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## **LIS 6272 Seminar in Qualitative Research in Information Studies Spring 2017**

Instructor:       **Michelle M. Kazmer (242A LSB, mkazmer@fsu.edu, 850-559-2421)**  
Day and Time:   **Tuesdays, 9-11:59 a.m.**  
Location:       **LSB 206**  
Office Hour:     **Tuesdays, 1:30-2:30 p.m.**

### **Course Description**

This seminar covers a variety of qualitative research methods that may be used in information studies. It explores general, epistemological, and ethical issues with qualitative research; methods of data collection; techniques for data analysis; and evaluation of qualitative research.

### **Prerequisites**

- Doctoral student standing
- Completion of LIS 6279, Seminar in Research in Information Studies, or a similar research methods course

The instructor may waive these requirements under exceptional circumstances.

### **Objectives**

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- apply qualitative research processes and describe their similarities and differences;
- explain epistemological and philosophical positions in qualitative research and their individual place in this landscape;
- practice qualitative data collection and coding;
- choose between and employ a variety of qualitative research methods and techniques for analysis;
- evaluate qualitative research by both traditional and new criteria; and
- develop and adapt the research process in response to ethical, moral, and political issues that arise when conducting qualitative research.

### **Assignments**

**In-class activities (32%):** There are eight in-class activities throughout the semester (indicated in the course calendar), each offering you the chance to get hands-on practical experience with topics within and methods of qualitative research. The exact nature of each activity varies; you may be working individually, in pairs, or in small groups (thus paralleling real-life qualitative research projects) depending on the topic and particular activity each week. Active participation in, contribution to, and completion of *each* of these in class is worth 4% of your grade (4%x8=32%).

**Reflection posts (32%):** After each of the eight in-class activities, you will post a short reflection on what you learned from the readings, in-class discussion, and activity to the class site. A major tenet of most qualitative research is for the researcher to reflect on his or her process, data, analysis, and findings; this weekly assignment will help you reflect on and write about topics as we cover them. It will also help you develop your own path through the course, as you learn about qualitative research and reflect on what you learn. This should include relating later topics to those covered earlier; qualitative research is a cyclical process that often revisits prior stages. In addition, you are strongly encouraged and recommended to read and respond to your fellow students' posts, sharing your ideas and thoughts with them. You may also post reflections on the readings outside of these weeks if you like. Each assigned reflection post is worth 4% (4% $\times$ 8=32%) and is due before the next week's class (i.e., by 8:59 a.m. the following Tuesday).

**Project (24%):** To help you gain experience in qualitative research, you will complete a small independent project during the semester. Depending on your stage in the doctoral program and your particular interests and needs, this may take many forms. I encourage you to use this project to gain experience with designing qualitative research; because we likely won't have time to secure human subjects approval, data collected during this semester probably won't be publishable. Above all, you should consider and select a project that (a) contributes to both your theoretical and practical understanding and knowledge about qualitative research and methods, and (b) helps your progress through your doctoral program.

- Project part 1: Submit via the course site a one-page description of your project that includes the topic and scope, and specifies the content, form, and length of the three project updates and the final report. This is due by 8:59 a.m. on February 7. Final form of the deliverables is determined by me.
- Project part 2: Your final written project is due via the course site by 8:59 a.m. on April 25.
- Project part 3: You will also give a brief presentation (about 12 minutes + 5 minutes for Q&A) in class on April 25.

**Project updates (12%):** Three times during the semester you will make a short post to the class site updating us on the progress you have made with your project. As with the activity reflections, you are strongly encouraged and recommended to read and respond to the updates of your fellow students, sharing your ideas and thoughts with them. Each update is worth 4%; these should be posted by 8:59 a.m. on 2/21, 3/14\*, and 4/11 (3/14 is in the midst of spring break, so you might choose to post your update early)

### Grading and Evaluation

In-class activities	(8 @ 4% each)	32%
Reflection posts	(8 @ 4% each)	32%
Project		24%
Project updates	(3 @ 4% each)	12%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100%</b>

The following scale will be used for final grades:

93%-100%	A
90%-92%	A-
87%-89%	B+
83%-86%	B
80%-82%	B-

## Course Calendar and Readings

You can think of this seminar as consisting of four segments:

- Weeks 1-4: Overview and general issues
- Weeks 5-8: Methods of data collection
- Weeks 9-11: Methods of data analysis
- Weeks 12-15: Evaluation, ethics, and project presentations

Topics will, however, **overlap** between weeks and segments; qualitative research is a cyclical process that often revisits earlier stages, and there is particularly significant overlap between the data collection and data analysis processes. Readings, activities, and discussion will often refer and relate to previous weeks and topics. As the semester progresses you should also discover many links between earlier topics and later ones.

Many of the course readings listed below are available via the FSU Libraries, either online or physically in Goldstein, Strozier, or Dirac. Those readings that are not currently available via the FSU Libraries will be placed on reserve in our course site for your use and convenience.

### Week 1 (January 10): Course introduction and overview

**Activity #1:** Introducing yourself (reflection #1 due Tuesday January 17)

- Sutton, B. (2010). Qualitative research methods in library and information science. In M. J. Bates & M. N. Maack (Eds.), *Encyclopedia of Library and Information Sciences* (3rd ed., pp. 4380-4393). Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
- Chu, H. (2016). Research methods in library and information science: A content analysis. *Library & Information Science Research*, 37(1), 36-41. doi:10.1016/j.lisr.2014.09.003.
- Cibangu, S. K. (2013). A memo of qualitative research for information science: Toward theory construction. *Journal of Documentation*, 69(2), 194-213. doi:10.1108/00220411311300048

### Week 2 (January 17): The qualitative research process

**No class meeting this week; no activity or post.**

- Westbrook, L. (1997). Qualitative research. In R. R. Powell (Ed.), *Basic research methods for librarians* (3rd ed., pp. 143-163). Greenwich, CT: Ablex.
- Mason, J. (1996). Planning and designing qualitative research. In *Qualitative researching* (pp. 9-34). London, UK: Sage.

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- Connaway, L. S., & Radford, M. L. (2017). Principles of qualitative methods. In *Research methods in library and information science* (6th ed.), pp. 212-238.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (????). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (? Ed., pp. 1-44). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. **[pp. 28-36 required, rest is optional; please use the PDF I've posted to the class site]**

**Week 3 (January 24):** Epistemological and philosophical issues

**Activity #2:** Introducing qualitative research (reflection #2 due Tuesday January 31)

- Becker, H. S. (1996). The epistemology of qualitative research. In R. Jessor, A. Colby, & R. A. Shweder (Eds.), *Ethnography and human development: Context and meaning in social inquiry* (pp. 53-71). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Holloway, I., & Todres, L. (2003). The status of method: Flexibility, consistency and coherence. *Qualitative Research*, 3(3), 345-357. doi:10.1177/1468794103033004 [replace this with Giardina piece?]
- Rogers-Dillon, R. H. (2005). Hierarchical qualitative research teams: Refining the methodology. *Qualitative Research*, 5(4), 437-454. doi:10.1177/1468794105056922

**Week 4 (January 31):** General data collection, coding, and analysis

**Project description** due Tuesday February 7.

*No post required this week*

- Whyte, W. F. (1984). Focusing the study and analyzing the data. In *Learning from the field: A guide from experience* (pp. 225-250). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Liamputtong, P. (2010). *Performing qualitative cross-cultural research*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. [chapter to be added]
- Kirk, S. (2007). Methodological and ethical issues in conducting qualitative research with children and young people: A literature review. *International Journal of Nursing Studies*, 44, 1250-1260. doi:10.1016/j.ijnurstu.2006.08.015
- James, N., & Busher, H. (2009). Dealing with ethical issues. In *Online interviewing* (pp. 56-70). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- [We will talk in class about write-up of the analysis process; please read just the methods sections of my two articles, sorry:
  - Kazmer, M. M., Alemanne, N. D., Mendenhall, A., Marty, P. F., Sutherland, S. A., Sampson, V., Douglas, I., Clark, A., Schellinger, J. (2016). "A good day to see a bobcat": Elementary students' online journal entries during a structured observation visit to a wildlife center. *First Monday*, 21(4). doi:10.5210/fm.v21i4.6152
  - Kazmer, M. M., Lustria, M. L. A., Cortese, J., Burnett, G., Kim, J.-H., Ma, J., & Frost, J. (2014). Distributed knowledge in an online patient support community: Authority and discovery. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 65(7), 1319-1334. doi:10.1002/asi.23064

**Week 5 (February 7):** Ethnography I

**Activity #3:** Ethnographic description (reflection due Tuesday February 14)

- Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In *The interpretation of cultures: Selected essays* (pp. 3-30). New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Clifford, J. (1988). On ethnographic authority. In *The predicament of culture: Twentieth-century ethnography, literature, and art* (pp. 21-54). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Forsythe, D. E. (2001). "It's just a matter of common sense": Ethnography as invisible work. In *Studying those who study us: An anthropologist in the world of artificial intelligence* (pp. 146-162). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Rosaldo, R. (1993). Subjectivity in social analysis. In *Culture and truth: The remaking of social analysis* (2nd ed., pp. 168-195). Boston, MA: Beacon.

**Week 6 (February 14):** Ethnography II: Virtual and multi-sited  
**Project update #1** due Tuesday February 21.

- Hine, C. (2000). The virtual objects of ethnography. In *Virtual ethnography* (pp. 41-66). London, UK: Sage.
- Turkle, S. (1995). TinySex and gender trouble. In *Life on the screen: Identity in the age of the Internet* (pp. 210-232). New York, NY: Simon and Schuster.
- Marcus, G. E. (1995). Ethnography in/of the world system: The emergence of multi-sited ethnography. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24, 95-117.
- Pink, S. (2007). The visual in ethnography: Photography, video, cultures, and individuals. In *Doing visual ethnography* (pp. 21-37). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Week 7 (February 21):** Interviews

**Activity #4:** Practicing interviewing techniques (reflection due Tuesday February 28)

- Kvale, S. (1996). The interview as a conversation. In *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing* (pp. 19-37). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Meho, L. I. (2006). E-mail interviewing in qualitative research: A methodological discussion. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 57(10), 1284-1295. doi:10.1002/asi.20416
- Suchman, L., & Jordan, B. (1990). Interactional troubles in face-to-face survey interviews. *Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 85(409), 232-241.
- Flanagan, J. C. (1954). The critical incident technique. *Psychological Bulletin*, 51(4), 327-358.
- Kazmer, M. M. & Xie, B. (2008). Qualitative interviewing in Internet studies: Playing with the media, playing with the method. *Information, Communication, and Society* 11(2), 115-136. [doi:10.1080/13691180801946333](https://doi.org/10.1080/13691180801946333)

**Week 8 (February 28):** Focus groups and case studies

**Activity #5:** Practice focus groups (post on case study due Tuesday March 7)

- Morgan, D. L., & Krueger, R. A. (1993). When to use focus groups and why. In D. L. Morgan (Ed.), *Successful focus groups: Advancing the state of the art* (pp. 3-19). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

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- Albrecht, T. L., Johnson, G. M., & Walther, J. B. (1993). Understanding communication processes in focus groups. In D. L. Morgan (Ed.), *Successful focus groups: Advancing the state of the art* (pp. 51-64). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Woodyatt, C. R., Finneran, C. A., & Stephenson, R. (2016). In-person versus online focus group discussions. *Qualitative Health Research*, 26(6), 741-749. doi:10.1177/1049732316631510
- Yin, R. K. (2003). Designing case studies. In *Case study research: Design and methods* (3rd ed., pp. 19-56). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Fidel, R. (1984). The case study method: A case study. *Library and Information Science Research*, 6(3), 273-288.

**Week 9 (March 7):** Ethnomethodology and hermeneutics

**Project update #2** due Tuesday March 14\*

- Garfinkel, H. (1967). What is ethnomethodology? In *Studies in ethnomethodology* (pp. 1-34). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Dourish, P., & Button, G. (1998). On "technomethodology": Foundational relationships between ethnomethodology and system design. *Human-Computer Interaction*, 13(4), 395-432. doi:10.1207/s15327051hci1304\_2
- Dennis, A. (2011). Symbolic interactionism and ethnomethodology. *Symbolic Interaction*, 34(3), 349-356. doi: 10.1525/si.2011.34.3.349
- Lee, A. S. (1994). Electronic mail as a medium for rich communication: An empirical investigation using hermeneutic interpretation. *MIS Quarterly*, 18(2), 143-157.
- Chalmers, M. (2004). Hermeneutics, information and representation. *European Journal of Information Systems*, 13(3), 210-220.
- Hansson, J. (2005). Hermeneutics as a bridge between the modern and the postmodern in library and information science. *Journal of Documentation*, 61(1), 102-113. doi:10.1108/00220410510578032

**No class on March 14: It's Spring Catch-up Week!**

**Week 10 (March 21):** Grounded theory

**Activity #6:** Coding in grounded theory (reflection due Tuesday March 28)

- Charmaz, K. (2006). An invitation to grounded theory. In *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis* (pp. 1-12). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1994). Grounded theory methodology: An overview. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 273-285). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). Coding in grounded theory practice. In *Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis* (pp. 42-71). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Charmaz, K. (2016). The power of constructivist grounded theory for critical inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 23(1), 34-45. doi10.1177/1077800416657105

**Week 11 (March 28):** Content analysis and discourse analysis

**Activity #7:** Content analysis exercise (reflection due Tuesday April 4)

- Krippendorff, K. (2004). Conceptual foundation. In *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology* (2nd ed., pp. 18-43). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Garfinkel, H. (1967). "Good" organizational reasons for "bad" clinic records. In *Studies in ethnomethodology* (pp. 186-207). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.
- Budd, J. (2006). Discourse analysis and the study of communication in LIS. *Library Trends*, 55, 65-82.
- Frohmann, B. (1994). Discourse analysis as a research method in library and information science. *Library and Information Science Research*, 16, 119-138.

**Week 12 (April 4):** Reliability, validity, and evaluation

**Project update #3** due Tuesday April 11.

- Gaskell, G., & Bauer, M. W. (2000). Towards public accountability: Beyond sampling, reliability, and validity. In M. W. Bauer & G. Gaskell (Eds.), *Qualitative researching with text, image and sound* (pp. 336-350). London, UK: Sage.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 16(10), 837-851. doi:10.1177/1077800410383121
- Jordan, B., & Dalal, B. (2006). Persuasive encounters: Ethnography in the corporation. *Field Methods*, 18(4), 359-381. doi:10.1177/1525822X06292976
- Kvale, S. (1996). The social construction of validity. In *InterViews: An introduction to qualitative research interviewing* (pp. 229-252). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Week 13 (April 11):** Ethics of qualitative research

**Activity #8:** Ethics (reflection due Tuesday April 18)

- Christians, C.G. (2008). Ethics and politics in qualitative research. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 185-220). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.
- Alcott, L. M. (1995). The problem of speaking for others. In J. Roof & R. Wiegman (Eds.), *Who can speak? Authority and critical identity* (pp. 97-119). Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press.
- Forsythe, D. (2001). Ethics and politics of studying up in technoscience. In D. J. Hess (Ed.), *Studying those who study us: An anthropologist in the world of artificial intelligence* (pp. 119-131). Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Markham, A. (2012). Fabrication as ethical practice. *Information, Communication & Society*, 15(3), 334-353. doi:10.1080/1369118X.2011.641993

**Week 14 (April 18):** A topic we think we should cover

- During the semester, we will decide we need to spend more time reading about, thinking about, talking about, and/or practicing another topic, concept, method, etc. That'll go here.

**Week 14 (April 25):** Project presentations and course wrap-up

**Project due** to professor by 8:59 a.m. April 25.

*No readings; finish your project and prepare for your presentation!*

### **Academic Honor Policy**

The Florida State University Academic Honor Policy outlines the University's expectations for the integrity of students' academic work, the procedures for resolving alleged violations of those expectations, and the rights and responsibilities of students and faculty members throughout the process. Students are responsible for reading the Academic Honor Policy and for living up to their pledge to "...be honest and truthful and...[to] strive for personal and institutional integrity at Florida State University." (Florida State University Academic Honor Policy, found at <http://fda.fsu.edu/academic-resources/academic-integrity-and-grievances/academic-honor-policy>.)

### **Attendance Policy**

You are expected to come to class each week prepared to discuss the topic and readings for that week with the instructor and fellow students. Active participation and discussion both in and out of class is strongly encouraged; you should ask questions, analyze and critique the readings, and as a group gain an understanding of the topic area and issues within it. Remember that we, as colleagues, are here to learn and grow our understanding of qualitative research methods. Attending class; asking and answering questions in class; and thoughtfully discussing readings with your classmates in class, online, etc., will greatly help this process and your progress in this seminar and in your doctoral program.

Excused absences include documented illness, deaths in the family and other documented crises, call to active military duty or jury duty, religious holy days, and official University activities. These absences will be accommodated in a way that does not arbitrarily penalize students who have a valid excuse. Consideration will also be given to students whose dependent children experience serious illness.

You should inform the instructor why you will miss or have missed a class or assignment as soon as possible. You are encouraged to discuss any class sessions you missed with your fellow classmates. As colleagues in training I expect you to have many of the same constraints as faculty; these will be accommodated as they occur, as long as you maintain open communication!

### **First Day Attendance**

University-wide policy requires all students to attend the first class meeting of all classes for which they are registered. The School of Information will drop students from a course they registered for if they do not attend the first class meeting.

### **Late Assignment Policy**

In general, late assignments will not earn full credit. In cases of constraints, emergencies, and crises that will result in you submitting an assignment late, you should let the instructor know as soon as possible. Such issues unfortunately occur when we least expect them; this is OK and we



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will deal with the repercussions of any crises on your work in this course together, making arrangements to have you make up the work that you have missed. In general Incompletes will not be assigned unless something that is both exceptional AND unforeseen arises near the end of the semester and you are already passing the course. Your project should be scoped in such a way that you can complete it by the end of the semester.

### **Americans with Disability Act**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodation should:

- (1) register with and provide documentation to the Student Disability Resource Center; and
- (2) bring a letter to the instructor indicating the need for accommodation and what type.

Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from the Student Disability Resource Center has been provided.

This syllabus and other class materials are available in alternative format upon request.

For more information about services available to FSU students with disabilities, contact the:

Student Disability Resource Center  
874 Traditions Way  
108 Student Services Building  
Florida State University  
Tallahassee, FL 32306-4167  
(850) 644-9566 (voice)  
(850) 644-8504 (TDD)  
sdr@admin.fsu.edu  
<http://www.disabilitycenter.fsu.edu/>

### **Syllabus Change Policy**

Except for changes that substantially affect implementation of the grading and evaluation of the course, this syllabus is a guide for the course and is subject to change with advance notice.