

Instructor: Dr. Amy Bradshaw **Office:** Collings 320B
Hours: Wednesday 1:30-3:00 **Phone:** 325-1530
e-mail: bradshaw@ou.edu

Course Website: <http://www.ou.edu/class/eipt6043>

Required Reading Materials

Books:

- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Glesne, C. (2006). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. (3rd ed.). Boston: Pearson / Allyn Bacon.
- Schwandt, T.A. (2001). *Dictionary of qualitative inquiry* (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Spradley, J.P. (1980). *Participant observation*. Belmont, CA:Thompson Learning.
- Spradley, J.P. (1979). *The ethnographic interview*. Belmont, CA:Thompson Learning.

Articles:

- Guba, E.G. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2005). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences. in N.K Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (eds.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp 191-215.
- Kincheloe, J.L. & McLaren, P. (2005). Rethinking Critical Theory and Qualitative Research, in N.K Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (ed.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp 303-342.
- House, E.R. (2005). Qualitative evaluation and changing social policy, in N.K Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (ed.) *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp 303-342.
- Additional research articles you select to support your study to be conducted this semester)

Course Overview

This doctoral level, hand-on course is designed to help you develop an understanding of qualitative research methods and designs. The focus of the course is on the identification and creation of research problems, the development of designs, actual data collection, and analysis procedures to address those problems. (The scope of this course does not include in-depth analysis techniques, which will be addressed in EIPT 6083, offered in the Spring semester.)

Course Goals

As a result of this course, you should be able to

- Distinguish the qualitative from competing paradigms in terms of fundamental assumptions about the nature of reality and method.
- Understand the fundamental concepts of interpretation, context, and participant meaning.
- Be able to describe the kinds of research questions that are appropriate for qualitative studies.
- Be aware of the sources of extant qualitative studies and resources both in and outside the College of Education that support qualitative inquiry.
- Be an able consumer and critic of qualitative studies.
- Appreciate the varieties of qualitative research and their similarities and differences.
- Distinguish research from evaluation and policy studies, and show the possibilities and limitations of qualitative methods in each.

This course is intended to help all participants (including the instructor) develop in the following areas:

Ontological, Epistemological, and Methodological Commitments. Our research is grounded in our notions of what it means to “know” and how we come to “know.” There are many paradigms of knowledge creation and consistent approaches to knowledge construction can be an elusive endeavor. In this course, you are encouraged to strive to develop more robust understandings and more informed approaches to issues related to these difficult questions

Ethics. Participants as researchers in the field will develop an informed commitment to acting on principles of responsible research approaches as they relate to issues of research subjects, the roles of the researcher, gender equity, privacy, censorship, copyright, and acceptable data collection, storage, and use policies.

Written Expression. It is the responsibility of the researcher to publish significant findings so that those who come after us may benefit from our work just as we benefit from the work of those before us. Communication in the form of writing is (very important) and, as researchers, we should strive continuously to improve our writing and hold ourselves to the highest standards in creating narratives that are expressive, creative, persuasive, and accurate.

Professionalism. This course will focus on the field of qualitative research as a professional community. Formulating goals, strategies and empowerment trajectories will be a focus throughout the course.

Personal Growth. All course participants will seek to build connections between the content of this course and positive developments in their personal lives. We are concerned with processes as well as products.

Knowledge of the Field. In this course, we will explore the philosophies, methods, practices, and personalities in the field of qualitative research. Our familiarity with the with these elements can then inform our research as we seek to build theory, create new methodologies, and in other ways contribute to the field.

Issues Related to Academic Dishonesty

Acts of academic dishonesty such as cheating or plagiarism will result in a zero on the assignment and a letter to the Dean detailing the incident (see the OU student handbook pp. 52-55 for more details). Plagiarism is defined by the American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition as “to steal and use the ideas or writings of another as one’s own” (p. 946). Students at this level are expected to know proper citing procedures. Please ask if you are at all unclear as to how to avoid plagiarism.

Miscellaneous Classroom Climate Issues

We will be engaging in lots of critical evaluation of our work. We need to give and receive criticism in the spirit of collaboration. Please be kind, respectful, and honest.

Please do not use mobile phones or pagers during class. All ringing and beeping should be suppressed.

Grading

Each assignment will be awarded points up to the maximum for each assignment.

| Assignment | Points | Due Date |
|--------------------------------------------|--------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Study Critiques (3) | 15 | (See schedule) |
| Observation Exercise | 10 | |
| Interview Transcription | 10 | |
| Research Log | 10 | |
| Project Report | | |
| IRB Components | 25 | |
| Topic (5) | | |
| Consent Form (10) | | |
| Interview Schedule & Questions (10) | | |
| Problem Statement & Significance | 10 | |
| Methodology | 25 | |
| Analysis / Results (Final Paper) | 35 | |
| Presentation | 10 | |
| Midterm Exam | 40 | |
| Participation | 10 | |
| Total Points Possible (No extra credit) | 200 | 180-200 = A 160-179 = B 140-159 = C 120-139 = D 0 – 119 = F |

Late Work

You are expected to come to class prepared, both for discussion of the readings and with the assignments due. Late assignments will result in a 10% penalty. Assignments more than one week late will result in a 50% penalty. If a serious situation arises that may interfere with your completing an assignment on time, let me know. If you have contacted me regarding your problem (and this does not mean the day before an assignment is due) and I judge it to warrant special consideration (only problems such as serious personal injury or illness, or a death in the immediate family, will warrant such consideration), we will negotiate an alternate due date (make sure I write this down and we both sign it).

Course Projects

Study Critiques

An important objective of this course is to familiarize participants with actual works of qualitative research, in the form of articles, books, or dissertations. Each student will select three studies (from the list provided). Each critique should be 1-2 pages in length and should address each of the following elements:

1. What is the nature of the research problem or topic?
2. What approach to qualitative research was represented in the study?
3. Which theory of research and which theory of social life seem to be represented in the study?
4. What role did the researcher play?
5. What methods of data collection were used?
6. What methods of data analysis were used?
7. What is the form of the report (for example, artistic, discursive)?
8. What stance was taken by the researcher with regard to validity?
9. What are the overall merits of the study?

Research Project

Select an area of interest in your field for completing a doctoral-level qualitative research project. Specifically plan to complete interviews and observations as part of your data collection* (do not use friends or relatives). This project will be divided into three main parts to help you design, implement, and analyze a qualitative research project. You must get started on this project IMMEDIATELY in order to collect and work with data, which should greatly increase your satisfaction and performance in this course. The research you will conduct for this class is for a COURSE PROJECT ONLY, and any information from the study should not be presented or published outside of this course. You must have each participant sign a consent form before they participate. A sample consent form will be provided. Consent forms and interview questions must be approved by me PRIOR TO data collection. If you wish to publish or present your research publicly, including in a dissertation, you must gain permission for your study from the university Institutional Review Board (IRB). It is up to you to submit your own IRB proposal.

* I suggest working with a typical, healthy adult sample. Working with any protected groups requires submitting, and obtaining approval for, a completed IRB application. Protected groups include children, mentally disabled persons, elderly persons, prisoners, and pregnant women.

Research Project Component Assignments

Smaller assignments are due during the semester to help you complete your research project. You will be asked to discuss each of these during class.

Research Topic. Briefly describe your topic, who you would like to work with, and how you plan to collect data. (may be handwritten) [5 points possible]

Consent Form. This must be submitted, approved, and signed by participants before collecting data. (word processed) [10 points possible]

Interview / Observation Guides. List Interview questions and/or observation plan. (word processed) [10 points possible]

Research Log

Create a research log to chronicle your developing research project. This log will be especially important for field and analysis notes. Begin the log as you are first considering what question to explore this semester. Report on how many interviews / observations, etc. you completed, transcribed, coded, compared, and so forth – basically what you accomplished toward your project for that time period. This log is meant to be used for writing field notes, memos, coding, drawing diagrams, and developing theory. This will give us both a chance to reflect on your progress in the course. Logs may be handwritten.

[10 points possible]

Observation Exercise

Utilize field notes to record an observation in a public setting. This could be at work, a park, a sporting event, library, grocery store, or so forth. Describe the setting. Describe the people in the setting. What were they doing? Are they interacting? If so, how? Write up the findings. The point is to analyze an everyday situation to see what's really happening. (Use Glesne Chapter 3 for ideas.) This project should be done via a word processor and should be about three pages in length (double spaced, with one-inch margins). Be prepared to discuss your observation in class.

[10 points possible]

Interview Transcription

Submit one of the interviews you conduct and transcribe.

Examination

The exam will allow you to demonstrate your understanding of course concepts, approaches, and theory bases.

Presentation

In addition to discussing your developing research project throughout the course in both small group and whole class discussions, you will conduct a 10–15 minute oral presentation of your research project in class at the end of the semester. This presentation should be similar to one you would do for a professional conference. The presentation should address (1) The research problem, (2) the research design, (3) data analysis techniques, and (4) results / discussion. [10 points possible]

Readings

All students are expected to engage in all the readings. To help facilitate class discussions, each student will be assigned as a discussion leader for 4-6 of the assigned reading sets.

Guidelines for Problem Statement and Study Introduction

- Introduction: State and describe the general topic for your research study.
- Review some literature that justifies your study. Information should be drawn from appropriate sources, such as professional journals, books, and dissertations. Information gathered from literature sources must be appropriately cited, following APA guidelines.
- Provide a problem statement that is specific. (What specifically about your topic do you intend to study?)
- Create research questions that will help you investigate sub areas of the research problem.
- Provide a brief statement regarding who you plan to work with, and where, and what types of data you want to collect.
- Explain the significance of your study. (Why should your field care about this research problem?)

Guidelines for Methodology Paper

- Introduction: Restate your research problem and research questions.
- Describe the general qualitative tradition you will follow in your research design. The methodology should reflect the research problem you described in your first paper.
- Sample: Specifically describe the number of participants and their ages, genders, SES, ethnicity, education level (all pertinent information), how they were chosen (purposive, randomly, etc.), and how you gained access to the sample.
- Describe the research setting.
- Describe your data collection methods (interviews, observations, documents, etc.) in detail (how long they lasted, how many times you interviewed/observed each person/group, whether you audio or video taped, etc.).
- Provide a brief description of your analysis plan. Include your interview questions, observation guides, or other examples of data collection techniques.

Guidelines for Data Analysis / Results Paper

- Briefly state your research problem and research questions.
- Describe your data analysis methods in detail. Make sure your interview/observation coding techniques are intricately described.
- Describe the themes, ideas, theories emerging from the data. Provide operational definitions of the themes and interview/observation examples (quotes, sections of field notes) to support your analysis/theory. Provide a summary/conclusion section. What does it all mean now that you have collected and analyzed your data? How did the data answer your research problem and research questions?
- Describe how your project adds to the literature base that already exists in your area.
- Provide one complete interview or videotape transcript.

| Class | Date | Topics & Activities (in class) | Reading / Assignment Due |
|--------------|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 | 8/23 | Introduction Theories of Research & Theories of Social Life | |
| 2 | 8/30 | Prestudy Tasks, Overview Research Design, Qualitative Traditions, Questions from Readings? | Glesne 1-2 [48] Creswell 1-4 [72] Guba & Lincoln [25] <i>[145]</i> |
| 3 | 9/6 | Participant Observation, Ethnography, Rapport & Ethics | Glesne 3, 5, 6, & Appx A [67] Spradley P.O. 1-3 [35] Spradley E.I. 1-3 [37] Research Topic <i>[139]</i> |
| 4 | 9/13 | Interviewing, Data Collection | Glesne 4 [29]; Creswell 6-7 [46] Spradley E.I. Steps 1-5 [63] Consent Form <i>[139]</i> |
| 5 | 9/20 | Focus Groups Documents Practice Interviewing | Spradley P.O. Steps 1-4 [46] Spradley E.I. Steps 6-9 [66] Creswell Appx E (sample ethn.) [34] Observation Exercise <i>[146]</i> |
| 6 | 9/27 | Review Biography, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Ethnography, Case Study | Spradley P.O. Steps 5-9 [55] Problem Statement & Significance Interview Questions <i>[55]</i> |
| 7 | 10/4 | Focus Groups Action Research | Kamberelis & Dimitriadis [28] Greenwood & Levin [22] Study Critiques <i>[50]</i> |
| 8 | 10/11 | Hermeneutics Critical Theory Policy Studies | Kincheloe & McLaren [40] House [13] Spradley E.I. Steps 10-12 [34] Interview Transcription <i>[87]</i> |
| 9 | 10/18 | Peer Review of Methodology Plans [AECT] | Spradley P.O. Steps 10-12 [42] Draft of Methodology |
| 10 | 10/25 | Evaluating Mixed Method Research | Methodology Paper Creswell C10 |
| 11 | 11/1 | Data Analysis | Glesne 7 [24] Creswell 8 [27] <i>[51]</i> |
| 12 | 11/8 | Data Analysis | Creswell 10 [26] <i>[26]</i> |
| 13 | 11/15 | Sharing Results / Writing the Narrative | Glesne 8 & 9 [38] <i>[38]</i> |
| 14 | 11/22 | Exam | |
| 15 | 11/29 | Present & Critique | Final Oral Presentation |
| 16 | 12/6 | Present & Critique | Research Log Final Paper due by 5 p.m. Dec. 12 |