

Journalism 454

Advanced Qualitative Methods in Journalism

Fall 2002
 Tuesday and Thursday, 11 a.m.- 12:15 p.m.
 Walter Williams 112

Syllabus

Instructor: Dr. Bonnie Brennen

Offices: 208 Neff Hall

Phone: 884-4568; e-mail: brennenb@missouri.edu

Office Hours: Tuesday, 9:30-10:30 a.m., 2-3 p.m.; Thursday, 9:30-10:30 a.m.,
 and by appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

This graduate seminar is designed to provide advanced training in qualitative approaches applicable to the study of journalism and mass communication. Students will focus on a variety of philosophical and conceptual approaches, as well as practical methodologies and tools that will help them to conduct scholarly research in their specific areas of interest.

COURSE TEXTS:

Denzin & Lincoln, eds. *The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues*. London: Sage, 1998.

One book related to the student's presentation topic chosen from Denzin and Lincoln's suggested reading list.

Additional Course Readings on reserve in the Journalism Library. All reserve readings are also available electronically, under J454, password "bonnie"

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Prerequisites

Journalism 454 is an advanced qualitative methods class. All students should have previously completed at least one qualitative methods course. Students are expected to have a basic understanding of several qualitative methods such as interviewing, ethnography and participant observation, history, oral history, legal and policy research, focus groups, textual analysis, rhetorical analysis, psychoanalytic analysis, ideological criticism, semiotics, and reception analysis.

Jensen and Jankowski, eds. *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communication Research* and Berger, *Media Research Techniques*, second edition are useful introductory qualitative methods texts.

The following additional introductory readings are on reserve in the journalism library:

Introduction to Qualitative Research:

Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture"
Christians and Carey, "The Logic and Aims of Qualitative Research"
Pauly, "A Beginners Guide to Doing Qualitative Research"

Interviewing:

Fontana and Frey, "Interviewing"
Sumpter, "Daily Newspaper Editors' Audience Construction Routines"

Ethnography and Participant Observation:

Bloch, "Political Bumper Stickers as a Communication Event in Israel"
Atkinson and Hammersley, "Ethnography and Participant Observation"

History:

Yodelis Smith, "The Method of History"
Smythe, "The Reporter, 1880-1900"

Oral History:

Thompson, "The Voice of the Past"
Anderson and Jack, "Learning to Listen. Interview Techniques and Analyses"
Brennen, "The Use of Oral Sources in Journalism History"
Morrissey, "On Oral History Interviewing"

Legal & Policy Research:

Barzun and Graff, "Truth, Causes, and Conditions"
Davis, "Personal Jurisdiction in Online Expression Cases"
Gillmor and Dennis, "Legal Research in Mass Communication"

Focus Groups:

Adams, "Television as Investigated Using Focus Group Techniques"
Greenbaum, "Focus Groups: An Overview"
Greenbaum, "Common Mistakes in Focus Groups"

Textual Analysis:

Lester-Roushanzamir and Roman, "Global Village in Atlanta: A Textual Analysis"

Rhetorical and Psychoanalytic Analysis:

Berger, "Psychoanalytic Criticism"
Coupland, "Styling Selves & Relationships in Over-50s Dating Advertisements"
Palmer & Duffy, "The Reality of Virtual Hate"

Ideological Criticism:

Berger, "Ideological Criticism"
Cormack, "Methods of Analysis"
Cormack, "Opening the Wall"

Semiotics:

Manning and Cullum-Swan, "Narrative, Content, and Semiotic Analysis"
Berger, "Semiotic Analysis"
Strinati, "Structuralism, Semiology and Popular Culture"

Reception Analysis:

Lotz, "Assessing Qualitative Television Audience Research"

Attendance and Participation:

In a seminar, attendance is by nature mandatory. Each student is obligated not merely to attend, but also to participate in each class session. To participate, each student must have prepared by completing all of the assigned readings and assignments and by thinking critically about each of those readings and assignments. The general class format will include class discussion on weekly readings each Tuesday and research-related activities each Thursday.

Class Discussants:

Each student will serve as a group leader/moderator for at least one of the topic areas addressed in the class. The instructor will assign topics during the first day of class. To prepare for this assignment, each student should not only master the assigned readings but must do additional reading on the topic. Students will select a book from the suggested readings list found in Denzin and Lincoln's text related to their topic area. Each student will prepare a three-page review of the book that will be distributed to all members of the class on the day of the presentation.

Assignments:

Students will complete two individual multi-part research assignments, one focusing on textual analysis and the other combining participant observation with interviewing.

Textual analysis:

STEP ONE: From Monday, September 2 through Sunday, September 15, students will keep a daily journal. The entries should be a minimum of one page in length and can be hand-written or typed. They can focus on personal or academic issues and thoughts but please keep in mind that students will be sharing these writings with other members of the class. Students should make sure that there is no information identifying them within the pages of the journal. Please submit a removable cover page with student identification and a separate brief biography or any other information that will help to explain the contents of the journal. The journal, coversheet, and biographical information should be turned in at the beginning of class on Thursday, September 19.

STEP TWO: Students will evaluate the journal they are given using a textual analysis, rhetorical analysis, psychoanalytic analysis, or ideological critique to help guide their assessment. Student analyses of the journals are due at the beginning of class on Thursday, September 26. Students should keep a copy of their analysis along with the journal that they evaluated.

STEP THREE: Students will re-evaluate the journal they previously analyzed with the benefit of the biographical material that they have been given. The final analysis and the original journal are due at the beginning of class on Thursday, October 3.

Participant Observation/Interviews:

STEP ONE: Students will observe and describe an event or activity. Students should take field notes during the initial observation that should last from six to eight hours. The observation can be done in one day or split over several separate observations. Field notes from the observation must be submitted with the final write-up.

Please note that October 29 and 31 have been set aside as research days for this assignment.

Participant Observation/Interviews continued:

STEP TWO: Each student should return to the observation site and interview at least two individuals connected with the event or activity. Students should tape the interviews and transcribe them, or take extensive notes. Interview transcriptions/notes must be submitted with the final write-up.

STEP THREE: After the observation and interviews, students should complete an analysis and interpretation of their observations. Students should also explain how the interviews interacted with the observations addressed in their field notes. The final analysis, field notes and interview transcriptions/notes are due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, November 5.

Research Paper:

Each student will be expected to complete a qualitative research project on a specific issue or problem that they would like to explore. The final research project should include: a statement of the research question, a discussion of the theoretical framework guiding the work, a literature review of some of the most relevant scholarly work related to the topic, a description of the qualitative method and how it is used, an analysis of the research, and a conclusion. The final research paper is due at the beginning of class on Thursday, December 12. Students will share their research with class members during the last week of classes, December 10 & 12.

Grading:

The instructor will use a percentage scale for computing grades:

90-100	A	The work is error free, intellectually rigorous, and shows and excellent understanding and command of the material
80-89 %	B	The work has few errors and shows a good effort at understanding the material
70-79%	C	The work has substantial errors and shows little progress toward gaining an understanding of the material
69 & below	F	The work shows no understanding of the assignment or was not completed in a timely manner

Grades are based on a 100% scale. The weight of assignments will be as follows:

Class Discussant and weekly participation:	20%
Textual Analysis:	20%
Participant Observation/Interviews:	20%
Research Paper and Oral Presentation:	40%

Expectations:

Students are expected to attend each class session. Make-ups or excused absences are given for illness, university excused activities, and for family and personal emergencies. If you know that you will be absent, please notify the instructor, in advance. Assignments must be turned in at the beginning of class on the date they are due. One full letter grade will be deducted for each day an assignment is late. Your written work should be of professional quality; spelling, grammar, and punctuation count. Please make sure that all work is your own and that all sources of information are accurately quoted and represented.

Any act of academic dishonesty as defined in the Missouri catalogue, the Journalism Master's Program Handbook (p. 7), or the M Book will result in a failing grade on the assignment. In addition, the student will be reported to the administration for official action. The following statement for academic dishonesty comes from the Provost's Office:

Academic honesty is fundamental to the activities and principles of a university. All members of the academic community must be confident that each person's work has been responsibly and honestly acquired, developed, and presented. Any effort to gain an advantage not given to all students is dishonest whether or not the effort is successful. The academic community regards academic dishonesty as an extremely serious matter, with serious consequences that range from probation to expulsion. When in doubt about plagiarism, paraphrasing, quoting to collaboration, consult the course instructor.

Academic misconduct includes the following: extensive use of materials from another author with or without citation/attribution, extensive use of materials from past assignments, or from current assignments in other classes. For in-class exams, academic misconduct includes conferring with classmates, copying/reading someone else's test and using notes and materials without prior permission. The School of Journalism is committed to the highest standards of academic and professional ethics and expects its students to adhere to those standards. Students are expected to observe strict honesty in academic programs and as representatives of school-related media. Should any student be guilty of plagiarism, falsification, misrepresentation, or other forms of dishonesty in any assigned works, he/she will be subject to a failing grade from the course instructor and disciplinary action will be recommended pursuant to University regulations. Classroom misconduct will not be tolerated. Forgery, obstruction or disruption of teaching, physical abuse or safety threats, theft, property damage, disruptive, lewd, or obscene conduct, abuse of computer time, repeated failure to attend class and/or repeated failure to participate or respond in class all constitute misconduct and may result in disciplinary action.

Instructor's Academic Freedom Policy:

Some of the material dealt with in this class may be perceived as controversial or offensive to some students. While students are encouraged to respond to the material and to freely offer their opinions, if any student becomes uncomfortable with any of the topics, or finds any of the material questionable, that student is urged to see the instructor about an alternative assignment.

Religious Holidays:

Students are excused for religious holidays. Students should notify the instructor in advance if they plan to observe a religious holiday.

Statement for ADA:

If you have special needs as addressed by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and you need assistance, please notify the course instructor immediately. Reasonable effort will be made to accommodate your special needs. All students seeking ADA assistance should be registered with MU's Office of Disability Services, A038 Brady Commons, 882-4696.

Class Schedule

Week 1: August 27 & 29 – Class introduction

Week 2: September 3 & 5 – Entering the Field of Qualitative Research

READ: Chapter 1, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 1-34

Begin journal assignment Monday, September 2

Week 3: September 10 & 12 – History of Qualitative Methods

READ: Chapter 2, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 41-110

DISCUSSANT:

Final journal entry is Sunday, September 15

Week 4: September 17 & 19 – Traditions, Preferences & Postures

READ: Chapter 3, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 111-129

DISCUSSANT:

Journals Due Thursday, September 19

Week 5: September 24 & 26 – Working the Hyphens: Reinventing Self & Other

READ: Chapter 4, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 130-155

DISCUSSANT:

Journal Analysis Due Thursday, September 26

Week 6: October 1 & 3 – Politics & Ethics in Qualitative Research

READ: Chapter 5, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 156-184

DISCUSSANT:

Revised Journal Analysis Due Thursday, October 3

Week 7: October 8 & 10 – Competing Paradigms

READ: Chapter 6, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 195-220

DISCUSSANT:

Week 8: October 15 & 17 – Rethinking Critical Theory

READ: Chapter 8, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 260-299

DISCUSSANT:

Week 9: October 22 & 24 – Constructivist & Interpretivist Approaches

READ: Chapter 7, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 221-259

DISCUSSANT:

Week 10: October 29 & 31 – **Outside Research on Participant**

Observations/Interviews

Week 11: November 5 & 7 – Feminisms and Models

READ: Chapter 9, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 300-332

DISCUSSANT:

Participant Observation/Interviews due Tuesday, November 5

Week 12: November 12 & 14 – Ethnic Modeling

READ: Chapter 10, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 333-358

DISCUSSANT:

Week 13: November 19 & 21 – Audiencing: Cultural Practice and Cultural Studies

READ: Chapter 11, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 359-378

DISCUSSANT:

Week 14: November 26 & 28

NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING BREAK

Week 15: December 3 & 5 – What Comes After ‘Post’? The Fifth Moment?

READ: Chapters 12 and 13, Denzin & Lincoln, pgs. 383-429

DISCUSSANT:

Week 16: December 10 & 12 – Student Presentations

Research Papers Due Thursday, December 12