



**BHS 415 Advanced Qualitative Methods
Winter 2013**

Instructor: Joel Thiessen, Ph.D.

CONTACTING THE INSTRUCTOR

Class Times: TUE/THU 9:45-11:00am

Office Hours: TUE/THU 12:00-1:00pm/by appointment

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Location: L2082

Office: L2105

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REQUIRED TEXT

Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy, and Patricia Leavy, ed. 2004. *Approaches to Qualitative Research: A Reader on Theory and Practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

ON RESERVE

American Psychological Association. 2010. *Mastering APA Style: Instructor's Resource Guide*. 6th Edition. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Johnson, William A., Jr., et al. 2010. *The Sociology Student Writer's Manual*. 6th Edition. Boston, MA: Pearson.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This seminar style course examines the basic techniques for collecting, interpreting, and presenting qualitative data, drawing on research methodologies in areas such as ethnography, interviews, focus groups, oral history, and unobtrusive research methods. Special emphasis is given to the epistemological and ontological undercurrents to qualitative research methodology, and "lived experience," or the process of humans constructing meaning through social interaction.

EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. To understand the epistemological and ontological aspects involved in qualitative research, especially with respect to the relationship between theory, method, and practice.
2. To gain first-hand data collection experience, using a variety of qualitative methodologies.
3. To develop data coding, analysis, and interpretation skills.
4. To clearly communicate research findings.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Date	Topic
<i>January 10</i>	Course Introduction
<i>January 15</i>	Distinguishing Qualitative Research (Part 1) & Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research (Chapter 1)
<i>January 17</i>	Distinguishing Qualitative Research (Part 1) & Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research (Chapter 1)
<i>January 22</i>	Overcoming Dualisms (Chapter 2) & Standpoint Methodology (Chapter 3)
<i>January 24</i>	Mixed Methodology (Chapter 4 & 5)
<i>January 29</i>	Ethnography (Chapter 6, 7, & 8)
<i>January 31</i>	<i>*NO CLASS – Community Day</i>
<i>February 5</i>	Interviews (Chapter 9 & 10)
<i>February 7</i>	Ethnography Assignment Debrief & NVivo Training
<i>February 12</i>	Data Analysis – Part 1 (Chapter 21, 23, & 24)
<i>February 14</i>	Interview Assignment Debrief & NVivo Training
<i>February 19</i>	<i>*NO CLASS – READING WEEK</i>
<i>February 21</i>	<i>*NO CLASS – READING WEEK</i>
<i>February 26</i>	Data Analysis – Part 2 (No Assigned Reading)
<i>February 28</i>	Writing the Research Report & Communicating the Data (Chapter 20 & 22)
<i>March 5</i>	Focus Groups (Chapter 13 & 14)
<i>March 7</i>	<i>*NO CLASS – Professor Out of Town</i>
<i>March 12</i>	Unobtrusive Research Methods (Part 3 and Chapter 15, 16, & 17)
<i>March 14</i>	Focus Group Assignment Debrief & NVivo Training
<i>March 19</i>	Unobtrusive Research Methods Assignment Debrief & NVivo Training
<i>March 21</i>	Oral History (Chapter 11 & 12)
<i>March 26</i>	Online Methods (Chapter 18 & 19)
<i>March 28</i>	Data Analysis - Part 3 (Chapter 25)
<i>April 2</i>	Research Project Presentations
<i>April 4</i>	Research Project Presentations
<i>April 9</i>	Research Project Presentations

LEARNING AND CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE

In the Behavioural Science Department we believe that learning is an active and interactive process, a joint venture between student and teacher and between student and student (i.e., learning is not just “downloading” information from teacher to student). Therefore, it is expected that professors will come to each class well read and prepared to engage students on the topic at hand, giving students the utmost attention and respect. In turn, it is expected that students will take an active role in the learning process. This includes: (a) regular class attendance, (b) reading course material in advance of class, (c) showing up to class on time, and (d) attentively and proactively being “present” at class (i.e., not on the internet, not texting, not conversing with the person beside you). Committing to this type of "active learning" significantly increases the learning experience for both teacher and student, and reflects the Christian ethos of excellence and respect that lies at the heart of the Ambrose educational experience. Failure to adhere to this will result in the professor either asking the student to leave the classroom for the remainder of the lecture or, in extreme cases (i.e., three or more ‘offenses’), to possibly withdraw from or fail the entire course.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS & GRADING

* Failure to submit all assignments will result in an automatic failing final grade.

Fieldwork Data Collection Assignments	20%
Course Reading Presentation	20%
Research Project	40%
Research Project Presentation	<u>20%</u>
<i>Total</i>	<i>100%</i>

1) Fieldwork Data Collection (20%) – Due @ 9:00am on Moodle on the day of the discussion for that methodology

Students will gather their own data, to be used in the final research project, drawing on the following methodologies: ethnography, interview, focus group, and unobtrusive research methods. More information will come in class, but prior to any data collection, students must gain approval of their research topic, location, and ethical components (e.g., appropriate consent forms, cannot exceed “minimal risk”) from the instructor. For each data collection exercise, students are required to submit a one page assignment (plus a title page and a bibliography), discussing the strengths and weaknesses of this method for your research topic. Each assignment should be double spaced, with 1” (2.54cm) margins on all sides, 12 point font, and ASA or APA formatting (see referencing books on reserve). In addition to addressing the three points above, students will be graded for grammar and writing, therefore ensure that your document is well-written, clearly and logically organized, and explicitly draws on lecture notes and course readings. Each assignment is worth 5% of your final grade. Late assignments will receive a zero (but still must be submitted in order to pass the course).

2) Course Reading Presentation (20%)

Each student will give a 60 minute lecture on one of the following topics: mixed methodology, oral history, online methods, or (depending on class size) unobtrusive research methods. Students must clearly include the following in their presentation: (a) Central ideas from the assigned readings; (b) Material from external sources on the methodology in question including, but not limited to, the advantages and disadvantages of the methodology, the practical side of carrying out this methodology, and other pertinent themes in the literature; and (c) Discussion of at least two recent (last five years) psychological or sociological studies that used this methodology. Presenters are encouraged to be creative (e.g., interaction with classmates, PowerPoint and/or handouts, videos, demonstrations of methodology, etc.) and will be graded on their ability (a) to fulfill the above three objectives; (b) to communicate things logically and coherently from beginning to end; and (c) to creatively and confidently communicate their ideas throughout.

3) Research Project (40%) – Due @ 11:55pm on Moodle the day before your presentation

Prepare an 18-20 page research paper on a research question of your choice (must align with the topic explored in the fieldwork data collection exercises). The format of the paper is as follows: Title Page, Table of Contents, Introduction (approx. 1 page), Literature Review (approx. 4 pages), Methodology (approx. 3 pages), Data (approx. 7 pages), Discussion (approx. 4 pages), Conclusion (approx. 1 page), Appendix, and Bibliography. The data will arise from your data collection throughout the course, and data from each fieldwork exercise must be incorporated into this assignment. Further details will be

circulated in class. This assignment should be double spaced, with 1” (2.54cm) margins on all sides, 12 point font, and ASA or APA formatting (see referencing books on reserve). Students will be graded for grammar and writing and social scientific content. Therefore, ensure that your document is well-written, clearly and logically organized, and explicitly draws on lecture notes, course readings, and external resources. This means that all theories and concepts should be clearly defined and explained prior to using them as an explanatory and analytical tool, and all statements must be supported with empirical and rational evidence. Late assignments will lose 10% per day.

4) Research Project Presentation (20%)

Students will give a presentation, based on their written research project. Students will be graded on their ability to sufficiently cover the main sections of their research project, and to do so in a logical and coherent manner. Students are expected to use PowerPoint and/or to provide a handout, and will also be graded on their ability to creatively and confidently communicate their ideas throughout. Further details to come in class.

GRADING ASSIGNMENTS

The available letter grades and percentages for course grades are as follows. A detailed chart of what constitutes an ‘A,’ ‘B,’ or ‘C,’ etc. is also included below:

A	96% and above	(GPA – 4.0)	C	63 - 67%	(GPA – 2.0)
A	91 - 95%	(GPA – 4.0)	C-	60 - 62%	(GPA – 1.7)
A-	86 - 90%	(GPA – 3.7)	D+	56 - 59%	(GPA – 1.3)
B+	82 - 85%	(GPA – 3.3)	D	50 - 55%	(GPA – 1.0)
B	75 - 81%	(GPA – 3.0)	F	Below 50%	
B-	72 - 74%	(GPA – 2.7)			
C+	68 - 71%	(GPA – 2.3)			

<p>Theory, Method, Data: Correctly employs paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research. Both breadth and depth of resources are relied upon, demonstrating an integrated understanding of the area of study.</p>	<p>Analysis and Application: Student is able to extend past summarizing research/theory, and clearly analyze and apply the research/theory (e.g., implications and consequences)</p>	<p>Logical and Coherent Argument: Logical and coherent argument that flows from beginning to end.</p>	<p>Grammar and Spelling: Writing is clear and effective communicating central ideas</p>	<p>Formatting: Use of appropriate writing style (i.e., APA, ASA) and other formatting particulars (i.e., page length, font size, margins)</p>	<p>Oral Presentations: Material is clearly, confidently, and creatively communicated. Both breadth and depth of resources are relied upon, demonstrating an integrated understanding of the area of study.</p>
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<p>A 86-100</p>	<p>Consistently achieved – paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are summarized and used accurately and in relevant ways</p>	<p>The majority of assignment demonstrates a balance in summarizing and describing theory/research and analysis and application</p>	<p>Clearly states central thesis and purpose of paper</p> <p>Each sentence/paragraph logically leads to the next</p> <p>Carefully selected details which support general statements and central thesis</p>	<p>Few to no spelling, grammar, or other writing errors.</p> <p>Words, sentences, and paragraphs flow smoothly</p>	<p>Consistently achieved</p>	<p>Communicates effectively main theme, thesis, or primary focus of presentation.</p> <p>Establishes order to ideas and points out relationships between them.</p> <p>Number and quality of main points are sufficient</p> <p>Presentation of ideas develops to a logical conclusion and/or summary</p> <p>Strong presentation style, demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact.</p>
<p>B 72-85</p>	<p>Mostly achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are summarized and used fairly accurately.</p>	<p>Some idea of how chosen topic bears on the development of sociological/psychological thought (i.e., some analysis and application beyond merely summarizing existing theory/research)</p>	<p>Clear central thesis</p> <p>Appropriate details/synthesis most of the time.</p> <p>Sentences/paragraph generally flow logically together</p>	<p>Some spelling, grammar, and writing errors</p> <p>Some awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs</p>	<p>Mostly achieved</p>	<p>Communicates to some degree the main theme, thesis, or primary focus of presentation.</p> <p>Ideas follow a general logical flow with presenter providing some synthesis between points</p> <p>Number and quality of main points are sufficient</p>

						<p>Logical conclusion and/or summary provided that develops from the presenters points</p> <p>Moderate presentation style, demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact</p>
C 60- 71	<p>Inconsistently achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are often summarized or used inaccurately, or not at all.</p>	<p>Little to no connection made to the development of paradigmatic thought in terms of analyzing or applying the theory/research</p>	<p>Adequately limited central thesis</p> <p>Details/synthesis may be repetitious or absent altogether.</p> <p>Sentences/paragraphs rarely, if ever, flow logically together</p>	<p>Several spelling, grammar, and writing errors</p> <p>Several awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs</p>	Inconsistently achieved	<p>Unclear presentation of main theme, thesis or focus of presentation</p> <p>Little order to ideas and relationships between points not clarified clearly</p> <p>Number and quality of main points are lacking in sufficiency</p> <p>Weak conclusion and/or summary</p> <p>Presentation style lacking as demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact</p> <p><i>And so on....</i></p>

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Students are advised to retain this syllabus for their records.
- It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Student Handbook and Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at privacy@ambrose.edu.
- Course changes, including adding or dropping a course, may be made during the Registration Revision period, as outlined in the Calendar of Events. All course changes must be recorded on a Registration form, available from the Office of the Registrar. Due to circumstances such as class size, prerequisites or academic policy, the submission of a Registration form does not guarantee that a course will be added or removed from a student's registration. Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit up to the date specified in the Calendar of Events, although students are not entitled to a tuition adjustment or refund after the Registration Revision period.
- The last day to enter a course without permission and /or voluntary withdrawal from a course without financial penalty (**drop**) – Sunday, September 16, 2012 (Fall semester) or Sunday, January 20, 2013 (winter semester). These courses will not appear on the student's transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date.
- Students may change the designation of any class from credit to audit, or drop out of the "audit" up to the "drop" date indicated above. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees. Please note that this is a **new policy**, that came into effect in the 2010-2011 academic year.
- Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. The last day to voluntarily withdraw from a course without academic penalty (**withdraw**) – Monday, November 12, 2012 (Fall semester) or Friday, March 22, 2013 (Winter semester). A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.
- Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.
- Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a "Course Extension" from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the appropriate deadline (as listed in the Academic Calendar <http://www.ambrose.edu/publications/academiccalendar>). Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control."
- Please note that final grades will be available on the student portal. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.
- An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the

final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

- We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar and the Student Handbook that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.