

# **Qualitative Research Methods**

(and Popular Music)  
**COMM 6400-01 - Monday 6:30 – 9:00pm**

## **Syllabus and Course Schedule**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

“Signs don’t say anything, they have to be read.”

-- MCS Website

In our quest to unravel and understand culture and social behavior, a well rounded scholar is well served to have a variety of methodological tools at their disposal. Qualitative research covers a wide range of approaches that may help us make sense of the world in general and more specifically, communication practices and meaning making. Given the diversity of qualitative methods, this course is intended to introduce the dominant techniques and debates around qualitative methods and inspire your curiosity to pursue the finer points of any one method.

This seminar will provide an introduction to the theory and methods behind a range of qualitative research methods and concepts including: Textual, Narrative and Discourse Analysis, In-Depth Interviewing, Participant Observation, Various Ethnographic Techniques, Grounded Theory, Focus Groups, Feminist Approaches, and Visual Analysis.

This seminar will address the linguistic turn in social theory and the resulting implications for research and analysis of cultural “texts.” Popular music will serve as a thread throughout the class, providing a site to examine from a range of methodologies. Each week, we will address theoretical issues, methodological techniques and applied methods.

Comm 6400-01 combines instruction in the nuts and bolts of qualitative research with an exploration of larger theoretical questions that underpin the relationship between research questions and research method.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

After completing this course, students will be able to:

- Understand the relationship between the theory and the methodology of a research project.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses of different methods for specific research questions.
- Develop an understanding of the basics of fieldwork technique, coding and analyzing data and writing up results.

## **REQUIRED TEXTS**

- Lindlof, Thomas R. (1995). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition*. London: Sage.
- Stokes, Jane (2003). *How To Do Media and Cultural Studies*. London: Sage
- Altheide, David L. (1996). *Qualitative Media Analysis*. London: Sage.

NOTE: Other readings will be available On Reserve at a location in Diffenbaugh TBA and on-line via the course Blackboard website.

## **ON-LINE RESOURCES**

The Qualitative Report: An on-line journal dedicated to qualitative research since 1990  
<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/text.html>

The Inter-University Faculty Consortium on Qualitative Research Methods (CQRM)  
<http://www.asu.edu/clas/polisci/cqrm/index.html>

“The MCS (pronounced 'mix') site is an award-winning portal or 'meta-index' to internet-based resources useful in the academic study of media and communication. It was originally established by Daniel Chandler in Spring 1995 and is hosted by the University of Wales, Aberystwyth.” <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/>

## **COURSE WORK**

Also, each week one person will be the discussion leader. This job includes providing a summary handout of the issues raised by the readings as well as preparing discussion questions and a short presentation. You may choose to point to further resources on the subject you are covering.

You will also have two other writing assignments and a final term paper length research project.

**Paper #1:** This assignment asks you to survey the journals in your field and identify one journal that consistently publishes qualitative work. The first part of your essay should be a description of the type of qualitative work found in this journal over the past few years. What methods are used? How are the articles structured? What source materials do the authors use for “data?” Are there consistent methodological citations across the articles? The second half of your essay should be a focused critique of one article from this journal. How does the author construct their argument? What data is used and how is this data examined? What are the strengths of the research – why do you think it was published? What are the limitations of the work? What would you do to build on this research? The total length for this assignment should not exceed 2000 words.  
**Due: Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>**

**Paper #2:** Select one of these two basic distinctions in qualitative research: Texts and People. Analysis of a text involves a cultural product (Newspaper article/TV Show/song etc.) and analysis of people includes audiences/consumers/producers/users drawing on ethnographic techniques. Choose a setting/audience/fan group to observe or a media text to analyze and do either a short observation and analysis of the setting/people or analyze and deconstruct the text. The result should be a 5 page (1200 word) paper. Turn in a hard copy to me and email a copy to your colleagues in the course. This work may serve as the start of your research project. Details for this assignment will be handed out in class. **Due: March 1st.**

**Final Term Paper: Due April 19<sup>th</sup>.** Details Forthcoming

## **LATE WORK**

Late work will only be accepted when special arrangements have been made prior to the day any assignment is due.

## **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS**

All written assignments should be well edited with clear, concise writing.

## **ADA STATEMENT**

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations must:

- 1) Register with and provide documentation to the Student Disabilities Resource Center (SDRC).
- 2) Bring a letter to me from the SDRC indicating your needed accommodations. This must be done within the first two weeks of class.

## HONOR CODE

Students are expected to uphold the academic honor code published in the *Florida State University Bulletin* and the *Student Handbook*. The academic honor system of The Florida State University is based on the premise that each student has the responsibility to:

- (1) Uphold the highest standards of integrity in your work
- (2) Refuse to tolerate violations of academic integrity in the university community.
- (3) Foster a high sense of integrity and social responsibility on the part of the university community.

## GRADING SCALE

Class Participation/Discussion Presentation: 25%

Paper #1: 20%

Paper #2: 20%

Final Project: 35%

100-94 = A	76-74 = C
93-90 = A-	73-70 = C-
89-87 = B+	69-67 = D+
86-84 = B	66-64 = D
83-80 = B-	63-60 = D-
79-77 = C+	59-0 = F

**Note On Grades:** Education is not about grades but about learning. Part of the learning process involves feedback and one form of feedback is a grade. Each grade will also be accompanied with written and verbal feedback that will often be more helpful to your learning than the letter/number grade. If you are not happy with your grade, I encourage you to rework and resubmit your assignment. Also, because learning is a process, I strongly encourage you to give me feedback about the class as we proceed through the semester.

## Class Schedule - Qualitative Research Methods

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on their due date.

**Week One - 1/12** Course Introduction: Maps, Models and Lenses

**Readings:**

Syllabus

Goldberg, V. (2001). Even Scientific Images Have Trouble Telling The Truth, *New York Times*, Oct. 10.

**Week Two - 1/19** - No Class – MLK Day

**Week Three - 1/26** Mapping the Terrain: Representation, Theory and Method

**Readings:**

Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S. (2000). The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research, p.1-28 in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S., (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hall, S., Ed. (1997). Representation, Meaning, and Language, p.1- 64 in Hall, S. (Ed.). *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*. London: Sage.

Kincheloe J.L. & McLaren P. (2000) Rethinking Critical Theory and Qualitative Research, p.279-314 in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S., (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Carey, J. (1989). Mass Communication and Cultural Studies, p.37-68 in *Communication as Culture: Essays on Media and Society*. Boston: Unwin Hyman.

Lindlof, T.R. (2002). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London:Sage. Chapters I + II, p.1-62.

Bell, R.H. (2000). *Double Dylan*. Popular Music and Society, Summer 2000 v24 i2 p109

**Week Four – 2/2** Qualitative Research: Planning, Practices, and Writing

**Readings:**

**First Paper Due**

Lindlof, T.R. (2002). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London:Sage. Chapters III, IV, IX.

Denzin, N.K. (2000). The Practices and Politics of Interpretation, p. 897-922 in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S., (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Stokes, J (2003). Chapters 1 & 2.

Giroux, H.A. (nd) 'Doing Cultural Studies: Youth and the Challenge of Pedagogy'

Available o.n-line at:

<http://www.gseis.ucla.edu/courses/ed253a/Giroux/Giroux1.html>

**Week Five - 2/9** Text, Narrative, Discourse

**Readings:**

Silverman, D. (2000). Analyzing Talk and Text, p.821-834 in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S., (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Gill, R. (2000). Discourse Analysis, p. 172-190 in Bauer and Gaskell (Eds.). *Qualitative Researching With Text, Image and Sound*. London:Sage.

Bauer, M.W. (2000). Analyzing Noise and Music as Social Data, p. 263-281 in Bauer and Gaskell (Eds.). *Qualitative Researching With Text, Image and Sound*. London:Sage

Potter, J. (1996). *An Analysis of Thinking and Research About Qualitative Methods*. Mahwah, NJ:Lawrence Erlbaum. P.83-133

Altheide, D.L. (1996). *Qualitative Media Analysis*. London: Sage. P. 1-83.

Fornas, J. (2003). *The words of music*. Popular Music and Society, Feb 2003 v26 i1 p37(15).

**Week Six - 2/16** Analyzing the Visual

**Readings:**

Lutz, C. A. & Collins, J.L. (1993). *Reading National Geographic*. Chicago:Univ. of Chicago Press. P. 1-46.

Loizos, P. (2000). Video, Film and Photographs as Research Documents, p. 93-107, in Bauer, M.W. & Gaskill, G., *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. London:Sage.

Penn, G. (2000). Semiotic Analysis of Moving Images, p. 227-245 in Bauer, M.W. & Gaskill, G., *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. London:Sage.

Rose, D. (2000). Analysis of Moving Images, p. 246-262 in Bauer, M.W. & Gaskill, G., *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. London:Sage.

McCarthy, A. (2001). *Ambient Television*. Durham:Duke University Press. P.1-26; 115-154; 225-251.

Morrow, M. (1999). *"But Beavis, Everything Does Suck": Watching Beavis and Butt-head Watch Videos*. Popular Music and Society, Fall 1999 v23 i3 p31

**Week Seven - 2/23** Grounded Theory

**Readings:**

Corbin, J & Strauss, A. (1998). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. London: Sage. p. 55-217.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded Theory: Objectivist and Constructivist Methods, p. 509-535 in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S., (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Lindlof, T.R. (2002). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London:Sage. Chapter VII.

Music Article: TBA

**Week Eight – 3/1** Ethnography

**Second Paper Due**

**Readings:**

Tedlock, B. (2000). Ethnography and Ethnographic Representation, p. 455-486 in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S., (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Geertz, C., (1973). Thick Description: Towards and Interpretive Theory of Culture, p. 3-30 in *The Interpretation of Cultures*, New York: Basic Books.

Agar, M.H. (1980). *The Professional Stranger : An Informal Introduction to Ethnography*. New York : Academic Press. P. 63-81.

Mankekar, P. (1999). *Screening Culture, Viewing Politics: An Ethnography of Television, Womanhood, and Nation*. Durham:Duke University Press. P. 1-44; 224-258.

Adams, R.G. (1998). *Inciting sociological thought by studying the deadhead community: engaging publics in dialogue*. Social Forces, Sept 1998 v77 n1 p1(25)

**Week Nine - 3/8** SPRING BREAK

**Week Ten - 3/15** Participant Observation

**Research Paper Topic Due**

**Readings:**

Jorgensen, Danny L. (1989). *Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies*. London: Sage. P. 12-123

Glesne, C. (1999). Being There: Developing Understanding Through Participant Observation in *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*. New York: Longman. P. 43-66

Atkinson, P. & Hammersley, M (1994). Ethnography and Participant Observation, p.248-259 in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S., (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 1<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Lindlof, T.R. (2002). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London:Sage. Chapters V, p.132-167.

Rosenthal, R. (2001). *Serving the movement: the role(s) of music*. Popular Music and Society, Fall-Winter, 2001,

### **Week Eleven - 3/22** In-Depth Interviewing/Focus Groups

#### **Readings:**

Glesne, C. (1999). Making Words Fly: Developing Understanding Through Interviewing in *Becoming Qualitative Researchers: An Introduction*. New York: Longman. P. 67-93

Jackson, B. (1987). Interviewing, p. 79-102 in *Fieldwork*. Chicago: Univ. of Illinois Press.

Gaskill, G. (2000). Individual and Group Interviewing, p. 38-56 in Bauer, M.W. & Gaskill, G., *Qualitative Researching with Text, Image and Sound*. London:Sage.

Lindlof, T.R. (2002). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London:Sage. Chapters VI, p.163-196.

Lowe, M. (2003). *Colliding feminisms: Britney Spears, "tweens," and the politics of reception*. Popular Music and Society, June 2003 v26 i2 p123(18).

### **Week Twelve - 3/29** Feminist Approaches

#### **Readings:**

Olesen, V. L. (2000). Feminisms and Qualitative Research at and into the Millennium, p. 215-256 in Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln Y. S., (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Visweswaran, K. (1994). *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*. Minneapolis:Univ. of Minn. Press. p. 1-113

Overbeck, A. (2000). Which Girl(s)? What Power?: (Re)Constructing Girls and Feminism in Popular Media Discourse. Paper presented to the Feminist Scholarship Division at the International Communication Conference, May 2000.

### **Week Thirteen - 4/5** Media Audiences, Media Industries

Stokes, J. (2003). Chapter 4& 5.

Morley, D. (1993). *Media, Audiences and Cultural Studies*. London: Routledge.

Pages TBA.

Lindlof, T.R. (2002). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*. London:Sage. Chapter VIII.

Alleyne, M. (2000). *White Reggae: Cultural Dilution in the Record Industry*. Popular Music and Society, Spring 2000 v24 i1 p15

**Week Fourteen - 4/12**            Media, Semiotics, Spectacle, Deconstruction  
and the 2000 Election

**Readings:**

Kellner, D. (2001). *Grand Theft 2000: Media Spectacle and a Stolen Election*. New York:Roman and Littlefield. Introduction and first 3 chapters.

Chandler, D. (1999). *Semiotics for Beginners*. Available on-line:  
<http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/S4B/> Chapters 1, 14, 15, 16. Note:  
This is a great resource and you may want to look at much of this page.

McCormack,W. (2001). Deconstructing the Election. *The Nation*, March 26.

Parr-Davies, N. (2002) *A Socially-Inflected Semiotic Approach to the Study of Music Videos*. Available on-line at: <http://www.aber.ac.uk/media/Students/njp0002.doc>

**Week Fifteen - 4/19**            Final Paper Presentations                            *Final Papers Due*