Syllabus: Qualitative Inquiry

Fall 2011

Syllabus

SYA3310.191F11: Qualitative Inquiry

Fall Semester 2011
W 6:00 to 9:50
LLC 2212
USF Polytechnic

Dr. Cecil Greek
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850-339-4268

Office hours (LLC 2114):
TuTh 1 to 3
W 3 to 5

(Last updated August 17, 2011)
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SYA3310.191F10: Qualitative Inquiry

Prerequisites:

SYG 2000 or CI. DPR.

Course description:

Exploration of human relationships and behaviors, organizations, and the larger culture through research techniques such as interviews, participant observation, life histories, narratives, photographs and video recording.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Recognize the underlying theoretical and methodological differences between qualitative and quantitative research.

2. Discuss what types of social situations and problems might best be studied by using qualitative methods.

3. Initiate and carry out qualitative research using traditional methods such as open ended questions and ethnographic techniques.

4. Employee visual techniques such as photography and videography to sociological investigation.

5. Recognize the variety of ways in which ethnographic research can now be done using both online data and online methodological tools.

Methods of Instruction:

This is a face to face course, with web-based enhancements. The course meets once a week. The primary method of instruction is lecture and discussion. Students will be expected to come to class prepared to discuss the reading materials. In addition, students will carry out a series of projects over the course of the semester that will help to familiarize them with methods used in traditional ethnographic research, contemporary visual research and Internet-based data collection and analysis.
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Course Outline:

The primary purpose of this course is to provide students with a deeper understanding of the origins of and continuing relevance of qualitative research within the social sciences. Qualitative methodologies have been used since the inception of sociology in the late 19th and early 20th century. For example, the photographer Lewis Hine was employed as part of the Pittsburgh Survey and traveled throughout the United States to document the prevalence of illegal child labor.

In the first part of the course we will compare quantitative and qualitative research by looking at the underlying foundation of each approach. In general, most research is framed in either positivistic, critical or interactionist approaches. Qualitative methods can be used to do research using any of these approaches, but is more frequently used for the latter two.

The course will then be divided up into three sections looking at specific qualitative methodologies. In the first section traditional research methods such as the construction of open ended questions and ethnographic fieldwork will be covered.

The second portion of the course will an emerging area within sociology and its employment of visual methodologies such as photography and videography to document aspects of social reality that are more difficult to capture using text methods alone. Still photography will be a major focus of this section. Additional emphasis will be placed on videography.

The final section of the course will cover how the emergence of the Internet has impacted on qualitative methodology. The Internet has created a rich new field of data for analysis, plus allowed for the emergence of new collaborative tools for conducting qualitative research.

Required texts:


Weekly reading Assignments Fall 2010:

Week 1: August 24
Fettermen- Chapter 1

Week 2: August 31
Fettermen- Chapter 2
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Week 3: Sept. 7
Fetterman- Chapters 3 & 4

Week 4: Sept. 14
Fetterman- Chapters 5 & 6

Week 5: Sept. 21
Fetterman- Chapter 7

Week 6: Sept. 28
Emmison & Smith: Chapter 1 & 2

Week 7: October 5
Emmison & Smith: Chapter 3

Week 8: October 12
Emmison & Smith: Chapter 4

Week 9: October 19
Emmison & Smith: Chapter 5

Week 10: October 26
Emmison & Smith: Chapter 6

Week 11: November 2
Kozinets: Chapters 1&2

Week 12: November 9
Kozinets: Chapters 3 & 4

Week 13: Nov. 16
Kozinets: Chapters 5 & 6

Week 14: Nov. 23
Kozinets: Chapters 7 & 8
Assignments:

Students will complete a set of four assignments over the course of the semester, all of which are interconnected to an overall research project of the student's choosing. Due dates for each project will be discussed as the semester develops.

The initial selection of a research project site is critical. All projects must be approved by the instructor. The project topic must have the following components:

a.) It must have a local real world component (e.g. a coffee shop, place of employment, school, mall, public meeting place, hair salon, etc.)

b.) The site must have locatable key informants (gatekeepers, bosses, mid-level managers, regular attendees, etc.)

c.) You will need to be able to secure permission to photograph on the site. (This might rule out places like courts, and government buildings which have security or privacy concerns).

d.) The site also needs to have a digital/Web presence of some type. (Webpage, Twitter account, Facebook site, employ social media or related software, etc.). In addition, make sure you are able to use the Internet to locate examples of similar institutions for comparison purposes. (Example: If you have chosen a local coffee shop, be able to locate competing or similar businesses that have an online presence).

Note: If you desire to research your current workplace, you need to make sure that this is permitted. Similarly, you will need to inform the organization that you are setting up a research project, and assure participants that any assistance they may provide will remain private beyond discussion in our classroom setting.

1. Students will thoroughly outline an ethnographic research project on a topic or issue of their choosing. Issues that will need to be discussed include (a) field entry and background preparation, (b) how the population will be approached (including the location of key informants), (c) information that will be collected, (d) how field notes will be analyzed, and (e) brief discussion of anticipated findings. The resulting document is expected to be 8 to 10 pages. (100 points)

2. Students will develop a 20-item set of open ended questions that could be employed with all potential informants. Samples will be provided. We will be using Survey Monkey as an example web-based method of creating surveys. Students will share their survey questions with the class. (50 points)

3. Students will complete a series of photographic mini projects related to their overall research topic. Based upon the visual research text, the mini projects will include (a)
two-dimensional space, (b) three-dimensional space, (c) lived visual data, and (d) persons interacting in space. Students will discuss their projects in class. (100 points)

4. The final portion of the project will include the collection and analysis of Web based data. This may include but not limited to websites, Facebook pages, social networking group pages, Twitter posts, online photography and videography, participation in virtual worlds, etc. Students will present this aspect of their findings in class. Students will also turn in a five page report on their findings. Hyperlinks to where these materials were located must be included. (100 points) Due Nov. 30th.

Attendance at all classes is expected. Those who miss more than 3 classes will lose attendance points; 10 points deducted for each class missed. It is also essential that you arrive at the beginning of class. It is not acceptable to arrive 15 to 30 min. after class starts because you can't get to class from work on time. (50 points for attendance is possible)
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Total points possible in the course are 400.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Point Equivalent</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>372-400</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
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<td>B+</td>
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<td>77-79</td>
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Technology Information

Access to a digital camera is required. Images will be posted to a Blackboard discussion board for discussion and analysis.

Access to the Internet (World Wide Web) is required. Use of Explorer browser is recommended for compatibility with the Blackboard system, which is provided by the University.
of South Florida and is the courseware package to be utilized in this course. Visit http://www.acomp.usf.edu/scholar.html for further specifications, downloads and plug-ins (http://proxy.usf.edu:81/plug-ins.html ).

To gain access to the course through the USF servers:

1. Have your USF student identification card.
2. Complete the USF Net ID Process
3. Log on to https://my.usf.edu

**E-mail:** Every enrolled USF student receives an official USF e-mail account that ends with "mail.acomp.usf.edu." Every official USF correspondence to students is sent to that account. Students should go to the Academic Computing website (http://www.acomp.usf.edu) and select the link "Activating a Student E-mail Account" for detailed information. Information about the USF Web Portal can be found at: http://www.acomp.usf.edu/portal.html.

All course correspondence will be routed through your USF e-mail account specified by your Net ID, unless you forward it to another location.

**USF Policies**

**Student Responsibility re: Academic Policies and Procedures:** While advisors, directors, department chairs and campus administration are available to assist students in meeting academic regulations, policies and procedures, it is ultimately the student’s responsibility to be acquainted with all academic regulations, policies and procedures, and to meet all requirements.

Undergraduate Catalog http://www.ugs.usf.edu/catalogs/catdl.htm

Graduate Catalog http://www.grad.usf.edu/catalog.asp

**Intellectual Property:** Taping lectures or classroom discussions is permitted. However, it is expected that students will request authorization from the instructor to tape a class. Notes and/or tapes of class lectures and discussions cannot be sold.

**Academic Support and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** Students with disabilities are responsible for registering with the Office of Student Disabilities Services in order to receive special accommodations and services. Please notify the instructor during the first week of classes if a reasonable
accommodation for a disability is needed for the course. A memorandum of accommodations from the USF Disability Services Office must accompany or follow this request during the first two weeks of the course. Verbal requests for accommodations are not authorized by the Academic Support and Accommodations for Students with Disabilities policy. A written memorandum of accommodation is required. On the USF Polytechnic Campus contact Ms. Mary Mittag, Disability Services Liaison, 863-667-7063. The USF Office number is 813-974-4309.

Attendance

Course Attendance at First Class Meeting. Students are required to attend the first class meeting of courses for which they registered prior to the first day of the term. Names of students who register prior to the first day of the term are printed on the first class roll for each course section. The first class roll is used by professors to drop students who do not attend the first day of class.

Students having extenuating circumstances beyond their control and who are unable to attend the first class meeting must notify the instructor or the department prior to the first class meeting to request waiver of the first class attendance requirement.

Students who add courses or late-register during the first week of classes will not be on the first class roll and, therefore, will not be dropped for non-attendance by the instructor. Students are responsible for dropping undesired courses in these categories by the 5th day of classes to avoid fee liability and academic penalty.

This policy is not applicable to courses in the following categories: Educational Outreach, Open University (TV), FEEDS Program, Community Experiential Learning (CEL), Cooperative Education Training, and courses that do not have regularly scheduled meeting days/times (such as, directed reading, or study, individual research, thesis, dissertation, internship, practica, etc.).

Illness. Out of concern for your health and the health of those with whom you contact and work with in class, please do not travel to class if you are ill, especially if you have a fever and know that your illness is contagious. Notify the instructor either by phone or e-mail that you will not be attending class. If you should make the attempt to attend class, thinking that you are feeling better, and are visibly ill, the instructor reserves the right to send you home out of concern for you and others.

For extended illness (e.g., missing three or more consecutive class sessions), the instructor reserves the right to require medical documentation for the necessity of the absences and clearance from a doctor that it is safe for you and others for you to return to class.

Medical or Family Emergency. If a medical or family emergency should occur and at the time you are not able to contact the instructor prior to class to indicate that you will be absent, take care of the emergency and notify the instructor of the absence and circumstances as soon as reasonable.
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Religious Observances: Students who anticipate the necessity of being absent from class due to the observation of a major religious observance must provide notice of the date(s) to the instructor, in writing, by the second class meeting.

Academic Dishonesty: Plagiarism is defined as "literary theft" and consists of the unattributed quotation of the exact words of a published text, or the unattributed borrowing of original ideas by paraphrase from a published text. On written papers for which the student employs information gathered from books, articles or oral sources, each direct quotation, as well as ideas and facts that are not generally known to the public at large, must be attributed to its author by means of the appropriate citation procedure. Citations may be made in footnotes or within the body of the text. Plagiarism also consists of passing off as one's own, segments or the total of another person's work.

Punishment for academic dishonesty will depend on the seriousness of the offense and may include receipt of an "F" with a numerical value of zero on the item submitted, and the "F" shall be used to determine the final course grade. It is the option of the instructor to assign the student a grade of F or FF (the latter indicating academic dishonesty) in the course.

Grade Dispute/Grievance: The student must first make a reasonable effort to resolve his or her grade dispute or grievance with the instructor concerned, with the date of the incident triggering the dispute/grievance clearly identified (i.e., the issuance of a grade; the receipt of an assignment). The instructor will accommodate a reasonable request to discuss the grade or incident in question and will attempt to resolve the issue.

If the situation cannot be resolved or the instructor does not respond to the student's attempts to contact the instructor, the student will file a notification letter within three weeks of the triggering incident to the USF Polytechnic Division Director. This should be a concise written statement of particulars and must include information pertaining to how, in the student's opinion, University policies or procedures were violated. The USF Polytechnic Division Director will provide a copy of this statement to the instructor and to the USF Polytechnic Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs. Grade disputes or issues that have not been identified by the student within 21 days of the triggering incident will not be considered.

If the situation cannot be resolved at the Division level, the USF Polytechnic Assistant Vice President for Academic Affairs will guide the student through the campus-level process. Additional information on the academic grievance process can be found in the Undergraduate and Graduate Catalogs.

Student Code of Conduct: The University of South Florida Polytechnic values a community based on the principles of integrity, civility, and respect. As such, the USFP community expects students to behave in a manner that supports these principles. The Student Code of Conduct is a document which describes behavior that is counteractive to these principles and how the university will hold students accountable to those inappropriate behaviors. The Student Code of Conduct can be found at the following link: http://www.poly.usf.edu/documents/Student-Code-of-Conduct.pdf
Instructor’s Right to Modify the Course Syllabus.

As the instructor of record of this course, I reserve the right to modify the course syllabus at any time during the course to address changes needed in content, course resources, assignments, due dates, etc. Changes will be made so as not to impact negatively students’ grades.