

**CS661/EP661: Advanced Qualitative Research in Education**

Prerequisite: EP555/CS560 (or equivalent)

Spring 2011

**Time and place:**

Tuesdays, 5:05- 7:45 pm

BEC501 (please confirm location by checking the online timetable prior to the first night of class)

**Professor:**

Trena Paulus, Ph.D., Associate Professor

Department of Educational Psychology & Counseling (EPC)

515 Bailey Education Complex; 974-8144; tpaulus@utk.edu

I am generally on campus 9-5, M-F and am happy to arrange a meeting with you during those times. I also answer e-mails within 24 hours (usually much sooner).

**GA/tech support:**

Debby Lee, dlee41@utk.edu

Jessica Lester, jlester5@utk.edu

**Course description:** This course is designed for advanced students interested in refining their understanding and skills related to doing qualitative research in education settings. Students will not be enrolled unless they have had an introductory course in qualitative methods. The focus of the course will be on deepening your understanding of qualitative research methodologies, in particular refining data analysis skills. Students will have great flexibility to work on individualized projects. The class will be run in a workshop/research group format.

This course is the second part of a two course sequence. The first course is CSE560/EP555: Introduction to Qualitative Research in Education. These courses are also part of the *Graduate Certificate in Qualitative Research*. For more information please visit: [http://epc.utk.edu/gradcert\\_qualresearch.html](http://epc.utk.edu/gradcert_qualresearch.html).<sup>1</sup>

**Disability services:** Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss specific needs. Please contact the Office of Disability Services at 865-974-6087 in Dunford Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

**Course philosophy:** Becoming an academic researcher (the traditional purpose of doctoral study) requires a commitment to intensive and extensive reading, writing, reflecting, analyzing and synthesizing. This process applies not only to the body of knowledge in your discipline, but the body of knowledge around the methodology you choose to use for your research. This process is a *creative* process, and, as with any creative process, takes a good deal of uninterrupted time. (A rule of thumb is that for every credit hour of class you attend, you should be investing three hours of work outside of class.) I try to use assignments in my classes to as opportunities to develop these skills (which will be put to good use, at minimum, in your dissertation work.) I consider the assigned readings and assignments to be merely starting points for your exploration this semester. My assumption is that you will be an active learner and co-participant in this class – engaging with

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<sup>1</sup> My own areas of research are discourse analysis methodologies, collaborative inquiry, discursive psychology, digital tools for qualitative research, and computer-mediated communication/discourse. I will be teaching EP631: Discourse analysis in educational environments in fall 2011 (part of the Certificate program); EP604: Digital tools for qualitative research in second summer session 2011 and IT532: Introduction to computer-mediated communication in second summer session 2011.

the concepts and going the extra steps it takes to fully understand them. For example, if you encounter readings that you don't fully understand, take the time to look up key concepts, vocabulary and jargon in other resources. Exploit the references lists in articles you read– it is there that you will find the network of scholarly relationships that will help you become part of your community of practice.

**Required materials:**

1. Grbich, C. (2007). *Qualitative data analysis: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
2. Saldana, J. (2009). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
3. *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. 6<sup>th</sup> edition.

**Other potentially useful resources (I will bring these to the first night of class):**

1. Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
2. Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
3. Lewins, A. & Silver, C. (2007). *Using software in qualitative research: A step-by-step guide*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
4. Major, C.H. & Savin-Badin, M. (2010). *An introduction to qualitative research synthesis: Managing the information explosion in social science research*. New York: Routledge.
5. Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
6. Willis, J.W., Jost, M. & Nilakanta, R. (2007). *Foundations of qualitative research: Interpretive and critical approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

**Qualitative research tools:** Technology is becoming increasingly important for qualitative researchers – here are some useful tools you may want to invest in at some point. <sup>2</sup>

*Data collection*<sup>3</sup>

- Digital voice recorder
- Transcribing machine (with foot pedal) and/or
- **Inqscribe:** transcription software, free trial available, \$39 with academic discount. Available at <http://inqscribe.com/>. It is Mac/PC compatible.
- Headphones
- Netbook capable of running data analysis & transcription software

*Data analysis*

- **Atlas.ti** is our recommended qualitative data analysis software. Large scale qualitative research projects are close to impossible without using a qualitative data analysis software package of some sort. UT provides free access to students to a server-based version of Atlas.ti. To access the software, visit <http://analysis.utk.edu>. You will need your NetID and password to access the site. Atlas.ti can be purchased for \$99 (student rate) at <http://www.atlasti.com>. **Please note:** Atlas.ti is currently only compatible with PCs.

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<sup>2</sup> I will be teaching a special topics course during second summer session, EP604: Digital tools for qualitative research.

<sup>3</sup> If you collect interview data as part of your project, you are expected to do your own transcribing for this project.

- **Transana** is “software for professional researchers who want to analyze digital video or audio data. Transana lets you analyze and manage your data in very sophisticated ways. Transcribe it, identify analytically interesting clips, assign keywords to clips, arrange and rearrange clips, create complex collections of interrelated clips, explore relationships between applied keywords, and share your analysis with colleagues. The result is a new way to focus on your data, and a new way to manage large collections of video and audio files and clips.” Transana is available at <http://transana.com> for \$65. It is Mac/PC compatible.

**Attendance and participation expectations:** We will run the class much like a seminar, and those of you who have taken classes with me before will notice similarities and differences. I’ll vary whole group discussion with small group discussion and mini-lectures, but I may rely more on whole group discussions since the class size is likely to be small(ish.) I will not scaffold you so heavily in terms of providing discussion questions. Instead, as co-participants in this class, I will look to your weekly reading notes (see below) to set the agenda for each class. We’ll have some hands-on practice activities in addition to discussion about important concepts. As with most classes, what you get out of this class will be exactly what you put into it. With 600 level classes I also try to model the experience of being part of a collaborative research team – engaging in data sessions, workshops, and other activities that allows you to give and receive feedback from your peers in a meaningful and constructive manner.

I expect all of your submitted work (not counting the blog posts) to be written in a professional manner, starting with following APA style and ending with being carefully proofread, edited and polished. Come to every class session on time and be fully engaged.

1. Be prepared by having read assigned materials thoroughly and critically.
2. Check your UT email & Blackboard regularly for announcements.
3. Enthusiastically participate in group discussions.
4. We will engage in a lot of small group work, so please let me know in advance about any irregularities in your attendance &/or participation.
5. There are no excused absences or excused delays for assignment completion. As adults it is your choice whether or not to attend class and how to participate in class. My position as the professor, of course, is that you should be in every class. I am not in the position to give or withhold permission for you to miss class. I simply ask that you let me know whether or not we can expect you in class each week.
6. At the same time, late arrivals, early departures, absences &/or assignments submitted late will all negatively impact your participation grade. Participation entails being present and meeting the expectations outlined in this syllabus.
7. You are expected to complete your own work. You cannot re-submit work here that was done for previous classes.
8. No incompletes will be given.
9. If you plagiarize, you will receive a zero on the assignment, and I will contact your academic advisor for further consultation.
10. Please be sensitive in your class participation by not unfairly dominating discussions. The ability to listen fully and respond thoughtfully is as, if not more, important than being able to talk first and most frequently.

**Academic honesty**<sup>4</sup> and integrity is a responsibility of all members of the academic community. An honor statement is included on the application for admission and readmission. The applicant’s signature acknowledges that adherence is confirmed. The honor statement declares

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<sup>4</sup> From the Graduate Catalogue (<http://catalog.utk.edu/content.php?catoid=2&navoid=27>):

*An essential feature of the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, is a commitment to maintaining an atmosphere of intellectual integrity and academic honesty. As a student of the university, I pledge that I will neither knowingly give nor receive any inappropriate assistance in academic work, thus affirming my own personal commitment to honor and integrity.*

Students shall not plagiarize. **Plagiarism** is using the intellectual property or product of someone else without giving proper credit. The undocumented use of someone else's words or ideas in any medium of communication (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge) is a serious offense subject to disciplinary action that may include failure in a course and/or dismissal from the university. Some examples of plagiarism are

- Using without proper documentation (quotation marks and a citation) written or spoken words, phrases, or sentences from any source.
- Summarizing without proper documentation (usually a citation) ideas from another source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge).
- Borrowing facts, statistics, graphs, pictorial representations, or phrases without acknowledging the source (unless such information is recognized as common knowledge).
- Submitting work, either in whole or in part, created by a professional service and used without attribution (e.g., paper, speech, bibliography, or photograph).

Extreme caution should be exercised by students involved in collaborative research to avoid questions of plagiarism. If in doubt, students should check with the major professor and the Dean of the Graduate School about the project. Plagiarism will be investigated when suspected and prosecuted if established.

## **Course activities**

### *1. Reading notes & researcher reflections- 20%*

Engaging in researcher reflexivity is a major part of being a qualitative researcher. This semester you'll begin, or continue, a research journal in which you keep track of your questions, a-ha moments, ideas, and conundrums related to your work in this class.

Blogs are ideal locations for such journals since others can easily read and provide feedback on your ideas and questions. Blogger and Wordpress are two free blog hosting services. My recommendation is that you set up a blog for this assignment. Blogs can be password protected if you're more comfortable limiting access to only those of us in the class.

You may reflect on your blog as often as you like throughout the semester, but please post at least once a week. By each Monday night you should have written, at minimum, a reflection on the week's readings. The reflections should 1) demonstrate that you have critically read the assigned readings; and 2) raise questions that you would like us to discuss in class. I will be reviewing the blogs each Tuesday morning bright and early as I prepare for class. I encourage you to read each other's blogs regularly, too. I recommend that you set up an RSS feed like Google reader or Bloglines to easily keep track of new posts made on your classmates' blogs.

Post your blog URL and first post by January 24.

### *2. Skill building activities- 10%*

Here are some workshops and resources that you should become familiar with at this stage of your doctoral study. Choose two to complete this semester. I highly recommend you attend a dissertation defense if you have never attended one before.

- Attend a dissertation defense or research presentation & write a brief summary/critique
- Schedule a session with our education librarian, Alan Wallace, on conducting database searches and setting up search alerts. If there's enough interest in this we can schedule a session together
- Attend a workshop on using Endnote. February 2 from 2-4 pm or March 1 from 3-5 pm:  
<http://www.lib.utk.edu/refs/endnote/>
- Attend the ATLAS.ti workshop through OIT. I recommend attending the session on Feb 28 at 10:10am-12:10pm 201 Humanities. Register here: <http://oit.utk.edu/workshops/data.php#atlas>
- Gain IRB approval for a study (not your dissertation) you would like to conduct this semester
- Propose a different skill building activity to Dr. Paulus

Post your selected skill building activities no later than February 1.

### 3. *Individual project - 40%*

The main skills emphasized in this course are 1) methodological competency and 2) data analysis skills. Thus your project should focus on one or both of these skills in some manner.

#### *Methodological competency*

- Identify key readings about the epistemology behind a research approach/methodology of your choosing
- Identify & analyze/critique empirical studies that have been conducted using that methodology, focusing on the epistemology/methodology – how the study was done & reported
- Identify & analyze/critique a dissertation that was written using that methodology, focusing on the epistemology/methodology – how the study was done & reported
- Bring a draft of your work to class for workshop
- Synthesize all of this in a way that will be relevant to your needs

#### *Data collection and/or analysis practice*

- Collect additional data if necessary, drawing upon skills learned in Intro to Qual
- Practice analyzing your existing and/or new data according to the methodology of your choosing and/or using the methods from Saldana
- Bring your data and/or analyses in for workshop sessions with the class for feedback
- Synthesize all of this in a way that will be relevant to your needs

#### *Deliverable ideas*

- Intensive reading in a particular area related to methodology and/or data analysis - w/ your own specified deliverable (e.g. epistemological portion of your dissertation, practice question for your comprehensive exam, data collection and/or analysis portions of an article for publication)
- The methodology & findings section of an article being written for publication, or for a pilot study for your dissertation
- A completed manuscript to be submitted for publication
- A draft of your dissertation proposal

- Something else that will help you meet your goals

A proposal for your final project should be posted in Blackboard before class on February 1.

#### 4. *Final presentation – 10%*

This is a chance to practice your academic presentation skills. You'll have 20 minutes (the average length of a dissertation defense / AERA conference presentation) to present the highlights of your final project to the class. Dress appropriately, practice ahead of time, organize your presentation keeping your audience in mind, use appropriate visual aids (prezi or ppt), maintain eye contact with your audience, etc. Final presentations will occur the last weeks of class.

#### 5. *Workshops and peer review- 10%*

The workshops are a chance for you to share your work with the class and get process feedback. It's your choice how to spend the time – we could listen together to an interview or read field notes and interpret together, review your raw data and discuss analyses, review a draft of your analysis, read a draft of your findings and discuss it together, or anything else that would be useful for you. Workshops are an example of how research and/or writing groups can work together to support the members of the group to strengthen their research skills. If you want the class to read something prior to your workshop time, please email that to us in advance (48 hours minimum). Workshops will occur after spring break.

On the last day of class you'll bring a draft of your final project and one other class member will read it and provide feedback to you. You'll use that feedback as you write your final draft of the paper.

#### 6. *Attendance and participation – 10%*

See expectations outlined earlier.

#### **Submitting written assignments.**

Completed assignments should be posted to the appropriate Blackboard discussion forum prior to the class session in which they are due.

Please save your files as "your last name-assignment description." For example, "Smith-final-proj-proposal.docx". This helps me organize the files as I download them from Blackboard.

I ask you to post assignments publicly so that you can get a sense of the many possibilities within qualitative research. I encourage you to read each other's work. If you are not comfortable posting your work, you can email your work to me privately.

I then download your assignments and insert my comments and feedback electronically in Word, then return it to you privately via e-mail. You should see comments inserted throughout your paper when it is returned. If you can't see these comments, please let me know.

All assignments must conform to the style and reference notation format outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. The APA manual is an essential tool for survival in graduate school. Please study it carefully and refer to it often. If you are unsure about particular APA formatting and citation

rules, refer to the manual. Points will be deducted from your papers if they are formatted incorrectly. See the class handout for additional guidance on appropriate style and formatting.

The ability to write in an appropriate academic manner is critical to successful graduate study and to qualitative research in particular. If you find that you need assistance with your writing, please visit the university's free Writing Center housed in the English department: <http://web.utk.edu/~english/writing/writing.shtml>. They do not proofread or edit your work, but they can help with idea development and organization – key elements of successful academic writing.

Another opportunity to improve your writing is by taking ENGLISH 462, WRITING FOR PUBLICATION, a course developed and taught in the English Department by Dr. Michael L. Keene. The course teaches the kind of writing involved in proposals, scholarly articles, theses, and dissertations and has received rave reviews from many doctoral students in our college.

**Assessment:** Grades are updated regularly in Blackboard. Final grades will be given according to the UT grading scale:

A=90-100%  
B+=85-89%  
B=80-84%  
C+=75-79%  
C=70-74%  
D=60-69%  
F=59% and below

*A Note Regarding Letter Grades:*

The defining characteristic of a successful graduate student is not your GPA, it is your ability to do research as evidenced by your publication record when you go on the job market. Nevertheless, many graduate students continue to be highly concerned about their grades. Thus, I am including this short explanation of my philosophy of letter grades. This class is different from other classes in that it is largely driven by you – you are proposing to develop particular skills and focus on an area of interest to you. Thus, my assessment of your performance will be based on whether you meet the goals outlined in your proposal and whether you have demonstrated your development of those skills in such a way that I am confident you are ready to move forward as a qualitative researcher. Meeting the course expectations and demonstrating competence will earn you a B, excelling in the work that you do, above and beyond what is expected, will earn you an A. Failing to meet the course expectations, such as failing to meet the goals outlined in your proposal, will earn you at minimum a C.

**TENTATIVE SCHEDULE, SUBJECT TO CHANGE**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Readings (posted in Blackboard)</b>	<b>Due BEFORE CLASS</b>
1, 1/18	Becoming an "independent" qualitative researcher	<p>Lovitts, B.E. (2005). Being a good course-taker is not enough: a theoretical perspective on the transition to independent research. <i>Studies in Higher Education</i> 30(2), 137-154.</p> <p>Boote, D.N. &amp; Beile, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. <i>Educational Researcher</i> 34(6), 3-15.</p> <p>Kilbourn, B. (2006). The qualitative doctoral dissertation proposal. <i>Teachers College Record</i> 108(4), 529-576.</p>	Introductions in Blackboard
2, 1/25	Review of philosophical foundations	<p>Grbich, Ch1-2</p> <p>Willis, J.W.(2007). World views, paradigms and the practice of social science research (Chapter 1). In <i>Foundations of Qualitative Research: Interpretive and Critical Approaches</i> (pp. 1-26). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.</p> <p>Crotty, M. (1998). Introduction: the research process (Chapter 1) and Positivism: the march of science (Chapter 2). In <i>The foundations of social science research: Meaning and perspective in the research process</i>. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications</p>	Reflective journal blogs set up & URLs posted, along with reading notes by Monday night January 24
3, 2/1	Approaches/ methodologies	Grbch, Ch 3-7	<p>Skill building activity proposal and final project proposal due</p> <p>Reading notes due by Monday night</p>
4, 2/8	Analysis	Grbch, Ch 8-13	Reading notes due by Monday night
5, 2/15	Writing it up & CAQDAS	<p>Grbch, Ch 14-17</p> <p>Atlas.ti/Transana/Inqscribe demonstration/discussion (Jessica Lester)</p>	Reading notes due by Monday night
6, 2/22	Coding & analytic memos	Saldana, Ch1-2	Reading notes due by Monday night
7, 3/1	First cycle coding	Saldana, Ch 3	Reading notes due by Monday night

8, 3/8	Second cycle coding, post-coding and pre-writing	Saldana, Ch 4-5	Reading notes due by Monday night
No class 3/17 Spring Break			
9, 3/22		Workshop	
10, 3/29		Workshop	
11, 4/5		Workshop	
12, 4/12		Workshop & final presentations	
13, 4/19		Final presentations	
14, 4/26		Peer review of final projects Course evaluation	Draft of individual projects due Course evaluations
Exam period, May 10		Individual projects due Skill building reports due	