EDLD 6384: Qualitative Research Methods

Educational Administration and Research
Texas A & M Corpus Christi

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Course Description
This course reviews the theoretical and methodological approaches to qualitative research. Students will read and evaluate reports of qualitative research in education and identify methodological issues.

Required Readings


Recommended Readings


Qualspace Online
For this class, you will be using a social networking site to discuss topics, reflect on questions asked in class, and respond to each other. This is a way for you to create and participate in a community of practice with your peers while you become more literate in technology. Additionally, you will also have ownership of an independent space outside of the University to which you can have immediate access.

http://qualspace.ning.com
Own Choice Book Reviews

Choose ONE of the following:


You are welcome to find another text suitable to your interest for your book review and I welcome you to suggest that to the reading list for the “Own Choice Book Reviews” as long as it is approved by me. The text should be entirely based on qualitative theories, data collection, analysis, and representation of primary research.

Support of Conceptual Framework

This course is designed to prepare students as qualitative researchers in their respective fields. This course aims to provide students with the appropriate pedagogical and methodological skills in qualitative inquiry so that students can design research projects that incorporate qualitative methods.

Methods of Instruction

This course is designed with multiple methods of instruction to respond to multiple forms of learner needs. These methods include but are not limited to:

- Interactive lectures
- Games
- PowerPoint presentation
- Hands-on application
- Group discussions
- Dyad and Triad collaborative work
- Qualspace – Online collaborative discussion work
It is more important to me that you understand the concept than memorize and regurgitate for me in assignments. Therefore, this class would be focused on testing your understanding and critical thinking and application of concepts.

**Course Objectives**

1. Identify and explain the range of problems addressed by qualitative research. What is qualitative research? What are the different ways it is conceptualized? How does it define problems? What are its origins?

2. Reflect on your own presuppositions and subjectivities in regard to the educational research processes.

3. Specify the units of analysis examined in qualitative research and the nature of explanations generated. What kinds of human phenomena does qualitative research examine? What goals does it attempt to achieve?

4. Identify the tasks and processes required to formulate appropriate research problems within educational settings, to design relevant qualitative research strategies for examining such problems to select pertinent data sources, data collection methods, and data analysis methods, and to assess the results of such efforts.

5. Examine ethical dilemmas and issues related to the research process.

6. Recognize exemplars of qualitative research derived from varying approaches and traditions, identify the goals and presuppositions of these different exemplars, and critically assess the designs for their accomplishment of specified research goals.

7. Develop an understanding of the relationship educational theorizing to the research process through an examination of a variety of theoretical orientations.

8. Formulate ways to compare and contrast different approaches to human inquiry: positivist, postpositivist, critical, feminist, and developments of these varying approaches, underlying values and assumptions, and their strengths and limitations.

9. Analyze the basic assumptions and implications of the identified research traditions and specify the inter-relationships among them. What assumptions about reality, knowledge, truth, rationality, and value does each tradition entail?

**General Expectations**

1. This is a graduate level class and as such your conduct in class should reflect accordingly. This means that you will come to class prepared, complete all the assignments, and not request extra-credit assignments at the end of the semester should your grade be below your expectations. **There will be NO extra credit assignments under any circumstances.**
2. We are in a multicultural learning environment. I expect that you remain aware of and sensitive to educational research issues emerging from multiple perspectives and integrate into your own as you construct your arguments in class and in your assignments.

3. This class requires a lot of time, preparation, and understanding and application of critical concepts in educational research. You will need to stay on top of things in order to perform well in this class. If you find that you are offering me multiple excuses for your inability to hand in assignments on time, attend all classes, and prepare adequately, then you should reconsider how you prioritize this class and whether or not this class is appropriate for you to take at this time.

4. There are some basic competencies that I expect you will have in order to perform well in this class. These are:
   - Ability to proof read your assignments before submitting
   - Ability to cite references when making general and/or specific statements that are not entirely your own
   - Ability to communicate effectively when you do not understand the instruction or expectations about assignments
   - Ability to connect to the Internet, download required materials, and post required materials as needed. I will not entertain excuses emerging from last minute computer troubles. So plan ahead and have back up plans in place should something go wrong.
   - Should you miss a class or come in late, it is your responsibility to catch up on what has been covered during your absence. I will not repeat my instruction individually to people who are late, tardy, or absent during instruction.

Specific Class Policies
The following outlines specific class policies in order to ensure a positive and professional learning environment.

1. Attendance and Participation
You are expected to attend and participate in all classes. Participation can include but not limited to, raising thought-provoking questions grounded in the class material, listening attentively to peers, not dominating discussions, and coming to class prepared. Because this class will cover a lot of material in a very short period of time, any more than one excused absence will cause a deduction of two points per absence from your final grade. You are responsible for materials covered during your absence. Any discussion of explanation for your absences should be done privately so as not use our limited class time with individual scheduling concerns.

2. Tardiness and Courtesy to Peers
I see us as professional scholars and therefore we should treat our learning environment with professional respect. Class will begin and end on time and anyone who arrives or leaves the
class five minutes late or early respectively will be marked tardy. Two tardies will equal an absence. This does not mean that there cannot be any exceptional situation. Please come and talk to me if such situations occur by the following class periods. I will NOT negotiate attendance at the end of the term so it is your responsibility to make sure you communicate with me about your extenuating circumstances.

3. Pagers and cell phones and other noise makers must be turned off during class.

4. Special Accommodations
It is the policy of the Texas A & M Corpus Christi to accommodate students with disabilities pursuant to federal law, state law, and the University's commitment to equal educational opportunities. Any student with a disability who needs accommodation, for example in seating placement or in arrangements for examinations, should inform the instructor with a letter from Student Disability Services.

Texas A & M Corpus Christi does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the recruitment and admission of students, the recruitment and employment of faculty and staff, and the operation of any of its programs and activities, as specified by federal laws and regulations. The student has the responsibility of informing the course instructor (at the beginning of the course) of any disabling condition, which will require modification to avoid discrimination. Faculty are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodation" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Student responsibility primarily rests with informing faculty at the beginning of the semester and in providing authorized documentation through designated administrative channels.

5. Professional Conduct and Academic Honesty
Professional conduct is expected in this course. Professional conduct includes, among others, interactions with peer colleagues, faculty, timely completion of assigned tasks and responsibilities; adherence to professional ethical standards; and adherence to University policies regarding plagiarism (see Student Handbook). Cheating, plagiarism and other forms of academic honesty will result in disciplinary actions.

All written work submitted must be the student’s original work and conform to the guidelines of the American Psychological Association (APA) available online and via their publications. This means that any substantive ideas, phrases, sentences, and/or any published ideas must be properly referenced to avoid even the appearance of plagiarism. Plagiarism includes, but is not limited to, the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the published or unpublished work of another person without full or clear acknowledgment. It also includes the unacknowledged use of materials prepared by another person or agency in the selling of term papers of other academic materials. It is the student’s responsibility to know all relevant university policies concerning plagiarism. Any documented cases of plagiarism can and will result in dismissal from the course with a failing grade, and may result in other more serious sanctions by the College of Education.
5. Assignment Expectations
All assignments are mandatory and must be typed, double spaced, written in Times New Roman 12 point font with 1 inch margins, and adhere to the guidelines as stated by the American Psychological Association (APA).

Assignments should be submitted on the due date before class begins. All students should sign an assignment submission sheet. If you must miss a deadline, you must let me know before the due date of the assignment. Late work will only be accepted for half credit if completed by the following class meeting. No late work will be accepted after one class meeting from when the assignment was due. There will be NO exceptions. Yes this means YOU.

If I do not have your assignment and your name does not appear on the assignment submission sheet, you will receive a zero on that assignment. If you fail to notify me of any problems associated with your work (grading error, missing graded assignment) within one class meeting after I have returned graded materials, then I will not be able to negotiate an alternate arrangement with you. Therefore, stay on top of things, monitor your work, and make sure that you talk to me immediately if there are problems.

7. End of Semester Negotiations
I will not entertain any end of semester negotiations about grades. However, I will support you in every way possible during the semester to ensure that perform well in the class if you communicate any difficulties or concerns with the material with me. Therefore, I recommend that you take full advantage of a supportive learning environment designed to ensure your success. Your grade in the course is a direct reflection of your engagement in your own learning process.

Please understand that, despite the strict expectations outlined above, I do care about you as individuals and am always willing to listen and be flexible in order to help you have a successful semester if you are faced with unusually difficult circumstances. Please be in touch with me if you want a conference to explain your circumstances. I believe that most professors share this attitude, but often, we do not know enough about our students to be of help to them. Although it may seem difficult to reach out, it is up to you to seek support when you need it. Do not wait until you have accumulated absences, fallen behind, and failed to do the required work to discuss any personal difficulties that are affecting your performance.

Grading Policy
90-100 = A
80-89.9 = B
70-79.9 = C
60-69.9 = D
59.9 and below = F (fail)
Course Requirements

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<th>Activity</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research Purpose &amp; Questions</td>
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<td>Subjectivity Story</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theoretical Frameworks Poster</td>
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<td>Book Review</td>
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<td>Interview Project</td>
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<td>Qualspace Discussions</td>
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<td>Qualspace Nugget</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>Research Design</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Article Review (10 points)
You are to select one article reporting on qualitative research from those listed on the website and write a review. The review of the article should be between 2-4 pages long and should contain the following headings with your comments:

- Research purpose/questions
- Theoretical (conceptual framework)
- Data collection methods and sampling procedures
- Data analysis methods
- Findings/conclusions
- Personal reactions/critique

Research Purpose & Questions (10 points)
During the entire session, you will be working on designing a qualitative or quantitative research proposal. As we go through the term, you will be completing individual parts of that research proposal, incorporate my feedback in your revisions, and eventually submit a research proposal in a topical area of your interest. In this assignment you will write a research question(s) or problem(s) about the topic that you might have an interest in knowing. Refer to the rubric for this assignment for more details.

Subjectivity Story (5 points)
This assignment will involve a creative performance/representation of who you are in the context of your study. You may choose to represent your position using presentation, digital scrapbook, poetry, performance, songs, interpretive dance, etc. This purpose of this assignment is for you to explore your own assumptions about your research interest, why that particular topic appeals to you, and your personal and professional investment in the topic. Refer to the rubric for this assignment for more details.

Theoretical Frameworks Poster (10 points)
You will represent your understanding of various theoretical frameworks in an artistic creative form using some time of metaphor which will enable you to express your understanding
consistently across each framework. Points will be awarded both for the final product of the group and individual contribution to that final product.

**Book Review (10 points)**
You will review one book listed above under the choices. Your reviews are to be clearly written and well-organized and should address the following elements:

- Research Purpose/Questions
- Theoretical (Conceptual) Framework
- Data Collection Methods and Sampling Procedures
- Data Analysis Methods
- Findings
- Conclusions
- Personal Reactions/Critique

**Interview Project (20 points)**
You will be required to do one audio-taped interview in this course. The participant and the topic can be of your choice. All the interviews would be approved through a class IRB approval which means that you cannot publish from these findings. You would have to get an individual IRB approval if you feel that you might want to publish from these findings. Engagement in this project is designed to give you a thorough introduction into the design, data collection, and data interpretation experiences within a research project.

**Qualspace Nugget (10 points)**
In this project, you may choose to work in collaboration with two or three people or individually, in order to produce your final product. During the semester, we will be discussing various issues of qualitative research. You will also get a chance to reflect on your own journey of learning qualitative methodology in ways that are meaningful to you. Before the semester ends, I want you to produce one or two key areas/ideas/nuggets of information that you have learned and develop a resource page for those areas in our community qualspace site. Your information will be used for students in the future classes. Your nugget of information should contain the following:

- Basic description of the nugget
- How do the nugget functions in spaces of qualitative research?
- Who are the key players that have talked about this in qualitative research?
- What examples can you share that helps understand this nugget in an accessible manner to someone who is new to qualitative research?
- Provide a bibliography for information related to the nugget(s) of your choice.

We will discuss this project in more details as we get closer to the deliverable due dates.
**Qualspace Discussions (5 points)**

You will be prompted for using the qualspace as an extended discussion and reflection forum. I expect that you will participate in discussions with each other substantively and critically instead of stating, “I agree.” This is part of the reflective process of qualitative inquiry. Qualitative inquiry is just as much about the process as it is about the product. So periodically, I will require you to discuss topics relevant to explore your understanding and your journey. You are also free to discuss topics of your own as a way to supplement discussions of topics that did not receive adequate time during the class. Remember the more you engage with these topics, the more crystallized your understanding will become.

**Research Design (20 points)**

You will design a research project that can be used in your graduate process (additional qualitative courses, a research study for a publishable article, pilot study for your dissertation, etc.) This proposal will include the following sections:

1. **Background of the Problem**: What is the scholarly literature that informs this work? What do we already know from research about this problem? What are the gaps in the literature? How will your study contribute to this literature? (You can use your work from earlier assignment in this class).
2. **Research Purpose and Research Questions** (You can use your work from earlier assignment in this class).
3. **Theoretical Framework**: What are the theories that are informing this work? (You can use your work from earlier assignment in this class).
4. **Site of Research**: Describe the site where you will be working. Why this site and not another? What will being in this site allow you to do? What is your rationale for selecting this site?
5. **Selecting Participant(s)** – Who are your participants? What is your rationale for selecting these participants and not others? What are your selection criteria?
6. **Risks and Benefits** – What are the risks and benefits for your participants? What contributions can you see emerging out of your study?
7. **Methods of Data Collection and Analysis** – What are the specific methods you will use to generate the data you need to answer your research question?
8. **Implementation** – Describe what you will do, how, when, and why. This will be mostly a chronological account of your plans for your research.
9. **Consultation** – Who will you consult with you as you engage in your project? Will you work within the context of a research group? With a peer-debriefer? Will you do member checks? Who else will help you?
10. **Ethical and Political Considerations** – What ethical and political issues may emerge as you engage in this study? How will you build strategies into your design to address these issues?
11. **Representation** – How might you write up your study? Who do you consider your audience(s)? What genre(s) will be most appropriate for those intended audiences?
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Pages/References</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 20</td>
<td>Introduction to qualitative research</td>
<td>Syllabus introduction</td>
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<td>Continuum of research</td>
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<td>Nature of qualitative research</td>
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<td>January 27</td>
<td>Exploring Qualitative Research</td>
<td>Bhattacharya Handbook – week 1</td>
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<td>February 3</td>
<td>Research Topics and Design</td>
<td>Bhattacharya Handbook – Week 2</td>
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<td>Crotty – Chapter 1: Introduction: The Research Process (website)</td>
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<td>Crotty – Chapter 2: Positivism: The march of science (website)</td>
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<td>February 10</td>
<td>Theoretical frameworks: “Isms” and application</td>
<td>Bhattacharya Handbook – Week 3</td>
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<td>Creswell – Chapter 2: Philosophical, Paradigm, and Interpretive Frameworks</td>
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<td><em>Activity: Article Review</em></td>
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<td>February 17</td>
<td>Theoretical frameworks: “Isms” and application</td>
<td>Bhattacharya Handbook – Week 4</td>
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<td>Creswell – Chapter 3: Designing a Qualitative Study</td>
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<td>Creswell – Chapter 5: Five different qualitative studies</td>
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<td><em>Activity: Research Purpose and Questions</em></td>
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<td>February 24</td>
<td>Qualitative Interviews</td>
<td>Bhattacharya Handbook – Week 5</td>
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Activity: Mock Interviews
Activity: Research Purpose and Questions
ARTICLE REVIEW DUE

March 3

Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry
Bhattacharya Handbook – Week 6
Creswell – Chapter 4: Five Qualitative Approaches of Inquiry

Activity: If this framework was a paradigm
Activity: Subjectivity Story
RESEARCH PURPOSE AND QUESTIONS DUE

March 10

Data Collection
Bhattacharya Handbook – Week 7
Creswell – Chapter 7: Data Collection

Activity: Theoretical Framework Poster Progress
SUBJECTIVITIES STORIES PERFORMANCES DUE

March 16-20

SPRING BREAK

March 24

Application and Ethics in Qualitative Research
Bhattacharya Handbook – Week 8


March 31

Data Analysis and Representation

Bhattacharya Handbook – Week 9
Creswell – Chapter 8: Data Analysis and Representation

Book review circles
Transcribe interview data (this needs to be completed before we meet in class next time)

April 7

BOOK REVIEW DUE
Inductive Analysis activity for the Interview Project
Work on Theoretical Framework

April 14

ONLINE CLASS
Finish transcribing interview. Bring Transcribed Interview to Class
Work on Interview Project

April 21

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK POSTER DISPLAY (DETAILS TBA)
Qualitative Nugget Project Discussion
Work on interview project

April 28

Work on Research Project in Class
Touch base on qualitative nugget project
INTERVIEW PROJECT DUE

May 5

Qualitative Nugget Project Due
Research Design Project Wrap-Up
End of Class Party

May 11

RESEARCH DESIGN DUE (via email or hard copy)

Any part of the syllabus can be changed based on class needs and instructor discretion. All changes will be notified to the students in writing. I reserve the option to widen the point range for letter grades.