**Seminar in Qualitative Communication Research**

**COM 473 -- Fall, 2019 –Thursday, 6:30-9:20, Fell 125 (Sec. 02)**

[**John Baldwin**](http://www.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/)**—**[**School of Communication**](http://www.communication.ilstu.edu/)**--**[**Illinois State University**](http://www.ilstu.edu/)

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| **Instructor:** John R. Baldwin | **Office:** Fell Hall 420 |
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| **Web:** <http://www.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/> | **Office Phone:** (309) 438-7110 |
| [Reading List](file:///C:\Users\Owner\Documents\Fall%202014\473\Readings473.htm) | [Writing Academese](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/WritingAcademese.htm) |

**Required Texts**:

* Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2017). *Qualitative communication research methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage. ISBN: 9781452256825
* Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks: Sage. ISBN: 9780761903437
* Additional readings available on ReggieNet or at Rapid Print (Nelson Smith basement)

**Catalog Description:**

Introduction to qualitative research methods including open-ended questionnaire, in-depth interview, conversation/ discourse analysis, rhetorical research, media analysis, and ethnography of communication. Prerequisite: COM 422, COM 497 (or instructor's permission).

**Course Objective:**

This course is designed to provide you with knowledge and skills necessary to evaluate qualitative research as it appears in scholarly writing and to perform qualitative research in the academic or organizational context with the rigor appropriate to that context. You will read sources detailing a variety of methods and conduct original research, both in-class exercises and as part of a major research project. Some methods have their own form of data analysis and write-up. However, since content analysis, journaling, and grounded theory are relevant to many of the areas, we will study these in more detail after coverage some of the methods.

**Specific Student Objectives:** By end of course, you should be able to:

* Understand, apply, and evaluate scholarly qualitative research
* Explain your own place in the research process (your values, biases, and intuition)
* Explain the main puRNoses, issues in each of several types of qualitative research
* Apply the concepts above to specific communication issues and questions
* Explain ethical implications at each stage of research
* Perform the various types of research at an introductory level
* Plan and execute an investigation of a communication question involving at least one of the methods introduced in class, demonstrating a greater knowledge of that area

**Course Texts and Readings:**

This course relies heavily on readings. You can utilize course and outside readings to understand the methods, as well as primary journal articles in which authors describe how they use the methods and you can see the types of results to which different methods lead. I will post examples on-line. I encourage you on example readings to look specifically to how the authors write up methods and findings sections.

This class has a reputation! That is, that it has *lots* of reading but is a lot of fun at the same time. Anticipate approximately 100 pages of reading per week. Some weeks we will have more, some less. An important skill in graduate school is to learn to pick up the main points and read quickly, sometimes not reading word for word. We will have a collaborative class—that is, you will be responsible for presenting portions of the readings in class and discussing and evaluating them. This will allow you to read those portions in more detail.

**Learning Activities and Evaluation**

You will learn the issues of qualitative research (paradigms, differences between methods, role of researcher to participants and data, ethical and evaluation issues) through in-class discussion of class readings, student summaries of journal articles, and final projects.

***Hands-On Exercises:*** Some class work will include in- and out-of class short methodological assignments to practice each of the methods. You will choose any three of the following.

* [Grounded-theory evaluation (in pairs)](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Grounded_Theory_Exercise.htm)
* [On-site observation with typed observation notes](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Observation_Exercise.htm)
* [Content analysis of open-ended questionnaire, interview or other data](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Thematic.htm)
* Conversation or discourse analysis (detailed transcription and inteRNretation)
* [Rhetorical/critical analysis (deconstruction of media text)](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Media_Analysis_Exercise.htm)
* [Personal/Research-related journal](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Journal_Exercise.htm)

If you choose the journal as one of your hands-on exercises, you can use it to investigate topics and think about your role in the research project, as well as to theorize about the findings of the research. Typical journal entries/in-class exercises might include:

* Self-reflection, bracketing [what are your values, biases, as you come into the research project?]
* A discussion of your metatheoretical/theoretical approach to research
* Ethics: What are ethical implications of your study?
* Journal memos (observation, procedural, theoretical/data analysis)
* Notes on journal articles/class readings as they pertain to your project

[***Abstracts***](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Abstract_Description.htm)***:*** Abstracts are summaries of journal articles, with divisions between main sections. You will summarize the argument that led to the study, the key details of methods and findings, and the strengths and limitations of the article as a qualitative study. We will do *two* of these—one on an article that uses the article you will use in your final project, and one on a different study that uses a different method; you should also skim other primary research articles on different methods to acquaint you with these. Please provide an electronic copy and a hard copy of the abstract to the instructor for the class, and a hard copy of the article.

***Final Research Paper:*** You will conduct original research, alone or in groups of no more than three students, during the course of the semester. You will then produce a conference-ready paper that shows rigor in the understanding, execution, evaluation, and write-up of qualitative research. That is, final papers are expected to be acceptable for submission at an academic conference. Final papers will be worth 25% of the total grade.

***Exams:*** I reserve the right to schedule one exam on the introductory materials (up to the first specific method), based on class grasp of material; however, there is no exam scheduled, with the assumption that you will learn the material best by practicing it and doing your final project.

***Class participation***, measured both in terms of quantity and quality of discussion showing reflection on assigned readings and methods) will account for 10% of the grade.

**Grading**

Grading will be based on the following. Abstracts will be due at the same time, but you should be ready to present it when we discuss the method. Short assignments are always due the class period after we have discussed the method on which it is based.

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| Assignment | Due Date (latest) | Points Possible |
| Abstract | 9/19/19  10/10/19 | \_\_\_\_ / 50  \_\_\_\_ / 50 |
| Hands-On Exercises (**Choose 3**)   * *Observation notes + memo* * *Thematic Analysis + memo* * *Grounded Theory Eval* * *CA/DA + memo* * *Media Analysi*s * *Journal (****min*** *10 well-developed), incl:* * *Overview of a project* * *Metatheoretical perspective* * *Ethics of project* * *Sample of article application* * *Sample of coding notes* | 09/26/19  10/17/19  10/25/19 [Fri electronic]  11/01/19 [Fri electronic]  11/8/19 [Fri electronic]  At final exam (with project) | \_\_\_\_ / 150 |
| Participation; in-class exercises |  | \_\_\_\_ / 50 |
| Final Research Project | At final exam | \_\_\_\_ / 200 |
| **TOTAL** |  | \_\_\_\_ / 500 |

**Policies**

1. Turn in work on time, unless arrangements are made.

2. Work ahead, especially on final project; have instructor review early drafts

3. Do not plagiarize. Plagiarized work will result in F for the assignment, with possible further repercussions.

4. Final paper should be in strict APA format (unless otherwise approved), 6th ed. Other assignments will have specified formats. See class examples and descriptions.

***Special Needs: Any student in need of a special accommodation for a documented disability should contact Student Access and Accommodation Services, 350 Fell Hall 438-5853 (voice), 438-8620 (TDD).***

**Course Syllabus: Topics and Readings**

**Updated 08/15/19**

Key: R = J = Journal Entry; OX= Out-of-Class Exercise, IX = In-Class Exercise. [Bracketed = optional];; L&T: Lindlof & Taylor; RN: ReggieNet or Reading Packet

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| **Wk** | **Topic** | **Readings/Assignments** |
| **1:** Aug 22 | **INTRO:**  **What is qualitative research?**  **Why does it matter?** | L&T Ch. 1; RN: Denzin & Lincoln 5 stages reading |
| **2:** Aug 29 | **UNIT 1: Theoretical Backgrounds**  [***Metatheoretical issues***](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Lindlof2.htm)***:***   * Paradigms * Intellectual fights in academia   Roots of Qualitative Research   * *Verstehen* and all that stuff * Phenomenology*,* whatever that is * Hermeneutics and other very exciting things | RN: Potter 3 (Opt: Burrell & Morgan 1, 3)  Optional: RN: Denzin & Lincoln 5 stages reading  L&T 2 [2 sections] & 3 [all]  J1: reflection; imagine a project |
| **3:** Sept 5 | **UNIT 2: Setting up the Study** [Practical issues](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Lindlof3&4.htm)  * Access * Sampling, etc. | **Meet at Pub II**  L&T 4 & 5  RN: Lincoln & Guba, Ch. 8 (pp. 187-220)  IX: Create open-ended questionnaire  Exs: Imahori & Cupach; Collier  J2: metatheoretical stance |
| **4:** Sept 12 | * [ethical issues](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Ethics&Worth.htm) * [project evaluation](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Ethics&Worth.htm) | RN: House, Smith, Goodalll (1990, 167-201)  RN: Lincoln & Guba. 11 (pp. 289-331)  OX: Collect open-ended questionnaire  J3: ethical issues **IRB content due** |
| **5:** Sept 19 | **UNIT 3: F2F Methods & Analysis**  [***Ethnography (of Comm)***](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Ethnography.htm) | L&T 6  OL: Philipsen (1989) (pp. 258-268)  Conquergood (1991) (pp. 179-194)  **Abstracts Due** |
| **6:** Sept 26 | [In-depth Interviews](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Interviews.htm) | L&T 7  RN McCracken (1988) Ch. 3 (pp. 29-52)  IX: Interview formats  OX: 1 hour observation notes |
| **7:** Oct 3 | [Focus Groups; Case Studies](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/FocusGroups.htm) | Morgan (whole book)  Sage Focus Group Series; class reports  IX: Focus Group!? |
| **8:** Oct 10 | Data Analysis 1:  [Coding & theorizing](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Data_Analysis.htm) | **Meet at the Rock;** bring calculator ☺  L&T 9-10  RN: Braun & Clarke (Opt: Baxter, 1991)  IX: Content Analysis & Reliability  Abstract #2 due (latest possible) |
| **9:** Oct 17 | Data Analysis 2  [Grounded Theory](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Grounded_Theory.htm) | Strauss & Corbin, Chs 6-9  Building a grounded theory: narrative analysis; Charmaz?  OX: Thematic analysis |
| **10:** Oct 24 | **UNIT 4: OTHER METHODS**  [***Conversation/Discourse Analysis***](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/CADA.htm) | RN: Atkinson, & Heritage, 1984 (pp. ix-xvi); Discourse. (pp. 179-196).  RN: Clayman and Gill  [Optional: Ten Have (1999, pp. 3-26, 101-128)]  RN: Blum-Kulka, (1997, pp. 38-63);  OX: Grounded Theory Evaluation (F) |
| **11:** Oct 31 | [Media Analysis](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/Media_Notes.htm)  * Review: Paradigms, sources * Analyzing Texts * Material culture * Cultural thematic analysis | L&T 8  RN: Turner, 1990, Ch.1;  RN: Berger, Semiotics, Ch. 1;  IX: Media Analysis: website; Pokémon!?  OX: Conversation or Discourse Analysis (F) |
| **12:** Nov 7 | * Semiotic analysis * Postmodern analysis | RN: Connor (PM), Chs 6-7.  IX: Ad & Website analysis  OX: Media or Internet analysis (F) |
| **13:** Nov 14 | ***Rhetorical Analysis*** | **Readings TBA [NCA]**  **Guest speaker** |
| **14:** Nov 21 | **UNIT 5:** [**Writing & Practice**](http://my.ilstu.edu/~jrbaldw/473/WriteUp.htm)  From "text" to "text"  QL research in the workplace  Critique & Convergence | L&T 11  RN: Potter, Chs. 16-17 |
| Nov 28 | Thanksgiving Holiday/Fall Break | |
| **15:** Dec 5 | **Work Week!** | **Work on final projects, ask Baldwin Qs** |

Final Presentations: TBA