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Texts  

  
  Corrine Glesne is an accomplished qualitative researcher who has written a thoughtful and accessible methods text for qualitative researchers. There are many such texts available and I encourage you to read widely. But there is no better place to than in Glesne's *Becoming a Qualitative Researcher*.  

  
  James Spradley, a professor of Anthropology at Macalester College, died of leukemia 1982. He was a prolific author who wrote or edited 20 books in his short career. Among the most important of these, for our purposes, are his two methods texts. We will read his book, *The Ethnographic Interview*. It offers a step-by-step method for constructing, conducting and analyzing interviews.  


  All the qualitative methods we will investigate in this course can be used to evaluate classrooms, school-improvement projects, district and state education policies, and more. Patton's text shows us how to use qualitative methods in evaluation projects.  


Course Description  

This is an introductory course in qualitative research methods. Over the few months, you will learn to design qualitative studies, ask foreshadowed questions, secure participants' participation, take useful field notes, design and conduct interviews, code and analyze qualitative data, build taxonomies, present descriptive (first-order) and explanatory (second-order) findings, array qualitative data and
write compelling reports. In addition to covering these expansive issues, you will explore the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research.

The course that will prepare you for advanced course work in qualitative research methods. Such courses are offered in the College of Education and throughout the University of Florida. The methods reviewed in this course are most compatible with a post-positive perspective. Advanced courses detail methods that grow from other philosophical traditions. Those wishing to conduct a qualitative study for their dissertation work should take advanced coursework as well. Such courses are available in the college and throughout the university. The methods reviewed in this course are most compatible with a post-positive perspective, an approach we will define and discuss in this class. Advanced courses detail methods compatible with other philosophical points of view.

This is a labor-intensive course, not because I delight in busying already busy students, but because qualitative research is always and unavoidably time consuming. That's the bad news. The good news is that I have taught qualitative courses four decades and know how to make the work manageable. I have cut some corners (requiring an outline rather than a paper, encouraging group work and data pooling, assigning micro-studies) that will save you time, and help you learn qualitative research skills.

Course Goals

1. Learn to see social worlds as qualitative researchers view them, an angle of vision Peter Berger calls "sociological consciousness."
2. Become a discriminating consumer of qualitative research.
3. Master basic qualitative methods including observation, interviewing, coding and data analysis.

Assignments

At the beginning of every lesson, I will list lesson tasks in the order you will probably want to complete them.

We will cover a lot of ground in this course, so do not fall behind. The stress of catching up will make your work more difficult and less satisfying.

Check the course website frequently; I will post class announcements regularly. The lecture material is as important as our text readings.

1. Participation: Your participation in class, discussion-board offerings, quiz grades, research reviews, observations and interviews, and group-work contributions will count 30% of your final grade. I will deduct points in this category for late assignments. Do not obsess over one errant quiz grade for it is a small part of your total participation grade. Quiz results help me determine what I may need to emphasize or review in lectures and class discussions.
Use discussion-board comments to explore the reading and lecture material. Quote from that material liberally and consider it critically. Do the same when commenting on your classmates’ postings. Examine ideas critically, extend them, and take them back to your readings.

2. **A Micro-Study of Hallway Behavior**: You will complete a micro-study of hallway behavior and the rules that guide it. We will break into small research teams of 4 to 6 students. Team members will observe hallway behavior, share their data and begin data analysis together. You will work independently, however, to complete your data analysis and to write up your findings. To save time, you will report your findings in *outline* form rather than as a formal paper. Your micro-study outline will count 35% of your final grade. Read the assignment requirements and the sample paper outline carefully before you start this task. *Please upload all assignments to the course website and label each document with your name and the Assignment number* (Smith, Assignment 1).

3. A Qualitative Evaluation of your On-Line Graduate Program: Groups of 4 to 6 students will complete an evaluation of your on-line graduate program. You need not evaluate the entire program; indeed, different groups can study different aspect of the program. But you should study an issue you think important and that you care about.

   In fact, this evaluation will be too small for us to consider it an evaluation and we will not advertise it as such. It is simply an exercise designed to teach us evaluation techniques.

   I will provide detailed instructions and sample papers for this assignment on the course website, so you will know exactly what is expected. Your group evaluation study will count 35% of your final grade.

**Due Dates and Assignment Submissions**

Unless otherwise specified, all written assignments are due in the week they are assigned and may be submitted anytime before Sunday at midnight.

Please complete reading assignments before class meetings so you can answer (and ask) questions.

Please submit all assignments on the course website. *Do not mail an assignment to me unless I ask you to do so.* You can withdraw papers and resubmit them anytime before their final due data.
Grading Scale

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<td>A</td>
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**Discussion Board Assignment**

In most lessons I ask you to write thoughtfully about course material and about your classmates’ entries. To keep our discussions connected to our readings, I will suggest a broad topic for most discussions, ask that you make specific references to things you have read for the course or to the lecture content, and quote from those readings. I am not asking you to merely comment on material but to engage it thoughtfully and critically. I will read all posts and will respond to the class at the end of each week.

Please add your comments directly after completing all reading assignments. Continually late assignments and/or thin, uncritical comments will bring down your final grade.

**Questions**

If, after completing a lesson and considering its content, you have a question on the material, post them on the lesson’s question board. I will check the board regularly and will answer the questions you post or direct you to further reading. I encourage students to post answers as well. I’ll read these posts and will share my views if they differ from the one’s posted.

**Technical Troubleshooting**

Please send all technical questions to the COE helpdesk. I can be of limited help on technical matter so you will save time if you contact the tech staff. You’ll find a contact-the-helpdesk board on the course website.

**Week 1 (Jan. 2) The Foundations of Qualitative Research**

**For Thursday:**

Lesson One: The Foundations of Qualitative Research

Assignments

- View the course introduction on the course website and study the material in Module One.
• Read Chapter 1 in Glesne's *Becoming a Qualitative Researcher*

Written Assignment One: Create or update an online profile and include a digital photograph. This information will be available to your fellow students.

**Lesson Two: The Study of Worlds**
1. Read all material on the Lesson-Two area of the course website.
2. View the mini-lecture within Lesson Two.
3. Read Chapter 1, 2 and 3 in Spradley's *The Ethnographic Interview*. (Lesson Two does not deal directly with ethnography and culture, but you will see the connections. We will return to this material later in the course.)
4. Contribute to the lesson’s discussion-board conversation.

**Week 2 (Jan. 9) Deeper Into Worlds**

**Lesson Three: The World of Everyday Life**

Assignments

1. Read all material on the Lesson-Three area of the course website.
2. View the mini-lecture within the lesson.
4. Contribute to the lesson’s discussion-board conversation.

**Lesson Four: Multiple Worlds, Multiple Realities**

1. Read the material on the Lesson-Four area of the course website.
2. View the mini-lecture within the lesson.
5. Contribute to the lesson’s discussion-board conversation.

**Week 3 (Jan. 16) The Nature of Social Science**
For Tuesday

*Lesson Five: The Act of Interpretation*

**Assignments**

1. Read Machlup’s "If Matter Could Talk." You’ll find this article in Lesson Five on the course website.


3. Read the material on the Lesson-Five area of the course website.

4. Complete lesson quiz if one is posted on the course website.

5. Contribute to the lesson’s discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website.

*Lesson Six: Preparing for a Research Study*

**Assignments**

1. Read Chapters 2 in Glesne

2. Read the material on the Lesson-Six area of the course website

3. Establish your researcher team. (You’ll find a team signup sheet on the course website. Teams should have no more than 6 or fewer than 4 members.)

   The first person to join a group will be the group "leader." The leader is responsible for creating the group's communal work area. I recommend using Google Docs (watch a video about Google Docs here) or creating your own group in the College of Education's new e-community, Purlieu. You can contact Nicola Wayer or Baird Whelan in the Office of Distance Learning for help with Purlieu.

   You’ll probably want to set up spaces in your communal site for uploading protocols and code sheets.

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**Week 4 (Jan. 23) Moving Into The Field**

*Lesson Seven: Fieldwork*

**Lesson Seven Assignments**

1. Read Chapters 3 in Glesne

2. Read all the material here on the Lesson-Seven site, including the sample protocol you will find at the end of the lesson.

3. Design and begin to use a research notebook. (I describe what to include in such a notebook in this lesson).
4. Recommended: Begin a notebook in which to gather information related to possible dissertation topics.
5. Locate a research site that enjoys a steady flow of traffic and where hallways and elevators enjoy constant use. I suggest that you not observe in courthouses, police stations, hospitals, or schools. Can you explain why these are poor sites for elevator research?
6. Complete your first observation and take careful, complete, thick-description field notes. Observe several elevator rides. Include maps in which you record entry and exit patterns and indicate the direction riders are facing. Pay close attention to where people look, how they occupy themselves, to whom they talk, what they say.
7. WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT TWO: Complete a six-page (or longer), typed, single-spaced protocol. (As I'll explain in this week's lesson, a protocol is the typed version of your observation field notes.) Upload your protocol on the course website. Remember, and this is important, to label the protocol document (the document icon) with your name and the Assignment number (Smith, Assignment 2) before you upload the document to the course website.
8. Share your first protocol with your research team on your research website.
9. Contribute to the lesson's discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website.

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Week 5 (Jan. 30) Coding

Lesson Eight: Coding, the First Step in Data Analysis

Lesson Eight Assignments

1. Read all the material on the Lesson-Eight site.
3. Code your first protocol and share your codes with your research team members on your research website. (Your team should already team research site where team members can meet, chat and share data.)
4. Code as many of your team members' protocols as time permits.
5. Unnumbered written assignment: Upload three code sheets to the course website before class and bring two copies to class.
6. Contribute to the lesson's discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website.

Lesson Eight Goals

1. Understand the coding process.
2. Code your first protocol and your teammates' protocols.
3. Learn from other people's coding.

Week 6 (Feb. 6) The First Research Assignment

Lesson Nine:
Digging Deeper--Coding and Observing

Lesson Nine Assignments:
1. Read all the material on the Lesson Nine site.
2. Review Chapter 5 in Strauss and Corbin's *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*.
3. Complete a second observation session. Use the codes you developed (and what you learned from looking at your teammates' codes) to deepen your second observation. This protocol should be at least ten, single-spaced pages.
4. Written Assignment Three: Complete your second protocol and upload it course website and to your research team's website.
5. Review your teammates' protocols.
6. Code your second protocol and as many of your teammates' protocols as time allows.
7. Begin applying the constant comparative method to each of your codes. Document your work and thoughts in coding memos. Not every code will require a memo but all complex or particularly suggestive codes will need them.
8. Written Assignment Four: In one document, upload to the course website three codes you think particularly interesting and potentially useful. Label each code with your name and a note explaining why you think the code is interesting and potentially useful. Include all the items you have coded in that code and where you found them in your interview protocols.
9. Read the Sample Assignment (Sample_Express_Line_Report.pdf) you will find in the Introduction section of Lesson Nine. This document was drawn from reports past students wrote after studying-express line behaviors in a super market. It contains all the sections you will include in your report except a graphic taxonomy (a term that means nothing to you now, but we will discuss in a later lesson.)
10. Contribute to the lesson's discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website

Week 7 (Feb. 13) Digging Still Deeper

Lesson Ten: Sharpening your Observations and Refining your Coding skills

Lesson Ten Assignments:
1. Read all the material on the Lesson Ten site.
2. **Written Assignment Five:** Complete your third protocol of at least ten pages. Upload it to the course website and to your team's website.
3. Review your teammates' protocols.
4. Code your third protocol and continue coding your teammates' protocols.
5. Continue applying the constant comparative method and writing code memos. Begin connecting rules with codes.
6. Contribute to the lesson's discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website.
7. Coding will make more sense to you if you understand the next step in your work, taxonomic analysis. Spradley explains taxonomic analysis well and we will study that material soon. For now, however, you may want to skim those chapters, so you know what is coming next and so you can code with taxonomies in mind. Review Steps 8, 9, 10 in Spradley.

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**Week 8 (Feb. 20): Organizing Your Codes**

**Lesson Eleven: Organizing Your Codes into a Taxonomy**

**Lesson Eleven Assignments:**
1. Read all the material on the Lesson Eleven site.
2. Read Glesne, Chapter 7: Finding Your Story: Data Analysis
3. Read Spradley Steps 8, 9, 10
4. Complete your coding and bring all relevant codes to saturation.
5. Complete your CCM analysis and finalize your code definitions.
6. Complete the draft of your taxonomy.
7. There is no one best tool for creating a taxonomy. You may use the chart tool in Word or Excel to good advantage. You may prefer using a brainstorming program, such as Inspiration, **bubbl.us**, **Free Mind**, or **Gliffy**. (If you use a brainstorming program, be sure to save the document as a picture file so I can open it.)
8. **Written Assignment:** Note any areas in your taxonomy that may need further data. If you find such areas (and only if you find them) complete one more, very focused observation in which you look only for the missing material you need. Stay in the field only long enough to get the data you need. If you complete a fourth protocol, hand it in. If you have all the data you need, you do not need to complete a fourth protocol.
9. **Written Assignment:** Upload a draft taxonomy for quick review.
10. Upload your draft taxonomy, add a core variable and upload it to the Lesson 11 website.
11. Contribute to the lesson's discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website.

Speed kills! The most common errors in this micro-assignment occur when
students move too quickly and do not giving themselves the time that thoughtful analysis requires. In these (infrequent) cases, codes are too broad, too sparse, or ill-defined; the rules are thin, the taxonomy is incomplete, or the core variable does not explain all codes.

**Week 9 (Feb. 27) Explaining Your Findings**

**For Tuesday**

**Lesson Twelve: Finding your Core Variable**

**Lesson Twelve Assignments**

2. Complete any quizzes that may appear on the lesson 12 website.
3. Connect rules to each of your codes.
4. Write your paper.
5. Contribute to the lesson's discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website.

**Week 10 (March 6) Elevator Paper (Spring Break, no class)**

**Lesson Thirteen: Hand in Your Paper**

**Lesson Thirteen Assignments**

- Return to Lesson Nine and review the elevator study assignment requirements. Review the sample paper as well and use it as a model for your own work.
- Written Assignment Number Seven: Upload your hallway analysis outline, taxonomy, your code sheets, your code memos and your own protocols in one document to the website before Sunday at midnight. (Remember, every rule claim must be referenced to at least three examples from your team's protocols [example: Smith: 2/2/21]. Be sure to include a full quote for every protocol citation. Label your DOCUMENT with your name and assignment number before you upload the assignment to the course website. "Adams_Assignment_Seven ").

Your paper should describe and explain all the rules associated with express lines. As I grade the papers I will consider richness of your data (your protocols) and the veracity, completeness, organization, logic, and clarity of your analysis and organizing theme.
Week 11 (March 13) Vital Questions, Evaluation Assignment and Interviewing

Lesson Fifteen: Qualitative Evaluations Using Interviews

Lesson Fifteen Assignments

1. Read Lesson 15 on the course website.
2. Read Glesne, Chapter 4 pp 79-108
3. Read Glesne, Chapter 5 pp 109-127
4. Read Spradley Steps Two and Three, pp 55-91
5. Read Spradley, Step Five, Analyzing the Ethnographic Interview, and Step Six, Making a Domain Analysis 92-119
6. Read Patton, Chapter 5 pp 108-143.
7. Form a research team at the “Evaluation Project Team Sign-Up” tool on Week 11 site.
8. Meet with your group to decide on the focus of your evaluation study. You need not study everything about your graduate program, but you must defend your topic and explain why it is important.
9. Create a working site for your research team where you can share interviews, codes, and working papers.
10. Work with your research group to create interview questions on the topic assigned to your group. Remember, evaluation question often spring from a program’s stated goals. I suggested that you look at documents that advertise the goals of this degree program.
11. Consider how you will record your interviews. Using a digital recorder can speed your transcription time if you use transcription software such as Transcricao. (Voice recognition software does not work well because it has to be trained to recognize a particular voice.]
12. Schedule your first interview for early next week.
13. Contribute to the lesson’s discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website.

Week 12 (March 20) Conducting Interviews

Lesson Sixteen: The Interview Process

Assignments

1. Read the material on the Lesson 16 website.
2. Conduct and record your first interview early in the week.
3. Transcribe your interviews into protocols. Interview protocols look just like observation protocols. Type all the questions you ask exactly as you asked them. Type responses verbatim. You may leave out names, verbal ticks, and material that is clearly unrelated to your study. Add punctuation
marks as needed for ease of reading.
4. Written Assignment Number Eight: Upload your first protocol to the course website and to your team’s website.
5. Carefully read your teammates’ interviews.
6. Contribute to the lesson’s discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website.

Week 13 (March 27) Coding Evaluation Interviews

Lesson Seventeen:
Coding Cultural Categories and the Evaluation Assignment

1. Read all the material on the website.
2. Review Spradley, Step Five (Analyzing the Ethnographic Interview) and Step Six (Making a Domain Analysis). pp 92-119.
3. Review codes with your team members and work toward a common set of beginning codes. (Codes will change over time.)
   i) Code analysis work may necessitate an on-line meeting early in the week.
   ii) I suggest you begin by identifying the codes you all used.
   iii) Add codes that seem useful, but that some researchers may have missed.
   iv) Discuss remaining codes and keep those that could have value. At As you continue coding and apply the CCM, those codes will prove useful or useless. (The answer is in the data!)
2. Use the codes to revise your interview questions and share your questions with your teammates. You’ll need to study one another’s suggestions, talk about alternatives, and agree upon revised questions. Interview questions should not vary greatly from one interviewer to the next, but you need not ask them in the same order.
3. Written Assignment Number Nine: Complete and record your second interview and type your interview protocol. Upload the protocol to the course website where I can review it.
4. Upload your interview protocols to your research team website
5. Contribute to the lesson’s discussion-board conversation if one is posted on the course website.

Week 14 (April 3)

LESSON SEVENTEEN:
Lesson Seventeen: Burrowing Still Deeper

1. Complete your coding
2. Read Spradley, Steps Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven 132—203
3. Review codes with your team members and keep working toward a common set of codes.
4. Upload your interview protocols to your research team website
5. Discuss your codes with your teammates.
6. Begin ordering codes into a taxonomy.

LESSON EIGHTEEN:

TAXONOMIC ANALYSIS AND FINDING A CULTURAL THEME

Lesson Eighteen Assignments

7. Read Spradley, Step Eleven: Discovering Cultural Themes, 185-203
8. Read Patton TBA
9. Work with your team to develop a beginning taxonomy.
10. You will discover, after you develop a draft taxonomy, that there are holes in your analysis. Fill in those holes with another set of short, focused interviews. Go back to the people you interviewed ask for missing information, define terms, probe for details and examples.
11. Written Assignment Number Ten: Complete your third (fill-in-the-holes) interview protocol. Upload it to the course website where I can review it. Note that a fourth interview may not be necessary and, if it is, every team member may not need to complete an interview.
12. Upload your codes and third interview protocol to your research website.
13. Consider possible cultural and/or evaluation themes.

Goals for Lesson Seventeen
- Learn to build an evaluation taxonomy

Week 15 (April 10) Completing the Evaluation

For Tuesday

Lesson Nineteen: Evaluation Analysis

Lesson Nineteen Assignments

1. Read Glesne Chapter 9
2. Read Patton: TBA
3. Complete your taxonomy
2. Look for a cultural theme that explains your data
3. Outline your paper and assign writing topics
4. Assign one team member to edit all sections and
   (with help in the last week from team members) prepare the final paper.

Goals for Lesson Nineteen
1. Learn how to develop a cultural theme.
2. Learn how to write a qualitative evaluation report.

Week 16 (April 17)

Lesson Twenty: Writing

By Sunday at midnight: One member of your research team will upload the team's final Evaluation Paper. In one file, upload your Evaluation Paper, taxonomy, your team's final code sheets, and a full set of interview protocols to the website.