TEXT: There are 2 required texts. Additional Course reading materials will be distributed in class

2. *Constructing Grounded Theory* Charmaz

**COURSE OBJECTIVES:**
This course provides a general overview of qualitative research. One part of the course describes what qualitative research is and why you might want to use qualitative research methods. The second part of the course describes a variety of methods that researchers use to collect and analyze qualitative data. After you complete this course, you should have a clear idea of what qualitative research is and the work that is involved in doing this kind of research.

On one hand, this course does not assume that you personally will be doing any qualitative research in the future. Instead, the assumption is that you are likely to encounter such research in your future career, so you need to be an effective “consumer” of qualitative research, even if you yourself are not going to be a “producer” of qualitative research.

On the other hand, if you do plan on doing a qualitative thesis or dissertation, the course readings, exercises, and assignments -- culminating with the final paper -- will walk you through the steps of developing a qualitative research proposal.

**Learning Goals**
Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate:
- increased understanding of strengths, limitations and fundamental logic of qualitative research
- increased awareness of the history of qualitative methods
- increased awareness of the issues relating to conducting field research
- increased awareness of the issues relating to conducting “high quality” qualitative research
- the ability to conduct, write-up and analyze field observations
- the ability to conduct and transcribe an individual interview.
- the ability to develop a codebook and code interviews
- the ability to develop grounded theory through aggregating and analyzing interview data
- the ability to produce a qualitative research proposal.
Basic Guidelines
• Attendance is required.
• In order to have productive class meetings, students are required to complete all assigned readings prior to class.

At the beginning of each class, each student is expected to turn in a hard copy of ONE question, suitable for class discussion, based on that week’s reading.

Assignments and Grades
A. Papers 105 points total
NOTE: Even if you will not be completing a research project in your degree program or if you plan on actually doing a quantitative Master’s thesis, you will still have to develop a qualitative proposal for this class.

There are three papers assigned for this class; the final paper will take the form of a complete qualitative research proposal. Please note that in the final paper, students are expected to combine the first two papers, while addressing my earlier feedback and suggestions for revisions.

B. Research Technique Assignments 110 points total
There are two data collection assignments for this class – one involving observation and the other interviewing. There are also two analysis assignments – an individual qualitative content analysis and a group project based on the collected interviews. More detailed instructions for each assignment will be passed out in class.

C. Other Assignments 40 points total
Other assignments include developing a first draft of your purpose statement and research questions, reviewing a qualitative research article that uses similar methods (e.g. design or data collection) as your proposed project, and a critique of positions relating to postmodernism and qualitative methods.

D. Discussion articles 40 points total
I have selected one article from each week’s readings to serve as the basis for a class discussion. Each week that there is an assigned discussion article, I will provide you with a discussion question for you to consider as you read that article. You will then send me a one page response to the discussion question along with an additional discussion question of your own, based on that article, by 1 pm on the day of our class. Each write-up is worth up to 5 points. Please bring a hard copy of your discussion question to class to be used in our class discussion of the article.

E. Class Participation 10 points total
This refers to whether you attend class regularly, are well prepared to contribute and actually participate (including participating the weekly group discussion). It does not refer to the amount that you speak in any single class.
A. Papers

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<td>3/6</td>
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Papers Total 105 pts.

B. Research Technique Assignments

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Research Technique Assignments Total 105 pts.

C. Other Assignments

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Other Assignments Total 40 pts.

Discussion & participation Total 50 pts.

Total Points 300

Grading Scale

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<td>228</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>210</td>
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1-9 What is Qualitative Research?
Discussion article: Becker “The Epistemology of Qualitative Research”

Readings:  
- Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #1, pp. 1-16; Chapter #2, pp. 17-20  
- Charmaz, Chapter #1, pp. 1-12  
- Hood, “Teaching Against the Text: The Case of Qualitative Methods,” pp. 207-223  
- Lamont & White, “Promising topics in qualitative research”

B. Introduction to Writing a Qualitative Research Proposal

Exercise: discussion of proposed research projects
To be turned in: a) description of own research project

 assignment:  
- find a qualitative research article that uses a similar data collection method to what you propose to use in your project.  
- summarize the article particularly the design and methodology (approximately 2 pages)  
- explain how this article relates to your proposed project. (approximately 2 pages)

1-16 Writing a Qualitative Research Proposal / Purpose Statement & Research Questions
Discussion article: Lareau, “Using the Terms Hypothesis and Variable for Qualitative Work: A Critical Reflection” pp. 671-677

Readings:  
- Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #4, pp. 55-69 AND 73-76  
- Creswell, "The Research Question" pp. 105-108 and 114-116

Exercise: discussion of methodology articles
To be turned in: a) research article assignment

 assignment:  
a) first draft purpose statement and research questions

M 1/23 A. Collecting Qualitative Data: Observation / B. Proposal: Significance & literature review
Discussion article: Becker & Geer “Participant Observation and Interviewing: A Comparison”

Readings:  
- A. Observation  
- Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #6, pp. 137-142
• Patton, "Fieldwork and Observation" pp. 70-107
• Whyte "On the Evolution of Street Corner Society." pp. 11-73

B. Proposal: Significance and Lit Review
• Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #4, pp. 70-73 AND 76-86

Exercise: discussion of purpose statement and research questions
To be turned in: first draft purpose statement and research questions

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<tr>
<th>assignment:</th>
<th>a) observation exercise “Transportation Stories”</th>
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<td>B) write-up of field notes and reflective essay on “Taking field-notes”</td>
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</table>

1-30 A. Collecting Qualitative Data: Observation II / B. Proposal: Why Qualitative?
Discussion article: Bonner & Tolhurst, 2002. "Insider-outsider Perspectives on Participant Observation." pp. 7-19
Readings: A. Observation
• Morgan, Sample field notes and write up

B. Proposal: Justifying a Qualitative Approach
• Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #5, pp. 89-92

Exercise: discussion of process of conducting observations
To be turned in: a) observation exercise “Transportation Stories”
                      b) write-up of field notes and reflective essay on “Taking field-notes”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>assignment:</th>
<th>a) 1 page paper: justification for using a qualitative approach for your study</th>
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<td>b) start putting together paper #1 incorporating feedback from earlier assignments</td>
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2-6 A. Basic Issues in Doing Qualitative Fieldwork / B. Research Design
Readings: A. Issues with Fieldwork
• Lareau, “Common Problems in Fieldwork: A Personal Essay” pp. 195-217

Readings: • Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #5, pp. 92-136

Exercise: come up with interview topics, questions (group work)
To be turned in: 1 page paper: justification for using a qualitative approach for your study

| assignment: | |
|------------| |
2-13 Collecting Qualitative Data: Interviewing
Discussion article: Qualitative Sociology Review: An Interview with Kathy Charmaz
Readings: • Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #6, pp. 142-160
• Charmaz, Chapter #3, pp. 13-41
• Patton, “Depth Interviewing,” pp. 108-143
• Hughes, "Turning Points in the Lives of Young Inner-City Men Forgoing Destructive Criminal Behavior: A Qualitative Study."

Exercise: discussion of interviewing experiences
To be turned in: a) paper #1 – first “half” of research proposal

assignment: a) interview a graduate student from an earlier cohort in your program
b) transcribe interview

2-20 A. Postmodern Debate / B. Interpreting Qualitative Data: Qualitative Content Analysis
Discussion article: Morgan “Qualitative Content Analysis: A guide to Paths Not Taken”
Readings: • Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #2, pp. 21-37
• McKenzie & Knight “Research dilemmas: Paradigms, methods and methodology”
• Denzin & Lincoln “Together – from the Handbook of Qualitative Methods”
• Snow & Merrill “Handbook for Revolution?” (review of Denzin & Lincoln)
• Denzin & Lincoln “Transforming Qualitative Methods: Is it a Revolution?” (response to review)
• Snow & Merrill “Ironies, Puzzles, and Contradictions” (response to Denzin & Lincoln’s response to review)

Exercise: develop initial codes;
To be turned in: a) transcribed interview – both hard copy and word file

assignment: a) Postmodern paper: summarize “constructivist” and “post modernist” perspectives on Qualitative Methods (min. 4 pages max. 6 pages); Explain where your proposed project fits on the continuum between these two positions (min. 2 pages max. 4 pages)
b) individual qualitative content analysis assignment; your coded interview, plus memos, plus your discussion of themes

2-27 A. Data Reduction, Coding, Memo Writing / B. Computer-assisted Qualitative Analysis
NO Discussion article this week
Readings:  • Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #8, pp. 205-219
  • Charmaz, Chapters #3, 4 & 5, pp. 42-122

B. Computer-assisted Qualitative Analysis:
  David Morgan guest presentation

C. Class Project: Data analysis I

Exercise: divide into groups and continue code development
To be turned in: a) Postmodern paper
  b) individual qualitative content analysis assignment, including coded
     individual interviews with memos

assignment:  a) paper #2

3-6 A. Interpreting Qualitative Data / Constructing Grounded Theory
Discussion article: Young, et al. “Meaning and Agency in Discussing End-of-Life Care:
  A Study of Elderly Veterans’ Values and Interpretations,” pp. 1039-1062

Readings:  • Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #8, pp. 219-227
  • Charmaz, chapters #6 & 7, pp. 123-176

B. Class Project: Data analysis II

Exercise: groups connect individual interviews; start to develop grounded theory to
explain patterns in groups’ interviews
To be turned in: a) paper #2
  b) coded individual interviews with memos

assignment:  a) develop initial group codebook
  b) begin to organize notes/diagrams on group theory development process
  c) since the final proposal is a combination of papers #1 & #2, begin work on
     your final proposal by incorporating feedback from paper #1 into those
     sections of final proposal while you wait for paper #2 feedback

3-13 Doing High Quality Qualitative Research
Discussion article: Freeman, et al. “Standards of Evidence in Qualitative Research: An
  Incitement to Discourse,” pp. 25-32

Readings:  • Marshall & Rossman, Chapter #3, pp. 39-53
  • Charmaz, Chapter #8, pp. 177-185
  • Johnson: "Examining the Validity Structure of Qualitative Research."
     pp. 282-292
  • Lincoln & Guba "Judging the Quality of Case Study Reports." pp. 205-216
  • Cho & Trent “Validity in qualitative research revisited” pp. 319-340

B. Class Project: Data analysis III
Exercise: groups connect individual interviews; continue to develop ground theory to explain patterns in groups’ interviews
To be turned in: a) initial group codebook

Assignment: Preparation for Final Exam Presentations:
each student: final proposal paper
each group:
a) final group codebook with memos on codebook development
   b) notes/diagrams on group theory development process
   c) written version of grounded theory presentation plus slides

3-20 Final Exam Presentations
to be turned in:
each student: final proposal paper
each group:
a) final group codebook with memos on codebook development
   b) notes/diagrams on group theory development process
   c) written version of grounded theory presentation plus slides

The schedule listed in the course syllabus is subject to change during the term. Any changes will be announced in class.