**Introduction to Qualitative Research: 07.704**

Instructor:
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The course meets on Tuesdays from 4:00-6:30 pm in Rm 513, O’Leary Library.

**Course Description and Goals**

The purpose of this course is to introduce doctoral students to the field of qualitative research and prepare them in the skills, techniques, and knowledge necessary to undertake independent research using this methodology.

The pre-requisite for this course is 07.700: Introduction to Research Design. In that course you will learn about the historical and philosophical foundations of qualitative research methodology and be introduced to key research strategies in qualitative research and principles for research design in qualitative research. In this course, 07.704, you will deepen your understanding of these key research notions and develop hands-on understanding of techniques and tools used in this field.

**Course Units**

The semester will be divided into four major units:

**Unit Objectives**

**I. Background and Beginnings: Getting Started in Qualitative Research**

Weeks 1-3

- Develop basic understanding of the history and development of qualitative research methodology
- Deepen your knowledge of the traditions of qualitative research and specific research strategies (exp: case study, ethnography, grounded theory, phenomenology)
- Deepen knowledge of research design in qualitative research.
- Explore in greater depth issues related to subjectivity, role, access, and ethics in qualitative research studies and their relationship to research design

**II. Data Collection Techniques and Qualitative Research Data Bases**

Weeks 4-7

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• Learn key techniques for data collection in qualitative research, including observation, interview, and visual data methods and ways that mobile and online data collection methods are extending these fundamental modes.
• Learn how to design methods for a proposal and describe data collection approaches.

III. Analysis and Interpretation in Qualitative Research
Weeks 8-11

• Learn common strategies for qualitative research analysis (exp: coding and memos), including working within and across forms of data.
• Learn how to design and organize a qualitative research data base and how to handle a range of data forms.
• Examine the ways qualitative research strategies shape analysis (exp: constant comparative method and grounded theory).
• Learn how to present findings and describe analysis processes.
• Become conversant in issues of trustworthiness and validity as they are understood in qualitative research.

IV. Representation, Writing, and Presentation
Weeks 12-14

• Learn about issues of representation in qualitative research and the ways that qualitative research is written up and presented.
• Apply skills learned over the semester to analysis of qualitative research studies.

Assignments Overview

All assignments will be organized and stored in the individual electronic portfolio (a wiki in the class Blackboard site).

In addition, as requested, components of each unit assignment will be submitted to the appropriate Blackboard Dropbox assignment area (allowing me to use the grading tool to provide feedback).

All assignments are due at the time requested. If you are unable to attend class, the assignment should still be submitted at or prior to the requested due date/time in the electronic dropbox. If an assignment is delayed, you are still expected to attend class—missing class because the assignment was not completed is not a good idea.

Weekly Memo Assignment

Each student is expected to write a weekly memo that will be submitted by 9:00 am Tuesday morning. The memo will be submitted in two places: 1) the appropriate assignment dropbox on Blackboard; and, 2) the student’s wiki. The memo assignment will provide reflection on readings, class activities, and any other pertinent learning inputs. Students will reflect not only on

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the content of the course and their learning, but also on their evolving subjectivity. The weekly memos are a critical component of each Unit Assignment and will provide the basis for the final Unit Reflection Paper. Each Weekly Memo is worth 5 points.

More information will be provided in a separate assignment sheet.

Unit 1: Foundations: 5 points

Ethics Worksheet: Subjectivity, Role, Ethics & Access

Weekly Memos

Unit 1 Reflection

Unit 2: Data Collection: 10 points

Visual Data Assignment

Observational Assignment

Interview Assignment

Weekly Memos

Unit 2 Reflection

Unit 3: Analysis and Interpretation: 20 points

NVivo database

Weekly Memos

Preliminary Findings Paper based on Analysis of Parent data from the Sexting Study

Unit 3 Reflection

Unit 4: Presentation of Qualitative Research and Analysis of Representations: 5 points

Methodology paper presentation

Weekly Memos

Unit 4 Reflection

Assignments will be described in more detail in the course schedule and in separate handout sheets.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Recommended Texts:


Subscriptions

In addition to the required texts you are also asked to sign up for a free subscription to the online weekly newsletter “The Qualitative Report”. It can be found at: [http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html](http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/index.html)

Course Technologies

We are a technology rich class. We will have a blackboard site and a qualitative data analysis software package. In addition, we will be making use of mobile applications and other Internet tools as is appropriate to our tasks. We will be figuring out the best ways to use these tools for our needs.

The QDAS package we will use is NVivo. UML has a university wide site license for this product, which means that all students can have a copy on their computer (for university related work) for a year, after which time, if you are still matriculated you may renew your license through the site administrator. NVivo is designed to run on a PC or a Mac with dual processor. You may place a copy on your individual computer or you may use the copies on the GSE lab computers.

A memory stick will be used frequently throughout the semester, so make sure to bring one every week with your electronic project on it. You will need the memory stick even if you are bringing your laptop with NVivo to class, as we will be using it often to share and look at projects on the big screen.

Grading and Expectations

The overall grading for the semester will be based upon the following scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>GPA</th>
<th>GSE point structure</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A+</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>99-100</td>
<td>Work of the highest professional standard demonstrating independent and exemplary</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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### Performance Grades

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>96-98</td>
<td>Excellent work demonstrating independent and high quality performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>91-95</td>
<td>Very good work, carefully executed, but requiring some areas of improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>86-90</td>
<td>Good work, indicating careful thought and attention to the task, yet requiring several areas of improvement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>80-85</td>
<td>Work of graduate standard, but omissions exist or careful analysis is not in evidence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Graduate Standard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>76-79</td>
<td>Effort is evident, but work indicates lack of understanding of the demands of the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>70-75</td>
<td>Poor quality work with little attention to detail and the demands of the task.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>65-69</td>
<td>Work of very poor quality, indicating no understanding of the depth of analysis required.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>Below 65</td>
<td>Serious neglect or evidence of cheating.</td>
</tr>
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### Human Subjects Certification

It is assumed that all students in this class will have already undertaken and received Human Subjects Certification in 07.700. If you have not done so, you must do so before we get to the analysis section of the class (Part III). Links to the online certification sites are available at the UMass Lowell Institutional Review Board site. If you have questions about this requirement, please speak with me.

### Plagiarism and Academic Misconduct

All work you submit must be original, that is, you have taken no portion of it from the work of another without due attribution. If you are unsure about the definition of plagiarism, please refer to the University catalog.

It should also go without saying that all data collected will be authentic, that is, it will not be fabricated. If you have questions about this form of academic misconduct, please refer to the UML catalog for definitions and a description of the punishment.

### Education for Transformation

**Conceptual Framework of the Graduate School of Education, University of Massachusetts-Lowell**

*The central tenets of our conceptual framework are Excellence, Equity, Inquiry and Collaboration*

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Thank you for joining me this semester. I look forward to the journey with you.