

Marshall University

Course Title/Number	Qualitative Research Methods: CMM 605
Semester/Year	Spring 2017
Days/Time	Tuesday 4:00-6:20 pm
Location	Smith Hall 232
Professor	Dr. Stephen M. Underhill
Office	Smith Hall 248
Phone	(304) 696-3020
E-Mail	underhills@marshall.edu
Office/Hours	Tuesdays: 9:15-11:00; 12:15-4:00 Thursdays: 9:15-11:00; 12:15-6:00 Please e-mail me in advance of your arrival, if possible
University Policies	By enrolling in this course, you agree to the University Policies listed below. Please read the full text of each policy by going to www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs and clicking on "Marshall University Policies." Or, you can access the policies directly by going to http://www.marshall.edu/academic-affairs/?page_id=802 Academic Dishonesty/ Excused Absence Policy for Undergraduates/ Computing Services Acceptable Use/ Inclement Weather/ Dead Week/ Students with Disabilities/ Academic Forgiveness/ Academic Probation and Suspension/ Academic Rights and Responsibilities of Students/ Affirmative Action/ Sexual Harassment
Class Policies	All assignments must be typed, size 12 font, 1 inch margins, double spaced

Course Description

This course provides an introduction to the breadth of qualitative research methods and their application in communication studies.

General Education Program Student Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the core curriculum at Marshall University, students will be able to master the following core domains of critical thinking:

1. Aesthetic/Artistic
2. Communication (oral, written, visual)
3. Information Literacy: Exploring; Questioning; Searching; Evaluating; Synthesizing; Creating; Communicating; Assessing.
4. Mathematical and Abstract
5. Multicultural/International
6. Scientific
7. Social/Ethical/Historical

Relationships among Course, Program, and Degree Profile Outcomes

Course Student Learning Outcomes	How students will practice each outcome in this Course	How student achievement of each outcome will be assessed in this Course	Program Outcomes	Degree Profile Outcomes
Students will understand theory as a context for communication.	Class discussion; Class reading; Class activities; Research Project.	Exams, Research Paper.	2,3,6,7	Applied learning; Intellectual skills;
Students will generalize communication patterns from qualitative inquiry.	In-depth interviews, observations, primary source data.	Research Paper.	2,3,6,7	Applied learning; Intellectual skills;
Students will assess the ways qualitative research methods inform theoretical understanding.	Class discussion; Class reading; Class activities; Research Project.	Exams, Research Paper.	2,3,6,7	Specialized knowledge; Applied learning; Broad, Integrative Knowledge
Students will analyze communication artifacts using qualitative communication theory.	Research Project.	Exams, Research Paper.	2,3,6,7	Applied learning; Broad, Integrative Knowledge; Intellectual skills
Students will synthesize qualitative data.	Research Project.	Research Project.	2,3,6,7	Broad, Integrative Knowledge; Intellectual skills
Students will analyze qualitative data.	Research Project.	Research Project.	2,3,6,7	Specialized knowledge; Applied learning; Broad, Integrative Knowledge; Intellectual skills; Civic learning.

Required Texts, Additional Reading, and Other Materials

Lindlof, Thomas R. and Bryan C. Taylor. *Qualitative Communication Research Methods*, 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks: Sage. 2011.
McKinnon, Sara L., Robert Asen, Karma R. Chávez, and Robert Glenn Howard. *Text + Field*. College Station. Penn State Press. 2016.

Semester Project

This course is structured around a real world problem. We will use what we learn this semester to collect qualitative data for Bright Futures Learning Services, a local clinic that provides services to young children with autism. The data will be used to apply for multimillion dollar grants, which will be used to expand autism services in the tristate region. As you may know, my son was diagnosed with severe autism at 20 months and is a student at Bright Futures, so this project is close to me. In particular, we will develop an interview protocol that we will use to interview parents of children who attend the school. We will ask questions to explore the world of a community that is connected by unique and common experiences. We will learn what it is like to walk in their shoes. We will learn what it was like to 1) come to terms with autism, 2) cope with life and autism before their children received services from Bright Futures, and 3) how their lives changed after their children began attending Bright Futures. These three broad areas of discovery are central to the grant-writing process because grant funders want to know about the needs or problems to which grant money will be spent.

The Department of Communication Studies is working toward building a grant-writing certificate program, and CMM 605 will be an important component of the program. Since the class is offered every two years, futures classes will be able to conduct follow-up interviews, which are also central to grant applications. Grant funders want to know if their money was well spent, if the project in which they invested was successful. Whereas we will use interview data in this class to establish a baseline of lived experiences before grant money was available, future classes will perform follow-up interviews to track how grant money informed the experiences of parents and children with autism alike. If you are still unconvinced that this project is important, the Center for Disease Control estimates that 1 in 69 children today are born with autism, which places it in the scope of a pandemic. Research shows that autism services is most critical/beneficial in early childhood, especially from age 2-3 ½. Unfortunately, the community of parents and children with autism in West Virginia is currently underserved. This project is an early step in a multiyear project to provide more services in the future.

We will have at least four speakers visit our class this semester to prepare ourselves for the parent interviews. Jill Scarbro-McLaury M.S., BCBA, Director of Bright Futures, will discuss the services that her clinic currently provides, the need for those services, and her vision for the future of autism services. Cindy Dollman LeGrand, who works with West Virginia Birth to Three, will discuss what it is like to work with parents who recently

received autism diagnoses. Her emphasis is helping parents who need to serve young children (under 3). Not only does this mean clinical services for children, but the emotional support of parents who most likely feel in over their heads and overwhelmed. Bruce Day of Marshall University's Office of Research Integrity will visit our class to discuss legal and ethical parameters of studying vulnerable populations, which are covered by the Institutional Review Board (IRB). Lastly, Sabrina Thomas will discuss strategies for library research to help prepare your annotative bibliographies.

Each student will interview at least three parents, transcribe their interviews, critically analyze their transcripts, and write an analysis grounded in a bibliography. You will examine intersections between what is said and how it is said to identify the experiential existence of the subjects.

Course Requirements	Points	Due Date
Midterm Exam	50	March 14
Final Exam	50	May 2
Semester Project-		
Annotated Bibliography	25	February 7
Interview Protocol Draft	25	February 21
Finalized Interview Protocol	40	February 28
Transcriptions	50	April 11
Project Presentation	50	April 25
Analytic Paper	100	May 1
TOTAL	390	

Guidelines and rubrics for all assignments will be posted on Blackboard. All assignments should be submitted via the drop box function. Below is a brief description of the major assignments for the course.

Annotated Bibliography: You will review 5 articles from communication journals that are focused on examining intersections of autism, education, and family support. Give priority to articles that use qualitative research methods. To the extent possible, look for articles that use in-depth interviewing and your secondary method of choice (observation or archival). For each article review (approximately 1 page each), give a complete citation, and describe 1) the research questions, 2) the theoretical perspective

(include whether this is explicitly stated or how you figured it out), 3) the data collection methods used, 4) the authors' methodological reflections, and 5) your personal critique of the methods used. If you choose your articles carefully, you will be able to build a stronger methods section and a more meaningful reflection on the effectiveness of your methods in the final paper.

Interview Protocol: We will decide as a group who should be interviewed for this project. You will then create an interviewing protocol for your data collection. First, your protocol needs to include guidelines and steps for implementing the interview. Next, you should include your complete question list, including planned probes. Finally, discuss your interviewing schedule. If needed, you will revise and resubmit the protocol.

Transcriptions: You will transcribe the interview data and add your notes and observational data to create a rich text for analysis. You will submit all of your data to earn credit toward your final grade.

Analytical Paper: Use the annotated bibliography to write a literature review that establishes what is currently known about your topic. You must (1) transcribe your interviews and (2) either transform your observation into a narrative structure (who, what, when, where, why, how) OR integrate your primary source data into usable form. Conduct a grounded theory analysis based on your transcripts. Intersect that analysis with your secondary data, using the latter to enrich the former. Reflect upon your analysis and identify:

- (1) important intersections and departures from the existing literature;
- (2) strength and weaknesses of your own experience of data collection;
- (3) strength and weaknesses of your own experience of inquiry;
- (4) implications of your study.

REMEMBER, this is a qualitative research methods course, so I will be most interested in your description of your data collection methods and how you employed the grounded theory method of analysis.

Course Policies

Attendance: Attendance is necessary for this course and will be taken at each session. You are allowed 1 unexcused absence during the semester (on a day that does not include your oral presentation or a major grading event). The unexcused absence does not include major illnesses that require hospitalization or medical care or university-sponsored events. After the one unexcused absence (a week's worth of class), you will lose -20 points off your total grade for each additional absence. Excused absences must be documented to the Dean of Students. Please see the university catalog for the definition of excused and unexcused absences.

Late Assignments: Assignments not received by the due date will be subject to a reduced grading scale. For every day that the assignment is late without the instructor's approval, the assignment grade will drop 20%.

Grade Inquiries: All grades will be recorded on Blackboard and can be viewed by the students throughout the semester. All questions about graded assignments, quizzes, or exams must be brought to the instructor within two weeks of the day the grade is posted. We will schedule an appointment to discuss the grade outside of class time.

Plagiarism: Copying another's work without proper citation of the source constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism in any form will not be tolerated. A student that is found plagiarizing another's work will automatically receive an "F" in the course and may be subject to further university discipline.

Cheating: According to university policy, cheating is defined as the use of any unauthorized materials during an academic exercise to include notes, study aids etc. Cheating also includes the viewing of another person's work or securing any part of an assignment or examination in advance of distribution by the instructor. Cheating will not be tolerated in this class and will result in an automatic "F" for the class and the possible recommendation of suspension or expulsion from the university.

Civility:

Cell Phones: Let's create an oasis of civility in our classroom. Please make sure that all cell phones are silenced before class starts. Please try to abstain from using your phone in class.

Laptops: Feel free to bring a laptop to take notes during class; BUT, other uses of the computer such as e-mailing friends or surfing the web for unrelated class material may result in your dismissal.

CLASS SCHEDULE
Reading/Assignment Due

Week 1 T, 01/10	Introduction
Week 2 T, 01/17	Lindlof & Taylor, Chs. 1-3 Class Speaker: Bruce Day; Marshall University Office of Research Integrity
Week 3 T, 01/24	Lindlof & Taylor, Chs. 4-6 Class Speaker: Jill Scarbro-McLaury
Week 4 T, 01/31	Lindlof & Taylor, Chs. 7-9 Class Speaker: Sabrina Thomas
Week 5 T, 02/07	McKinnon et. al Chs. 1-2 Annotated Bibliography
Week 6 T, 02/14	McKinnon et. al Chs. 3-4 Class Speaker: Cindy Dollman LeGrand
Week 7 T, 02/21	McKinnon et. al Chs. 5-6 Interview Protocol Draft
Week 8 T, 02/28	McKinnon et. al Chs. 7-8 Finalized Interview Protocol
Week 9 T, 03/07	McKinnon et. al Chs. 9-10
Week 10 T, 03/14	Midterm
Week 11 T, 03/21	Spring Break
R, 03/23	Spring Break

Week 12

T, 03/28 Saldana Chs. 1-2

Week 13

T, 04/04 Saldana Chs. 3-4

Week 14

T, 04/11 Saldana Chs. 5-6
Due: Transcriptions

Week 14

T, 04/18 Workshop

Week 15

T, 04/25 Presentations

Final Exam May 2: 4-6:20

CITI Instructions (IRB #2 Social/Behavioral Research)

All researchers, staff and students are required to complete an educational course prior to submission of a research protocol. The educational course utilized by Marshall University is the Comprehensive IRB Training Initiative (CITI). The steps for completing the educational requirements can be found on the ORI educational website at <http://www.marshall.edu/wpmu/ori/human-subject-research/education/>. The course is broken down into 25 minute modules so you can complete the modules as time permits. The directions for registering for the course are as follows:

1. Go to the ORI educational website at <http://www.marshall.edu/wpmu/ori/human-subject-research/education/>.
2. Complete step one by reviewing the Belmont Report.
3. Click on the link to the CITI Program on step #2.
4. The first time you go to the site you will have to register for the course and you do that by clicking on the "Register Here" link above the login. Once you register you will just login each time you return.
5. Select Marshall University under "Participating Institutions".
6. Enter a Username and Password that is convenient for you to remember.
7. Create your security question and answer.
8. Fill out Name and Email Address.
9. Answer the CME/CEU and Course Survey questions then click on "Submit."
10. Fill out CITI Member Information Page. All fields with an asterisk must be filled in, then click on "Submit".
11. **Note: There are 3 separate questions for this page.** For **Question #1** Select Group #2 (IRB#2 Social/Behavioral Research). For **Question #2** Select only the box that states "I have not previously completed an approved Basic Course". Skip **Question #3** and then click on "Submit" at the bottom of the page.
12. The next page will ask "Do you need to take the training for more than one institution?" You should click "No". **Note:** Even if you are with the Huntington VAMC **do not** select any other institutions other than Marshall University.
13. Now you are in and you should be on the Learner's Menu page. There you can begin your course by clicking on the link that is in red (**Not Started – Enter**).

You will not have to go through all of these steps each time you go to the site. After the initial registration all you will have to do is login with your Username and Password and pick up where you left off.