

# Qualitative Research Methods

JRSM 7085-S01, 001

Fall 2022

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

Remote Synchronous (via Zoom)

## Robby Byrd, Ph.D.

**Office:** 328 Meeman Journalism Building

**Office Hours:** MW 10 a.m. to noon, or by appointment

**Email:** rdbyrd@memphis.edu

**Twitter:** @rdbyrd80

## 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 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

Wolcot, 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 7085.S01 or JRSM 8085 S01 to enter your course and read the instructions on the welcoming page

## Course Requirements

### *Research Colloquium*

Graduate students must attend and write a one-page reflection paper about at least one Research Colloquium sponsored by the Department. Attendance and papers will count for at least 2% of your course final grade. Those who cannot attend will receive instructions about remote viewing from your instructor. Students enrolled in more than one course may write multiple reflections of one research presentation as long as the topic is customized to the individual class.

### *Virtual Classroom Format*

This class will use Zoom, a web-based video conferencing platform. All students, whether in the on campus or online section, will be in class synchronously, with everyone meeting at the same time via Zoom. I will not be in building during class time, and I do not expect anyone else to join the class live in a classroom. All students 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.

#### *Research Colloquium*

Graduate students must attend and write a one-page reflection paper about at least one Research Colloquium sponsored by the Department. Attendance and papers will count for at least 2% of your course final grade. Those who cannot attend will receive instructions about remote viewing from your instructor. Students enrolled in more than one course may write multiple reflections of one research presentation as long as the topic is customized to the individual class

#### *Midterm and Final*

You will complete a midterm exam and final 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.

OR

#### *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.

### *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.

#### Exam Option

- Participation 50 points
- Research Colloquium 50 points
- Weekly Reading Reviews 100 points (10 points each)
- Qualitative Field Work 150 points (three assignments 50 points each)
- Textual Analysis 100 points
- Midterm exam 200 points
- Final Exam 300 points
- **Total 1,000 points**

#### Research Option

- Participation 50 points
- Research Colloquium 50 points
- Weekly Reading Reviews 100 points (10 points each)
- Qualitative Field Work 150 points (three assignments 50 points each)
- Textual Analysis 100 points
- Research Project 500 points
- **Total 1,000 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. 25: Syllabus/Course Overview; What is qualitative research?*

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapters 1, 2, 3

*Week 2: Sept. 1: Qualitative research in action*

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

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

*Week 3: Sept. 8: Participation, Observation, and Recording Communication; IRB process*

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

Assignments: Reading Review 2 & Observation notes; Declare which class option you're taking

*Week 4: Sept. 15: Interviewing/Focus Groups*

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

Assignments: Reading Review 3 & Practice interview transcript

*Week 5: Sept. 22: Textual and document analysis Part 1*

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapter 8; Reading packet on Canvas

Assignments: Reading Review 4

*Week 6: Sept. 29: Textual and document analysis Part 2*

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapters 9 & 10

Assignments: Reading Review 5 & Textual data collection

*Week 7: Oct. 6: Historical Analysis*

Readings: Reading packet on Canvas

Assignment: Reading Review 6

*Week 8: Oct. 13: UX Research*

Readings: Reading packet on Canvas

Assignment: Reading Review 7; Midterm Exam

*Week 9: Oct. 20: Cultural and Critical Studies*

Readings: Reading packet on Canvas

Assignments: Reading Review 8 (due by the beginning of class)

*Week 10: Oct. 27: Writing Up Qualitative Research*

Readings: Lindlof & Taylor Chapter 11; Wolcott (entire book)

Assignments: Reading Review 9

*Week 11: Nov. 3: Textual Analysis*

Assignment: Textual Analysis

*Week 12: Nov. 10: Catch Up Day*

*Week 13: Nov. 17: Peer Review of manuscripts*

You will each be assigned projects to review before class. You'll present feedback during class.

*Week 14: Nov. 24: Thanksgiving, No Class*

*Week 15: Dec. 1: Final Presentations/Final Exam Due*

**Note: The AEJMC Southeast Colloquium Deadline is Dec. 18 at 11:59 p.m. If you intend to submit your project to this conference or any other conference, please let me know as soon as possible.**

## JOURNALISM AND STRATEGIC MEDIA POLICIES

### Portfolio requirement

All students in the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media are required to develop and maintain an active portfolio of their work. Undergraduate students are to begin the portfolio in JRSM 3900 and graduate students are to begin in JRSM 7002. Students are to contribute to it in every skills course thereafter. The portfolio should contain samples of the student's work from courses and/or professional experiences and should develop as the student builds skills. Portfolios will undergo a final, external review while students are enrolled in their capstone courses.

Students may use any type of web hosting for their portfolios, but it must have an independent and professional URL. Students may use any content management system, but students are encouraged to use WordPress, Wix or SquareSpace. Students are encouraged to consider purchasing a URL and hosting if they plan to use the portfolio for a long term, but they must keep the portfolio active for six months following graduation from the University of Memphis.

Students should have a professional email address they plan to use throughout their professional lives, via a common email service, such as Gmail.

All portfolios must contain the following items:

- Samples of work from courses and/or professional activities. (Example: Broadcasting students must include a video reel)
- A current résumé
- A personal profile
- Contact information/means of contact
- Social media links

Students might wish to include a blog, video reels, photograph galleries, SoundSlides presentations, design PDFs, audio files and writing pieces as examples of professional work. The professional work should ultimately be tailored to the career the student seeks after graduation. Thus, each student's portfolio should show a unique blend of work.

### Email

Students must have their UofM email accounts activated. Students using another provider, such as Google, are required to have all UofM email forwarded to that account. Students should go to the <http://iam.memphis.edu> website to implement forwarding of UofM email. Students are required to check their email daily. They are responsible for complying with any email sent to by professors or others in the University.

## Electronic devices

Some classes require a tablet, laptop or a smartphone. Others do not. Instructors will set the policy for their specific classes.

## Attendance

Class attendance is mandatory in Journalism and Strategic Media. Students may be assigned a failing grade for the semester for nonattendance or habitual late arrival. No late work will be accepted without prior arrangements with the class professor. Students may not be permitted to make up any missing work unless it is for an absence because of illness or other catastrophic emergency, such as a death in the family that can be documented (e.g. with a doctor's note or a copy of the newspaper obituary). Journalism and Strategic Media is a professional program, and students are expected to understand and comply with deadlines. Students who have some problem making it to class on time should make arrangements to correct the problem or consider taking another class. Students should consider this class as a "job" in the educational process and be on time just as they would elsewhere.

## Course repetition

Majors and minors who fail to earn the minimum passing grade ("C-") in a class required by their program of study in Journalism and Strategic Media more than three times will be dropped from the program.

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 résumé and logo).

## Academic integrity

In addition to University-wide policies stated in the Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities, the Department of Journalism and Strategic Media considers making up quotes from sources, turning in substantially the same assignment for credit in two different courses or students receiving any assistance from others for work assigned to be done on their own, as acts of cheating punishable to the degree determined appropriate by the course instructor and department chair. Punishment may include grade reductions or seeking dismissal of the student from the University.

Further, as this is a journalism and strategic media class, students are expected to comply with copyright law and must have sufficient permission to use any copyrighted materials used in creative projects, unless otherwise informed in cases of exercises or reproduction.

Your written work may be submitted to Turnitin.com, or a similar electronic detection method, for rating originality of your ideas. Also to evaluate proper use and assignment of sources. As part of this process, you may require to submit electronic as well as hard copies of your work. Other instructions to follow may also be given. By taking this course, you agree that all assignments may undergo this review process. The assignment may be included as a source document in Turnitin.com's restricted access database. It is solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism in such documents. Assignments not submitted according to the instructor's procedures may be penalized or may not be accepted at all. (*Office of Legal Counsel, October 11, 2018*)

### **Online SETEs**

Students are urged to complete the SETEs evaluation of this course. Once the instructor has posted grades, student can immediately see that grade, provided they have completed a the SETE for that class. To access evaluation forms, students should log in to MyMemphis using their UUIDs and email passwords; click on the gray “Student” tab; complete an evaluation for each course listed and hit the “Submit” button at the bottom of the form. Completing the SETE will only take a few minutes. Faculty take the evaluations very seriously and use them to improve courses and instructional quality. Student feedback is essential and is appreciated.

### **Deadlines**

All deadlines are firm. This is journalism and strategic media. Students needing an extension on an assignment must receive approval from the instructor. Exceptions will be made for reasonable circumstances if the student notifies the instructor prior to the due date.

### **AP Style and grammar**

All written work in this class must follow the AP Stylebook and accepted rules of grammar and punctuation. Students are responsible for learning these rules and checking their work for errors.

### **Disability and accommodations**

Students who need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office for Disability Resources for Students at 901-678-2880 in 110 Wilder Tower Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

### **Diversity and inclusivity**

Students are required to respect the differences of others and treat all persons with respect. Discriminatory, derogatory and threatening language or behavior will not be tolerated. Further, students are expected to consider their work through a diverse mind. Media reach a mass audience, and students should be aware of how those messages are received by a diverse audience.

### **Weather policy**

Always check with local media and the University of Memphis website regarding inclement weather. If the University is closed or classes are canceled, this course will not meet. However, students will still be responsible for that day’s work.



## **Student support**

Students who are experiencing personal or academic challenges including, but not limited to food or housing issues, family needs, or other stressors, should visit the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support page to learn about resources that can help: <https://www.memphis.edu/saos/sos/crisis-resources.php>. Any student who faces personal challenges including, but not limited to securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Office of Student Accountability, Outreach & Support (901-678-2187) located in the University Center, Suite 359 for assistance. Students may also talk with course instructors about the challenges they are experiencing. Instructors may be able to assist in connecting with campus or community support.

## **COVID-19 protocols**

If a student tests positive for COVID-19, they need to notify the Dean of Students Office at [deanofstudents@memphis.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@memphis.edu) and notify the University of their result. Faculty are expected to be accommodating with extra time for assignments; however, decisions will vary on a case-by-case basis according to the severity of the student's illness. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, students are encouraged to wear masks indoors, wash hands frequently and wipe down their workstations with sanitizing wipes before and after class.