

Qualitative Research Methods

JRSM 8085-S50, 001; 7085-001

Fall 2025

Class meeting: W, 5:30-8:30 p.m.

In-Person (001)/Remote Synchronous (S50)

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COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Catalog description

Familiarization with in-depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, and textual analysis; practical experience in collecting and analyzing qualitative data.

Prerequisite/Corequisite

JRSM 8050/7050 Mass Communication Theory

Textbooks, Software and Required Materials

Lindlof, T.R. & Taylor, B.C. (2017). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods* 4th Edition. Sage Publishing. ISBN-13: 978-1452256825

Altheide, D.L. (1996) *Qualitative Media Analysis*. ISBN: 0-7619-0199-X

Wolcott, H.F. (1990) *Writing Up Qualitative Research*. ISBN: 0-8039-3793-8

Classroom format

This is a graduate seminar with lecture and class discussion. Each week, we will discuss a new topic and selected readings. You must be prepared to discuss those readings each week. Please note that failure to attend class or to actively participate, even if all your assignments are turned in on time and done acceptably, will significantly affect your final grade.

Accessing the course website

1. Go to the University of Memphis eLearn home page: <http://elearn.memphis.edu>
2. Log in using your University of Memphis username and password.

3. Click on the link for JRSM 8085 001/S50 or JRSM 7085 001 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

Course Requirements

Research Events

Graduate students must attend research events sponsored by the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media. Attendance for at least 2% of your course final grade. Those who cannot attend will receive instructions about alternatives from your instructor. Students enrolled in more than one course may write multiple reflections of one research presentation if the topic is customized to the individual class.

In-person Classroom Format (for those in the 001 sections of JRSM 7085 and JRSM 8085)

This class will take place in Meeman Journalism 108 on Wednesdays from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. You must be present and on time for all class meetings. There will be work weeks or virtual weeks during the semester where we will not meet in person. Those dates will be communicated to you as they arise.

Virtual Classroom Format (for those in the S50 section of JRSM 8085)

This section of the class will use Teams, a web-based video conferencing platform. All students in this section will be in class synchronously, with everyone meeting at the same time whether on campus or virtual. Class will take place on campus in a classroom that is equipped with video and audio equipment. All students in this section must have a stable Internet connection, speakers and a microphone (or a headset with a built-in mic). Headsets can be purchased for approximately \$20. Students will need to be able to have video turned on for the entire class. Online students will not be permitted to attend class using a cellphone.

Repetition of Courses and Coursework

Students may not use or submit work from a previous course, even if it is the same course being repeated, to fulfill requirements for assignments in another course. If students wish to substantially rework the original submission, or to work with the same general idea, that may be permissible upon discussion with and written approval from the professor of the current course. All written work will be checked for policy adherence via TurnItIn.com. All creative work will be checked for policy adherence by the professor and judged against previous submissions. The only exception to this policy is the student's online portfolio and its attendant pieces (for example, the resume and logo).

Quality of Work

All work in this course should follow APA Style, including proper spelling, grammar, and language. A large part of effective communication is having a polished written concept of what you are communicating.

This includes all class work and presentations. Although line editing is unlikely, problems in these or other areas will result in the deduction of points.

I expect your work to be good and to be yours. What is not yours should be fully cited. In documenting sources, you should use APA formatting. If you need help with writing and citing sources, please see me for resources. In addition, Purdue University's Online Writing Lab is an excellent resource, and can be found at <http://owl.english.purdue.edu>.

Your papers will be graded on content, including writing quality, comprehensiveness of research, adherence to complete and proper citation style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. All of these will be analyzed to determine a final paper grade. Avoid overusing long or block quotes. Within your paper, you will have an introduction, a review of pertinent literature, research questions or hypotheses, method, findings and discussion.

Questions About Grades

If you would like to ask about a grade, please make an appointment to meet with me outside of class time, as I will not discuss grades via email or during class. If you have a question or problem with a grade, exam question, or in-class assignment, you have 48 hours after the assignment is returned to you to contact me, or the grade stands. Your question or appeal must be stated in writing, citing your position and why you feel the mark is incorrect. The appeal should be turned in to the professor or sent via email within the stated time frame.

Additionally, you are responsible for tracking your grade online and meeting with me early in the semester if you are concerned about your overall grade. Meeting with me early and often can help both parties involved find ways to improve student-professor understanding and quality of work.

Grading and Course Assignments

This is meant as a general guideline to the major assignments within the class. More detail will be provided in class and on Canvas. Deadlines are also listed in the Class Schedule. All work should be turned in as a Word document or PDF via Canvas. All work is due at the start of class, 5:30 p.m. Central on the assigned Tuesday, unless otherwise noted.

Weekly Reading Reviews

Each week you will write a short review of that week's reading. This analysis must show your grasp of the concepts discussed in that week's readings. It is important for you as a novice researcher to spend time with the readings so that you come to class prepared to discuss the topics, ask appropriate questions, and develop a deeper understanding of the material.

Weekly Discussion Leaders (Doc students only)

Each week one student will serve as discussion leader. Their job will be to pose questions and thoughts based on the readings to facilitate class discussion. All students are required to participate in the discussion, but only one doctoral student will be required to lead the discussion.

Midterm

You will complete a midterm exam that covers material and concepts explored during the semester. The exam will assess your knowledge of the concepts of qualitative research methods and methodology. The exams will consist of broad discussion questions.

Research paper

Your research paper of between 5,000 to 6,000 words (count only text, not cover sheet, references or endnotes) is to be based upon individual research conducted by each student on some aspect of the course. Research must be original, but the interpretation of the findings must reflect an appropriate review of the literature. Paper topic ideas must be approved by the instructor. Because IRB (Institutional Review Board) usually requires several weeks, I would strongly suggest that your research not include interviewing human subjects. A textual analysis or an historical analysis, for example, would not require IRB approval. However, if you do decide to complete a project involving interviews or questionnaires, your IRB application needs to be completed and filed as soon as possible (probably before midterm) to give you ample time to complete data collection and analysis before the end of the semester.

For your citations style, you must use the Chicago Manual of Style or APA. Your papers will be graded on content, including writing quality, comprehensiveness of research, adherence to complete and proper citation style, grammar, punctuation and spelling. All of these will be analyzed to determine a final paper grade. Avoid overusing long or block quotes. Within your paper, you will have an introduction, a review of pertinent literature, research questions or hypotheses, method, findings and discussion.

Doctoral students are required to submit their paper to either the AEJMC Midwinter Colloquium or to the AEJMC Southeast Colloquium. Deadlines will be announced in class.

Grading Scale

There are 1,000 possible points in this class. At the end of the semester, your class average will be calculated, and fractions will be rounded to the nearest whole number. Letter grades will be determined according to the scale below.

Assignments	Points
• Participation	50 points

- Weekly Reading Reviews 100 points (10 points each)
- Qualitative Field Work 150 points (three assignments 50 points each)
- Discussion Leader 50 points (doc students only)
- Midterm Exam 150 points
- Research Proposal 50 points
- Intro/Literature Review 100 points
- Method Section/RQs 100 points
- Analysis 100 points
- Final Research Project 200 points
- Final Exam 150 points
- **Total** **1,150 (masters) 1,200 (doc) points**

A+ = 96.5-100%; A = 92.5-96.4%; A- = 89.5-92.4%

B+ = 86.5-89.4%; B = 82.5-86.4%; B- = 79.5-82.4%

C+ = 76.5-79.4%; C = 72.5-76.4%; C- = 69.5-72.4%

D+ = 66.5-69.4%; D = 59.5-66.4%

F 0-59.4%

COURSE SCHEDULE

This is a basic schedule for topics and major assignments over the course of the semester. Although every effort will be made to stick with this schedule, please understand that some material may require more or less discussion and class time. Thus, changes to the schedule may occur. All changes will be announced in class.

Week 1: Aug. 27: Syllabus/Course Overview; What is qualitative research?

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapters 1, 2, 3

Week 2: Sept. 3: Qualitative research in action

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapters 4 & 5, Reading packet on Canvas

Assignments: Reading Review 1 (due by the beginning of class)

Discussion Leader: Sydnie Davis

Week 3: Sept. 10: Participation, Observation, and Recording Communication; IRB process

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapter 6; Reading packet on Canvas

Assignments: Reading Review 2 & Observation notes; Research project proposal

Discussion Leader: Michael Gray

Week 4: Sept. 17: Interviewing/Focus Groups

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapter 7; Reading packet on Canvas

Assignments: Reading Review 3 & Practice interview transcript
Discussion Leader: Kelse Martinez

Week 5: Sept. 24: Textual and document analysis Part 1

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapter 8; Reading packet on Canvas
Assignments: Reading Review 4
Discussion Leader: Maria Silva Baameiro

Week 6: Oct. 1: Textual and document analysis Part 2

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapters 9 & 10
Assignments: Reading Review 5 & Textual data collection
Discussion Leader: Victoria Cooper-Thompson

Week 7: Oct. 8: Historical Analysis (Virtual week, we will all be on Teams this week)

Readings: Reading packet on Canvas
Assignment: Reading Review 6; Intro/Literature Review
Discussion Leader: Israel Henry

Week 8: Oct. 15: Cultural and Critical Studies

Readings: Reading packet on Canvas
Assignment: Reading Review 7; Midterm Exam
Discussion Leader: Brandi Hunter

Week 9: Oct. 22: UX Research

Readings: Reading packet on Canvas
Assignments: Reading Review 8; Method/Research Questions
Discussion Leader: Zinnia Sheik

Week 10: Oct. 29: Writing Up Qualitative Research

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapter 11; Wolcott (entire book)
Assignments: Reading Review 9

Week 11: Nov. 5: Individual Research Meetings

Week 12: Nov. 12: Textual Analysis

Assignment: Analysis

Week 13: Nov. 19: Peer Review of manuscripts

Assignment: Full paper drafts to exchange for peer review

Week 14: Nov. 26: Thanksgiving, No Class

Week 15: Dec. 3: Final Presentations,

Assignment: Research Project Presentations; Final Drafts of Paper Due Dec. 10 by 11:59 p.m.

Note: The AEJMC Southeast Colloquium and Midwinter Conference deadlines are in mid-December. If you intend to submit your project to these conferences or any other conference, please let me know as soon as possible. I will update you on the exact deadline as it becomes available.