Course Outline for
CMST 509: Qualitative Research Methods
Spring 2021

Course Meeting Location & Time
- **Tuesdays**: Communication Building, Room 2010, 3.35 p.m. – 4:50 p.m. **(TBD)**
- **Thursdays**: Online/Asynchronous (Assigned readings and work due on Fridays by 5 p.m. CST)

Instructor Details & Contact Information
Craig L. Engstrom, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Dept. of Communication Studies
Comm. Bldg. 2249 | 618.203.1997 (text okay) | craig.engstrom@siu.edu

Office Hours
- Office Hours (MS Teams) or Book Appointments: See **craigengstrom.ninja/contact**

Contact & File Naming Instructions
- Use the following email subject line format: **CMST 509:** *Topic of email* (change to suit)
- Attachments submitted electronically: **LastnameFirst-Assignmentdetails.docx** (or .rtf).

Course Information & Policies (Syllabus)
- **Course Policies:** craigengstrom.ninja/policies
- **Course Information:** craigengstrom.ninja/cmst-509
- **Grading Criteria:** craigengstrom.ninja/grading-criteria.html

Course Description (Modified)
Practical introduction to qualitative methodologies in communication research with an objective to practice data collection through interviewing or textual approaches, analyze data using narrative or rhetorical procedures, and interpret data to thematize findings using interpretive or critical methods.

Course Goals and Objectives
By the end of this course, learners will
• Identify the kinds of data gathered through different qualitative methods;
• Use observation, participant observation, participatory tools, interviews, and focus groups for project planning and monitoring and evaluation activities;
• Analyze qualitative data collected from multiple qualitative data collection techniques;
• Use tools and techniques that facilitate effective interpretive research.

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Course Schedule (Overview)

Important: The following schedule highlights major assignments and chapters from the primary textbook *Qualitative Research Methods* by Sarah J Tracy. Additional reading work and shorter activities will be available in Microsoft Teams or D2L.

Week	Calendar	Topic	Reading	Assignment Due
1	Jan. 18–24	Developing Research	Chapter 1	
2	Jan. 25–31	Getting Started in Qualitative Research	Chapter 2	
3	Feb. 1–7	Basics of Qualitative Research	Chapter 3	Research Summary
4	Feb. 8–14	Research Design	Chapter 4	
5	Feb. 15–21	Field Notes and Field Focus	Chapter 6	
6	Feb. 22–28	Interview Planning and Design	Chapter 7	
7	Mar. 1–7	Interview Practice	Chapter 8	Human Subjects Proposal
8	Mar. 8–10	Data Analysis Basics	Chapter 9	[No Class Thursday]
9	Mar. 15–21	Advanced Data Analysis	Chapter 10	
10	Mar. 22–28	Qualitative Quality	Chapter 11	Initial Data Transcript
11	Mar. 29–April 4	Theorizing and Writing	Chapter 12	
12	April 5–11	Drafting, Polishing, Publishing	Chapter 13	
13	April 12–18	Qualitative Methodology Matters	Chapter 14	Themes & Supporting Evidence
14	April 19–25	Negotiating Access	Chapter 5	
15	April 26–May 2	TBD		
16	Finals	Final Exam Week: Top 5 Ignite Talks and Evals	---	Research Paper

Important dates

- MLK Day, 1/18 (No Classes)
- Deadline to register, add/change sections of full-term courses (w/o Dean's signature), 1/24
- Last day to drop course and be eligible for refund, 1/29
- CMST Study Days, 3/11 & 3/12
- Last day to drop course for a W grade, 3/26
- Honors Day, TBD
- Commencement, 5/8

Required Reading

We will use Sarah J. Tracy's *Qualitative Research Methods* as our primary textbook.

Additional media, including short articles and videos, will be available to you via D2L or MS Teams. Your instructor will distinguish between required and optional readings or viewing.

As graduate-level course, you are expected to conduct additional research to support your major writing activities. It is expected you will read one additional peer-reviewed journal article per week (so approximately 15 over the term). Most of these will be provided to you; however, you will have opportunities to choose among listed readings or select your own article for reading (requires approval).

Assignments and Grades

Research Summary **15%**
Learners will prepare a brief research abstract that summarizes their proposed study. This summary will be two, single-spaced pages maximum and include the following items: 1) title, abstract, outline of paper with brief notes (explanation and rationale of method required), and references.

Human Subjects Proposal **25%**
Learners will prepare an application for the Human Subjects Committee that outlines their study. Learners must include all items required by ORDA for review, including the following items: 1) certificate of CITI training, 2) recruitment scripts, 3) interview protocols, etc. Actual submission to ORDA is optional. (If a learner is doing textual analysis, or another form of research not requiring HSC approval, they will prepare a brief presentation on their method of analysis summarizing additional readings on method.)

Initial Data Transcripts **15%**
Learners will conduct actual or simulated research following the protocols outlined in their research proposal. At least one-hour of research must be conducted, transcribed (or notated), and prepared for analysis.

Themes & Supporting Evidence **25%**
Learners will analyze their data using a narrative or rhetorical method to thematize and interpret their data (other interpretative approaches may be used; however, you must get approval from your instructor to use a specific approach). Learners will prepare some form of report on themes and must include supporting evidence from the data and extant research to support their arguments.

Research Paper **20%**
Drawing on all the items above, learners will prepare a rough draft of a paper, in APA, that should include an introduction, literature review, explanation of method and analysis, findings, discussion, and conclusion. This is a rough draft and may not be complete. Focus should be placed on introduction, method and findings. The literature reviews, discussion, and conclusion can be developed after the course is over for submission to a conference.

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