

**JOURN 776 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS**  
**in Journalism and Public Communication**

Spring 2012  
Linda Steiner  
office hours:

Tuesday 4:15 – 7 p.m.  
lsteiner@jmail.umd.edu 301-405-2426  
Tuesday, noon-2; Wednesday, 1 - 3 pm

This course explores the philosophical and theoretical bases of qualitative approaches to research and provides opportunities to learn and experiment with the various methods and tools used by researchers seeking to understand important issues in public communication and media studies through qualitative methods. The goal is that you become able to apply these methods fruitfully in your own work, when relevant. Thus, you need to recognize when any of these would be appropriate-- alone or in combination with other research strategies, given your research topic and your hypotheses--and to know what kinds of claims you can or cannot make with your research. You will also become able to critique others' research. That is, having learned to compare and use various ways of "knowing," you will become a discerning and critical, and perhaps even appreciative, consumer of qualitative research.

The major approaches we will consider include grounded theory, ethnography, textual and framing analyses, and cultural studies of audiences. Early discussions will highlight the theoretical foundations and canonical traditions of qualitative studies. More specifically, among the methods to be included in your "tool-kit" are participant-observation, extended observation and other field research methods; framing, rhetorical analysis and textual analysis; the long interview and the focus-group interview; as well as historical and natural history approaches. Part of the course will focus on techniques of data collection (observing, interviewing, videotaping, collecting artifacts) and data analysis, beginning with how one develops and uses field notes. Since most of you have taken a history course, we will spend little time on historical methods, although this is clearly relevant. Of course, we will seriously think about ethics as well as ways to incorporate audience/subject empowerment, such as action research.

Discussions will highlight the issue of authorial presence and authorial stance in qualitative research, from design to writing. This, in turn, entails some consideration of how researchers come to understand themselves, including as a producer and product of culture and cultural meanings. Put another way, we'll consider the issues of ownership and power, the political and ethical issues of who controls whose meanings, and who gets to answer whose questions. The fact that qualitative research is interpretive and, by definition, involves the researcher in interpreting data, however, does not mean that qualitative research may be sloppy. The prevailing theme is that good qualitative research involves a well-thought out design and organization; is systematic and involves systematic coding of data, such that possibilities and limitations are explicitly acknowledged; relies on data (whether field notes, transcripts, notes on analysis of cultural products or interviews) that can be scrutinized by others to see if they would generate similar interpretations; and can be evaluated by known principles and standard criteria. That said, attention will be paid to the role of graceful, persuasive, accessible writing in qualitative research.

Note: you are responsible for taking the IRB course in scholarly ethics, and passing the CITI tests, so that you can participate in individual and collaborate research projects. Please do so by the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of class if you have not already done so.

"The multiple methodologies of qualitative research may be viewed as bricolage, and the researcher as *bricoleur*." Denzin & Lincoln

**TEXTBOOKS:** The books below have been ordered (all in paper, all available used).

Bonnie S. Brennen. 2012. *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies*. Routledge

Alan McKee. 2009. *Textual Analysis. A Beginner's Guide*. Sage.

Harry F. Wolcott. 2002. *Sneaky kid and its aftermath: Ethics and intimacy in fieldwork*. Alta Mira.

Additional articles and book chapters will be distributed via Canvas to supplement readings.

Denzin, N. K. & Y.S. Lincoln, eds. (2000), *Handbook of Qualitative Research* (Sage), and Lincoln, Yvonna S. & Egon G. Guba (1985), *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Sage) are also excellent. They are expensive, but highly useful. For your information, appended at the end are other titles that either focus generally on qualitative methods, or are otherwise relevant. When they are relevant is partly indicated by the title; particularly important ones are marked with an \*\*.

Lectures in the series “Qualitative Research methods Across the Disciplines” are highly recommended.  
Cole Field House

**Every student will make one oral presentation (30%)**, as scheduled, on one method or issue. **You are strongly urged to do/discuss “extra” or “outside” reading on the approach**; the assigned readings will have been read by everyone, so do not need to be summarized. Studying the same topic from different vantage points is helpful. You will be responsible for helping to lead discussion of this approach, including by summarizing the theoretical and methodological bases of the approach, critiquing the advantages and disadvantages of the method, and highlighting when or for whom it is maximally appropriate or inappropriate and when it can be integrated with other approaches, or can complement other approaches. You will also **share**—electronic link is sufficient—at least one relevant example or reading that demonstrates the issues or method under discussion. Please, **if you are going to distribute an outline or notes**—and I hope you do—**circulate these electronically** or send to me so I can load to Canvas.

In addition to the required readings and presentation, each student will complete the following assignments:

**1. In-depth interview : due Feb 26**

a. First choose the "type" (teenage girl, regarding teen magazines; suburban voter, regarding campaign advertising; elderly male, about proposals for health care reform, etc., etc.); and

b) write the interview schedule for an hour-long interview with an individual, preparing a 1-2 page list of appropriate questions, including demographic data.

c) Once approved, you will actually conduct the interview (A sample consent form is attached to this syllabus; please have the person you interview indicate consent by signing this form), and

d) write it up in a 3-4 page report.

**2). Textual analysis: due March 26**

Please write a paper (at least 8 pages, but if can be longer if you are thinking toward presentation/publication) analyzing a piece of popular culture (genre novel, newspaper or magazine series or articles on a topic, film or television show, a board or computer game, advertising campaign, popular song lyrics, etc.). These will be presented in class, so you are invited to bring to class materials that you analyzed.

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The above represents what I am tentatively assigning. **Students who seriously work on a paper for presentation and publication, whether individually, pairs or groups (or as an entire class), will not need to do these two assignments. Everyone will make an individual presentation. I encourage you to consider working on papers that can be developed as submissions for presentation and/or publication; collaborative work is encouraged.**

I intend to email you information but I also hope to master the Canvas system sufficiently to post important announcements, assignments, readings; and possibly, discussions, blogs. Please therefore make sure I have your email address and regularly check your account and Canvas.

**Outline, Required Readings and Assignment calendar, by week.** *More readings will be added.*

- Jan 29 Introduction to Qualitative Research: Founding Theories
- Feb 5 Major Principles of Qualitative Approaches  
Brennen, 1
- Feb. 12 The Role of the Qualitative Researcher and What Counts as Data  
Brennen, 2, 5
- Feb 19 Asking Questions, Focus Groups  
Adams, W. J. (2000). How People Watch Television as Investigated Using Focus Group Techniques. *Journal of Broadcasting And Electronic Media*, 44: 78-93  
Brennen 3-4, 6
- Feb. 26 Grounded Theory  
The Constant Comparative Method of Qualitative Research. Barney G. Glazer. *Social Problems*, 1965. 21(4): pp. 436-445. available through JSTOR.  
V. B. Martin (2008). 'Attending the news: A grounded theory about a daily regimen'. *Journalism* 9(1):76-94.
- March 5 Textual Analysis  
Stuart Hall, (1975). Introduction, In A.C.H. Smith (Ed.), *Paper Voices* (pp. 11-24); Chatto & Windus; <http://www.brown.uk.com/brownlibrary/SMITH.htm>  
  
McKee: entire book.  
If you can find: David L. Altheide, *Qualitative Media Analysis* (Sage, 1996): 23-44.
- March 12 Framing  
Robert M. Entman, "Framing U.S. Coverage of International News," *Journal of Communication* 41, no. 4 (1991); Robert M. Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43:4 (1993).
- March 25 Ethnography, Naturalistic Inquiry & Observational Research  
Brennen 7; Wolcott, Ch 1-2
- Apr. 2 Cultural Studies, Audiences and Reader-Response Theory  
Stuart Hall, Janice Radway;
- April 9 Action research  
See: <http://cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/define.html>
- April 16 Concerns of Validity and Reliability
- April 23 Writing as an Issue, Practice, Way of Learning
- April 30 Ethical Issues in Qualitative Methods  
Wolcott 3-6, 8
- May 7 Research Presentations

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**Consent Form**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer name: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee name: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, consent to be interviewed on this day and to allow the interviewer, \_\_\_\_\_ to tape record and transcribe our conversation. I understand that these materials will be used for research purposes and that my identity will be kept confidential.

Signed,

- Thomas Lindlof & Bryan Taylor (2003). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, Sage**
- Michael Pickering, ed. *Research methods for cultural Studies*.Edinburgh U Press, isbn 978 - 7486 2578**
- Alasuutar, P. (1995). Researching Culture: Qualitative Method and Cultural Studies (Sage).
- Anderson, J.A. (1987). Communication Research: Issues and Methods (McGraw-Hill).
- Anfara, V.A., Mertz, N. T. 2006 *Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research*, Sage
- \*\* Behar, Ruth. The Vulnerable Observer (Sage) (re ethnography)
- Berger, A.A. (1991). Media Research Techniques (Sage).
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. C., & Williams, J. M. (2003). *The Craft of Research*. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Briggs, Charles L. Learning How to Ask: A sociolinguistic appraisal of the role of the interview in social science research (Cambridge University Press).
- Bruner, J. (1990). Acts of Meaning ( Harvard University Press).
- Charmaz, K. C. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis* (Sage).
- Creswell, J. W. (2008). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Deacon, D, M. Pickering, P. Golding, & G. Murdock (1999). Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis (Arnold).
- Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. (1998), The Landscape of Qualitative Research Theories and Issues (Sage)
- Denzin, Norman K. and Yvonna S. Lincoln, eds. (1998), Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry (Sage)
- Garfinkel H. (1967). Studies in Ethnomethodology (Prentice-Hall).
- \*\*Geertz. C. (1973). The Interpretation of Cultures (Basic Books).
- Glaser, B. & A. Strauss (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory (Aldine).
- Glesne, C. & A. Peshkin (1992). Becoming Qualitative Researchers (Routledge).
- Hammersley, M & P. Atkinson (1983). Ethnography: Principles and Practice (Tavistock).
- Hesse-Biber, S.N. & Leavy, P.L. (2009), *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (Sage).
- Hesse-Biber, S.N., Leavy, P.L. (2006), *Feminist Research Practice* (Sage).
- Holliday, Adrian (2007). *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*. Sage.
- Iorio, S. H. 2004. Qualitative Research in Journalism: Taking it to the Streets (Erlbaum).
- Jensen, K.B. (2002). A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research (Routledge).
- Kirk, J. & Miller, M.L. (1986) Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research (Sage)
- Kleinman, S. *Feminist Fieldwork Analysis*, (Sage).
- Lederman, L. (1995). Asking questions, Listening to Answers (Kendall Hunt)
- Letherby, Gayle, *Feminist Research in Theory & Practice*
- Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. (1985). Naturalistic Inquiry (Sage).
- Marshall, C., Rossman, G. B. *Designing Qualitative Research* 2006, Sage
- Matheson, T. *Media Discourses*
- Maxwell, J. A. (1996). Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach (Sage)
- Miles, M.B. & A. M. Huberman (1984). Qualitative Data Analysis: A Sourcebook of New Methods
- Morgan, D. L. (1988). Focus Groups as Qualitative Research (Sage).
- Richards, L. 2005 *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*, Sage
- \*\* Richardson, L. Writing Strategies: Reaching Diverse Audiences (Sage). (re writing)
- Roberts, H. (1981). Doing Feminist Research (Routledge).
- Rose, G. 2007. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*. Sage.
- Schwandt, T. A. *The SAGE Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*
- Silverman, D. 2004 *Doing Qualitative Research*, Sage very simple, easy, for theses
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). Participant Observation (Holt, Rinehart, Winston).

- \*\*Strauss, Anselm and Juliet Corbin, Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques (Sage).
- Steier, F. (Ed.) (1991). *Research and Reflexivity*. London: Sage
- Stempel, G. H., Weaver D.H., & Wilhoit G. C. (Eds.) (2003). *Mass Communication Research and Theory*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Stewart, D. W. Shamdasani, P.M. Rook, D.W. 2006, *Focus Groups Theory and Practice*. Sage
- Van Maanen, J. ed. (1983). Qualitative Methodology (Sage); also by Van Maanen, J Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography; Representation in Ethnography (Sage)
- Van Maanen, J., M. Dabbs, and R. R. Faulkner (1982). Varieties of Qualitative Research (Sage)
- Watt, J. H. & van den Berg, S. A. (1995). *Research Methods for Communication Science*. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.