

French 590: Qualitative Research Methods

Goals

Both theoretical and practical, this course covers the fundamentals of qualitative research methods. Students will design and implement a small-scale qualitative study. Students will collect different forms of qualitative data (field notes, interviews, participant observation), explore data analysis, learn how to code data, and present their findings. This course is geared toward graduate students in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Taught in ENGLISH. No pre-requisites.

Grading

The final grade will be determined by:

Participation: **10%**

Assignments: **20%**

-article review (5%)

-site observation (5%)

-2 audio interviews (10%) (combined total of 1 hr of recording)

Research documents: **45 %**

-problem and questions (5%)

-interview questions (5%)

-annotated questions (5%)

-fieldnotes (10%) (based on 10+ hours of observation and 3+ visits to your site).

-transcription (10%): 10+ pgs

-coding (5%)

-data analysis (5%)

Final project: **25%**

-presentation (5%)

-write up (20%)

Assignments

Readings

Readings will be found either in the required textbooks or through pdf files uploaded to Canvas. Readings average out to ~55 pages a week.

Found at UW bookstore

Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (1995). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press.

Charmaz, K. (2008). *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Weiss, R. (1994). *Learning from strangers: the art and method of qualitative interview strategies*. New York: Maxwell Macmillan International.

Assignments

For some weeks there will be 1-2 page, single-spaced assignments. Due Tuesdays by 3:30pm unless otherwise stated.

Research Documents

You will submit various research documents to Canvas throughout the quarter that we will discuss as a class. Due Tuesdays by 3:30pm unless otherwise stated.

Final Presentation

The goal of the final presentation is to present what you've been working on throughout the quarter. It will be similar in scope to the final paper. You have 15 minutes to address the following:

- Background info
 - The research question(s) and a justification of its importance
 - What was the genesis for this project?
 - Why did you pursue the project?
 - What did you hope to learn from it when you started?
 - Why should others be interested in it?
 - A statement of your research methods
 - how you selected your site and interviewees
 - any obstacles you encountered in the field and a discussion of how you dealt with them
- Analysis
 - Elaboration on one theme from your study
 - How does the theme connect with your larger research question and might contribute to a larger argument
 - Present us with a piece of data
 - Provide handouts or powerpoint
 - Analysis should be grounded in the data
 - You can briefly situate the analysis in literature in your field but the bulk of the analysis should focus on what is found in the data
- Further research
 - Outline the most significant things you learned about your topic and about qualitative research from your experience of the study.
 - Where do you go from here?

Final Research Project

Your final project includes the following three sections: 1) a discussion of the design and implementation of your study; 2) an analytic memo elaborating in full one theme from your research to-date, and 3) a detailed proposal outlining what you intend to do to move this project forward towards your thesis or a publishable project. (~15 double-spaced pages.)

I. Section one should consist of a complete discussion of your study (5-7 pages), including the following elements:

- a) The research question(s) and a justification of its importance;
- b) A statement of your research methods including the following: how the method fits the question; how you selected your site and interviewees; and any obstacles you encountered in the field and a discussion of how you dealt with them;

- c) The process of revising your interview guide: what topics seemed salient at first and how this list evolved once in the field; what you learned from your informants that lead you to revise your interview guide the way you did;
- d) A description of your coding process: what surprises did you find in the themes that emerged? Disappointments? Discuss areas of inquiry that emerged and areas that you discarded and why.

II. Section two will be an integrative/analytic memo fully elaborating (with quotes and discussion) one theme from your study:

- a) This aspect of the paper should be no less than 6-8 pages, and should include data to demonstrate your assertions
- b) Remember that you are trying to build an argument from the ground up, and that all of your assertions must be data-driven.
- c) Think about how the theme connects with your larger research question and might contribute to a larger argument.
- d) How do the quotes and/or fieldnotes illustrate the points you are trying to make concerning each level of analysis?

III. Section three will present a brief proposal (4-5 pages) outlining how you plan to implement the next phase of your research:

- a) Outline the most significant things you learned about your topic and about qualitative research from your experience of the study.
- b) Give an overview of your new research question, how you intend to explore it, why you have chosen this method, and why this new question is significant.
- c) Discuss what additional data you would need to gather and how you intend to gather it - be specific.
- d) What lines of inquiry do you intend to follow in analyzing the data? What are some avenues you might pursue to linking the thesis project to the substantive literature in your field?

You will submit your final research to Canvas on the Monday of exam week.

Plagiarism

Any test, paper or report submitted by you and that bears your name is presumed to be your own original work that has not previously been submitted for credit in another course unless you obtain prior written approval to do so from your instructor. According to the Committee on Academic Conduct (1994, p. 23), a student commits plagiarism by: 1) Using another writer's words without proper citation. 2) Using another writer's ideas without proper citation. 3) Citing your source but reproducing the exact words of a printed source without quotation marks. 4) Borrowing the structure of another author's phrases or sentences without crediting the author from whom it came. 5) Borrowing all or part of another student's paper or using someone else's outline to write your own paper. 6) Using a paper writing "service" or having a friend write the paper for you. The consequences of cheating and academic dishonesty—including a formal discipline file, possible loss of future internship, scholarship, or employment opportunities, and denial of admission to graduate school—are simply not worth it. (<http://depts.washington.edu/pswrite/plag.html>)

DRS

If you need accommodations for a disability or if you want your instructor to have emergency medical information, please speak with your instructor privately, either after class or during office hours. (<http://depts.washington.edu/uwdrs/>)

Syllabus may change!

~ Weekly Schedule ~

Week 1 What is Qualitative Research? Ethnography? Grounded theory? – Oct 3

This week serves as an introduction to qualitative research. We will define the terms ‘ethnography’ and ‘grounded theory’ and will briefly discuss different forms of data and ways of analyzing them. We will then discuss how these types of methods can enrich Humanistic studies.

Readings (~55pgs)

Schram, T. (2006). *Conceptualizing and proposing qualitative research*. Ch. 1: Finding a point of entry (pp. 1-20).

Charmaz, K. (2008). *Constructing Grounded Theory*. Ch. 1: An invitation to grounded theory (pp. 1-12).

Hammersley, M., and P. Atkinson. (2007). *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*. Ch. 1: What is ethnography? (pp. 1-19).

Guthrie, L. & Hall, W. (1984). Ethnographic approaches to reading research. (pp. 91-110).

Assignment

Be prepared to talk about your experiences in conducting research, qualitative or otherwise.

Week 2 Discovering a research question – Oct 10

This week will guide students in developing a research topic. They will also analyze a research proposal that bridges the gap between ethnography and close-reading to provide a more interdisciplinary approach to cultural studies research.

Readings (~57)

Schram, T. (2006). Ch. 2: Engaging problem and purpose (pp. 21-38), Ch. 3: Clarifying your perspective (pp. 39-57).

Booth et al. (2003). *The Craft of Research*. Ch. 3: From Topics to Questions (pp. 40-55).

Hammersley, M., and P. Atkinson. (2007). Ch. 2: Research design: Problems, cases, and samples (pp. 20-40).

Smith, M. Current research project proposal

Assignments

Write a short paper (1-2 single-spaced pages) on any research article or book that uses qualitative research: what questions did the author pose, what method was employed, what type of data was gathered, what were the findings, and how convincing was the author’s arguments and findings? Try to find an article in a field similar to that in which you intend to conduct your research.

Week 3 Framing your research questions – Oct 17

Readings (~70)

Schram, T. (2006). Ch 4: Constructing a conceptual argument (58-73), Ch 5: Forming research questions (74-91).

Booth et al. (2003). *The Craft of Research*. Ch. 4: From Questions to Problems (pp. 56-74).

Charmaz, K. (2008). Ch. 2: Gathering rich data (pp. 13-35)

Research Document

Write a short paper about your research topic, briefly situating it in a theoretical framework, identifying methods you plan to use and types of data you hope to collect, and articulating two or three questions you seek to answer.

Week 4 Interviews: formulating and asking questions– Oct 24

Readings (~76)

Weiss, R. (1994). *Learning from strangers: the art and method of qualitative interview strategies*. Introduction (pp. 1-14), Ch. 3: Preparing for interviewing (pp. 39-57), Ch. 4: Interviewing (pp. 61-83)
Emerson, R., Fretz, R., & Shaw, L. (1995). Ch. 1 (pp. 1-20).

Assignment

Choose your research site and make a preliminary visit.

Research Document

Write down 15+ interview questions

Week 5 Fieldnotes and Participant Observation – Oct 31

Readings (~106)

Emerson et al. Chs. 2-4 (pp. 21-128).

Assignments

Visit your research site and write a brief report (1-2 pgs) on what you observe. Your task is to come up with observations and insights not ordinarily offered by journalists. For instance, if you attend a public meeting or event, you might devise a method for ascertaining the social composition of the audience; a measure of audience response to the speakers; tell us why people came to the event and how they behaved?

Research Document

You should begin writing fieldnotes. While you don't have to submit them yet, you can draw from them when writing your brief report.

Week 6 Examples of qualitative work in cultural studies – Nov 7

Readings (~35)

Kinginger, C. (2004) "Alice doesn't live here anymore: Foreign language learning and identity reconstruction. In A. Pavlenko and A. Blackledge (eds.) *Negotiation of Identities in Multilingual Contexts*, pp. 219-242.

Smith, M. (2015). "Who is a legitimate French speaker? The Senegalese in Paris and the crossing of linguistic and social borders" in *French Cultural Studies*, 26(3): 317-329.

Be prepared to discuss in class the following: what questions did the author pose, what method was employed, what type of data was gathered, what were the findings, and how convincing was the author's arguments and findings?

Assignments

Conduct and audio record an interview at your research site.

Research Document

Returning to your previous research document, annotate your interview questions. In other words, start with the original questions you will ask in your interview. After conducting the interview, add any new questions that you asked in response to how your interviewee answered your questions. Write brief comments on how effective your questions were in helping you to illuminate your overall research questions.

Week 7 Interviews: transcripts – Nov 14

Readings (~70)

Kvale, S. and Brinkmann S. (2009). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*.

Ch. 10: Transcribing Interviews (pp. 177-88).

Ochs, E. (1979). Transcription as Theory (pp. 43-72)

Weiss, R. (1994). Ch. 6: Analysis of data (pp. 151-182)

Assignments

Conduct another interview, keeping in mind what you learned from your first interview.

Research Document

Transcribe interesting parts of your two interviews. You should have at least 10 sg-spaced pages.

Week 8 Coding and Analyzing Fieldnotes and Interviews – Nov 21

Readings (~58)

Charmaz, K. (2008). Ch. 3: Coding in Grounded Theory Practice (pp. 42-71)

Emerson et al. (1995). Ch. 6: Processing Fieldnotes: Coding and Memoing. (pp. 171-200)

Research Documents (2 files)

- 1) Using what you've learned, code your two interviews.
- 2) Choose and analyze a key feature of your data.

Week 9 Making sense of everything/ Presentations – Nov 28

Readings (~23)

Charmaz, K. (2008). Ch. 4: Memo-writing (pp. 72-95)

PRESENTATIONS

Week 10 Discussion of write ups / in class office hours– Dec 5

Readings (~25)

Charmaz, K. (2008). Ch. 7: Writing the draft (pp. 151-176)

Research Document

Turn in fieldnotes

Assignments (A), Research documents (D), (O) Other work
due in class

Week 1	Talk about your experiences in conducting research, qualitative or otherwise
Week 2	(A) Review any research article that uses qualitative research (1-2 pgs)
Week 3	(D) Come up with your research topic including theoretical framework, methods and types of data, and 2-3 research questions
Week 4	(O) Choose and visit research site (D) Write out a list of interview questions (at least 15)
Week 5	(A) Write a brief report on observations at your chosen research site (1-2 pgs) (O) Begin writing your fieldnotes document
Week 6	(A) Conduct and audio record an interview (D) Write an annotated list of interview questions (O) Continue with fieldnotes doc
Week 7	(A) Conduct another interview (D) Transcribe relevant segments of interviews (at least 10 pgs) (O) Continue with fieldnotes doc
Week 8	(D) Code both interview transcripts (D) Choose and analyze a key feature of your interviews
Week 9	PRESENTATIONS
Week 10	(D) Turn in fieldnotes doc In-class office hours
Exam week	15 pg write-up (double-spaced)