Qualitative Research Methods
CRIM 7316 Advanced Topics in Criminal Justice
Spring 2016

Meeting Times & Location: Wednesday 5:30-8:00
Room 301 Churchill Hall

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Office Hours: Monday: Noon-1:00
Wednesday: 4:00-5:00


Additional readings will be posted on the Blackboard Web Page for the course.

Course Introduction
This is a graduate level course is designed to provide students with an introduction to the principles and use of common qualitative methods used in social science research with a particular focus on the field of criminal justice. Throughout the course we will cover the basics of qualitative research including: the paradigms that underlie qualitative inquires; principles of qualitative inquiries such as ethnography and participant observation, interviewing, case studies and qualitative evaluation analysis; and analytic strategies for
qualitative data analysis to help transform qualitative data into written research documents. Students will engage in primary data collection and learn how to use a variety of analytic techniques including transcription, field note preparation, memoing, development of coding schemes and conceptual frameworks and data verifying techniques. The course will mix theory and practice. At the same time as we are discussing analytic techniques you will be collecting and analyzing data. As a result, students will be expected to spend 4-6 weeks “in the field” collecting data (e.g. conducting interviews, observing social settings, and collecting documents) that will be used to complete assignments for the course.

Requirements and Assignments

1. Class discussion and participation (10 percent)
   Participation in the discussion of assigned class readings is an important part of this course. Students will be responsible for the discussion of all assigned materials and active engagement in classroom discussions.

2. Book review assignment (10 percent)
   Students complete a 5-7 page review of a social science monograph, which utilizes qualitative research techniques as the primary source of data. The reviews will include a description of the study, including the research methods utilized; a discussion of the research findings and critical evaluation of the strengths and limitations of the research methods utilized and conclusions drawn from the research. The book review should generally look like those found in academic journals, with the exception of having a stronger focus on the method used. A list of potential monographs will be provided on the course Blackboard web page (due March 2nd).

3. Mini Fieldwork Assignments (10 percent)
   Three assignments will be completed throughout the semester to demonstrate students’ understanding of non-participant observations, ethnographic observations and interviewing. These assignments will combine in-class and out-of-class exercises.

4. Qualitative Research Project Assignments (45 percent)
   To grasp the principles and methods of qualitative data collection and analysis it is critical for students to undergo the process of collecting and analyzing primary qualitative data. Throughout the course, students will engage in a practice research project that utilizes at least one source of qualitative data (interviews, participant observation, ethnography, secondary documents, etc).

   It is understood that students will not be able to conduct a full-fledged qualitative research project during the time of the course, however, it is anticipated that students will be able to collect a minimum level of qualitative data upon which to practice conducting preliminary analysis and reporting.
A number of assignments will be completed throughout the course to help walk students through the process of collecting and analyzing qualitative data.

- **Project description and research questions (5%)**
  Students will complete a one-paragraph description of the general area in which they intend to conduct a short qualitative study during the semester. The description should include a general idea of the potential area of study and possible research settings. The assignment should also include a central question and short list of sub questions to guide the proposed research (due electronically January 27th).

- **Practice Human Subject Application (10%)**
  Students will complete a draft copy of Northeastern University’s “Application for the Protection of Human Subjects” required by Northeastern University’s Office of Research Integrity, including consent forms or other documents that would be required by your intended research activities. Assignment includes completion of National Institute of Justice online IRB certification (due February 10th, note: if you plan to go through formal IRB approval see Professor Farrell about deadlines). Guidelines for this application can be found at: http://www.northeastern.edu/research/hsrp/forms/

*Note: Like any other form of research inquiry that involves human subjects, qualitative studies require Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval. To help students understand how IRB regulations impact modes of qualitative inquiry students will be required to prepare a mock application to the Northeastern University IRB as an assignment for the course. I would additionally recommend avoiding research with populations under the age of 18 or other special groups (e.g. prisoners, mentally ill) that require additional human subjects protections when developing their assigned research project for the course. In general, students will not be required to seek official Northeastern University IRB approval for class based project; however, if you have any thought that your research project may turn out to be something that you would like to pursue further and eventually write up, publish or share beyond this class we will need to secure IRB approval prior to conducting research.*

*For more information about Northeastern University’s policies regarding human subjects protections, see the Policies and Procedure for Human Research Protections publication at the Office of Research Integrity website (http://www.northeastern.edu/research/hsrp/)*

- **Fieldwork and Interviews – February 17th through March 30th**
  - Field note/transcript project I and II (15%)
    Students will conduct research at their selected research site for four to six weeks. If the methodology involves observation students should conduct at least four observations for one hour each. Students conducting observations will turn in two sets of field notes. If the methodology involves interviews students should conduct at least two interviews with key subjects. Two
interviews should be transcribed and submitted for review (due March 16th and March 23rd).

- Coding project (15%)
  Students will develop a preliminary analytic framework for the analysis of their data including the construction of a coding scheme and demonstration of coding for the data submitted in the fieldnote/transcript project. Codes will be created and entered using the qualitative data analysis program QSR NVivo (due March 30th).

5. Final project paper (25 percent)
   A final 20-25 page research will be produced which brings together the literature review, research questions, description of methodology, findings and conclusions for the research project conducted throughout the course of the semester. The final project paper will be due *Monday April 25th at noon* and should be submitted through Blackboard.

### Class Schedule

**January 13th**  
**Introduction and Understanding the Paradigm of Qualitative Inquiry**  
Creswell, Chapter 2 “Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Frameworks” pp. 15-40.


**January 20th**  
**Doing Qualitative Research**  
Creswell, Chapters 3, 4 and 6 “Designing a Qualitative Study” pp. 42-67, “Five Approaches to Inquiry” pp. 69-110 and “Introducing and Focusing the Study” pp. 129-143.

Geertz, Clifford. “Thick Description: Toward and Interpretive Theory of Culture” in Emerson, pp. 55-75 (Blackboard).

Manning, Peter. “Qualitative Research as Theorizing,” in Miller and Palacios, pp. 51-66.

**January 27th**  
**Ethics and the Protection of Human Subjects in Qualitative Research**  
http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/belmont.html
Proposed Changes to the Common Rule, Office of Human Research Protections, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services


Miles, Huberman and Saldana, Chapter 2. “Ethical Issues in Analysis” pp. 55-60.

Note: Now would be a good time to complete your NIH certification if you do not already have certification. To complete the program go to:
http://www.northeastern.edu/research/hsrp/training/

Assignments Due:
Project description and preliminary research questions should be submitted electronically

February 3rd  What is Qualitative Data?


Emerson, Ralph, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. 1995. “In the Field: Participating, Observing and Jotting Notes” in In Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago, IL; University of Chicago Press, pp. 17-35. (Blackboard)


Assignments Due:
Write-up of Non-Participant Observation Assignment (posted to Blackboard by February 1st)

February 10th  Representing Realities - Ethnography

Hammersley, Martyn. “Ethnography and Realism” in Emerson, pp. 102-112.

Weiss, Chapters 1-3, pp. 1-60.

**Assignments Due:**
NU Institutional Review Board Application and NIH certificate

**February 17th  Relational and Personal Processes in Ethnography and Participant Observation**

Bucerius, Sandra “Being Trusted with ‘Insider Knowledge’: Ethnographic Research with Male Muslim Drug Dealers” in Miller and Palacios, pp. 135-154.


**Assignment Due**
Write up of Ethnographic Field Note Assignment (Posted to Blackboard by February 15th)

**February 24th  Interviewing and Asking Questions**


Weiss, Chapters 4-5, pp. 61-147. *In class interviewing and feedback assignment.*

**March 2nd  Studying Cases and Analyzing Content**


Assignment Due:
Book review

March 9th  
Spring Break – No Class

March 16th  
Data Reduction and Analysis: Building Conceptual Frameworks From Data

Miles, Huberman and Saldana, Chapter 4, “Fundamentals of Qualitative Data Analysis” pp. 69-104.


Assignments Due:
Field note/Transcript project I due

March 23rd  
Qualitative Data Analysis: Data Display: Coding, Memoing and Ordering Data


Assignments Due:
Field note/Transcript project II due

March 30th  
Drawing Conclusions and Verifying

Miles, Huberman and Saldana, Chapter 9 “Methods of Explaining” pp. 221-253.
Assignments Due:
Coding project

April 6th
**Drawing Conclusions and Finalizing Themes**
Creswell, Chapter 9, “Writing the Qualitative Study,” pp. 213-242.


Wolcott, Chapter 1-2, “Reading about Writing,” pp. 7-9 and “Getting Going,” pp. 13-32 (Blackboard).

April 13th
**Writing and Producing Knowledge from Qualitative Data**

Miles, Huberman and Saldana, Chapter 12, “Writing about Qualitative Research,” pp. 323-337.

Wolcott, Chapter 4 “Tightening Up,” pp. 47-88 (Blackboard).

April 20th
**Using Qualitative Data**
Maruna, Shadd. “Qualitative Research, Theory Development, and Evidence-Based Corrections: Can Success Stories Ever Be ‘Evidence’” in Miller and Palacios, pp. 311-338.

Wright, Richard, Scott Jacques, and Michael Stein. "Where Are We? Why Are We Here? Where Are We Going? How Do We Get There? The Future of Qualitative Research in American Criminology” in Miller and Palacios, pp. 339-356.

Presentation of Research Findings Session I.

April 27th (Finals Week)
**Presentation of Research Findings Session II.**
*Final Paper due Monday April 25th at noon*