

## **RWS 5306 Research Methods in Rhetoric and Writing Studies**

Mondays 6:00 pm - 8:50 pm, Hudspeth Hall 313  
Fall 2022, CRN 19385

### **Instructor Information**

Dr. Soyeon Lee (she/her/hers)

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E-mail: [slee15@utep.edu](mailto:slee15@utep.edu) (expect a response within 24-48 hours M-F)

Office Hours: Mondays 4:30 - 6:00 and Thursdays 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. Hudspeth Hall 309

Schedule an appointment: <https://calendly.com/slee15>

Zoom link: <https://utep-edu.zoom.us/j/8309009811>

### **COVID-19 Precautions**

Please stay home if you (1) have been diagnosed with COVID-19, or (2) are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, and alternative instruction will be provided. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID 19 testing. If you test positive for COVID, please send a note to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto:covidaction@utep.edu) and let them know, so that case managers in Student Affairs can help and provide support.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus. For free COVID-19 testing on campus, please visit COVID-19 [Testing at UTEP](#). For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org)

### **Course Description**

This course investigates research methods with a focus on qualitative methods, mainly case studies, ethnographic approaches, archival research, and user experience research, used in rhetoric and writing studies and technical and professional communication (TPC) research. Echoing justice-oriented paradigms in RWS and TPC, students will read methodological literatures with a focus on decolonial and participatory methods and multiple showcases of research studies involving methods such as doing interview, participant observation, artifact and document collection, and field notes writing.

Beyond reading materials, students will create their own research agendas and projects by applying research methods learned from this course in a real research context and setting. To do this, students will also investigate ethical challenges and pressing issues arising in research contexts. Students will actively involve themselves in class discussions to create research questions and design with ethical considerations. To be specific, students will be familiarized with ethical issues in working with human participants/subjects and the process of Internal Review Board (IRB).

For the course project, students are to conduct a study in the community of their choice (e.g., UTEP's scholarly community, local non-profit organization, El Paso's racially, linguistically, and culturally diverse

communities).

The instructor is an ethnographer trained in sociolinguistics, rhetoric and writing studies, and TPC, and many reading materials we read are drawn from multiple disciplines through interdisciplinary approaches. Those materials will enrich for students to apply methods, methodologies, and practices to their own qualitative research in its entirety.

Students completing RWS 5306 should be able to plan and adopt qualitative methods in their research projects. Students may complete the course project required in this class as part of their larger project they are already working on (e.g., a MA thesis, PhD dissertation) or may execute the course project solely for this class.

1. Engage current issues in research methods and methodologies
2. Develop research questions and methodologies
3. Theorize research design and identify various ethical issues and sociopolitical factors in the process of research design and practice
5. Articulate the value of their own research methods and conduct qualitative research

## Course Materials

Readings include parts of the books and articles, which are available online through UTEP Libraries and Blackboard.

### Main Textbooks (eBooks available via UTEP Library)

\*O'Reilly, K. (2012). *Ethnographic methods* (2nd ed.). Routledge.

[https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP\\_INST/7g1vpo/alma991022906934707051](https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP_INST/7g1vpo/alma991022906934707051)

\*Hughes, M.A. & Hayhoe, G.F. (2007). *A research primer for technical communication: Methods, exemplars, and analyses*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203877203>

[https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP\\_INST/uk4am/alma991022926168307051](https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP_INST/uk4am/alma991022926168307051)

\*Ramsey, Sharer, W. B., L'Eplattenier, B., & Mastrangelo, L. (2010). *Working in the archives: Practical research methods for rhetoric and composition*. Southern Illinois University Press.

[https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP\\_INST/1q3tr5t/cdi\\_proquest\\_miscellaneous\\_2\\_130967742](https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP_INST/1q3tr5t/cdi_proquest_miscellaneous_2_130967742)

\*Courage, C., & Baxter, K. (2005). *Understanding your users: a practical guide to user requirements methods, tools, and techniques*. Morgan Kaufmann Publishers, Elsevier.

[https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP\\_INST/uk4am/alma991022946180607051](https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP_INST/uk4am/alma991022946180607051)

### Other Readings

Denzin, Lincoln, Y. S., & Smith, L. T. (2008). *Handbook of critical and indigenous methodologies*. SAGE.

[https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP\\_INST/uk4am/alma991022941747507051](https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP_INST/uk4am/alma991022941747507051)

Gaillet, L. L. (2012). (Per)Forming archival research methodologies. *College Composition and Communication*, 64(1), 35–58. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23264916>

Geisler, Cheryl, & Jason Swarts. (2019). *Coding streams of language*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. <https://doi.org/10.37514/PRA-B.2019.0230>

Gold, D. (2012). Remapping revisionist historiography. *College Composition and Communication*, 64(1), 15–34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23264915>

Kirsch, G. E. et al. (Eds.) (2021). Special issue on Unsettling the Archives. *Across the Disciplines*, 18(1/2), <https://doi.org/10.37514/ATD-J.2021.18.1-2.01>

Lockett, Alexandria L., Iris D. Ruiz, James Chase Sanchez, & Christopher Carter. (2021). *Race, rhetoric, and research methods*. The WAC Clearinghouse; University Press of Colorado. <https://doi.org/10.37514/PER-B.2021.1206>

Meloncon, L., & Scott, J.B. (Eds.). (2017). *Methodologies for the rhetoric of health & medicine* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi-org.utep.idm.oclc.org/10.4324/9781315303758>

Misra, J., Curington, C. V., & Green, V. M. (2021). Methods of intersectional research. *Sociological Spectrum*, 41(1), 9–28. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02732173.2020.1791772>

Prior, & Thorne, S. L. (2014). Research paradigms: Beyond product, process, and social activity. In *Handbook of Writing and Text Production* (Vol. 10, pp. 31–54). DE GRUYTER. [https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP\\_INST/1q3tr5t/cdi\\_walterdegruyter\\_books\\_10\\_1515\\_9783110220674\\_31](https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP_INST/1q3tr5t/cdi_walterdegruyter_books_10_1515_9783110220674_31)

Smagorinsky, P. (2008). The Method Section as Conceptual Epicenter in Constructing Social Science Research Reports. *Written Communication*, 25(3), 389–411. [https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP\\_INST/1q3tr5t/cdi\\_proquest\\_journals\\_192822\\_8533](https://utep.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/01UTEP_INST/1q3tr5t/cdi_proquest_journals_192822_8533)

Walton, R. (Ed.) (2014). Special edition on methodology. *Journal of Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization*, 5(1), Article 1-7. Available at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/rpcg/vol5/iss1/>

## Assignments

### 1. Reading Response

You will write a 250-500 word summary and response to weekly reading materials. The response is encouraged to synthesize what you selected from the texts you read. You will create 3 reading response posts throughout the semester. In your response, you are encouraged to build on the ideas in your selected article to present an argument or pose a question, identify a debate or a question that emerges from the texts. Late work relevant to reading response assignments will not be accepted. Please consult the instructor if you have concerns or questions.

### 2. Course Facilitation (\*visual aids/handout needed)

To facilitate our course discussion, I will ask you to sign up for one class meeting and present an overview of your response to the reading materials and provide a visual aid (15-20 minutes) at the beginning of the course meeting. Then, lead a 30- or 40-minute class discussion based on your reading. In your facilitation, you may include short in-class writing sessions in your course facilitation section, draw our attention to specific keywords or themes, and assign us to discuss with 2 or 3 specific discussion questions. For your course discussion leading, you will provide a visual aid. Your visual aids

can be a one-page document or slides that include a summary of your response: your name and email; your analysis through the readings; contextualized quotations from the week and previous week's readings; a list of 2-3 discussion questions you'd like to suggest.

### **3. Method Assignments: Observation, Interview, and Archival Research Method Assignments**

To practice qualitative inquiry, you will work on the observation, interview, and archival research method assignments as your methods assignments. Following the safety guidelines from UTEP and CDC, you can implement and work with observation, interview, and archival materials to prioritize health and safety. In these assignments, drawing on qualitative methods, you will set up a working hypothesis or a "guiding theoretical problem" (O'Reilly, 2012, p. 32). You will first follow preliminary thought processes. In relation to the readings relevant to methodologies and methods, you will explain:

- What are you interested in?
- What do you think you might find?
- What do you already know on the subject?
- What is already known on the subject?

The point of this assignment is to exercise implementing fieldwork and analysis related to your academic or professional career goal. You will use reading materials, theoretical toolkits, and methodological toolkits included in the course reading materials. You will submit 3 different assignments throughout the semester: observation method, interview method, and archival research method assignments.

#### **Deliverable (a 2-3 page single-spaced Word document):**

1. Create a cover memo that explains the method and a brief overview that lays out what you did and how you did it
2. Include your method fieldwork results:
  - i. observation fieldnotes
  - ii. interview transcripts
  - iii. archival research descriptions
3. Write your preliminary results and reflections
  - i. What happened?
  - ii. What did you learn from your fieldwork?
  - iii. What worked well or what problems did you face?
  - iv. What findings emerged? What different things did emerge from your findings?

### **4. Final Research Project Paper**

The main purpose of this final project is to create a preliminary work that can start the first few steps that can meet your academic or career goals. I list some options below among which you can choose for your final project considering your academic and professional career goals. The requirements are that your project is connected to the methodologies and methods this course reviewed and that you produce some new writing as part of your work on the project.

Your research project paper should be 10-12 double-spaced pages, not including reference pages. You will create a project that builds on current research in composition studies and will add important knowledge to the field. Your research project paper should include the following:

- purpose of the project (the exigency for and value of your project)
- literature review on the scholarly area(s) of literacy education or rhetoric and composition or and technical and professional writing studies to which you plan to contribute

- guiding research question(s)
- theoretical and methodological framework
- methods
- preliminary findings (data analysis results) and discussions
- references

### 5. Final Project Presentation (\*visual aids needed)

You will deliver a presentation on your ongoing final project. Your presentation should be supplemented by a visual aid and will be a 6-8 minute presentation followed by a brief discussion session.

### 6. Human Subjects Research Ethics Requirement

All seminar participants who are enrolled in this course will complete the mandatory CITI training before working with Method Assignments (designing a research method involved humans, observing, interviewing, collecting data from human subjects) to engage with research ethics. Visit <https://www.utep.edu/orsp/human-subjects-research/training/>. Create an account and take training as described on the webpage. Graduate students will take the Social Behavioral Researchers Stage 1 Basic course. Submit a copy of your CITI Training Completion Report.

## Grading

### Grade Breakdown

Assignments	Points
Attendance, Participation, Workshopping, & Professionalism	10 pts
1. Reading Response (3 posts * 10 pts)	30 pts
2. Course Facilitation	20 pts
3. Method Assignments 1) Observation Method Assignment (20 pts) 2) Interview Method Assignment (20 pts) 3) Archival Research Method Assignment (20 pts)	60 pts
4. Final Research Project Paper (40 pts) Data Analysis Paper (= Partial Draft of Research Project Paper, 10 pts)	50 pts
5. Research Project Presentation	10 pts
6. Human Subjects Research Ethics Requirement: CITI Training Completion Report	20 pts
Total	200 pts = 100%

\*All assignments will use APA style. Please include your last name and the title of your assignment in the

file name.

### Course Grade

A 90-100%	B 80-89%	C 70-79%	D 60-69%	F 0-60%
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## General Course and University Policies

### Attendance, Participation, & Professionalism

I expect you to come ready to ask questions and discuss ideas. Our class sessions rely on your participation and engagement including arriving on time and staying for the full class, coming prepared (complete reading and assignments before class; bring reading materials and your notes for discussion), and participate actively in discussion and class activities.

It is your responsibility to manage your time in the classroom and to participate appropriately to be successful in this course. One absence will not affect your attendance points. Two absences will result in one-point deduction. Three absences will result in two-point deduction. Four absences and beyond will result in zero point in your attendance grades.

If you need to take course remotely due to health issues or miss class, let me know via email or in person ahead of time via email. In case you miss class, I ask you to be still responsible for the work or presentation materials due that day. If absences are related to health or other safety issues, let me know for alternative plans. University policy allows two kinds of absences: university-recognized activities and observances of Religious Holy Day. Please refer to [UTEP's Attendance & Grading](#) policies.

Respect the views of others. Maintain and promote a civil environment for learning. If your behavior seems distracting/harmful toward others, I will ask you to leave. Submit your work on time (as indicated on the course schedule). Late work will result in a point deduction. I reserve the right to not provide a grade to late work. Communicate your progress with me. If you have questions regarding any lesson, let me know. If you are unable to meet due dates, work with me to set up plans.

Make-up work for time missed from the course activities will be allowed if you have a university excused absence or health-related issues. If you miss a deadline due to an emergency or illness, or if you have a university-approved excuse ahead of time, you must notify me as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Note that if you will miss the major assignment deadline, I expect you to contact me immediately of your emergency situation in order to make arrangement.

### Communication

I will have office hours for your questions and comments about the course. If you'd like to meet me virtually, please use the link to my calendar at <https://calendly.com/slee15> and sign up for a time slot. Please email me if you'd like to make an appointment for some other times.

### Academic Integrity Statement & Professionalism

As a scholar and member of intellectual communities, you will abide by the standards of academic honesty and responsibility. Academic integrity is to take responsibility of their own work and demonstrate intellectual honesty and ethical behavior. To achieve the learning goal by exchanging ideas and making scholarly conversations, all UTEP members have the responsibility to execute ethical behaviors and independent thought that are essential and will be rigorously evaluated.

Any violations of academic integrity and honesty will be reported to and referred to the [Office of Student Conduct and Conflict Resolution](#). All work submitted must be original. Students who plagiarize or self-plagiarize (i.e., students who submit works that were submitted to other courses) or who fabricate (deliberate create false information on a reference page) or who collude (lend work to another person to submit as their own) will receive a zero grade for the assignment and for the professionalism grade, and if academic integrity is further breached in other assignments, students automatically get a F grade and may not be able to continue the coursework and/or UTEP coursework. Please refer to the UTEP [Academic Integrity](#) webpages and [Handbook of Operating Procedures](#)

## Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence

UTEP is committed to providing an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. If I become aware that an incident of sexual misconduct has occurred, as an instructor I am required by law to report it to UTEP Title IX Coordinators. Faculty and staff at UTEP are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available sources are the following:

- Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/counsel/>
- On Call Crisis services: Please refer to our [Crisis & Emergency](#) page to learn what is considered a mental health crisis.
- Our Miners Talk: Crisis Line will also remain in operation for after-hours services. After hours, please call 915.747.5302.

## ADA Statement

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor's office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at <http://sa.utep.edu/cass/> or call the CASS at 915-747-5148 or email them at [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu)