

**Communication 5311: Qualitative Research Methods**  
**CRN: 12649**  
**Fall 2016**  
**Classroom Building C303**

**General Information**

Professor: Dr. Sarah Upton  
Office: Quinn Hall, 204  
Email: [smupton@utep.edu](mailto:smupton@utep.edu)  
Office Hours: TR, 10:30-12:00 pm, and by appointment

**Course Overview**

This course is an introduction to methods used in conceptualizing, planning, and designing critical or interpretive methods for communication research problems.

**Course Objectives**

1. To explore the relationship between theory, methods, and interpretation in research.
2. To understand the appropriateness of different analytical strategies for particular qualitative studies.
3. To analyze methodologies in existing research.
4. To collect qualitative data apply one or more analytical approaches.
5. To develop writing and research skills.
6. To critically reflect on how chosen methods impact communities where research is conducted.

*Learning Outcome:* Competence in research methods used in communication contexts

*Learning Outcome:* Competence in evaluating qualitative research

*Learning Outcome:* Competence in developing and conducting qualitative research projects

*Learning Outcome:* Competence in understanding and applying ethics in multiple communication contexts

**Course Materials**

The course syllabus, readings, and other materials will be available on Blackboard.

**Course Format**

In this course we will use a combination of discussions, presentations, analysis activities, and research. It is therefore important that you come to class having done the assigned reading, and prepared to discuss and apply the method we are covering for that week. In addition, this course will be using service learning as an educational approach, working with UTEP's Center for Civic Engagement and Ciudad Nueva, a community development organization in El Paso's Rio Grande District. Service learning offers the opportunity to use the skills you are developing in this course to serve the surrounding community, offering a chance to strengthen the relationship between UTEP and the larger El Paso community, and showcasing the possibilities of how to engage in research with communities in meaningful ways. For this service learning project you will partner with Ciudad Nueva to identify a research project that both fits your research interests, and serves a need/goal identified by Ciudad Nueva.

**Course Evaluation**

1. **Attendance/Participation (10 points):** Participation points will be given for attendance, thoughtful contributions to class discussion, and in-class analysis exercises. If you are absent from class you will not be able to make up these assignments.

2. **Research Critiques (3 @ 10 points each):** You will select three of the different methods of data analysis studied in class (weeks 5-12). For each method identify a journal article representative of the analytical strategy chosen, and write a 1-2 page critique. The critique will be shared with the class on the day we cover the method you have chosen, and should address the following questions:
  - What does the researcher want to find out by analyzing the data or text?
  - What are the data analyzed? What are the primary units, dimensions, or characteristics of the data or text that the analysis identifies?
  - What is (are) the analytical strategies employed? How?
  - Any weaknesses or gaps in this article?
  - What is particularly useful in this article for my own research projects?

This assignment is designed to help you understand not only how researchers have used data analysis, but also how to find useful models for your own research projects in this class and the future.
3. **Methodology Paper (25 points):** In this paper you will outline the method you will be using for your research project with Ciudad Nueva. Your paper should include a discussion of your positionality as a researcher, the paradigm informing your research, and your approach to data collection and analysis. Detailed instructions will be available on the assignment sheet posted to Blackboard. The paper will be 4-5 pages in length, double-spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font, **due in class on October 18<sup>th</sup>**.
4. **Data Analysis Paper (25 points):** In this paper you will write up the findings from your analysis. You should include a discussion of how you conducted your analysis, the major themes/findings which emerged, and the larger implications of these findings for Ciudad Nueva and for your discipline. Detailed instructions will be available on the assignment sheet posted to Blackboard. The paper will be 8-10 pages in length, double-spaced with one-inch margins and 12-point font, **due to my e-mail ([smuption@utep.edu](mailto:smuption@utep.edu)) by 5:00 pm on December 9<sup>th</sup>**.
5. **Oral Presentation (10 points):** You will present the results of your individual projects to the class and Ciudad Nueva in the format of a 15-minute academic conference presentation, with an accompanying handout. You may use visual aids such as PowerPoint, but these are not required. Specific guidelines for presentations will be provided on the assignment sheet on Blackboard.

### Course Assignments

Each of the following assignments will be thoroughly detailed in class:

Attendance/Participation	10 points
Research Critiques	30 points
Methodology Paper	25 points
Data Analysis Paper	25 points
<u>Oral Presentation</u>	<u>10 points</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100 points</b>

### **Course Policies**

1. **Attendance:** You are expected to attend class. If you choose not to attend regularly, your grade is likely to suffer because you will not have had the benefit of the material and ideas covered in class. Read the assignments for the day before you come to class so that you can participate fully and thoughtfully in class discussions and activities.
2. **Late work:** All assignments are due in hard copy at the beginning of class. If you are scheduled to give a presentation, or turn in work, you should be in class and on time. If you will not be able to attend class when an assignment is due I reserve the right to approve or deny credit for late work. Late work that is accepted will receive a **10 percent deduction for each calendar day the assignment is late**.
3. **Academic Misconduct:** The University of Texas El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to

- cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.
4. **Diversity:** The course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identifies. The course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating. Students are expected to be respectful and supportive of other students in order to create an environment where everyone feels comfortable to express their thoughts.
  5. **Accessibility:** If you have a disability and need classroom accommodations, please contact The Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) at (915) 747-5148, or by email to [cass@utep.edu](mailto:cass@utep.edu). Or visit their office located in UTEP Union East, Room 106. For additional information, please visit the CASS website at [www.sa.utep.edu/cass](http://www.sa.utep.edu/cass). CASS Staff are the only individuals who can validate and if need be, authorize accommodations for students with disabilities.

### About My Teaching Style

My approach to teaching and learning is focused mainly on the creation of an environment which recognizes various learning styles, maintains accessibility, promotes equality, and invites the critical analysis of texts. My approach is also informed by Karen Foss, Sonja Foss, and Cindy Griffin's theory of Invitational Rhetoric (Foss & Griffin, 1995; Foss & Foss, 2002). I believe that many college courses are developed based on a model of traditional rhetoric, characterized by a desire to change others, gaining control over others, deriving self-worth through power over others, and the devaluation of the life worlds of others (Foss & Griffin, 1995). To challenge traditional rhetoric, Foss, Foss, and Griffin propose an alternative rhetoric guided by feminist values including: a commitment to the creation of relationships based on equality, recognition of the imminent value of all living beings, and allowing individuals to make their own decisions about how they wish to live their lives. I aim to structure my courses based on these feminist assumptions. Invitational rhetoric approaches communication with the goals of understanding as the purpose of communication, acknowledging the equality of the speaker and audience, viewing diverse perspectives as resources, understanding change as self-chosen, and finally a willingness to yield. I aim to understand the experiences of my students, and create an environment where they can understand mine. Additionally, I acknowledge the equality of myself as instructor, and my students, choosing not to use my position as one of power. I ultimately hope to invite students to become equal participants in their learning.

\*\*\*This syllabus is intended to serve as a guideline for Comm 5311. Both University of Texas at El Paso and your instructor reserve the right to make modifications in content, schedule and requirements as necessary to promote the optimal educational experience within prevailing conditions affecting this course.

Tentative Course Schedule				
Week	Day	Topic	Reading	Due
1	8/23	Introduction to the course, each other, and Ciudad Nueva		
2	8/30	Qualitative Inquiry Paradigms	Guba & Lincoln Heron & Reason	
3	9/6	Introduction to Qualitative Methods	Lindlof & Taylor Ch. 1, 2	
4	9/13	Starting your Qualitative Research Project	Lindlof & Taylor Ch. 3	
5	9/20	Rhetorical Criticism	Foss Ch. 1,2 Chávez	
6	9/27	Grounded Theory	Charmaz Ch. 1,2 Coleman et. al	

7	10/4	Sensory Ethnography	Pink Ch. 1, 2 Sunderland et. al	
8	10/11	Participatory Action Research	Kemmis & McTaggart Fals Borda Langdon	
9	10/18	Cultural Studies	Saukko Ch. 1,2 Starr	Methodology paper
10	10/25	Decolonizing Methodologies	Tuhiwai-Smith Intro, Ch. 2 Stanton	
11	11/1	Indigenous/Feminist Perspectives	Cannella & Manuelito Jones & Jenkins	
12	11/8	Borderland Feminist Perspectives	Saavedra & Nymark Saavedra & Pérez	
13	11/15	Analyzing Data and “Tidying Up”	Mason Ch. 9 Foss Ch. 7 LeCompte & Schensul	
14	11/22	Negotiating the Research Process	Tibbals Brydon-Miller & Greenwood	
15	11/29	Presentation of findings to Ciudad Nueva		Oral presentations
				Data analysis paper due December 9 by 5:00 p.m.