Man 605: Qualitative Research

Nature and Purpose of the Course:
This seminar introduces students to the design, conduct, evaluation, and presentation of qualitative research. Key topics include issues of methodological “quality” and ethics; the role of theory and research questions in the choice of methodology; and the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of methodology. The main aim is to familiarize students with the methods so that they themselves can carry it out in their own scholarly research. Assignments and a term project provide practice in research design and data collection, analysis, and presentation. Thus, the role of various creative skills, including oral and written skills, in gathering, interpreting, and reporting on qualitative data is also emphasized.

Learning goals are:

1. Constructing a viable interpretive study design
2. Collecting rich and insightful data using a variety of methods
3. Analyzing and interpreting qualitative data
4. Employing ethical and effective field practices
5. Evaluating the quality (trustworthiness and dependability) of a study
6. Grasping the epistemological bases of qualitative research
7. Grasping the interrelatedness of theory and methodology
8. Writing proposals and writing for publication

Students will be active participants in guided activities, such as data analysis and other exercises. Thus, the seminar also offers possibilities for young researchers to learn from each other, to explore new avenues of thinking, to learn collectively and to exchange ideas in a very active and stimulating way as students present and discuss their research and the readings.

Students are encouraged to develop research proposals relevant to their dissertation or other projects of interest.

Grading

20% Class Participation
5% Short Essay on the Readings
5% Critique Essay
45% Five Short Research Reports: Data Collection and Analysis Projects
25% Thesis (research methodology) Proposal, Oral and Written Presentation
Texts and Other Readings

Required
2. Emerson, Robert, Fretz, Rachel, and Linda Shaw, 1995, Writing ethnographic fieldnotes, University of Chicago Press

Recommended (on reserve in the library)
1. Agar, Michael, 1986, Speaking of Ethnography, Sage

Recommended books on foundations

Recommended classics
5. Spradley, James, 1979, The Ethnographic Interview, USA Wadsworth Group/Thomas Learning
Activities and Assignments

Class Participation (20%): The class relies on discussions of the readings and each other’s presentations. You are expected to have read and thought about the readings prior to class and to come to class prepared to discuss. Both the quality and frequency of participation are important.

One Short Essay on the Readings (5%): 2 page written paper with a 5-10 min. oral presentation. You will choose one of the following topics (each topic must be covered by at least two students) and present on the specific due date:

1. The relationship between theory and method. Due: Week 3 (6 Oct)
2. Comparison and evaluation of emic and etic approaches. Due: Week 9 (17 Nov)

Critique Essay (5%): You will evaluate the worth of a scientific article, with a focus on methodology. 1-2 page written report & 5 min. oral presentation. Referring to the readings regarding criteria of goodness and/or quality of research, evaluate any ONE of the following: Diamond et al., 2009, OR Wallendorf & Arnould 1991 OR Belk, Ger, Askegaard, 2003 OR Sandıcıcı & Ger. Due: Week 4 (13 Oct)

Five Short Research Reports (45%): The project will entail data collection and/or analysis and reflection/discussion of the data as well as the process of collecting the data in light of the readings for a particular week. You will discuss their findings/insights/questions along with their experience in the field.

You will work in a team, with a buddy or two, depending on class size. You will use each other as a consultant or supervisor. For some tasks/assignments you will turn in one team report, for others each of you will submit your own, individual reports.

Class research topic: Consumer practices that produce and manage garbage: how do people throw things away? At home, in parks, on the street, in malls, etc.? Any recycling? What things are considered to be possible to be recycled and what not and why? How are dirt and waste regarded? How do the street garbage sorters and collectors work?

The research tasks/assignments are (Make sure you do the readings of the week first!):

1. Historical, material, internet sources* (textual and visual) and notes: team report summarizing key insights, key questions. 5 points
2. Observation & field notes: team report summarizing key insights, key questions. 10 points
3. 2 interviews by each student, with projectives or other photo-elicitation techniques, with transcriptions: work with you buddy(ies), but submit individual reports summarizing key insights, key questions (two reports, one for each interview). 15 points
4. Focus group & transcription: one team will run one focus group and submit the team report summarizing key insights, key questions. 5 points
5. Overall analysis/interpretation based on all the data collected: team report of all of the findings, conclusions, implications, research suggestions. 10 points

Plus, you will do introspection & reflection and turn in a file of visuals* (soft or hard). These activities will count towards participation.

*Keep an archive of textual & visual materials throughout the term; turn it in at Week 14.

Thesis Proposal (25%): You will design a study – a plan of data collection and analysis (you will NOT do the study). This proposal will be presented orally in class and with a written report.

Equipment: voice recorder, camera/video camera, computer; eyes, ears, nose, brains, feelings 😊
SCHEDULE, TOPICS, AND ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1 (15 Sept): Introduction

Readings:

1. Textbook: Moisander & Valtonen 2006 “The cultural turn in marketing” 1-20

Readings for Week 1 and then each and every week of the course:

1. Venkatesh’s Guidebook
4. Silverman, 2005 “Writing a research proposal” in: Doing Qualitative Research, 139-146

Substantive articles that we will use throughout the semester

5. Sandıkçı & Ger, Veiling in Style, conditionally accepted, JCR.
Week 2 (29 Sept): The Nature of Qualitative Research

Readings:

5. Thompson, Locander, Pollio, 1989, “Putting Consumer Experience Back into Consumer Research,” Journal of Consumer Research, 16 (September), 133-146

Recommended:

4. Foxall, G. 1995, “Positivism and pluralism in consumer research,” European Journal of Marketing, 29 (9), 10-18 (a section of the full article)

One-page discussion essay: How scientific is qualitative research? (counts towards participation)

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Week 3 (6 Oct): The Theory-Method Link

Readings:

1. Textbook: Moisander & Valtonen 2006 “Evaluating cultural research” 21-41
8. Sandikci & Ger, Veiling in Style, conditionally accepted, J of Consumer Research.

1st Essay on Readings: What is theory? What is a theoretical contribution? What is the link between theory and method? Focus especially (but not solely) on the first 7 readings; work with one of the 5 substantive articles as a research example. 5 points.

### Week 4 (13 Oct): Designing the Study & Quality of Interpretive Research

Readings:

2. Textbook: Maxwell (all)

Recommended:


Critique Essay: Referring to the above readings, evaluate any ONE of the substantive articles - Oral & Written Presentation. 5 points.

### Week 5 (20 Oct): Ethnography

Readings:


Review: Venkatesh’s Guidebook

Recommended:
Week 6 (27 Oct): Data Collection: Historical, Archival, Material, Internet Accounts
Readings:
4. Rosaldo, Renato (1986) "From the door of his tent: the fieldworker and the inquisitor," in Clifford & Marcus, eds., Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography, 77-97
5. Karababa & Ger, in progress.

1st Research Report: Historical, material, internet sources (textual and visual) and notes: team report summarizing key insights, key questions - Oral & Written Presentation. 5 points

Week 7 (3 Nov): Data Collection: Visual Data (images)
Readings:
Recommended:

Review for writing your proposal:
1. Venkatesh’s Guidebook
3. Silverman, 2005 “Writing a research proposal” in: Doing Qualitative Research, 139-146
5. Textbook: Maxwell, 99-137

Research exercise: Bring a file of visuals, produced by others or your own (soft or hard). Be prepared to relate your images to the readings.

Thesis Proposal First Version Due -- Oral & Written Presentation (~3 pp)
Week 8 (10 Nov): Data Collection: Observation (people & spaces)

Readings:


Review: Venkatesh’s Guidebook

Recommended:

2. Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, Allen, 1993, The section on Observation, Documents, Artifacts, in: Doing Naturalistic Inquiry, 94-109
3. Ger and Belk 1996, “I’d Like to Buy the World a Coke”

2nd Research Report: Observation with field notes: team report summarizing key insights, key questions - Oral & Written Presentation. 10 points

Week 9 (17 Nov): Data Collection: Projective Techniques

Readings:


2nd Essay on the Readings: Comparison and evaluation of emic and etic approaches - Oral & Written Presentation. 5 points.

Week 10 (24 Nov): Data Collection: Interviewing & Focus Groups

Readings:

1. Textbook: McCracken, 1988 Long Interview
2. Textbook: Moisander & Valtonen 2006 “Cultural texts and talk” 68-83
5. Catterall and Maclaran, 2006 “Focus groups in marketing research,” in Belk, 255-267

Review: Venkatesh’s Guidebook


3rd Research Report: 1st interview (with projectives) -- Oral & Written Presentation
Week 11 (1 Dec): Analysis and Interpretation of Data I

Readings:

2. Textbook: Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 1995, 142-216

Review

2. McCracken 1988
4. Venkatesh’s Guidebook

Recommended:

1. Agar, 1986, Speaking of Ethnography

3rd Research Report: 2nd interview (with projectives) -- Oral & Written Presentation. Together with the 1st one, 15 points.

Substantive articles we will use during Weeks 11-14 with respect to analysis & interpretation are:

1. Wallendorf & Arnould 1991
2. Sandiçk & Ger, forthcoming
3. Belk, Ger, and Askegaard, 2003
4. Diamond et al 2009

Week 12 (8 Dec): Analysis and Interpretation of Data II

Readings:

2. Reissman 1993, Narrative Analysis xxx? all?


4th Research Report: Focus group & transcription: one team will run one focus group and submit the team report summarizing key insights, key questions. 5 points
Week 13 (15 Dec): Analysis and Interpretation of Data III

Readings:

1. Coffey & Atkinson 1996 “Beyond data” and “Computer-aided analysis,” 139-188
4. Miles & Huberman, 1994, “Matrix displays” and “Making good sense, (section)” in: *Qualitative Data Analysis*, 239-244, 245-276

Recommended:

1. Agar, 1986, *Speaking of Ethnography*
2. Feldman 1995

5th Research Report: Analysis/Interpretation, first try -- Oral & Written Presentation (individual)

Week 14 (22 Dec): Writing & Defending/Convincing [review relevant course material!]

Readings:


Recommended:


5th Research Report: Analysis/Interpretation -- Oral & Written Presentation. Analysis & interpretation based on ALL the data collected. Team report of all of the findings, conclusions, implications, research suggestions. 10 points
Also, turn in your personal archive of textual & visual materials.

Final Exam Week: Thesis Proposal: A study design, a plan of data collection and analysis (you will NOT do the study). Oral & Written Report.
Suggestions on writing article critiques

1. Consider the limitations and the strengths of the methodology
2. What did the reading make you think? What are your questions? Is there anything that you disagree with in the author’s arguments? Reflect critically on these in light of this particular and previous readings. Critically reflect on your own thoughts and criticisms; think through them. Then, articulate, elaborate, illustrate your own argument convincingly.
3. What did you learn? Any new insights? What changed (if anything) in your own thinking? Is there something new that you now see/understand that you never saw/understood before?
4. What are the implications for you as a researcher? What are the implications for your own field, your research area?
5. Use proper referencing and citing formats: both for citing in the body of the paper and listing as references at the end of the paper.

Typical Journal Submission Review Criteria

1. Importance of the topic to the field (of the journal)
2. Quality of writing and other presentations (tables, figures, exhibits)
3. Conceptual rigor (clarity of objectives, treatment of relevant literature, logical reasoning)
4. Methodological rigor (research design, sampling, data collection/analyses)
5. General discussion and conclusions (implications, limitations, future research)