

Qualitative Research/MMC 6936/Fall 2015

Dr. Huan Chen

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Office Hours: T/TH 10:30 am to 11:30 am

Tel: 392-0447

Meeting Time: T 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm

Meeting Location: 1098 Weimer Hall

Please bring this syllabus to class with you each week in order to note changes.

Required Texts:

Creswell, J. W. (2013). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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

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. 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 6936, 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 personal, long interviews and field observations.
 Evaluate the rigor and contribution of qualitative research.
 Write a qualitative research manuscript.

Course Requirements

Students are evaluated on both written and oral assignments. These assignments and their weights are listed below:

<u>Course Assignments</u>	<u>Evaluation Weights</u>
The qualitative state of your field	10%
Long interview	10%
Field observation	10%
Article critique	10%
Discussion leader	20%
Qualitative project proposal	30%
Participation	10%

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 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)

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 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. You will select TWO pieces of readings related to the discussion topic, and send the readings to the class ONE week before the class that will be led by you. The selected readings must demonstrate your understanding of the topic and are appropriate to the doctoral level seminar. 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 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 PhD 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. A PhD is a terminal degree. 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

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

Week 1: 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.

Week 2: What is qualitative research?

Creswell, Ch. 1

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.

Chesebra, James W. and Deborah J. Borisoff (2007), "What Makes Qualitative Research Qualitative?" *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 8(1), 3-14.

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

Higgs, C., McAllister, L. (2001). Being a methodological space cadet. In Hilary Byrne-Armstrong, Joy Higgs, Debbie Horsfall (Eds.), *Critical Moments in Qualitative Research*, Oxford: Butterworth Heinemann, 30-43.

The qualitative state of your field DUE

Week 3: Philosophical and Theoretical Foundation

Creswell, Ch.2

Vidich, Arthur J. and Stanford M. Lyman (2000), "Qualitative Methods: The History in Sociology and Anthropology," in Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 37-61.

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

Creswell, Ch.3 & Ch. 4

Maxwell, Ch. 1 & Ch. 2

Additional readings selected by discussion leader

Week 5: Phenomenology

Creswell, 76-82, 327-369, 114-116, 193-195, 225-229.

Ihde, Don (1986), "Indians and the Elephant: Phenomena and the Phenomenological Reduction," *Experimental Phenomenology: An Introduction*. Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 29-54.

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.

Additional readings selected by discussion leader.

Week 6: Conducting qualitative interviews

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

McCracken (1988), Grant, *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.

Chen, Huan and Eric Haley (2014), "Product Placement in Social Game: Consumer Experiences in China," *Journal of Advertising*, 43(3), 286-295.

Additional readings selected by discussion leader

Week 7: No Class/Field Work: Conducting an in-depth interview

Week 8: Grounded Theory

Creswell, 83-90, 347-369, 116-119, 195-197, 229-232.

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

Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin (2008), *Basics of Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks (3rd ed.)*, CA: Sage Publications, 1-17.

Flint, Daniel J., Robert B. Woodruff, & Sarah Fisher Gardial (2002), "Exploring the Phenomenon of Customers' Desired Value Change in a Business to Business Context," *Journal of Marketing*, 66 (October), 102-117.

Additional readings selected by discussion leader.

In-depth interview DUE

Week 9: Ethnography

Creswell, 90-96, 370-398, 118-119, 197-199, 232-236.

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.

Additional readings selected by discussion leader

Week 10: 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.

Bell, Genevieve (2006), "The Age of the Thumb: A Cultural Reading of Mobile Technologies from Asia," *Knowledge, Technology, & Policy*, 19(2), 41-57.

Additional readings selected by discussion leader

Week 11: No Class/Field Work: Conducting an observation

Week 12: Narrative Research

Creswell, 70-76, 303-326, 112-114, 189-193, 220-225

Clandinin, Jean D. and Michael F. Connelly (2000), "Why Narrative?" *Narrative Inquiry: Experience and Story in Qualitative Research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 1-20.

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.

Additional readings selected by discussion leader

Field observation DUE

Week 13: Case Study

Creswell, 97-102, 399-416, 119-121, 199-200, 236-239.

Stake, Robert E. (1978), "The Case Study in Social Inquiry," *Educational Researcher*, 7(2), 5-8.

Yin, Robert K. (2003), *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (3rd 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.

Additional readings selected by discussion leader

Week 14: Writing qualitative research

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 (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 923-948.

Readings selected by discussion leader

Week 15: Evaluating qualitative research

Creswell, 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.

Selected readings by discussion leader

Week 16: Research proposal presentations

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

Final research proposal DUE