

**COURSE: ORL6500 Qualitative Research Methods on Organizations:  
Design and Data Collection**

**Spring 2011** Tuesday, 7:20-9:00

**Professor:** Dr. Lyle Yorks

**Office:** 210 A, Main Hall

**Phone:** (212) 678-3820

**E-mail:** ly84@columbia.edu

**Office**

**Hours:** Wednesday 5:00-7:00 p.m. and by appointment

**Graduate Assistant:** Jody Barto, M.ED

**E mail:** jb3375@tc.columbia.edu

**Course Objectives:**

This course is an introduction to qualitative research methods—conceptualization, design and data collection procedures—with a special focus on organizational study. Through this course, students will:

- learn about the nature and application of qualitative research in social and organizational research
- learn to conceptualize qualitative research and to formulate problem statements and research questions
- learn how to design a qualitative research study
- learn about qualitative data collection procedures—observation, interviews, focus group interviews, and collection and use of documents and archival data
- apply their research design and data collection skills by undertaking a pilot research study.

**Course Description:**

This course is designed to train graduate students in qualitative research methodology, from conceptualization, through design and data collection processes for use in their graduate studies and as an applied research methodology for problem investigation, problem solving and evaluation in educational administration and other related fields. It includes a thorough discussion of qualitative research design and the role of theory in guiding and informing research design. The course begins with research problems, questions and design considerations. The course follows with training, through lecture, group work and hands-on experiences, in four data collection methods commonly used in qualitative research—observation, interview, focus group and use of documents and archival

data. Students will undertake a pilot research study as part of the course requirements and as a means of trying out their research conceptualizing and data collection skills. The exercises (Maxwell) are intended to develop the mindset required to think through, design, and execute a qualitative study.

### **Prerequisite**

Students must have completed an overview research methods course. Students are strongly encouraged to already have a research topic for their dissertation or other research endeavors.

### **Required Textbooks:**

The following texts have been ordered through the Teachers College bookstore. These books have been selected to provide an in-depth understanding of the issues involved in conducting qualitative research, including design and the various methods of gathering and organizing data. Students should consider these books as a foundation for their professional library in qualitative methods. These books should be useful references throughout their graduate student career and their professional practice following completion of their studies.

Berg, B. L. & Lune, H. Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences, 8<sup>th</sup> edition, Boston: Pearson, Allyn & Bacon. 2012

Creswell, J. W., Qualitative inquiry and research design, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Sage Publications. 2013.

Maxwell, J.A. Qualitative Research Design. Sage Publications, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 2013

Rubin, H. J. & Rubin, I. S. Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data, Sage Publications, 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, 2012.

Seidman, I. E. Interviewing as Qualitative Research, Teachers College Press, 4<sup>rd</sup> edition.

Yin, R. K. Case Study Research. Sage Publications, 4<sup>th</sup> edition, 2009.

### **Other readings:**

Various articles and excerpts from published studies available at the Teachers College duplicating center. These are intended to supplement the above texts by providing additional perspective on the issues involved or particular variations and applications of topics.

Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond neo-positivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. Academy of Management Review, 28, 13-33.

Barbour, R. (1997). Mixing qualitative methods: Quality assurance or qualitative quagmire? Qualitative Health Research 8, 352-361.

Brookfield, S. (1990). Conducting Interviews. Unpublished manuscript, Teachers College, Columbia University.

- Brookfield, S. (1990). Preparing interview schedules. Unpublished manuscript, Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Conklin, T. (2007). Method or madness: Phenomenology as knowledge creator. Journal of Management Inquiry, 16, 275-287.
- Dyer, Jr., W.G. and Wilkins, A.L. (1991). Better stories, not better constructs, to generate better theory: A rejoinder to Eisenhardt. Academy of Management Review, 16, 613-627.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. Academy of Management Review, 14, 532-551.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1991). Better stories and better constructs: The case for rigor and comparative logic. Academy of Management Review, 16, 620-627.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. Qualitative Inquiry, 12, 219-245.
- Gold, R. (1958). Roles in sociological field observation. Social Forces, 36,217-223.
- Gold, R. (1997). The ethnographic method in sociology. Qualitative Inquiry, 3, 388-402.
- Knapp, N. F. (1997). Interviewing Joshua: On the importance of leaving room for serendipity. Qualitative Inquiry, 3, 326-342.
- Kreiner, G. E., Hollensbe, E.C. & Sheep, M. L. (2006). Where is the “me” among the “we”? Identity work and the search for optimal balance. Academy of Management Journal, 49(5), 1031-1057.
- Gutierrez B., Howard-Grenville, J. & Scully, M. A. (2010). The faithful rise up: Split identification and an unlikely change effort. Academy of Management Journal, 53(4), 673-699.
- Mathison, S. (1988). Why triangulate? Educational Researcher, 17 (2) 13-17.
- Morgan, D. L. (1998). Practical strategies for combining qualitative and quantitative methods: Application to health research. Qualitative Health Research, 8, 362-376.
- Owens, E. (2006). Conversational space and participant shame in interviewing. Qualitative Inquiry, 12, 1160-1179.
- Roulston, K., deMarrals, K., & Lewis, J.B. (2003). Learning to interview in the social sciences. Qualitative Inquiry, 9, 643-668.
- Schultz K. (1997). Crossing boundaries in research and teacher education: Reflections of a white researcher in urban schools and communities. Qualitative Inquiry, 3, 491-512.
- Yorks, L. (2005). Action research. In R.A. Swanson & E. Holton, (Eds.), *Research in organizations: Foundational principles, processes, and methods of inquiry*, (pp. 375-398). San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler.
- Yorks, L. & Nicolaidis, A. (2007). The role conundrums of Co-Inquiry Action Research: Lessons from the field. *Systemic Practice and Action Research*, 20, 105-116.
- Yorks, L. et. al. (1996). Boundary management in Action Reflection Learning™ research. Human Resource Development Quarterly, 7, 313-329.
- Yorks, L. & Whitsett, D.A. (1985). Hawthorne, Topeka, and the issue of science versus advocacy in organizational behavior. The Academy of Management Review, 10(1), 21-30.

## Introduction and Research Design in Qualitative Methods

Session 1 Jan. 29<sup>th</sup> **Overview.** Course purpose, objectives, and requirements. What is qualitative

research and how has it been used in the field of educational research and adult learning? How do qualitative and quantitative research designs differ?

Berg & Lune Chapter 1

Yin, Chapter 1

Develop your researcher memo, (Maxwell's exercise 2.1, page 34) and submit Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>.

Session 2 Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> **Research design.** Types of research design.

Berg & Lune Chapters 2 & 10

Creswell Chapters 1-5.

Maxwell, Chapters 1-2

Yin, Chapters 2-3

Eisenhardt, - Dyer & Wilkins –Eisenhardt articles

Flyvbjerg, Five misunderstandings of case study...

Session 3 Feb. 12<sup>th</sup> **Research design.** Procedures for designing and setting up a qualitative research study. Conceptual Frameworks, Research questions, validity in data gathering

Berg & Lune Chapter 3

Creswell, Chapter 6

Gold, R. "The ethnographic method in sociology"

Maxwell, Chapter 3, 4,

Yorks & Whitsett, "Advocacy..."

Do Maxwell's exercise 3.1 (p. 62) prior to class. Bring two copies to class. Also, begin developing your Pilot study abstracts, due the fourth session. What are the core ideas? How do they relate to one another in terms of an argument?

Session 4, Feb. 19<sup>th</sup> **Research design.** Starting a study: entry into the field; developing rapport; role of the researcher; confidentiality; collecting background information, sampling, and Validity in data gathering.

Creswell, Chapter 7

Maxwell, Chapters 4, 5, & 6

Seidman Chapters 3 & 4

Schultz, K. "Crossing Boundaries in Research and Teacher Education: Reflection of White Researcher in Urban Schools and Communities."

Yorks, *et. al.* Boundary Management in Action Reflection Learning™ Research: Taking the Role of the Sophisticated Barbarian."

Yin, Chapter 4

Pilot Study Abstract Due

## Data Collection Procedures

For each data collection experience, write a summary of the issues that were challenges in data collection and bring to class for your discussion group.

Sessions 5& 6, Feb. 26<sup>st</sup> & March 5<sup>th</sup> . **Interviews.** Types of interviews (structured to unstructured). How to design interview questions; how to conduct interviews

Brookfield, S. "Conducting Interviews." and "Preparing Interview Schedules."  
Knapp, "Interviewing Joshua: On the Importance of Leaving Room for Serendipity."

Roulston, et. al. "Learning to Interview in the Social Sciences"

Rubin & Rubin, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 7

Seidman, Chapters 1, 2, 6

**For session 5:** Do Maxwell's exercises 4.1 (p. 84), 5.2 (p. 119), & 6.1 (p. 136) and bring two copies to class

**Note:** Interview notes are due on the eighth class session March 20<sup>th</sup>.

Session 7, March 12<sup>th</sup>. **Observations.** Taking notes, following up issues, developing a sequence  
Types of observation procedures. How to observe and focus. Use of observation guides.

Berg & Lune Chapter 6

Gold, R. "Roles in sociological field observation."

Cresswell, Chapter 7

Spring Break

Session 8, March 26<sup>th</sup> . **Focus groups.** Design, conduct and analysis of focus group interviews

Berg & Lune Chapter 5

Interview notes are due

Session 9, April, 2<sup>nd</sup>. **Documents and archival data.** Definition, review of sources and types of data, methods of collection and analysis.

Berg & Lune Chapter 8

Observation notes are due.

Session 10, April 9<sup>th</sup>. **Action Research**

Berg & Lune Chapter 7  
Yorks & Nicolaides.  
Yorks Action Research  
Pilot Methodology Paper is due

Session 11, April 16<sup>th</sup>, **Integrating and synthesizing data, reflexivity.**

Creswell, Chapters 10 & 11  
Yin, Chapter 5  
Alvesson, Beyond neopositivists...”  
Revised Maxwell Exercises 5.2, p. 119 & 6.1 p. 136 due, bring two copies to class

Session 12, April 23<sup>rd</sup>. **Discussion of pilot study experiences and results**

Berg & Lune Chapter 12  
Focus group notes due

Session 13, April 30<sup>th</sup>. **Open and Advanced Issues**

Final pilot study findings are due

Session 14, May 7<sup>th</sup> **Final Summary**

Kreiner, Hollensbe & Sheep &/or  
Gutierrez, Howard-Grenville & Scully

### **Organization of the course**

The course will combine an in-depth study of qualitative research methods and their application to organizational issues, with student-directed pilot studies for a qualitative research project. To facilitate an understanding of the methodology and its application to field-related problems, students will be assigned to small groups for periodic discussions. These same discussion groups will be used for reflection on pilot study research experiences.

Each student is to select a qualitative research topic to design, conduct and analyze a qualitative pilot study. As part of this pilot study, every student is to practice each of the four primary data collection techniques—observations, interviews, focus groups and collection of documentation and archival data. Students are strongly encouraged to use their dissertation topic as the basis for the pilot study.

To provide further exposure to qualitative research, it is highly recommended that during the early weeks of the course each student read, analyze and critique the methodology and findings of a published qualitative research study. The study should be a published book, not an article or report. Look closely at how a study was done, the nature of the results it yielded, and how the results were written up and presented. This reading will help give you a basis for comparison and discussion on the methodological procedures, analysis and reporting which will be discussed in class throughout the course. A list of suggested qualitative research studies is included at the end of the syllabus. These are primarily published ethnographic studies. Students are strongly encouraged to find a published qualitative research study that is relevant to their research topic and do not have to be limited by this list. Other studies are listed in your course books and related readings.

## **Course Assignments**

There are three major assignments to be completed throughout the course:

1. Design and conduct of a pilot study
2. Data collection using four different procedures (which is described as part of the pilot study).
3. Maintain a reflective learning journal of the experience.

In addition there are a number of short exercises that are designed to facilitate one's mindset and understanding of the research process applied to the pilot study.

### **1. The Pilot Project**

To apply the skills and techniques of qualitative research, students will work throughout the semester on a pilot research project, either based on their proposed dissertation research or another topic. Throughout the semester, each student will be required to collect the following data using various data collection procedures to be submitted for review at designed dates:

- Literature review (collect articles, books and other publications on the problem or issue). This is to be included in the pilot study methodology due in the 10<sup>th</sup> session (April 3<sup>rd</sup>) and the findings paper and is due in the 13<sup>th</sup> Session (April 24<sup>th</sup>).
- Interviews (interview a variety of "stakeholders" such as an administrator, two teachers or staff members, and three participants; conduct at least 3 in-depth interviews in all. Transcribe one of the interviews. This is due on the 8<sup>th</sup> class session (March 20<sup>th</sup>). Submit a one page summary of the other two.
- Observations (Do two one-hour observations). Observation notes are due on the 9<sup>th</sup> class session, March 27<sup>th</sup>.
- Focus group (conduct a focus group of staff, participants or other relevant stakeholder group). This is due on the 12<sup>th</sup> class session (April 17<sup>th</sup>).

- Documents and archival records (collect relevant documents, records, archival materials, utilization figures and so forth).

Students are to prepare the following reports on their pilot study;

1. *Pilot study abstract*

By the fourth class session (February 14<sup>th</sup>), students are to submit a one-page abstract describing their pilot study topic. This abstract should include the following information:

- description of research problem
- whether it is your dissertation topic (and your sponsor's name)
- field setting you intend to use for the pilot study (with permission from the field setting administrator, as is appropriate)
- scope of work you intend to cover in conducting the pilot study
- primary issues to be studied, as is relevant for your research topic and to work through methodological design features
- your relationship to the participants or setting under study.

2. *Methodology Paper*

By the 10<sup>th</sup> class session (April 3<sup>rd</sup>), each student is to write and submit a summary description of the methodology used for their pilot study. It is to include the following topics:

I.	Introduction (summary of the research problem with reference to the literature)
II.	Research Purpose and Research questions
III.	Methodological design
IV.	Field setting and consent procedures
V.	Sampling and confidentiality
VI.	Validity issues




The methodology should be approximately 12 pages long.

Methodologies that are turned in early or on time would be eligible for rewrites, if needed, to improve the course grade. Methodologies turned in after the due date would not be.

### 3. *Data collection*

Throughout the semester, students are to be collecting observations, interviews, focus group interviews and documents and archival data. To facilitate methodological skill development, students are to complete their data collection procedures at recommended times throughout the semester and turn in copies of their “raw” data for review and feedback on their methodology. These data will be used as a basis for classroom and small group discussion. Students will only be evaluated on the completion of these assignments and not on the quality of the work done. Students are to bring summary written notes to class about the challenges in undertaking each data collection procedure, to be used in our discussions.

### 4. *Pilot study findings*

The findings of the pilot study will be written as a final report and will be due on the 14<sup>th</sup> class session. This should be a reflection on the results as they apply to the conceptual issues of the study, summarizing what is learned and what questions remain. It extends the prior methodology paper. The remainder of the paper is a two-part report; 1) reflecting on the data collected and its implications for revising the proposed study, and; 2) reflecting on the methodological experience in order to make recommendations for the formal study to be conducted.

This report is due April 24<sup>h</sup> and should be 20-22 pages long (including the content of the prior paper). Some revisions and additions to the first paper (i.e. additional literature, tightening of the research problem and research questions, methodology may be made.

I.	Introduction (summary of the research problem with reference to the literature)
II.	Research Purpose and Research questions
III.	Methodological design
IV.	Field setting and consent procedures

<p>VII. Sampling and confidentiality</p> <p>VIII. Validity issues</p>
<p>VII. Methodological findings of the study</p> <p>This section should analyze the lessons learned about how to conduct this study, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. proposed revisions to data collection steps</li> <li>2. proposed revisions to data collection guides</li> <li>3. changes in sampling</li> <li>4. changes in approaches to data collection and your conduct in the field</li> <li>5. other methodological considerations</li> </ol> <p>VIII. Conclusions and recommendations for a continued study on this topic</p>

### Summary of Assignments

Below is a table that summarizes the key assignments and their due dates:

<b>Schedule and Assignments, ORL6500</b>				
<b>Date</b>	<b>Session #</b>	<b>Qualitative research study and exercises</b>	<b>Data collection</b>	<b>Pilot Study</b>
January 29 <sup>th</sup>	1			
February 5 <sup>th</sup>	2	Maxwell exercise 2.1 p. 27		
February 12 <sup>th</sup>	3	Maxwell exercise 3.1 p. 52		
February 19 <sup>th</sup>	4			Pilot abstract due
February 26 <sup>th</sup>	5	Maxwell exercises 4.1 p. 76, 5.2 p. 102, & 6.1 p. 114		
March 5 <sup>th</sup>	6			
March 12 <sup>th</sup>	7			
March 26 <sup>th</sup>	8		Interview notes due	
April 2 <sup>th</sup>	9		Observation notes due	
April 9 <sup>th</sup>	10			Pilot

				methodology due
April 16 <sup>th</sup>	11	Revised Maxwell Exercises 5.2 pp. 102 & 6.1 p114 due. Bring 2 copies to class		
April 23 <sup>rd</sup>	12		Focus group notes due	
April 30 <sup>th</sup>	13			Final pilot study findings and learning due
May 7 <sup>th</sup>	14			
May 14 <sup>th</sup>				

### Evaluation

Student work and performance will be graded according to the quality and completeness of each assignment, as well as each student's participation in the course and small group discussions. The assignments account for the following portions of your grade:

- Completion of the three data collection assignments--20 percent
- Methodology paper--30 percent
- Final Paper --30 percent
- Class participation and small group discussions--20 percent

### General course expectations

Throughout the years of teaching this course, the professors and students have developed a set of general expectations about student participation in the course:

- Students are to come to class prepared for the discussions, by having done all requisite reading in advance.
- Active class participation is expected of all students. Students are strongly encouraged to provide relevant information from their own experiences or other materials they have read; probe for clarification; make connections among the readings; and integrate ideas. The quality of participation, not the just the quantity, will be assessed.

- Students are to attend all classes. Students are to give advance notice, if possible, of any expected absence or provide immediate follow-up, if they are unexpectedly absent.
- If as student misses a class, he or she is responsible for obtaining all notes and materials.
- Assignments are to be completed on time.
- The quality of the writing and as well as the content will be assessed for this course. All students are advised to carefully proofread all grammar and spelling prior to turning in assignments.
- All papers are to be written using the style of the American Psychological Association's Publication Manual, which is available at the Teacher's College bookstore and the library.
- There are several style features that are necessary at a minimum:
  - all papers must be paginated
  - all paragraphs must be indented 5-7 spaces
  - subheadings should be used to break up topics in the paper, helping to organize the flow and facilitate reading
- Group discussions and group project work are integral parts of the course. Students will be assessed on their ability to participate in and facilitate good group dynamics, throughout small group and whole class discussions. This includes respectful listening, support and encouragement of all classmates, as they test out ideas and opinions in an academic learning environment.

### **Grading criteria**

Grade will be assigned to papers based on the following criteria, adapted from one used by other faculty in the department. It should help to clarify my expectations for your writing. As doctoral students preparing for engaging in dissertation research focus on the formatting and overall quality of the paper. Pay particular attention to APA formatting.

- “A” paper      An “A” paper is rich in content and quality of writing. It is meaty and dense with information. It makes all points well, and is thought provoking. It is complete and integrates all the ideas raised, rather than leaving tangents unresolved. It is presented in a cogent manner, with an engaging opening paragraph, good transitions, and tight, fresh and cogent phrasing. It has careful organization and development, with a clear beginning, middle and conclusion.
- “B” paper      A “B” paper provides substantial information and is well written. Its points are logically ordered, well developed and unified around a clear organizing principle. It

has a well-developed beginning and conclusion. It is concise, with some of the finesse of an “A” paper, and is somewhat successful in convincing a reader of its points.

“C” paper A “C” paper is generally competent in meeting the specifications of the assignment and having few mechanical errors. Its content is thin, commonplace, and too dependent upon vague generalities. The writing is uneven, without a well-developed beginning and conclusion, and has choppy sentences, with repetitions and redundancies. It lacks intellectual rigor, and is mediocre in establishing a stand on an issue. It leaves many ideas dangling and is not very successful in convincing the reader.

“D” paper A “D” paper is ineffective in how it develops a subject and is written. It is often a summary of information rather than an analysis of information, and may miss parts of the required assignment. The sentences and overall organization are frequently awkward and ambiguous. There may also be frequent grammar and spelling errors.