

Field Methods

Professor: James P. Spillane

Phone: (847) 467 5577

E-mail: j-spillane@nwu.edu

Office Hours: By Appointment

Meeting Time: Mondays, 10 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Location: Annenberg 345

Introduction

This course is designed to introduce graduate students to qualitative research, including field work, document analysis, and interviewing. Students will explore qualitative research approaches by undertaking their own research study as well as reading and discussing relevant writing on the subject. The readings, topics for discussion, and assignments in this course center on three issues:

- The epistemological underpinnings of approaches to qualitative research. In addition to considering different theoretical traditions, students will also consider issues such as reliability, validity, and generalizations.
- The practice of qualitative inquiry. Students will explore sampling strategies; instrument and research design; observation and interview techniques; and a variety of approaches to data analysis and data presentation.
- Key issues that researchers encounter in doing qualitative research. Students will consider a range of practical issues that they will have to deal with as researchers including access to sites and ethical issues relating to qualitative work.

The course will be conducted as a "clinical seminar." Class work will be organized around prescribed readings on a particular issue as well as students' fieldwork. Materials (e.g., research design, instruments, data) from students' research projects (a required assignment for this course) and from the instructor's research projects will be used to ground weekly discussions.

Assignments & Evaluation

Class attendance is required. Students are expected to participate in discussing the topics and readings during each class. To participate in this way, you will have to read the assigned texts carefully before each class.

Class participation will account for 20% of your final grade and will center on our informed participation (drawing on the assigned readings and your own field work experience) during each class and your final presentation on your assertion.

The completion of weekly site visits and writing field notes on these visits, and completing one interview will account for an additional 40% of your final grade. Each student will complete and place on a class server a copy of their field notes by 12 noon each Monday. The instructor will review and respond to students' field notes over the course of the quarter. Students will work in pairs, reviewing and critiquing one another's field notes.

Your final research report/case study will account for 40% of your final grade. Each student will write a research report using the data they collected during the class. The final report will develop and defend **one** assertion using the qualitative data collected over the quarter. Additional details on this assignment and the research project will be distributed in class.

Prescribed Texts

Becker, H. (1998). Tricks of the Trade: How to think about your Research while you're Doing It. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Spradley, J. (1980). Participant Observation. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston

Robert M. Emerson, Frachel I. Fretz, & Linda L. Shaw. (1995). Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Myles, Matthew B. and A. Michael Huberman. 1994. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook*. 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Week 1: Introduction & Overview

Required Reading:

Ragin, C. (1994). Constructing Social Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press. pp. 1 – 102.

Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative Data Analysis*: Chapter 1, "Introduction"

Spradley, J. (1980). Participant Observation. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. pp. 1 – 35.

Becker, H. (1998). Tricks of the Trade: How to think about your Research while you're Doing It. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 1 – 9.

Robert M. Emerson, Frachel I. Fretz, & Linda L. Shaw. (1995). Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1 – 15.

Reference Materials:

Ragin, C. (1994). Constructing Social Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge.

Week 2: Getting Started: Site Selection and Fieldwork

Required Reading:

Spradley, J. (1980). Participant Observation. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. pp. 37 – 84.

Robert M. Emerson, Frachel I. Fretz, & Linda L. Shaw. (1995). Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 17 – 65.

Becker, H. (1998). Tricks of the Trade: How to think about your Research while you're Doing It. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 10 – 66.

Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A source book of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. pp. 16 - 50.

Reference Materials:

Bogdan, R. and Biklen, S. (1992). Qualitative research for education: An Introduction to theory and methods. Boston: Allen and Bacon.

Week 3: Fieldnotes and Sampling

Required Readings:

Becker, H. (1998). Tricks of the Trade: How to think about your Research while you're Doing It. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 67 – 108.

Spradley, J. (1980). Participant Observation. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. pp. 85 – 111.

Robert M. Emerson, Frachel I. Fretz, & Linda L. Shaw. (1995). Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 66 – 108.

Kuzel, A. Sampling in Qualitative Inquiry. In B. Crabtree & William Miller (eds.). Doing Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, pp. 33 – 45.

Week 4 Standing Back: Qualitative Approaches and Traditions

Required Readings:

Greswell, J. Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Chapters Two and Five, pp. 15 – 34; 53 – 84. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y. Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln (eds.) The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE 195 – 220.

Vidich, A., & Lyman, S. Qualitative methods: Their History in Sociology and Anthropology, In Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln (eds.) The Landscape of Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. pp. 41 – 110.

Reference Materials:

Atkinson, P. & Hammersley, M. 1998. Ethnography and Participant Observation. In Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln (eds.). Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. pp. 1 - 34.

Fetterman, D. 1998. Ethnography. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Yin, R. 1993. Applications of Case Study Research. Newbury Park: SAGE.

Jessor, R., Colby, A., & Shweder, R., Ethnography and Human Development: Context and Meaning in Social Inquiry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Denzin, N. (1997). Interpretive Ethnography. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Greswell, J. Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Stake, R. (1998). Case Studies. In Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln (eds.). Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. pp. 86 – 109.

Smith, L. Biographical Method. In Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln (eds.). Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. pp. 184 – 224.

Holstein, J. & Gubrium, J. (1998). Phenomenology, Ethnomethodology, and Interpretive Practice. In Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln (eds.). Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. pp. 137 – 157.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. Grounded Theory Methodology: An Overview. In Norman Denzin & Yvonna Lincoln (eds.). Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. pp. 158 – 183.

Week 5: Getting Started on Data Analysis

Spradley, J. (1980). Participant Observation. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. pp. 112 – 159.

Robert M. Emerson, Frachel I. Fretz, & Linda L. Shaw. (1995). Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 142 - 168.

Becker, H. (1998). Tricks of the Trade: How to think about your Research while you're Doing It. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 109 – 145.

Ragin, C., & Becker, H. (1992). What is a Case: Exploring the foundations of social inquiry. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 1 – 18.

Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A source book of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. pp. 50 - 89.

Reference Materials:

Yin, Robert. 1994. Case Study Research: Design and Methods, Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Week 6: Interviewing

Required Readings:

Robert M. Emerson, Frachel I. Fretz, & Linda L. Shaw. (1995). Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 108 – 141.

Gilchrist, V. & Williams, R. (1999). Key Informant Interviews. In B. Crabtree & William Miller (eds.). Doing Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, pp. 71 – 88.

Miller, W. & Crabtree, B. (1999). Depth Interviewing. In B. Crabtree & William Miller (eds.). Doing Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, pp. 89 – 108.

Brown, J. (1999). The Use of Focus Groups in Clinical Research. In B. Crabtree & William Miller (eds.). Doing Qualitative Research. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, pp. 109 - 126.

Reference Materials:

Spradley, J. (1979). The Ethnographic Interview. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.

Kvale, S. (1996). Interviews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Ginsburg, H. (1997). Entering the Child's Mind. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Week 7: Data Analysis Continued

Required Readings:

Becker, H. (1998). Tricks of the Trade: How to think about your Research while you're Doing It. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 146 - 214.

Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A source book of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. pp. 90 – 244.

Ragin, C., & Becker, H. (1992). What is a Case: Exploring the foundations of social inquiry. New York: Cambridge University Press. pp. 205 - 226.

Reference Materials:

Coffey, A. & Atkinson, P. (1996). Making Sense of Qualitative Data. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Strauss, A. (1987). Qualitative Analysis For Social Scientists. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Ragin, C., & Becker, H. (1992). What is a Case: Exploring the foundations of social inquiry. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Wolcott, H. Transforming Qualitative Data: Descriptions, Analysis, and Interpretation. Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Weisner, T. Why Ethnography Should Be the Most Important Method in the Study of Human Development. In Jessor, R., Colby, A., & Shweder, R., Ethnography and Human Development: Context and Meaning in Social Inquiry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Pp. 305 – 324.

Week 8: Reliability, Validity, & Generalizations.

Required Readings:

Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A source book of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. pp. 245 - 297.

Eisenhart, M. & Howe, K. Validity in Educational Research. In M. LeCompte, W. Millroy, & J. Preisle (eds), The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education, pp. 643 to 680.

Week 9: Writing and Presenting Research Findings

Required Readings:

Spradley, J. (1980). Participant Observation. Orlando: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. pp. 160 – 172.

Robert M. Emerson, Frachel I. Fretz, & Linda L. Shaw. (1995). Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, pp. 169 - 216.

Miles, M., & Huberman, M. (1984). Qualitative data analysis: A source book of new methods. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage. pp. 298 - 310.

Reference Materials:

Lareau, A. & Shultz, J. (1996). Journeys Through Ethnography: Realistic Accounts of Fieldwork. Boulder: Westview Press.

Week 10: Review and Presentations.

Marc Ventresca and John W. Mohr. 2002. "Archival Research Methods." Pages 805-828 in The Blackwell Companion to Organizations, edited by Joel A. C. Baum. Oxford, U.K.: Blackwell Publishers

Reference Materials:

Tashakkori, A. & Teddlie, C. (1998). Mixed Methodology. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.