

MMC 6426
****QUALITATIVE RESEARCH****
FALL 2022 SYLLABUS

Professor: Dr. Kasey Windels

Class Time/Location: Thursday from 10:40-1:40 in 1096 Weimer

Office Hours/Location: Tuesday from 11-12; Thursday from 1:40-2:30 via Zoom @ <https://ufl.zoom.us/j/8593158653> (the prof. sets aside these hours for students to ask questions and chat informally)

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Course Website: Relevant course info will be posted on Canvas.

This course is designed to provide a broad overview of qualitative research methods – “an umbrella term covering an array of interpretive techniques which seek to describe, decode, translate, and otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world” (Van Maanen, 1983, p. 9) – used in the social sciences.

Over the semester, we will explore the aims, theoretical frameworks, and methods of qualitative research. We will focus on the tools, approaches and methodologies that will help prepare you to conduct qualitative research in your graduate program and beyond. The course begins with a review of the philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks associated with qualitative research. Then we will focus on different data collection methods, including participant observation, interviews, focus groups. We will also look at ways to analyze media texts and other forms of discourse. We will read theoretical, logistical, and exemplary materials.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- Demonstrate an understanding of the aims and philosophical frameworks of qualitative research.
- Recognize the theoretical and practical considerations behind the range of techniques, including interviewing, focus groups, and participant observation.
- Design and conduct in-depth interviews, participant observation, and textual analysis.
- Conceptualize and design projects, collect data, and make wise choices in qualitative research projects.
- Use appropriate techniques for analyzing and reporting qualitative research.

COURSE FORMAT

Our course has both Master’s and Ph.D. students. It has students who are interested in academic research and in professional research. To ensure that everyone gets the most out of the course, class sessions typically will be divided into two parts. Part one is a presentation and discussion of the readings, typically led by a student discussion leader. Part two is the workshop led by Dr.

Windels. The workshop will include lectures and activities on how practitioners and academics use qualitative research as well as opportunities to practice your qualitative methods and skills.

We will read an extensive amount in this course. This large volume of reading may take some adjustment. However, reading a large amount of text in a short amount of time is a skill that you should develop in any graduate program. Do not get discouraged. Some of the readings may offer more to you personally than others. Learn to read those texts more heavily and to skim quickly the text that doesn't interest you as much. Reaction posts due each week will help you organize your thoughts around the subject matter.

COURSE MATERIALS

Course readings can be found on the Canvas website. There are no required textbooks for the course.

Note that our library has several eBooks on qualitative research methods that may be helpful to you, including:

- Bhattacharya, Kakali (2017). *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*.
- Flick, Uwe (2013). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*.
- Hannes, Karin and Lockwood, Craig (2011). *Synthesizing Qualitative Research: Choosing the Right Approach*.
- Margolis, Eric M. and Pauwels, Luc (2011). *The SAGE Handbook of Visual Research Methods*.
- Merriam, Sharan B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*.
- Tracy, Sarah J (2013). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*.
- Wiles, Rose (2012). *What are Qualitative Research Ethics*.

ASSIGNMENTS

1. **Reaction Post and Discussion Question:** Each week you are responsible for writing a 200-word response regarding the week's readings, due by Wednesday at 3:00. In the **reaction paper**, you will respond to the readings for the week. Do not summarize what you have read. Instead, **respond** to implied ideas in the reading, plus **evaluate** and **elaborate** on the author's main points.

Some topics you may discuss in your **reaction paper** include the following:

- Discuss the most important idea(s) from the readings. How do you disagree? Can you reconcile your point of view with the readings?
- Discuss how the author's perspective is different than yours. What struck you about that? How is that significant?
- Raise a question relevant to the topic but not answered in the readings: "The author ignored this key issue..."

- Analyze how one text relates to another text from the same week or from a previous week. Point out similarities and differences. Reconcile with your own point of view.
- Connect a text to concepts and themes discussed in class.
- Question key assumptions made by the author.
- Consider the strengths and weaknesses of the author's argument.
- Consider how the material could be applied to real-world problems, to your own research or work interests, or to another area that interests you.

At the end of the reaction paper, you will also write one **discussion question** that will provoke interesting in-class discussion. Some ideas for the types of topics to discuss include: delving deeper into a particular research area, exploring the evidence the authors provide for their conclusions, questioning the author's assumptions, expanding on an implication of the study, or exploring the implications of this particular study for understanding of different disciplinary areas or for how the research could be applied in a variety of different capacities.

These papers will help you to participate in a meaningful discussion during our class time. The reaction paper will be evaluated with a check plus, check, or check minus, indicating either an outstanding (A=97); satisfactory (B=87), or unsatisfactory (C=77) performance. You will receive a zero if you do not turn it in.

2. **Discussion Leadership:** Each student is required to lead one class discussion on the weekly readings. Use the reaction posts and discussion questions submitted by your classmates to help organize your thinking. The goal is to engage the class in a fruitful discussion of the topic, so feel free to be creative and use different tools and techniques. Start with a brief, synthesized summary of the readings. Next, you might generate and disseminate a list of questions based on the readings; present a challenge, puzzle or two opposing viewpoints to spur discussion; use videos or current events examples to promote discussion; develop activities or case studies that encourage learning or discussion; or divide the class in half for a debate. You can provide handouts, discussion points, or speak extemporaneously.

Here are some tips for facilitating discussion:

- **Ask questions:** To inspire a response is perhaps the most important strategy of the facilitator. Questions should be open-ended questions, such as "what, how, who, why" type questions that encourages brainstorming and creativity.
- **Probe in-depth into a comment/idea:** Encourages more in-depth analysis, such as: "Tell me more about what you mean by X" or "Could you be more specific?"
- **Paraphrase:** Only for clarification of a comment made by a student, not to evaluate or improve it.
- **Refer back to earlier comments:** Which ties the discussion to previous student's contributions.
- **Be comfortable with silence:** The facilitator must be willing to wait once a question is posed as people need time to think and frame a response. Thus, a facilitator should not step in and answer one's own question
- **Give positive reinforcement:** This is a way to encourage participation, especially to students who are quieter.
- **Include quieter members:** Some ways to draw people out are to ask students directly for their opinion on something that has been brought up, to refer back to comments that quieter people make to draw them out further, or to break the class into smaller

- groups or pairs that then report to the larger group.
- **Shift perspective of the discussion:** If all students seem to agree, it may be less likely that a single or few students who feel differently would speak up. To get these students to speak up, the facilitator can ask if there “might be another viewpoint that could be missing from the discussion.” In addition, the facilitator can ask for the implications of the topic or a big-picture question; or the facilitator can ask for a specific example or for details to enrich the discussion that may be at too broad of a level.
 - **Summarize:** Occasional summary is helpful to keep the group focused. The facilitator can briefly summarize what has been said before moving on. Or, better yet, the facilitator can ask for someone else to summarize, but it is important that enough time is provided for students to think before answering.
3. **In-Class Contributions:** As the course is a seminar, class participation is essential—and a substantial part of student grades. In addition to the assignment to lead a discussion, weekly participation will be evaluated with a plus, check, or minus, indicating either an outstanding (A=97); satisfactory (B=87), or unsatisfactory (C=77) level of engagement. To earn a “+” in participation, I am looking for consistent, active contribution to class activities and discussion that demonstrates a firm grasp of the material covered and adds to the learning of your fellow classmates. You will receive a zero for unexcused absences.
4. **Assignments:** Students will be responsible for **three** assignments designed as practice for qualitative methods: 1) deprivation study, 2) In-depth interview, and 3) textual analysis. I will provide details for each assignment when relevant topics are discussed. Due dates are listed in the course schedule.
5. **Qualitative Research Proposal and Presentation:** You will write an 8-12-page (double spaced) research proposal (not including cover page, abstract, references, tables, etc.). This assignment helps you learn how to design logically and empirically effective approaches to data collection and analysis. Here are the key elements that should be included.
- A **title** that captures the essence of your topic and **abstract** (75-100 words) that summarizes the main elements of your proposal.
 - An **introduction** that describes a phenomenon you wish to explore qualitatively and why understanding it more deeply is necessary.
 - A **brief background** on the topic, which should describe literature and theories you think a priori justify the need to conduct the research and may partially describe what might be going on with the phenomenon. This section should also include your **research question(s)**.
 - Explain what **method(s)** you will use and justify why it is the most appropriate method to answer your research question.
 - **Identify your data:**
 - If interview or focus group, identify and explain the demographic criteria for choosing participants and decide on the sample size.
 - If field observation, identify the place you will conduct your fieldwork and explain.

- If textual analysis/discourse analysis, identify and explain which texts will be selected and the nature and scope of the selection.
- **Describe your procedure:**
 - If interview, describe how to get access to and recruit the possible interviewees.
 - If field observation, describe how to get access to the field and observation strategies.
 - If textual analysis/discourse analysis, identify how you would locate the texts.
- **Develop the measure:**
 - If interview, justify if you would use structured or semi-structured or unstructured questions and compose an interview protocol with sets of interview questions grouped in different topical areas.
 - If field observation, explain what particular areas you would like to focus on and develop an observation protocol.
 - If text-based analysis, design a “coding scheme” in a qualitative sense and explain what you will look for in analyzing the texts (e.g. theme, metaphor, discursive strategies, ideological package, intended audience, sources, etc.).
- Identify and describe several **strategies to improve validity** for both data collection and data analysis: reflexivity, triangulation, peer review, participant feedback, extended fieldwork, etc.
- **Reflection:** Describe the main challenges you expect and the limitations of your design.

You will turn in your proposal via Canvas.

Presentation: You will develop a 7-10-minute presentation of your research proposal to present to the class the receive feedback from classmates.

GRADING

- Reaction Papers 15%
- Discussion Leadership 15%
- In-Class Contributions 15%
- Assignment 1: Deprivation 10%
- Assignment 2: Interview 10%
- Assignment 3: Textual Analysis 10%
- Qualitative Research Proposal 20%
- Research Proposal Presentation 05%

GRADING SCALE

	94.00 and above = A	90.00 – 93.99 = A-
87.00 – 89.99 = B+	84.00 – 86.99 = B	80.00 – 83.99 = B-
77.00 – 79.99 = C+	74.00 – 76.99 = C	70.00 – 73.99 = C-
67.00 – 69.99 = D+	64.00 – 66.99 = D	61.00 – 63.99 = D-
60.99 and below = E		

Please see UF grading policies at <https://catalog.ufl.edu/UGRD/academic-regulations/grades-grading-policies/>.

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

- **In-Person Course:** Our course is an in-person course. Lecture, discussion, activities and exams will occur in the classroom. We will not utilize the HyFlex technology. You are responsible for getting notes from a classmate if you are unable to attend class.
- **Attendance:** As a graduate-level course, your attendance and punctuality are expected each week. You will earn a zero for your in-class participation for any day in which you have an unexcused absence.

If you are going to miss class for an excused absence, you must let me know you will miss class (and why) **BEFORE** the class meets except in certain (rare) emergency situations.

Excused absences include religious holidays (on the holiday), jury duty, and medical/health issues. Unexcused absences include social events, entertaining out-of-town guests, holiday/travel plans, weddings, etc.

- **Classroom Preparedness:** Students should attend all classes and participate in class discussions. Students should complete readings before the class in which they are discussed. Finally, students should check email and Canvas frequently for the latest class information and updates.
- **Group Work in Class:** In-person, face-to-face communication is a learning outcome of this course and an important part of working in persuasive communications industries. As such, we will have some class time allotted to working on the group project. During that time, you and your team are expected to work on and converse about your project for the full length allotted during class. If you leave early or don't communicate with your team, your in-class contributions score will be lowered. If your whole team leaves early, every member of your team will receive a lower in-class contribution score for the day.
- **Technology/Paying Attention:** I prefer that you take hand-written notes in class and keep your laptops closed to avoid distraction. Research shows that we learn and remember more from handwriting our notes. Also, when we're distracted rather than engaged, we can't improve as professionals. No text messaging/social media/web surfing during class. If you do this you will be asked to stop. If you continue, you will be asked to leave.
- **Grade Challenges:** Grades will not be discussed via email, the telephone or in class. If you disagree with a grade given on any assignment, you must appeal the grade during my office hours or in an appointment with me. In this appeal, you must clearly state the problem and give a clear, concise explanation as to why you feel the grade is inaccurate. You must appeal assigned grades within two weeks of your receiving that particular grade. After two weeks, all grades are final.

- **E-mail Policy:** As e-mail has become a favored way to communicate in academia and industry, you must learn to use it appropriately. Thus, when e-mailing me, address me formally. I will generally return it within 24 hours of receiving it on weekdays or by Monday evening if I receive it on the weekend. If you need to discuss something in length, come see me during office hours or we can schedule an alternative time.
- **Respect for Others' Ideas:** Appropriate and professional classroom conduct is expected at all times. Respect and common courtesy toward your classmates and your professor are required. Effective communication relies on the ability to recognize and embrace diversity in all its forms, including viewpoints. Be respectful of the diverse range of opinions of everyone in the class, and help make this an inclusive environment. See the CJC diversity statement for more information: <https://www.jou.ufl.edu/home/about/diversity-statement/>.
- **Honor Code:** Please review the UF Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code, which can be found at: <https://sccr.dso.ufl.edu/policies/student-honor-code-student-conduct-code/>. Any violation of the codes will be reported to the proper University administrators and may result in other sanctions.
- **Plagiarism:** Original writing is essential to ethical communication, and it is also essential for this class. Cheating is any action that violates University norms or an instructor's guidelines for the preparation and submission of assignments. Such actions may include using or providing unauthorized assistance or materials on course assignments or possessing unauthorized materials during an exam.

Plagiarism involves the representation of another's work as your own, for example: (a) Submitting as one's own any material that is copied from published or unpublished sources such as the Internet, print sources, or video programs without proper acknowledgement that it is someone else's. (b) Paraphrasing another's views, opinions or insights without proper acknowledgement or copying of any source in whole or in part with only minor changes in wording or syntax even with acknowledgement. (c) Submitting as one's own work a report, examination, paper, computer file, lab report or other assignment which has been prepared by someone else. (d) Presenting work created for another course as original work in this class.

UF requires faculty who find evidence of plagiarism to submit a report to Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution. Please read the UF Student Honor Code for more information.

- **Effective Writing and Presentation Skills:** Your written communication is expected to be clear and concise. I will grade you on your ideas as well as on grammar, syntax, spelling and other writing mechanics. Be sure to proofread all papers and presentations carefully. Presentation skills are another important component of communication. We will have class assignments that focus on presentation skills and delivery. I will specify a time limit for each presentation. You must observe these limits. Plan and rehearse the material.
- **Professional Credibility:** There are certain egregious errors that signify to a client or superior that you have not given adequate attention to your assignment. One example of an

egregious error is misrepresenting facts. Employees can get fired on the spot for these types of errors. You will receive a two-letter-grade reduction.

- **Professional Execution:** You should execute and present your ideas as if you were pitching to a client or boss. You can choose the tools (Photoshop, InDesign, PPT, Prezi, etc.), but the key is to develop professional work.
- **Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities can receive accommodations. The first step is to contact the Disability Resource Center (352-329-8565; www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/). Once you receive your accommodation letter, provide a copy to the professor as early as possible in the semester.
- **Course Evaluations:** Students are expected to provide professional and constructive feedback on the quality of instruction via the online course evaluation system, GatorEvals. You will be notified when the evaluation period begins, and you can find GatorEvals through your Canvas course menu.
- **Counseling and Wellness Center:** Your well-being is important to the University of Florida. The U Matter, We Care initiative is committed to creating a culture of care on our campus by encouraging members of our community to look out for one another and to reach out for help. If you or a friend is in distress, please contact umatter@ufl.edu so that the U Matter, We Care Team can reach out to the student in distress. A nighttime and weekend crisis counselor is available by phone at 352-392-1575. The U Matter, We Care Team can help connect students to the many other helping resources available including, but not limited to, Victim Advocates, Housing staff, and the Counseling and Wellness Center. Please remember that asking for help is a sign of strength. In case of emergency, call 9-1-1.
- **Recording the Professor:** Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor.

A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture **does not** include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered

published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student Honor Code and Student Conduct Code.

MMC 6426

Tentative Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Assignment / -Readings	Workshop
Aug. 25	Intro to MMC 6426	-Edwards: How to Read -Sherry: Discussion Leadership	Teacher and Student Introductions
Sept. 1	What is Qualitative Research?	Discussion Leader 1 -Merriam: What is Qualitative Research (Ch. 1) -Windels (2016), Stereotypical or Typical	Ethnomethodology activity
Sept. 8	Philosophical and Theoretical Foundations of Qualitative Research	Discussion Leader 2 Deprivation Assignment Due -Crotty: Intro to the Research Process (Ch. 1) -Parker, Ang and Lawrence (2018), Account Planning Insights	
Sept. 15	Planning and Designing Qualitative Research	Discussion Leader 3 -Creswell and Poth: Designing a Qual Study (Ch. 3) -Radanovich (2014), Pilot study on Hispanics In PR -Austin (2010), Framing Diversity in PR	Write problem, purpose, RQs
Sept. 22	Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry	Discussion Leader 4 (pick one of these two) -Bhattacharya: Methodological Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry (Ch. 5) -Merriam: Types of Qualitative Research (Ch. 2) -Iannacone (2021), CISV Case Study	Analyze data based on approach Discuss potential approaches
Sept. 29	Interviews, Focus Groups and Projective Techniques	Discussion Leader 5 -Tracy: Interview Planning and Design (p. 155-164) -Morrison et al.: Listening to Consumers (p. 65-75) -Charmaz: Grounded Interview Questions (p. 66-67) -Bhattacharya (p. 132-134, 137) -Silverman & Patterson (p. 66-68) -Bernard (p. 169-174) -Silverman & Patterson: Focus Groups (Ch. 5)	Develop interview guides Practice focus group
Oct. 6	No Class: Conduct Interview		
Oct. 13	Data Analysis and Interpretation	Discussion Leader 6 -Tracy: Data Analysis Basics (Ch. 9) (and one of the two below) -Tracy: Advanced Data Analysis (Ch. 10) -Bernard, Wutich & Ryan: Finding Themes (Ch. 5) -Bock (2016), Embodied Narratives	Practice analyzing data Code data Classify codes into themes Develop and assess interpretations Read and memo emergent ideas
Oct. 20	Textual Analysis, Visual Analysis and Discourse Analysis	Discussion Leader 7 Interview Assignment Due -McKee: Beginners Guide to Textual Analysis -Ussher & Perz: Critical Discourse/Discourse Analysis -Gurzki et al (2019), Decoding Luxury Brands	Practice analyzing media texts

Oct. 27	Ethnography and Field Observation	Discussion Leader 8 -Merriam: Being a Careful Observer (Ch. 6) -Silverman & Patterson (Ch. 3) -Walsh (2012), Rural Consciousness	Observation field guide Field observation practice and analysis
Nov. 3	One-on-One Conferences to Discuss Research Proposals	Textual Analysis Assignment Due Initial Idea(s) for Research Proposal Due	
Nov. 10	Presenting, Disseminating and Sharing Research	Discussion Leader 9 -Maxwell: Designing a Qualitative Study (Ch. 7) -Silverman & Patterson (p. 110-120)	Defending qualitative research
Nov. 17	Work Day in Class	Work Day in Class	
Nov. 24	Thanksgiving Break	Thanksgiving Break	
Dec. 1	Research Papers Due Present Research	Research Paper Due Presentations Due: 7-10 minute presentations	

**This syllabus is subject to change as the professor deems appropriate and necessary.
P = project (activity related to our final project)*

Readings on Canvas

Edwards, P. "How to Read a Book v.5.0"

<http://pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf>

Sherry, T.W. "Leading Discussion of a Scientific Journal"

Crotty, M. (1998), *The Foundations of Social Research*, Chapter 1.

Creswell and Poth (2018), *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*, 4th ed. SAGE.

Walsh, K.C. (2012), "Putting inequality in its place: Rural consciousness and the power of perspective," *American Political Science Review*, 517-532.

Bock, M.A. (2016), "Film the Police! Cop-Watching and Its Embodied Narratives," *Journal of Communication*, 66, 13-34.

Bhattacharya, Kakali (2017), *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*, New York: Routledge.

Silverman, R. M, and Patterson, K.L. (2015), *Qualitative Research Methods for Community Development*, New York: Routledge.

Merriam, Sharan B. (2009), *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, A Wiley Brand.

Tracy, Sarah J. (2020), *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*, Chicester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Bernard, H. Russell (2018), *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Lanham, Maryland: Rowman and Littlefield.

Bernard, H. Russell, Wutich, Amber, and Ryan, Gery W. (2017), *Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches*, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Taylor, Stephanie (2013), *What is Discourse Analysis*, London: Bloomsbury Academic.

Windels, Kasey (2016), "Stereotypical or Just Typical: How do U.S. Practitioners View the Role and Function of Stereotypes in Advertising?" *International Journal of Advertising*, 35 (5), 864-887.