interview (at least one hour long) with someone you do not know. If your interview turns out to be less than an hour long, you must redo it. Otherwise, you will not have enough data for analysis.

You must conduct your interview face-to-face, in person. 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 two hours. 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 filed 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 filed 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)

### **Article critique**

Critique an article that employs a qualitative approach from a peer-reviewed journal in



your field. The overall idea is to act as a professional reviewer. This means you must be critical but not rude and over the top. You should also not be too easy. As a reviewer for this class, your job is to highlight both the strengths and the weaknesses of the METHOD not much on the content, findings, or theoretical justification. Write the critique as you would a review, which has the following format:

Name: [your name] – this is obviously not done in a real review

Manuscript title: “Expressive Consumption Escape Mechanisms: From Horse Back Riding to Extreme Sports”

Reviewer Comments to the Authors

Strengths: [keep this section short]

This manuscript is about...It is strong in its....

However, there still exist opportunities for improvement.

Major Weaknesses:

1. I am not convinced that the theoretical base upon which the authors draw sufficiently justifies the method for this project. Here is why...
2. Please explain why this approach was taken...
3. I don't see the XYZ interpretation clearly from the passages used in the manuscript....
4. (or something along these lines)

Minor Weaknesses:

1. You misspelled “horseback” throughout; it’s one word.
2. Your citation on page is 5 is missing a date.

This review can be as long as you think is needed. Before reaching a premier journal in communication, qualitative manuscript reviews such as those I receive and write will typically be 3-4 pages single-spaced for each reviewer. At this stage, with a published work, I expect about two pages, with far more strengths than would normally ever be found in early stages of the review.

### **Discussion leader**

You will lead discussion for one or two classes (depending on enrollment) of your choice during the semester. Come to that class with a list of issues/questions that you will use to facilitate discussion among your classmates. Briefly summarize the article – then ask provocative questions or provide unexpected insights that will improve our understanding of the primary issues. Augment your discussion with visual material, exercises, etc. Google “leading class discussion” for pointers on

how to keep the conversation going.

### **Qualitative Research Proposal**

You will write a 15-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 both scholars and practitioners. 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. You need to select one from the five traditions we discuss in the course as a methodological approach that you will use to collect and analyze your data. In this section of the manuscript you need to justify the tradition you have chosen as well as explain the steps you will follow. This methods section must be detailed in data collection, sampling, and data analysis plans you have. 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 accurately a tradition is chosen that aligns with the stated phenomenon, objectives and questions
- how thoroughly and appropriately antecedent literature is considered
- how well the tradition chosen is conceptualized and explained
- the potential relevance of the proposed project to scholars and or practitioners

### **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