

Utah State University

College of Education

EDUC 6770: Qualitative Methods 1

Wednesdays from 4:30-7:00pm

Professor: Colby Tofel-Grehl, Ph.D.

Office: EBL5 240

Office Hours: By appointment

Email: Colby.tg@usu.edu

Course Description: Qualitative research involves the collection and analysis of observations, interviews, and other records of human activity so that we can come to a richer understanding of structures, processes, and perspectives that drive or shape human behavior. This course is to serve as an introduction to the methods and methodological approach to conducting qualitative research. We will explore five approaches to conducting qualitative research to act as a foundation for your future reading and understanding of qualitative research. With each qualitative approach we explore, we will examine exemplar cases of this research approach as well as practice the skills associated with conducting this research. As a survey course in qualitative research, this course serves to provide you a broad outline of these research methods rather than an in-depth practice of any specific qualitative method.

Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, students will be expected to be able to:

- Correctly and classify identify several types of qualitative research.
- Demonstrate proficiency in conducting core qualitative research practice such as conducting interviews, writing observational field notes, and analyzing qualitative data.
- Identify appropriate contexts for conducting qualitative research.

Required Textbook: *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches* Fourth Edition by [John W. Creswell](#) & [Cheryl N. Poth](#) (Authors)

Additional Requirements: All students must have successfully completed CITI training for Human Subjects Research by October 5. Students who have completed training already do not need to complete it again. Failure to complete human subjects training will result in an automatic F for a final grade.

Course Format: The course meets weekly for the three weeks of each month. On approximately every fourth week, students will meet (face to face or virtually) with partners to conduct their research skills practice. As a graduate research methods course, the emphasis will be on class discussions, led in part by the students. There will also be a course website through which you will complete and submit your assignments. It is expected that you will attend each week and have completed all required readings prior to class. There is a lot of assigned reading and online submission expectations, so plan accordingly. The course website is available at <http://usu.instructure.com>.

Course Requirements

Participation (5%): Everyone is expected to participate actively in weekly class discussions. Failure to do so consistently will result in an automatic drop in a full letter grade.

Reading responses (15%): For most weeks, you submit the following for each assigned reading:

- A short (2-5 sentence) summary of what you and your reading partner think the authors were arguing or demonstrating (i.e., their thesis).
- A brief description (~1 paragraph) of the research methods used/advocated/introduced and how the methods supported the discovery process or argument.
- Any questions you both have about the methods or topic.

Reading summaries and questions must be submitted by noon the day before the class meeting. Your lowest reading response grade will be dropped.

Field Work Journal (10%): When qualitative researchers make observations in the field, they take notes. We will practice this process of taking fieldnotes in class. You will also be expected to take fieldnotes during your week of observations. Those fieldnotes need to be kept in a journal and submitted at the end of term for credit. Field note journals must contain both observations and inferences as well as questions and thoughts you have about the observed situations or phenomena.

A week of observations	An interview protocol and test
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<p>In pairs, you are to make a plan for and collect field notes for <i>at least 5</i> hour- long observations at the same public field site (e.g., a public library or a supermarket). You are to prepare typed notes and submit those along with a 3-5 page (single-spaced) report that includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief summary about the field site • A description of how you coordinated and completed your field observations • A synthesis of your observations that produces some claims, hypotheses, or conjectures based on the data you had collected • A reflection paragraph from each partner about the experience and what you would realistically do differently and why if you were to do field observations in the future 	<p>In pairs, you are to produce an interview protocol that you will informally test in <i>at least three</i> interviews. You are to document the responses from the interviews and prepare summaries. You will submit a copy of your interview protocol and the summaries along with a 3-5 page (single-spaced) report that includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief summary of your motivation and rationale for designing this interview protocol • A description of how you organized and conducted your interviews • A synthesis of your interview responses that produces some claims, hypotheses, or conjectures based on the data you had collected • A reflection paragraph from each partner about the experience and what you would change in your protocol or do differently in this process if you were to conduct interviews on this topic again in the future
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Observation & Interview Protocol Assignment (20% each): You will be required to complete the following:

While you can leverage overlaps with existing research projects, you **MUST** newly conduct these observations or newly design and test your interview protocol during this semester and in service of this course. This is because we will be focusing on the process and conceptualization of instrument design and observation recording. **You must submit a proposal and have it approved by the instructor by the due date listed in the schedule below.**

Final Coding Project (30%): In pairs, you are to analyze an existing qualitative data set by generating and applying a coding scheme relevant to one or more researchable questions. The data set should come from an existing project with which you are affiliated OR if you do not have access to such data, the instructor will provide data that you can use. For this project, you will submit a report 10-15 double-spaced pages in length that includes the following: 1) Research Questions and Motivation 2) Summary of Data Sources 3) Summary of Analysis Procedures and Coding Scheme 4) Summary of Coded data Interpretations and Conclusions

Overview of Course Plan

We will work together this semester to cover a few broad areas of understanding and use a cyclical approach to visit those topics various times over the term. That means we will open with a broad look at some of the various types of qualitative research. Then we will look at the methodological choices we make and why we might make them based on our epistemic beliefs. Lastly we will practice the skills needed to engage in qualitative research while reviewing the ways to engage those pragmatic skills within those types of qualitative research.

Fall 2018 Tentative Schedule

Date	Agenda and Assignments
	Assignments are due by noon on the day prior to class. Assignments received after this time will be considered late and recorded as zero.
August 29	<p><i>Introduction & Syllabus Review</i> Discussion: What is qualitative research? Why do qualitative research? What shapes research? Overview of the paradigm wars. Read Lincoln and Guba. Ethics in Research</p> <p>Activity: Beliefs on child rearing</p> <p>Assignment: None</p>
September 5	<p><i>Narrative Research: What is narrative research? Why is it of value? What are the limitations?</i> Discussion: What are your ontological and epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning? How do our beliefs inform the research we conduct?</p> <p>Activity: Making Observations</p> <p>Assignment: Read Connolly and Clandine 1990 and Creswell chapter 1 and write reading responses.</p>
September 12	<p><i>Phenomenography : What is it? What makes a phenomena compelling to study?</i> Discussion: What are your ontological and epistemological beliefs about teaching and learning? How do our beliefs inform the research we conduct? Activity: Taking Fieldnotes Practice</p> <p>Assignment: Read Hathaway & Fletcher, 2018, McGill, 2018 and Creswell chapter 2 and write reading responses.</p>
September 19	<p><i>Grounded Theory</i> Discussion: Why is conducting ethical research important?</p> <p>Activity: Epistemologies about child rearing.</p> <p>Assignment: Read Charmaz, 1996 and Creswell chapter 3 write reading responses.</p>

September 26	<p>Guest Lecturer: Dr. Kristin Searle</p> <p><i>Ethnography</i> Discussion: Qualitative Research: How do you know what is true and when enough is enough?</p> <p>Activity: Developing research questions appropriate to your methods.</p> <p>Assignment: Read Katz, 2001 and Creswell chapter 4 and write reading responses.</p>
October 3	<p>Partner Work- NO CLASS</p> <p>Working together, write up a one to two page outline of the plan for your observations. Submit to the instructor via email by midnight on October 3rd.</p> <p>Assignment: Read Creswell chapter 5.</p>

October 10	<p>Guest Researcher: Dr. Steven Camicia 4:30-5 pm</p> <p><i>Case Study: What is it? How do you choose a case? Benefits? Limitations?</i> Discussion: Validity and fidelity of the data; how can we know qualitative research is “real?”</p> <p>Activity: Interviewing Practice</p> <p>Assignment: Read Tofel-Grehl & Callahan, 2014 & Creswell Chapter 6</p>
October 17	<p>Epistemologies and Theoretical Frameworks: Talking through them</p> <p>Activity: Data analysis</p> <p>Assignment: Creswell Chapter 7 and TBD</p>
October 24	<p>Partner Work- NO CLASS</p> <p>Working together, write up a one to two page outline of the protocol for interviews. Submit to the instructor via email by midnight on October 24th.</p>
October 31	<p>Analyzing Qualitative data</p> <p>Activity: Data analysis cont.</p> <p>Assignment: Creswell Chapter 8 and TBD</p>
November 7	<p>Observations and Field notes</p> <p>Activity: Data analysis cont.</p> <p>Assignment: Creswell Chapter 9 and TBD</p>

November 14	<p>Guest Researcher: Dr. Sherry Marx 5:00-5:30</p> <p>Interviews and Protocols</p> <p>Activity: Data analysis cont.</p> <p>Assignment: Creswell Chapter 10 and TBD</p>
November 21	NO CLASS Due to Thanksgiving Holiday
November 28	<p>Presentations of Final Projects</p> <p>Round Robin Feedback</p>
December 5	Final Papers Due

Policies

Professionalism

Students will be treated professionally in the course and professionalism will be expected from each student. This entails professional behavior both in the classroom and in the schools. Any deficiencies in these areas will be addressed promptly so that all students are prepared for success in their future careers. Any issues or concerns you have should also be addressed professionally. Any issues or concerns that I have regarding your ability to successfully complete the course will be addressed as early as possible and in writing.

As adults, you will be treated as adults. This means that (for most instances) I will not require explanation of illness, absences, or missed assignments. I operate under the belief that if you are not in class, you cannot be there. In your future careers your employers will not want this information; what they will expect is that you get your job done to the best of your ability. A teacher who is frequently absent (for example, more than 5% of the time) would not be rehired. This also means that work either gets done when it is required or it does not count. The policies for this course are designed to help you become prepared as professionals to meet those work place challenges. I will always do my best to guide and support each student, but it is ultimately the responsibility of each student to work toward success.

Attendance and Participation

Regular attendance and participation is expected since class dialogue is vital to educational discussions and collaborative solutions. In order to maintain an equitable attendance policy for all class members, it is expected students come to every class on time and stay the entire session. As stated above, absences exceeding 5% of total time would cause a teacher to not be rehired; for this course that means more than one absence. **More than one absence can result in a failing grade.** Exceptions to this policy are solely at the discretion of the instructor and will only be made in the case of extenuating circumstances such as major illness or family emergency.

Assignments

Written assignments must follow APA style requirements according to The Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition). Students are required to keep a copy of all assignments for their own records. All assignments are due by noon on the Monday due. **No assignments will be accepted late and the grade will be recorded as a zero.** This means an assignment turned in at 12:15pm of the due day will not be accepted; promptness and responsibility are features of professionalism within teaching and thus are maintained within this class. **All assignments require a signed copy of the Honor Pledge attached;** digital signatures are accepted.

Grading

Grades will be determined by the degree to which the course objectives are met and according to rubrics provided for each assignment. All assignments submitted for evaluation must reflect commitment to success as a teacher.

Academic Integrity – "The Honor System"

Each student has the right and duty to pursue his or her academic experience free of dishonesty. The Honor System is designed to establish the higher level of conduct expected and required of all Utah State University students. The Honor Pledge: To enhance the learning environment at Utah State University and to develop student academic integrity, each student agrees to the following Honor Pledge: "I pledge, on my honor, to conduct myself with the foremost level of academic integrity." A student who lives by the Honor Pledge is a student who does more than not cheat, falsify, or plagiarize. A student who lives by the Honor Pledge: Espouses academic integrity as an underlying and essential principle of the Utah State University community; Understands that each act of academic dishonesty devalues every degree that is awarded by this institution; and, Is a welcomed and valued member of Utah State University.

Any violation of the honor system including plagiarism will be met with the most stringent consequences allowed by Utah State University! This means course failure and referral to the academic deans. To be clear this includes copying information directly from any source including a web page. If the idea is not yours, it requires a proper citation ALWAYS!

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY: SELECTED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Please turn off pagers, cell phones, and other electronic devices (unless specific permission has been granted by the instructor) before class begins.

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Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association

For academic writing, APA is the style most commonly used by scholars in education. Unless otherwise specified in

this syllabus, all papers for this class should be double-spaced in 12 pt. Times or similar fonts, have one inch margins, and follow APA style when citations and references are included. You can access guidelines on the following website: <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Plagiarism

Plagiarism includes knowingly "representing, by paraphrase or direct quotation, the published or unpublished work of

another person as one's own in any academic exercise or activity without full and clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency engaged in the selling of term papers or other academic materials." The penalties for plagiarism are severe. They include warning or reprimand, grade adjustment, probation, suspension, expulsion, withholding of transcripts, denial or revocation of degrees, and referral to psychological counseling.

Plagiarism tutorial website (<http://library.acadiau.ca/tutorials/plagiarism/>)

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined by the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as any "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature." If

you feel you are a victim of sexual harassment, you may talk to or file a complaint with the Affirmative Action/Equal Employment Opportunity Office located in Old Main, Room 161, or call the AA/EEO Office at 797-1266.

Students with Disabilities

The Americans with Disabilities Act states: "Reasonable accommodation will be provided for all persons with

disabilities in order to ensure equal participation within the program. If a student has a disability that will likely require some accommodation by the instructor, the student must contact the instructor and document the disability through the Disability Resource Center (797-2444), preferably during the first week of the course. Any request for special consideration relating to attendance, pedagogy, taking of examinations, etc., must be discussed with and approved by the instructor. In cooperation with the Disability Resource Center, course materials can be provided in alternative format, large print, audio, diskette, or Braille."

Withdrawal Policy and "I" Grade Policy

Students are required to complete all courses for which they are registered by the end of the semester. In some cases, a

student may be unable to complete all of the coursework because of extenuating circumstances, but not due to poor performance or to retain financial aid. The term 'extenuating' circumstances

includes: (1) incapacitating illness which prevents a student from attending classes for a minimum period of two weeks, (2) a death in the immediate family, (3) financial responsibilities requiring a student to alter a work schedule to secure employment, (4) change in work schedule as required by an employer, or (5) other emergencies deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Counseling Center

The USU Counseling Center provides confidential mental health services to students on the USU campus. By offering

you a full range of counseling services in a friendly environment, the center strives to help you achieve your personal, relational, and academic goals while at USU. (<http://www.usu.edu/counseling/>)