

Advanced Qualitative Methods 34:833:628	Tuesdays 8:30 – 11:10	Synchronous remote instruction
Fall 2020	3 credits	No pre-requisites

Course Catalog Description

Students apply techniques of qualitative research, including interviewing, ethnography, and phenomenology, to help them gain an understanding of which techniques are appropriate for what specific research needs.

Course Synopsis

This course is designed to familiarize doctoral and advanced master's students with the most commonly used qualitative research methods and with qualitative research design. The course will prepare you to utilize these methods in your own research and to evaluate the qualitative research done by others.

Course Learning Goals

1. To Analyze, Synthesize, Think Critically, Solve Problems & Make Decisions.
2. To Participate in and Contribute to the Public Policy Process.

All Learning Goals are assessed via written assignments, in class comments, and a final research proposal.

Requirements and Grading

Course Requirements

Class Participation

Because this is a seminar, active and informed participation in class discussions is critical and will count for **39% of the overall course grade, 3% for each of 13 weeks**. It is difficult to participate if you are not in class, so participation will include attendance. Each class participant will be allowed one excused absence. Any additional absences, except for those caused by emergencies, will result in a 5-point reduction off the total grade. Anyone who knows in advance that s/he will miss class must let the professor know as soon as possible.

Research Proposal

Class participants will be required to write and present to the class a research proposal that utilizes qualitative research methods. **The final written proposal is due by 11:59PM on Saturday, November 28th. The written and 15 to 20-minute oral presentation of your proposal will jointly count for 26% of your overall course grade. Three preliminary versions of the written proposal are due by 4PM Monday, September 14th, 4PM Monday, September 21st, and 4PM Saturday, October 24th. They will count for 3%, 3% and 5% of the course grade, respectively.**

Weekly Assignments

In addition to participating in seminar discussions and writing and presenting the research proposal, course participants will be required to fulfill eight weekly assignments. **Each of these will count for 3% of the overall course grade, for a total of 24%**. Unless indicated otherwise, the assignments must be uploaded to Canvas by 4PM on the Monday before class. Any that are turned in later than that will not be accepted.

Readings

Except for *Designing Qualitative Research, sixth edition*, by Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, all the readings will be available on Canvas. The Marshall and Rossman book can be purchased online or read on reserve at Alexander library. All the readings for the first three weeks of the course are available on Canvas, to give you time to purchase the Marshall and Rossman book, should you wish to do so.

The Rutgers University policy on academic integrity and plagiarism is available at: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/

Week 1 (September 1): Introduction – What Is Qualitative Research?

- Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 4th edition:
 - Chapter 2: Strategic Themes in Qualitative Inquiry, pp. 45-84

(Assignment 1: no written requirements)

Please be prepared to discuss during class the key themes in qualitative methods that Patton identifies in chapter two, and how they differ from quantitative research approaches.

Week 2 (September 8): Qualitative Research Approaches

- Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 6th edition:
 - Chapter 2: Qualitative Research Genres, pp. 15-41.
- John W. Creswell, *Research Design, Qualitative, Quantitative, & Mixed Methods Approaches*, 5th edition
 - Chapter 1: The Selection of a Research Approach, pp. 3-16.

(Assignment 2: due 4PM Monday, September 7)

*Identify an article in your subject area of interest that uses **only** qualitative methods of data collection and data analysis and indicate:*

- *What is the overall objective of this research?*
 - *What specific research question(s) did the study answer?*
 - *What data collection technique(s) and method(s) of analysis were used to answer the research questions?*
 - *Why were these data collection techniques and methods of analysis selected?*
 - *Could the research question(s) have been answered using quantitative methods? If not, why not? If yes, please briefly explain what quantitative methods could have been used and why you believe the authors chose to use qualitative methods instead.*
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Week 3 (September 15): Designing Qualitative Studies

- Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 4th edition:
 - Chapter 5: Designing Qualitative Studies, pp. 244-254.
- Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 6th edition:
 - Chapter 4: The What of the Study, pp. 65-96.
 - Chapter 5: The How of the Study, pp. 99-137.

(Assignment 3: due 4PM Monday, September 14)

Prepare a preliminary research proposal that will serve as the first draft of the proposal you will distribute and present at the end of the semester. It should be no more than 2 pages double spaced and should include:

- *Topic and purpose statement*
 - *Significance for knowledge, and/or for practical and policy problems, and/or for action*
 - *The research question(s) that you wish to address in this research.*
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Week 4 (September 22): Which Data Collection Methods to Use?

- Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 6th edition:
 - Chapter 6: Basic Data Collection Methods, pp. 141-176.
 - Chapter 7: Specialized and Focused Data Collection Methods, pp. 179-204.

(Assignment 4: due 4PM Monday, September 21)

Prepare a preliminary research proposal that will serve as the second draft of the proposal you will distribute and present at the end of the semester. It should be no more than 3 pages double spaced and should include:

- *Topic and purpose statement.*
 - *Significance for knowledge, and/or for practical and policy problems, and/or for action*
 - *The research question(s) that you wish to address in this research.*
 - *Qualitative data collection methods you plan to use to answer your research question(s) and why they are appropriate for these research questions.*
 - *Alternative qualitative data collection methods that would be appropriate to answer your research question(s) and why you chose not to use them.*
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Week 5 (September 29): Data Collection – Individual Interviewing

- Michael Quinn Patton, *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, 4th edition:
 - Chapter 7: Qualitative Interviewing, pp. 421-474

(Assignment 5: due 4PM Monday, September 28)

Create an interview guide for a 20 to 25-minute qualitative interview on a topic about which you could interview one of your class members. Use the readings assigned for this week to help inform your work. Please indicate at the top of your assignment if your interview questions are appropriate for all class members or only specific class members (e.g., doctoral students or women or foreign students). If the interview questions are only appropriate for some class members, please make sure that it is a group with at least three members in the class, whose membership would be easy for me to identify. In other words, please do not select categories such as students who are left-handed and like sushi, who would be difficult to identify without knowing them very well 😊. Please have technology with you for the September 28th class that will enable you to record the interview you will conduct during the class.

You will need to transcribe this or another interview for the data analysis class. Transcribing manually is very time intensive so if you choose not to use transcription software, I strongly encourage you not to leave doing the transcription until the week it is due. If you wish to use transcription software to expedite the transcription process, you can obtain a free trial subscription to Otter.ai

Week 6 (October 6): Data Collection – Group Interviewing

- Benjamin F. Crabtree, et al. (1993). Selecting individual or group interviews. pp. 137-149. In David L. Morgan (1993). *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art*
- Richard A. Krueger and Mary Anne Casey (2009). *Focus Groups*, 4th edition. A Practical Guide for Applied Research, Chapters 2, 3,4,5 and 11, pp. 17-111 and pp. 173-184.
- Richard Zeller. (1993). Focus group research on sensitive topics: Setting the agenda without setting the agenda. Pp. 167-183. In David Morgan (1993). *Successful Focus Groups: Advancing the State of the Art*.

(Assignment 6: due 4PM Monday, October 5)

Working with your partner(s), create a protocol for a twenty-minute focus group on a topic of your choice. The protocol should indicate your research objective (what are you trying to learn from the focus group)? The protocol also should specify your opening question, your introductory/discussion starter question(s), your transition question(s), your key questions, and your ending question(s). Please also indicate what role each of you will play (e.g., moderate the focus group, observe and write down what participants are doing, other?)

Please also sign up on Canvas for those focus groups that you would like to participate in during class.

Week 7 (October 13): Data Collection – Documents and Material Culture, Use of Images, Historical and Biographical Methods - see assigned readings on Canvas.

(Assignment 7: due 4PM Monday, October 12)

Your assignment is to utilize two of the following methods to collect data – documents and material culture, use of images, historical and biographical methods. Write a 2 to 3-page response paper that briefly describes how you collected data, analyzes the data you collected, and reflects on your experience with using these methods. What or whom you choose to study is entirely your decision. While you may choose to study the same person, place, event, or phenomenon via each of the methods, this is neither expected nor required for the assignment. The objective is to give you experience using these techniques in collecting and analyzing data. Please do not worry about "getting it right."

Week 8 (October 20): Data collection – Observation, Participant Observation and Ethnography – see assigned readings on Canvas.

(Assignment 8: due 4PM Monday, October 19)

Your assignment is to utilize observation and participant observation to collect data about a culture with which you may or may not already be familiar and write a 2 to 3-page analysis of that culture that draws on your data. You also may (but do not have to) draw on additional sources of data for the analysis. The objective is to give you experience using these techniques in collecting and analyzing data. Please do not worry about “getting it right.”

Guest Speaker: Christien Philmarc Tompkins, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology, Rutgers University

Week 9 (October 27): Class Discussion of Preliminary Research Proposals

There are no assigned readings for this week’s class. The third draft of your research proposal is due by 4PM on Saturday, October 24th. I will email a subset of your classmates’ proposals to you by noon on Sunday, October 25th that you should read carefully. Come to class prepared to give feedback on that subset of research proposals and to get feedback from your classmates on your own research proposal.

(Assignment 9: due 4PM Saturday, October 24)

DRAFT RESEARCH PROPOSAL

This is the third draft of the proposal you will present at the end of the semester. This version should be no more than 5 pages double spaced and may be shorter. At minimum, your proposal should include:

- *Topic and purpose statement*
- *Significance for knowledge, and/or for practical and policy problems, and/or for action*
- *The research question(s) that you wish to address in this research.*
- *Qualitative data collection methods you plan to use to answer your research question(s) and why they are appropriate. (I realize that most of you are not yet well-versed in these methods (that is why you are taking this class. Please keep in mind that you will have time to modify your research proposal before you submit it at the end of the semester).*
- *Site or population selection and sampling strategies (please provide specifics whenever possible – e.g. how you will obtain access to research subjects or a research site, if that is not obvious).*
- *Any limitations of the methodology (e.g. not enough money or time to do the number of interviews necessary for saturation)*
- *A timeline indicating when you will conduct and write-up the various aspects of this research – based on a June 1, 2021 start date.*
- **OPTIONAL:** *A brief summary of the relevant literature that you are addressing or responding to via this research. A literature review is required for the final research proposal.*

Week 10 (November 3): Case Studies & Grounded Theory Building – see readings on Canvas

(Assignment 10: due 4PM Monday, November 2)

Submit three research questions: one that would be appropriate for an intrinsic case study, one that would be appropriate for an instrumental case study, and one that would be appropriate for a comparative case study. Explain what each of them is a case study of, why each of them is appropriate for that type of case study design, and what data collection methods you would use for each one.

Propose a research question that would be appropriate for Grounded Theory Building. Explain why it is appropriate and what data collection methods you would use.

Guest Speaker: Jocelyn Crowley, Professor, Edward J. Bloustein School, Rutgers University

Week 11 (November 10): Participatory Action Research and Phenomenology – see readings on Canvas

(Assignment 11: due 4PM Monday, November 9)

Propose two studies, one that uses participatory action research (PAR) and one that uses phenomenology. Submit a one-page summary for each one that includes the research question, why it is appropriate to use PAR or phenomenology to address that question, and your proposed sampling and data collection methods.

Guest Speaker: Nora E. Hyland, Associate Dean & Faculty Director of Teacher Education, Graduate School of Education, Rutgers University

Week 12 (November 17): Data Analysis – see readings on Canvas

(Assignment 12: due 4PM Monday, November 16)

Transcribe a 20 to 25-minute interview that you conducted (in class or elsewhere), code and analyze the interview using the techniques outlined in the readings and write a 2 to 3-page summary of your analysis and findings. Please submit the transcript and coding along with your assignment.

November 24 – No Class HAVE A WONDERFUL THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY!!

ASSIGNMENT 13: FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL - DUE BY 11:59PM, SATURDAY, November 28TH

The completed research proposal should include a final version of all the areas required for the third draft as well as a complete literature review. There is no page limit, but proposals are usually between 10 and 20 pages long.

Week 13 and 14 (December 1 and 8): Research Proposals Presentation & Discussion

Please sign up on Canvas for a date and time to present your research proposal. Your presentations should be 15 to 20 minutes in length and will make up part of your total research proposal grade. Those not presenting will provide written and verbal feedback on their classmates' proposals, which will make up their class participation grades for those days.

If using PowerPoint or another presentation aid, please upload your presentation to Canvas, by 11:59PM on the day that you present.