

EDUC 8260: Qualitative Methods II

Spring 2005

Class meetings: Thursdays, 9a. – 11:30a., Room 338 EDUC

Professor Susan Jurow
susan.jurow@colorado.edu
Phone: 303.492.6557
Office: 316 EDUC
Office hours: Thursdays, 12-2

COURSE OVERVIEW & OBJECTIVES

This course focuses on the nature and processes of qualitative research; it is designed to extend and elaborate on the topics covered in Qualitative Methods I. In this class, you will read book-length qualitative studies to appreciate how researchers conducted their studies, analyzed their data, encountered difficulties and opportunities “in the field,” and wrote about their findings. You will also read articles specifically about conducting, analyzing, and writing about qualitative research. While the readings are a critical part of this class, the course is designed so that in-class discussions and activities will help you learn to become strategic as you collect, analyze, revisit, and finally write about the data gathered as part of your own small-scale qualitative study.

In this course, I hope you will:

1. extend your understanding of the goals and nature of qualitative research;
2. gain an appreciation for the process of qualitative research;
3. and, develop the professional skills of analytic and integrative thinking and writing.

Topics and issues will undoubtedly emerge that were not planned for or intended. As research on learning suggests, it is often through following these unintended paths that students and teachers develop more personally meaningful understandings. Therefore, not only do I expect this to happen, I look forward to creating together the shape of the course and what we need to learn.

REQUIRED BOOKS

Emerson, R.M., Fretz, R.I., Shaw, L.L. (1995). Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago.
Whyte, W.F. (1993). Street corner society: The social structure of an Italian slum. Chicago: University of Chicago.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Becker, H.S. (1986). Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article. Chicago: University of Chicago.
Schwandt, T. (2001). Dictionary of qualitative inquiry. Second edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

OTHER REQUIRED READINGS

All required articles and book chapters are on reserve at the Education Library (EDUC 344). These can also be accessed electronically through the Chinook library catalog.

MY EXPECTATIONS OF YOUR PARTICIPATION IN CLASS

The quality of this seminar will depend on seriousness and thoughtfulness with which we address issues raised by the readings, our projects, and our experiences. I view this course as a collaborative effort to learn, question, and make sense of some challenging but exciting ideas.

My expectation is that you will attend every class, be prepared to discuss and share your ideas about the readings, and ask questions about things you don't understand or want to know more about. As members of what I hope will become a productive learning community, I expect that you will take responsibility for your own learning and support the learning of others. One of the things this implies is that you need to pay attention to how much you speak in class, what you say and how you say it, and how you encourage (or discourage) others' participation.

You are expected to complete the reading and assignments prior to each class. Sometimes readings will be discussed that week. Sometimes they won't because we will have other things to do. Keep up with the readings either way. I assume that you will and will refer to the readings as if you have. Your engagement and participation in class activities are important not only for your own learning but also for the learning of others.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Missed classes will affect your grade. Students who must miss class need to inform the instructor in advance, if possible. Absences will be excused due to emergencies that are beyond the student's control, such as personal illness, or critical illness or death in the family. Students who miss class are responsible for assignments listed on the syllabus and any assignments announced in class. The professor has discretion over attendance policies.

MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments	Point value
NVivo reflections	15 points
Research study work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field notes (4-6) • Interviews (2) • Analytic memos (3) 	20 points
Comparative book review	20 points
Written report and presentation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full rough draft of emergent analysis • Final written report (20 pts.) • Final presentation (10 pts.) 	30 points
Field diary/Intellectual journey	15 points

NVivo activities and reflections:

See handout titled, “NVivo activities and reflections”

Research study work:

A major component of this course is conducting a small-scale qualitative study. In order to make your study manageable, it is necessary to set some basic guidelines about what kinds and how much data you will collect. I recommend that you complete between 4 and 6 field notes, 2 interviews, and at least 3 analytic, integrative memos. This, along with the data you collected last semester, should provide you with enough information to complete your study.

Depending on your specific study requirements, you may want to conduct more observations or more interviews. Please set up a meeting with me during the second or third week of class to discuss the requirements for your specific study. I encourage you to come to my office hours during the semester to discuss your emergent study and any changes to your plans.

Comparative book review:

See the last page of this syllabus for details on completing the comparative book review. Please read the guidelines for doing the review prior to reading the books as they will help you read more strategically.

Written report and poster presentation:

The final report for your research study should be between 15 and 20 pages (double-spaced). Specific guidelines regarding what needs to be included in your report will be handed out in class. In general, your report should include discussion of the following basic features of a research report:

- Your research question and why it is important
- The research study setting and the study participants
- The research methods you used to collect data
- The analytic approach you used to analyze the data
- Your findings and a discussion of competing lines of analysis
- And, the significance of your study and its potential implications

The last two classes of the semester will be devoted to presentations of your research studies. You will need to create a poster representing your research study. Guidelines for creating the poster and for how to discuss your study while standing next to the poster will be developed collaboratively in class and will follow an AERA-style approach to poster presentations.

Field diary/Intellectual journey:

I recommend that you keep a field diary as you carry out your research study. In your diary, jot down your thoughts and feelings about how the study is proceeding, your role in the study, your reactions to the people, scenes, and activities you’re observing, and your changing ideas about your research questions and your assumptions about what is going on at your study site. At the end of the semester, you need to write a 5-page (maximum), double-spaced paper detailing your “intellectual journey” through your qualitative research study. To do so, it will be helpful to draw on your field diary entries so I recommend writing them on a regular basis.

Policy regarding Late Assignments

Late assignments will be accepted only if you have received approval from the professor. It is essential that you complete and turn in assignments on time because they are designed to build on one another and help form the groundwork for our class discussions. I encourage you to turn in drafts of assignments before they are due so you can receive feedback.

The Role of Study Questions listed in the Course Schedule

Questions are included in the class schedule to help you think about the readings. These are meant to guide your reading and get you to think about the main points of the articles/book chapters. You are not required to write responses to every week's questions (I may ask you to do so on occasion), but I do want you to have thought about these issues before you come to class.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1: January 13

Introduction to the course & revisiting ideas from last semester

Reading: Begin reading *Street Corner Society*; identify through discussion with your advisor or me a second, book-length qualitative study to read (your selection needs to be approved by me by week 3)

In-class activity: NVivo overview

Week 2: January 20

What is qualitative research and what kind of knowledge does it produce?

Reading: BECKER, The epistemology of qualitative research

Recommended: Entries for qualitative, quantitative, and epistemology in the *Dictionary of Qualitative Inquiry*

Study question: Find one statement that Becker makes with which you agree and one with which you disagree. Why do you think what you think? Write a short (1-2 page) reflection on your reactions to the article. I encourage you to refer to readings and discussions you had last semester.

In-class activity: Graduate student panel on doing qualitative research

Assignment due: Turn in a selection of your field notes for instructor to review

Week 3: January 27

Representations of the field

Reading: EMERSON, FRETZ, & SHAW Writing up field notes I: From field to desk (39-65) and Writing up field notes II: Creating scenes on the page (66-107); GEERTZ

Study questions: What is “thick description” and how does it differ from “rich” description? What is the difference between ethnography and qualitative methods?

In-class activity: NVivo activity

Assignments due: (1) Identify second qualitative book; (2) Turn in one set of *expanded* fieldnotes. Expanded fieldnotes should recreate (not just summarize) conversations and events in as much detail as possible.

Week 4: February 3

Making meaning, coding

"Although we often hear that data speak for themselves, their voices can be soft and sly."

(Mosteller, Fienberg & Rourke, 1983, *Beginning statistics with data analysis*. Reading, MA: p. 234)

Reading: EMERSON, FRETZ, & SHAW, Processing field notes (142-168); CHARMAZ; ERICKSON, Qualitative methods in research on teaching [Read especially "Introduction and Overview", "Theoretical Assumptions", and "An Interpretive Perspective"]

Study questions: What is grounded theory? What are its strengths and weaknesses? What counts as "data"?

Assignment due: Select a "chunk" of your data (e.g., field notes, an interview transcript) and code it in relation to your research question. Try to develop between 10 and 20 codes for your data.

In-class activity: NVivo activity

Week 5: February 10

Comparing qualitative studies

Reading: Finish reading both qualitative studies

In-class activity: NVivo activity

Week 6: February 17

Asking questions

Reading: BURGESS; ANDERSON & JACK

Recommended: Weiss, R. (1994). *Learning from strangers: The art and method of qualitative interview studies*. New York: Free Press.

Study question: In reading about interviewing, think about the differences between gathering data through participant observation and interviewing. What are there various strengths and weaknesses? How does each contribute to your study?

Assignment due: Comparative book review

Week 7: February 24
Analysis of situated interaction

- Reading:** ERICKSON, Ethnographic microanalysis of interaction; HALL; JUROW, Methods chapter from dissertation; JUROW, Shifting engagements in figured worlds
- Study question:** What *is* the ethnographic microanalysis of interaction?
- In-class activity:** Teleconference with Professor Frederick Erickson from UCLA

Week 8: March 3
Interviewing as social interaction

- Reading:** OCHS; OAKLEY; SUCHMAN & JORDAN
- Study question:** *What* is said in an interview is as important as *how* it is said. What does a discussion of the conversational context in which you conducted your interview(s) add to your analysis of what was said in the interview?
- Assignments due:** Prepare and bring a loosely transcribed section of your interview to class today. Be prepared to discuss what you could gain from closely examining the interactions between you and the person your interviewed.

Week 9: March 10
Developing analyses: Case studies

- Readings:** BECKER, Cases, causes, conjunctures, stories, and imagery; HARPER
- Study questions:** What is a “case”? How can one generalize from a case study?
- Assignment due:** Write an integrative memo for this week that aims to tie together a number of themes you have identified in your analysis. Bring it to class to share in small groups.
- In-class activity:** NVivo activity

Week 10: March 17**Developing analyses: Stories, narratives**

Readings: CARTER; MISHLER; MATHIESON

Study questions: According to Carter, why are stories useful for capturing the “richness and indeterminacies” of experience? Is there a “place” for story in your research study?

Assignment due: Written draft of your emergent analyses (be sure to have developed two competing lines of analyses)

Week 11: Spring Break- No class**Week 12: March 31****Social science behind the scenes**

Reading: LAREAU; GROSSMAN

Study question: Qualitative research is filled with ambiguity, dilemmas, and the occasional good luck. What aspects of your journey through qualitative research will you reveal in your final report?

Assignment due: A complete rough draft of your “intellectual journey”

In-class activities: Conversation with Steve Guberman, Bill McGinley, and Shelby Wolf; NVivo activity

Week 13: April 7**Workshop on writing and presenting your analyses**

Reading: EMERSON, FRETZ, & SHAW, Writing an ethnography; WINEBURG

Assignment due: Complete rough draft of your data analysis presentation

Week 14: AERA- No Class

Week 15: April 21
Final project poster presentations

Week 16: April 28
Course wrap-up and completing course evaluations

Assignment due: Final papers, Intellectual journey papers

COMPARATIVE BOOK REVIEW

This assignment has two main purposes. First, I want you to think deeply about the art and science of qualitative research (design, data collection, analysis, representation) and how different authors have grappled with the problem of capturing other people's experiences. More specifically, I'd like you to begin to fashion an understanding of this process—in particular, how good qualitative research transcends stories, anecdotes, and description. Second, I hope that reading these and other qualitative studies carefully will help you understand how the qualitative research becomes the real tool of research; and what it means to “calibrate” and use this tool.

For this assignment, I'd like you to compare and contrast the two book-length qualitative studies you read this semester along the following dimensions:

Texture and use of description: How is the narrative constructed in each study? How does the writer shift between particularistic accounts of events, people, etc., and generalized accounts or summary statements? Does the author use him/herself as the main narrator in the study, or are other voices present? Does the narrator comment on his/her narrative work, or on the judgments, conclusions, and uses of evidence that appear in the text?

Roles and field activities of the researcher: This refers to the information supplied by the author about his/her ability to conduct thorough-going field work based upon his/her access to, and relationship with, key informants and other participants. How does the researcher present him/herself and the nature of the research? What about the researcher's role might limit data collection, or enhance it?

Methods: What methods does the author use in each study? Are the methods appropriate to the descriptive and theoretical tasks they set themselves? Do you think the study is done well or are there seeming flaws in the methods (or their implementation) that might introduce rival plausible hypotheses for their major (and minor) conclusions?

Adequacy of evidence reported: This refers to the kinds and amount of evidence brought to bear in support of the main assertions about the culture and/or social organization in the setting studied. How does the author use observational data (interviews, observation and field notes, site documents or other written/graphic materials, demographic information, videotape, etc.) to support his or her main claims?

ARTICLES ON RESERVE

- Anderson, K. & Jack, D. (1991). Learning to listen: Interview techniques and analyses. In S. Gluck & D. Patai (Eds.), *Women's Words: The feminist practice of oral history*, pp.7-26, Routledge, New York.
- Becker, H. (1992). Cases, causes, conjunctures, stories, and imagery. In C. Ragin & H. Becker (Eds.) *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*, pp. 205-216, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Becker, H. (1996). The epistemology of qualitative research. In R. Jessor, A. Colby, & R. Schweder (Eds.) *Essays on ethnography and human development*, pp. 53-61, Chicago: University of Chicago.
- Burgess, R. (1984). Interviews as conversation. In R. Burgess *In the field: An introduction to field research*, pp. 101-122, London: Allen & Unwin.
- Carter, K. (1993). The place of story in the study of teaching and teacher education. *Educational Researcher*, 22(1), 5-12, 18.
- Charmaz, K. (1983). The grounded theory method: An explication and interpretation. In R.M. Emerson (Ed.) *Contemporary field research: A collection of readings*, pp. 109-126, Boston: Little, Brown, & Company.
- Erickson, F. (1986). Qualitative methods in research on teaching. In M. C. Wittrock (Ed.) *Handbook of Research on Teaching, Third Edition*, pp. 119-160, New York: MacMillan.
- Erickson, F. (1992). Ethnographic microanalysis of interaction. In M. D. LeCompte, W. L. Millroy, & J. Preissle (Eds.), *The handbook of qualitative research in education* (pp. 202-225). Academic Press, Inc.
- Geertz, C. (1973). Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In C. Geertz, *The Interpretation of cultures: Selected essays*, pp.3-30, New York: Basic Books.
- Grossman, P.L. (1990). Methodology, Appendix A. In *The making of a teacher: Teacher knowledge and teacher education*, pp. 149-160, New York: Teachers College.
- Hall, R. (2000). Video recording as theory. In D. Lesh & A. Kelley (Eds.) *Handbook of research design in mathematics and science education* (pp. 647-664). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Harper, D. (1992). Small N's and community case studies. In C. Ragin & H. Becker (Eds.) *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*, pp. 139-158, Cambridge: Cambridge University.
- Jurow, A. S. (2001) Methods chapter from dissertation
- Jurow, A.S. (2005). Shifting engagements in figured worlds: Middle school mathematics students' participation in an architectural design project. *The Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 14(1), 35-67.
- Lareau, A. (1989). Common problems in field work: A personal essay, Appendix, *Home advantage: Social class and parental intervention in elementary education*, pp. 187-223, London: Falmer.
- Mathieson, S. (1988). Why triangulate? *Educational Researcher* (March 1988), 13-17.
- Mishler, E.G. (1990). Validation in inquiry-guided research: The role of exemplars in narrative studies. *Harvard Educational Review*, 60(4), 415-442.
- Oakley, A. (1981). Interviewing women: A contradiction in terms?, In H. Roberts (Ed.) *Doing Feminist Research*, pp. 30-61, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Ochs, E. (1979). Transcription as theory. In E. Ochs & B. Schieffelin (Eds.) *Developmental Pragmatics*, pp. 43-72, New York: Academic.
- Suchman, L., & Jordan, B. (1990.) Interactional troubles in face-to-face survey interviews. *Journal of the American Statistical Association* 85, (409), 232-253.
- Wineburg, S. (2004). Must it be this way? Ten rules for keeping your audience awake during conferences. *Educational Researcher*, pp. 13-14.