Seminar in Qualitative Field Methods
MEJO 850
Monday, 9:30am-12:15pm, Room 338

Professor: Daniel Kreiss   **Office**: 377
E-mail: dkreiss@email.unc.edu   **Hours**: Mondays, 12:15pm-1:15pm
Phone: 415.238.6924   and by appointment

Course Goals

This course provides students with an in-depth introduction to the theory and practice of qualitative communication research, with an emphasis on field methods. The class has five objectives: 1) to provide students with a rich introduction to the epistemology, theory, and ethics of qualitative research; 2) to teach students how to formulate research interests and plan for fieldwork; 3) to help students acquire skills in field observation, interviewing, and interpretative analysis; 4) to provide students with the opportunity to deeply engage with books that are among the strongest in this tradition; and, 5) to provide students with a space to workshop in-progress qualitative research projects, from conceptualization to execution.

The course is designed both for students who plan on utilizing qualitative methods in their work and those who are just seeking a deeper understanding of this approach to research. Students who are planning on utilizing qualitative methods in their work are encouraged to use this course as an opportunity to further their thesis, dissertation, or other research projects. Students who work primarily in other research traditions are encouraged to consider how qualitative methods can complement their research.

The School of Media and Journalism's accrediting body outlines a number of values you should be aware of and competencies you should be able to demonstrate by the time you graduate from our program. Learn more about them here: http://www2.ku.edu/~acejmc/PROGRAM/PRINCIPLES.SHTML#vals&comps Students taking this course will be able to think critically, creatively, and independently, learn how to conduct research and evaluate information, write correctly and clearly, and critically evaluate their own work and that of others.

Readings

There are nine required books for this class, in addition to book and journal readings that will be available on Sakai.

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. *Racism Without Racists: Color-blind racism and the persistence of racial inequality in America*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. *An electronic copy of this volume is available on Sakai.*

Robert M. Emerson. *Contemporary Field Research: Perspectives and Formulations* (2nd Edition). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press, 2001.

Melissa Victoria Harris-Lacewell,. *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday talk and black political thought*. Princeton University Press, 2010.

Alice Goffman, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City.* Picador, 2015.

Jeffrey Lane. *The Digital Street*. Oxford University Press, 2018.

Kristin Luker, *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences.* Harvard University Press, 2008.

Terence E. McDonnell, *Best Laid Plans: Cultural entropy and the unraveling of AIDS media campaigns*. University of Chicago Press, 2016.

Safiya Umoja Noble. *Algorithms of Oppression: How search engines reinforce racism*. NYU Press, 2018.

Whitney Phillips. *This is Why We Can't Have Nice Things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture*. MIT Press, 2015.

Grades

Graduate grades are H, P, L, F. I determine your grade by active participation in class, the quality of your assignments, and your work in relation to others.

The following is a general description of graduate grades:
- H means a truly outstanding performance in the class and on assignments.
- P is a solid performance overall in the class and on assignments.
- L is a performance in the class and on assignments that is below the acceptable level for graduate students. It means the student does not understand the course material very well, does not have a grasp of what is required in this area at the graduate level, is not participating in the class, is not handing in assignments on time, or is not participating in research basics or in-class exercises.
- F is failing.

Grading Percentages

Participation: 20%

Assignments: 20%

Final Paper: 60%

Course Requirements

Participation
This course is organized as a seminar, and as such it is premised on active discussion. You are expected to come to class having completed the readings and ready to discuss them. Critical interpretations of the literature encountered in the course are particularly valued.

Sakai Discussion
You are responsible for posting a long-form discussion comment (about 500 words) each week about the readings on the course Sakai forum. These comments should be reasoned and developed starting points for group discussion, and they should end with the posing of at least one question that we will take up in class. You are responsible for reading the comments of your peers in advance of class.

Assignments

"Opening" a Text for Class Discussion: Due Date TBA
At some point in the course you will "open" a text for class discussion. This entails a formal, ten-minute presentation that 1) profiles the author and summarizes the key arguments of the text, 2) presents and assesses the methodological approach(es) of the author, 3) and commences and facilitates class discussion. Your presentation should focus on the relationship between theory, method, and evidence.

In-progress Presentation Assignments
You will be presenting your in-progress research in class periodically throughout the course both formally and informally.

Term Paper
In the hope that this class will further your research, you can pursue one of three options for your class paper.

Option 1: Research Proposal
The proposal will be a dissertation or grant proposal detailing questions relating to a research topic, presenting an in-depth literature review, and proposing a viable empirical strategy for carrying out the study.

Option 2: Research Project
Students pursuing this option will conduct original qualitative research during the course of the semester and write a paper based on it. The goal is that this could potentially become a journal article, a professional project, or even a chapter of a thesis or dissertation. You may choose any methodological approach discussed in class (including in combination with other methods, quantitative or qualitative). Your paper must specify the method you used and defend your approach. Students pursuing this option must also complete the Collaborative IRB Certification training online (if you have not already) at: https://research.unc.edu/offices/human-research-ethics/researchers/training/index.htm. If you planning on carrying this work outside of class, you should also complete an IRB proposal (I am happy to guide you in this).

Option 3: Your Choice
I am open to other approaches to the final paper given the diversity of student interest in the class. If you want to pursue a different project, submit your plan in writing. This option is particularly appropriate for students who primarily work with other methods and want to complement their ongoing work, or late stage graduate students who already have

projects under way and would like to link the content of this course to their current research.

For all three options, you will present your preliminary work midway through the semester and deliver a 15-minute presentation of your final paper to the class during the scheduled final exam period.

Special Accommodations:
If you require special accommodations to attend or participate in this course, please let the instructor know as soon as possible. If you need information about disabilities visit the Accessibility Services website at https://accessibility.unc.edu/

Honor Code:
I expect that each student will conduct himself or herself within the guidelines of the University honor system (http://honor.unc.edu). All academic work should be done with the high levels of honesty and integrity that this University demands. You are expected to produce your own work in this class. If you have any questions about your responsibility or your instructor's responsibility as a faculty member under the Honor Code, please see the course instructor or Senior Associate Dean Charlie Tuggle, or you may speak with a representative of the Student Attorney Office or the Office of the Dean of Students.

Seeking Help:
If you need individual assistance, it's your responsibility to meet with the instructor. If you are serious about wanting to improve your performance in the course, the time to seek help is as soon as you are aware of the problem – whether the problem is difficulty with course material, a disability, or an illness.

Diversity and Inclusion:
The School of Media and Journalism adopted diversity and inclusion mission and vision statements in spring 2016 with accompanying goals. It complements the University policy on Prohibiting Harassment and Discrimination. In summary, UNC is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and does not discriminate in offering access to its educational programs and activities on the basis of age, gender, race, color, national origin, religion, creed, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression.

Harassment: UNC does not tolerate harassment based on gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, culture, disability, or for any other reason. It is also a violation of the Honor Code and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act (1964) and Title IX of the Educational Amendments. If you need assistance with a harassment issue or problem, bring it to my attention or The Office of the Dean of Students, dos@unc.edu or 919/966-4042.

Course Schedule

Session One: January 14th

Course Overview and Project Discussion

January 21st

No Class, Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday

Session Two: January 28th

Introduction to Field Work

Jeffrey Lane, *The Digital Street*

We will have a virtual visit with Jeffrey Lane, Assistant Professor in the School of Communication and Information, Rutgers University, during class period.

Session Three: February 4th

Introduction to the Theory-Research-Theory Process

Kristin Luker, *Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences*

Session Four: February 11th

Theory and Qualitative Research

Becker, "The Epistemology of Qualitative Research," in Emerson, 317-330

Burawoy, Michael. (1998). "The Extended Case Method." *Theory and Society 16*(1): 4-33.

Charmaz, "Grounded Theory," in Emerson, 335-352

Tavory, Iddo and Timmermans, Staffan (2010), "Two Cases of Ethnography: Grounded Theory and the Extended Case Method." *Ethnography,* Vol. 10 (3), pp. 243-263.

Eliasoph, Nina, and Paul Lichterman. "Culture in interaction." *American Journal of Sociology* 108, no. 4 (2003): 735-794.

Katz, Jack. "Analytic Induction Revisited," in Emerson, 331-334

Jack Katz, "From How to Why: On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography Parts One and Two". *Ethnography*, 2 (4): 443-473, 2001 and *Ethnography* 3(1), 63-90, 2002. Available online at: http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/katz/current.htm

Swedberg, Richard. "Theorizing in sociology and social science: Turning to the context of discovery." *Theory and society* 41, no. 1 (2012): 1-40.

Timmermans, Steffan and Iddo Tavory, 2012, "Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis." *Sociological Theory*, Vol. 30 (3), pp. 167-186.

Session Five: February 18th

Fieldwork and Mixed Method Designs

Melissa Victoria Harris-Lacewell,. *Barbershops, Bibles, and BET: Everyday talk and black political thought*. Princeton University Press, 2010.

Session Six: February 25th

Part One: Virtual visit with Emily Van Duyn, Ph.D. Candidate, School of Journalism, UT Austin

Emily Van Duyn,. "Hidden democracy: Political dissent in rural America." *Journal of Communication* 68, no. 5 (2018): 965-987.

Nina Eliasoph. "Making a fragile public: A talk-centered study of citizenship and power." *Sociological Theory* (1996): 262-289.

Part Two: Thinking Analytically and Empirically About Cases, Fields, and Sites

Bent Flyvbjerg, (2006). "Five Misunderstandings about Case Study Research." *Qualitative Inquiry 12*(2), 219-245.

Alexander N. George and Andrew Bennett. (2005). *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences.* Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapter 1.

George E. Marcus. (1995). "Ethnography In/Of the World System: The Emergence of Multi-sited Ethnography." *Annual Review of Anthropology, 24*(1), 95–117.

Charles Ragin. (1999). "The Distinctiveness of Case Oriented Research." *HSR: Health Services Research,* 34(5). Available online at: http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1089057/pdf/hsresearch00022-0061.pdf

Mario Small. (2009). "How Many Cases Do I Need: On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-based Research." *Ethnography 10*(5), 5-38.

Session Seven: March 4th

Fieldwork and Strategic Communications Campaigns

Terence E. McDonnell, *Best Laid Plans: Cultural entropy and the unraveling of AIDS media campaigns*. University of Chicago Press, 2016.

March 11ᵗʰ

No Class, Spring Break

Session Eight: March 18ᵗʰ

Ethics and Positionality of Fieldwork

Association of Internet Researchers. "Ethical Guide." Available online at: https://aoir.org/documents/ethics-guide/

Maxine Baca Zinn. "Insider Field Research in Minority Communities." In Emerson, pp. 159-166.

Christina Chavez. (2008). "Conceptualizing from the Inside: Advantages, Complications, and Demands on Insider Positionality." *The Qualitative Report 13*(3), 474-494. Available online at: http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR13-3/chavez.pdf

Robert M. Emerson and Melvin Pollner, "Constructing Participant/Observation Relations," in Emerson, 239-259.

Clifford Christians, "Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research." In Norman K. Denzin and Yvonna S. Lincoln (eds). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Available online at: http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/5317_Denzin_and_Lincoln_Chapter_6.pdf

Brooke Harrington. (2002). "Obtrusiveness as a Strategy in Ethnographic Research." *Qualitative Sociology* 25(1). Available online at: http://www.mathcs.duq.edu/~packer/Courses/Psi4105/Harrington%2002%20obtrusiveness.pdf

Paul Spicker. (2011). "Ethical Covert Research." *Sociology 45*(1), 118-133.

Arlene Stein. (2010). "Sex, Truths, and Audiotape: Anonymity and the Ethics of Exposure in Public Ethnography." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 39*(5), 554-568.

Session Nine: March 25ᵗʰ

Ethics

Alice Goffman, *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*

Assignment:

Project proposal presentations

Session Ten: April 1ˢᵗ

Doing Interpretative Work

Eduardo Bonilla-Silva. *Racism Without Racists: Color-Blind Racism and the Persistence of Racial Inequality in the United States.* New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006 (2ⁿᵈ edition). (Selections from, available on Sakai.)

Thomas F. Corrigan, "Making Implicit Methods Explicit: Trade Press Analysis in the Political Economy of Communication." *International Journal of Communication* 12, no. Feature (2018): 2751.

Clifford Geertz, "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture," in Emerson, 55-75

Colin Jerolmack, and Shamus Khan. "Talk is cheap: Ethnography and the attitudinal fallacy." *Sociological Methods & Research* 43, no. 2 (2014): 178-209.

Daniel Kreiss, *Prototype Politics*, Methodological Appendix. Available through UNC libraries.

Rakow, Lana F. "Commentary: Interviews and focus groups as critical and cultural methods." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly* 88, no. 2 (2011): 416-428.

Barbara Sharf and Marsha Vanderford, "Illness Narratives and the Social Construction of Self." *Handbook of Health Communication.* Available online at: http://bit.ly/1lUqhPh

Session Eleven: April 8ᵗʰ

Digital Field Research

Whitney Phillips. *This is why we can't have nice things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture.* MIT Press, 2015.

Session Twelve: April 15ᵗʰ

Critical Cultural Approaches

Safiya Umoja Noble. *Algorithms of Oppression: How search engines reinforce racism.* NYU Press, 2018.

Session Thirteen: April 22ⁿᵈ

Data and Analysis and Evaluating and Writing Up Qualitative Research

Data and Analysis

Tehmina Basit. (2003). "Manual or Electronic? The Role of Coding in Qualitative Data Analysis." *Educational Research 45*(2), 143-154.

Michael Bloor, "Techniques of Validation in Qualitative Research: A Critical Commentary," in Emerson, 383-396.

Margarete Sandelowski. (1994). "The use of quotes in qualitative research." *Research in Nursing & Health* 17(6): 479–482, 1994

Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretz, and Linda Shaw. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chapters 1, 2, and 6. Available online at:
http://www.pacificdiscovery.org/credit/SEAreadings/Robert%20et.al.%20-%20Writing%20Ethnographic%20Fieldnotes.pdf

Evaluating and Writing up Research

Howard Becker, "Tricks of the Trade," in Emerson, 353-360

Kate Caelli, Lynne Ray and Judy Mill. (2003). "'Clear as Mud': Toward Greater Clarity in Generic Qualitative Research." *International Journal of Qualitative Research 2*(2), 1-13.

Mark Easterby-Smith, Karen Golden-Biddle, and Karen Locke. (2009). "Working With Pluralism: Determining Quality in Qualitative Research." *Organizational Research Methods 11*(3): 419-429.

Michael Pratt. (2009). "For the Lack of a Boilerplate: Tips on Writing Up (and Reviewing) Qualitative Research." *Academy of Management Journal 52*(5): 856-862.

Margarete Sandelowski and Julie Barroso. (2002). "Reading Qualitative Studies." *International Journal of Qualitative Research 1*(1), 74-108.

Assignment:

In-progress project presentations. And, in advance of class, share at least one qualitative research article or book that you have found in the course of your project that you think presents data effectively.

Session Fourteen:

***Final Presentations* – We will meet for three hours during finals week for presentations. Schedule is TBD.**