QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS
Psychology 781

Spring 2012

Class Time and Location
Tuesday
9:00-11:30pm
Location: Kuykendal 410A

Professor
Charlene Baker, Ph.D.
C405 Sakamaki
Phone: 956-5669
E-mail: bakercha@hawaii.edu
Office hours: by appointment

Course Objective: The purpose of this course is to provide students with an advanced introduction to qualitative methods for community and action research. The course will concentrate on basic principles and issues in the design and practice of qualitative research in community settings. My overall approach to the course will be one in which we create a learning workshop. That is, I believe that qualitative work is best learned by reading it and practicing it and through constant self-reflection and dialogue. To that end, we will practice designing and carrying out two mini studies, using the classroom as a place to think critically about our design, data collection, and analyses decisions and experiences. We will complete in-class exercises to sharpen our skills in self-awareness and in seeing, hearing, and analyzing data. We will read and discuss qualitative research studies. Through reading, doing, and reflecting, we will identify and sort through the challenges of designing, conducting, analyzing, and writing qualitative research.

Required Reading:


Books are available for purchase in the bookstore. I will provide the other readings in class.

Course Requirements: There will be two field practice exercises culminating in written assignments. To prepare to complete your assignments, you should draw on the required readings and in-class discussions. All assignments will be graded. All assignments must be typed, double-spaced, and in American Psychological Association style (see the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th ed.), with the exception of your field notes. Your final grade will be based on these homework assignments (70%) and on your class participation and demonstrated grasp of the readings (30%).

Field Practice Assignment #s 1 & 2: You will conduct two mini-qualitative studies over the course of the semester. The first study will rely on observational methods. The second study will rely on interview methods. Each counts 35% toward your final grade.

Mini-study #1: In this study, you will rely on observing to obtain your data. You are not restricted from also using other methods, such as interviewing and document analyses to supplement your data collection, but observation should be your primary method. Your study may seek to address a research question of interest to you, but must be answerable within the context of a 6-week rapid data collection period. So, think about how you would fill in the blanks for study titles such as:

The daily routines of
A day in the life of
Rules and rituals concerning
Coping with

Keep in mind that these are but a few examples to prompt your creativity. I also strongly encourage you to conduct the study outside the context of settings with which you are familiar and relationships in which you are a member. So, do not study your own romantic partnership, parents, siblings, or church. Check out something new and unfamiliar.
Your study must conform to the following requirements:

1) You must observe on a minimum of 4 occasions.
2) You must obtain informed consent, as appropriate, noting that the data will only be used as an in-class practice opportunity.
3) You must obtain permission to be in settings, if required.
4) You must keep and fully elaborate your field notes.

Your report, due by noon on March 13, 2012, should be no more than 25 pages and include:

1) A detailed description of why you selected the phenomenon and setting.
2) A description of how you gained entrée to the setting and how your presence was understood and perceived.
3) A description of how you focused your observations and made decisions about what and what not to record.
4) A precise, detailed description of relevant persons and the social and physical setting.
5) A description of critical events over the course of your observations.
6) A meaningful summary of the observations, using quotations from your notes illustratively.
7) Identification of at least three organizing themes in the data, providing evidence for how they structure the phenomenon.
8) An account of the phenomenon.
9) The signed consent form(s).
10) A discussion of ethical and practical issues that arose.
11) A page or more reflection on what you learned.

In addition, you should include a sample of 5-pages from your best field notes.

Mini-study #2: In this study, you will rely exclusively on interviewing to obtain your data. Your study must seek to address the research question, what does _____ mean to you? Fill in the blank with a topic such as work, motherhood, masculinity, health, or well being. You might also fill in the blank with a social identity, such as Professor, Prosecutor, Immigrant, or Person with AIDS. Your report is due on May 8, 2012:

Your study must conform to the following requirements:

• You must have at least 1 but no more than 4 respondents.
• Your interviews must each be at least 1 hour in length.
• Your respondent(s) must be interviewed a minimum of twice, with the second interview developed as a result of the content of the first. This suggests that your initial interview should follow a basic grand tour format, with the second interview more narrowly focused on issues raised and events described in the first interview.
• You must obtain informed consent, noting that the interview will only be used as an in-class practice opportunity.
• You must tape record and fully transcribe your interviews.
Your report should be no more than 25 pages and include:

- A detailed description of why you selected the respondent(s).
- A list of what questions you asked in each interview.
- A precise and meaningful summary of the interviews, using quotations illustratively.
- Identification of at least three organizing themes in the data, providing evidence for how they structure the data.
- An account of what the concept means to the person(s) within the context of your retelling their life story(ies).
- The signed consent form(s).
- A discussion of ethical and practical issues that arose.
- A page or more reflection on what you learned.

In addition, you should include a sample of 5-pages from your best transcribed interview.
# COURSE OUTLINE

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Readings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Overview; Philosophical Tenets of Qualitative Inquiry</td>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>None</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preparation for the Field (e.g., Design Considerations, Qualitative Approaches, Focusing the Study, Sampling &amp; Data Collection)</td>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>Creswell, Ch. 3, 4</td>
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<td></td>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Creswell, Ch. 5, Appendices C, D, F</td>
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<td>January 31</td>
<td>Creswell, Appendices A &amp; E, Ch. 6, 7</td>
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<td>Observing</td>
<td>February 7</td>
<td>Observation Exercises: Introduce Observation Assignment</td>
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<td>February 14</td>
<td>Patton, Chapter 6</td>
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<td>Ethics</td>
<td>February 21</td>
<td>Punch</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Seal et al.</td>
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<td>Glesne &amp; Peshkin</td>
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<td>Singer &amp; Easton</td>
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<td>Interviewing</td>
<td>February 28</td>
<td>Liebow’s <em>Tell them who I am: The lives of homeless women.</em></td>
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<td>March 6</td>
<td>Patton, Chapter 7; Introduce Interviewing Assignment</td>
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<td>Self as Instrument</td>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>R. Campbell’s <em>Emotionally involved: The impact of researching rape.</em></td>
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<td>OBSERVATION ASSIGNMENT DUE</td>
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<td>Using Photography</td>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Photovoice articles</td>
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<td>Interview Lab</td>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>Work in class on interview questions and informed consent</td>
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<td>Using Film</td>
<td>April 10</td>
<td>IN-CLASS FILM: The Two Towns of Jasper</td>
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<td>Reliability, Validity, Analysis and Writing</td>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>Creswell – Table 8.2; Straus &amp; Corbin, Chapter 6 &amp; 7</td>
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<td>April 24</td>
<td>Straus &amp; Corbin, Chapters 8 &amp; 9</td>
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<td>May 1</td>
<td>Patton, Ch. 9, Creswell, Ch. 10</td>
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<td>Wrap-up</td>
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<td>May 8</td>
<td>INTERVIEWING ASSIGNMENT DUE by 2:00p</td>
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