There exists a continuing debate among social scientists over the theoretical and methodological rigor underlying qualitative and quantitative research designs. The educational psychologist Dr. Del Siegle proffers that he is astounded at “how often we hear qualitative researchers applying their standards to quantitative research or quantitative researchers applying their standards to qualitative research. Each functions within different assumptions. Finding fault with one approach with the standards of another does little to promote understanding. Each approach should be judged on its theoretical basis.” Accordingly, the appropriateness of any research design must include a consideration of axiology, epistemology, and ontology.

Will Durant, the American humorist, suggests that “Inquiry is fatal to certainty.” In the spirit of Durant’s assertion, this doctoral seminar is a critical inquiry into the use of qualitative research measures, methodologies and metrics. For many social scientists committed solely to quantitative research designs, the whole concept of qualitative research is ambiguous and often considered not real research relative to methodological rigor. Social scientists sometimes find it difficult to accept this research method where the generation of hypotheses often replaces empirical testing conventions, explanation replaces measurement, and understanding replaces generalization of research findings.

Consider the parable of “The Four Learned Fools”:

“In a certain town, there lived four Brahmins who had become great friends. They were all extremely naive by nature. One day, they said to each other, ‘Let us all go to another kingdom, study hard and then make some money there’. So, they set off for a city to study further. They joined a hermitage and began a course of study. They worked hard at this hermitage for twelve years. Then, one day, they said to each other, ‘We have now acquired sufficient
knowledge in all branches of the sciences. Let us go to our Guru, get his permission and leave. So, they did this and left the hermitage, taking all their shastras with them.

After they had been travelling for a short time, they came to a place where two paths met. They stood and pondered. One of them said, 'Which way shall we go?' Now, the son of a merchant had died in the town and, at this very moment, a huge funeral procession, including several prominent citizens of the town, passed by, on its way to the cremation ground. Then one of the Brahmans consulted his holy scriptures and read: 'Whichever road is followed by great men, is the right one to follow.' So they said, 'Let us go the same way as these people.' And they started following the road taken by the prominent citizens.

When they reached the cremation ground, they saw a donkey standing there. As they could not decide what to do next, the second Brahmin consulted his holy scriptures and read: 'Whosoever stands by you on all occasions whether joyous or sad, is your true friend.' So they came to the conclusion that the donkey was their true friend. And so, one of the Brahmans put his arms round the donkey's neck, the second kissed him, whilst the third began to wash his hoofs. For they said, 'He is our true friend.'

Meanwhile, they saw, in the distance, a camel marching quickly towards them. The third Brahmin consulted the holy scriptures and read: 'Righteousness marches rapidly.' So they all decided that this camel must be nothing but righteousness incarnate. Then the fourth Brahmin opened the holy scriptures and read: 'A wise man should lead his friend to righteousness.' And so they decided that the donkey should be introduced to the camel, and when the camel approached, they tied them up together. When the donkey's master, a washer man, heard the news that his donkey was being dragged along by a camel, he picked up a stick and ran after the four learned fools to beat them. And they ran for their lives. When they had gone a little way, they came to a river.

The leaf of a holy tree was floating by. One of them cried, 'This holy floating leaf will take us across the river.' And with this, he jumped on it and immediately began to drown. The second Brahmin caught him by the neck and remembered the quotation: 'When total destruction is imminent, a wise man sacrifices half and works with the rest.' So he concluded, 'He should be cut in two!' And they cut him in two halves with a sharp sword.

The three remaining Brahmans wandered on, until they reached a village. There, they were invited by the villagers in the usual traditional hospitable style and lodged in different houses. One of the Brahmans was served with sweet noodles and he remembered a quotation from the holy scriptures: 'When a man makes use of long tactics, he is sure to be destroyed. And so he did not touch the food and went away hungry. The second Brahmin was served with another dish. When he saw the bowl of frothy food, he remembered the verse that said: Whatever is frothy and distended, will not last long.' So, he too left his food and went away hungry. The third Brahmin was given another tasty dish. But when saw little holes in it, he remembered the verse: 'The presence of defects is a sure sign of approaching disaster.' So he too left his food and went away hungry. Thus, the three learned fools began to starve and started on their journey home with all and sundry ridiculing them on the way.

The insights gleaned from this fable may serve as important compass points on our journey into understanding qualitative research development and designs. What lessons may be gleaned from this parable? How might these lessons relate to qualitative research?

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1 From *Panchatantra*, Indian Book of Fables.
SEMINAR CONTEXT

The term qualitative research has often been equated with *ethnomethodology*, and it is largely rooted in other social science disciplines (i.e., anthropology, philosophy and sociology). For nearly 40 years, qualitative research methodology has developed from an epistemic quandary to a widely-accepted approach to scientific inquiry. While this seminar does not advocate nor champion qualitative over quantitative approaches, it is intended to introduce seminar participants to a choice set of qualitative research methods that may be employed to advance knowledge. In the context of market inquiry, a spate of qualitative researchers emerged as sub-units of market research companies (largely in the 1980s).

Multinational corporations including Coca-Cola, Procter & Gamble, and Unilever employed qualitative research to learn more about consumers’ attitudes toward advertising; shopping cart choices and product merchandising; brand positioning; and new product development. Gene Reilly and Jerry Schoenfeld were among the pioneer agencies that championed qualitative research methods – especially focus groups, passive observation and ethnography – to garner a richer understanding of consumers’ motivations and purchase intentions. There are a multitude of qualitative research methods. The overarching purpose of this seminar is not to critically engage in all qualitative research methods. Instead, it is to assess the philosophical and scientific challenges underlying qualitative research. While there exists a great deal of different (and emerging approaches) to qualitative research – this doctoral seminar requires a great deal of self-motivated and self-initiated evaluation of these methods – and much content is biased by my own criticisms of methods such as recursive abstraction, a methodology that has found high acceptance among many social scientists. Some may view the *domain* [not the research methods] of qualitative research approaches to look something like this:
COURSE DESCRIPTION

This doctoral seminar explores the theoretical and practical issues underlying qualitative and hybrid research methodologies in social sciences research as applied to testable relationships in business contexts. Special attention is afforded to sources of nomothetic versus idiothetic research approaches, qualitative research methods, and qualitative research designs (including but not limited to ethnography, narratives, focus groups and case studies). Ironically, it was the logical positivist Kant whose philosophy demarcates between the generalizations of objective phenomenon and the in-depth understanding of a single case.

The seminar will also assess the philosophical bases of metrics: auditability, bias, truth value, consistency, and critical interpretations of data metrics. There are also other methodologies “open” as qualitative research methods (i.e., bibliometric analysis). In the increasingly technologically-enabled, globally-connected marketplace, there are entirely new platforms for qualitative study vis-à-vis the Internet (i.e., social media).

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1.0 To explore Pinker’s computational theory of mind (and its relationship to Chomsky’s perspective of the “innate faculty of the mind”), and relate it to the domain of qualitative research.

2.0 To understand the axiological, epistemological and ontological foundations of qualitative research, and to contrast it with quantitative research approaches.

3.0 To articulate the relevance of grounded theory in the development of qualitative research designs.

4.0 To explain what makes data qualitative with an emphasis on reliability, sampling and validation.

5.0 To demarcate between coding approaches, and to understand the challenges associated with each coding technique.

6.0 To identify the challenges and opportunities that underlie each type of qualitative data design.

7.0 To demonstrate an ability to design and conduct a qualitative research design that confronts one or more research objectives.
MKTG 6080. Ph.D. Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods | 2015

SEMINAR FACILITATOR

Lou E. Pelton, Ph.D. 2
385M Business Leadership Building
Office: 940.565.3124; Mobile: 972.333.3132; Home 469.212.7373
loue.pelton@unt.edu

Dr. Pelton’s principal research interests include global marketing channels, relationship marketing and the culture and consumption nexus, and he is largely a logical empiricist. Dr. Pelton is senior author of five textbooks, including multiple editions of Marketing Channels: A Relationship Management Approach (McGraw-Hill) and Marketing Channels: Managing Supply Chain Relationships and the forthcoming Marketing Channels: Resource Advantage in the Value Chain. He is also co-author of Business Ethics: Perspectives on Corporate Responsibility (Houghton Mifflin) and Rights, Responsibilities and Relationships: Ethics and Social Impact Management (KSU Press). His forthcoming book Value Chain Relationships in a Global Marketplace (third title), IE (Oxford University Press) addresses transformative development and deployment of value chains in global marketing channels.

Dr. Pelton has published more than 142 research articles in prominent journals and international conference proceedings. His articles appear in Advances in Marketing, Business Horizons, Industrial Marketing Management, Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, Journal of Business Ethics, Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing, Journal of Business Research, Journal of Global Marketing, Journal of Healthcare Marketing, Journal of Macromarketing, Journal of Marketing Management, Journal of Personal Selling & Sales Management, Journal of Pharmaceutical Marketing and Management, Journal of Retailing, Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice, Journal of Services Marketing, Research in Marketing, Psychology and Marketing, among others. His contributions also appear in the Journal of Marketing, the Journal of Applied Marketing Theory, Marketing Theory, as well as cases and chapters in textbooks. His opinions in legal proceedings (as a result of expert witness role sets) have been cited as precedent in other litigation. Dr. Pelton has delivered educational programs and keynote addresses for governments, organizations and tertiary institutions in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Europe, South America and the U.S.; he has taught in 49 countries to date. He represents the U.S. as APEC CEO and Education Delegation Leader, and he is the CEO and member of the board of directors on the Virtual Trade Mission Foundation. In this role, he is also a board member and leader of the APEC/ABAC “Voices for the Future” program, and he has lead delegations to CEO Summits in a multitude of member economies hosting the global forum. In Year 2011, Dr. Pelton was awarded the “Lifetime Research Achievement Award” by the People’s Republic of China. Dr. Pelton is a consultant to the Socialist Republic of Vietnam regarding doctoral academic programming.

Dr. Pelton’s research and practitioner insights have been presented at the National Pharmacy Forum, the Asia-Pacific Millennium Conference, U.S.-Vietnam Forum on Sustainability, multiple World Marketing Congresses, and many national and regional academic conferences. Pelton is recipient of national research grants from the U.S. Department of Education and international research grants from The Cheung Foundation. Pelton has served as vice president (programs) of the Academy of Marketing Science. He has also served as president of the Federation of Business Disciplines, president of the Association of Collegiate Marketing Educators, director of the American Marketing Associations ethics and co-director of relationship marketing special interest groups. He has also served in a number of roles in the World Marketing Congress. Dr. Pelton has been a frequent expert witness in federal and state litigation. Dr. Pelton was selected as the 2004 UNT Summer Commencement speaker. He has also served the university in a multitude of leadership roles, including chair of the UNT Faculty Senate, Senate Budget Committee, Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, Faculty Participation in Governance Committee, Greek Scholarship Task Force, as well as dozens of College of Business and departmental...
committees. Lou E. Pelton is the founder and faculty sponsor of the University of North Texas chapters of the American Marketing Association, ascend Pan Asian Leadership, LogSA, and Mu Kappa Tau, the national marketing honor society. Dr. Pelton’s passion is international education and global outreach. He has co-directed the COB’s first study abroad programs in China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Morocco, Singapore, Spain, Thailand and Vietnam.

**SEMINAR MODULES AND READINGS**

*Optional ‘Tools’ Monograph (AFE Series): [This is a “tools” book]*


*Potentially Valuable Reference* [This is a good textbook, but not necessary]


*Highly-Cited Textbook*  [I will cite often from this resource, but I will give you specific articles that may be of interest]


*Expected Critical Reading of the Following Citations:*

**Qualitative Research Methodology: Epistemological Foundations**


**Attitudes, Attributions and Affect**


**Idiothetic versus Nomethetic Scientific Inquiry**


**Applied Qualitative Methods**


Seminar Performance Assessment

John Ruskin stated, “The highest reward for a person’s toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it.” I think Ruskin is correct in his assessment of the “highest reward” for performance. Performance assessment in this course will be based on the following:

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<th>Experiential Exercises</th>
<th>QR Manuscript</th>
<th>Comprehensive Examination</th>
<th>Total Possible Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>300</td>
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Experiential Exercises. Every seminar participant is expected to be well-prepared for each seminar. However, you are expected to go beyond a cursory reading of the assigned materials. During the seminar, you are expected to actively engage in intellectual discussion of critical issues. Each exercise has a very serious set of expectations requiring both critical thinking and applied marketing theory.

Qualitative Research Manuscript. You will actually complete a comprehensive, publishable-quality qualitative research study. You will be expected to develop and conduct a research study that addresses a social science quandary underlying a relevant and timely issue. Hopefully, you will have an extant research stream that you may use as a research context. This will be discussed in the seminar meetings.

Comprehensive Final Exam. There will be a comprehensive exam at the end of the semester that requires a critical, integrative approach to addressing marketing strategy issues. This will require a thorough understanding of the assigned readings.
As Ph.D. in Business (Marketing) students, the expectations of a seminar participant is to read the recommended articles before the seminar, and to be prepared to actively engage in a critical discourse on the topics within each assigned reading. There are 21 assigned readings, and 17 of these readings will be discussed extensively in our face-to-face sessions. However, learning is self-motivated in a doctoral program, and the other readings will greatly enhance your readiness for becoming a marketing scholar, regardless of your intent to use qualitative research methods. All readings may be covered on the Seminar Comprehensive Examination.

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Assigned Readings</th>
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<tr>
<td>Seminar 1</td>
<td>Semantics, Semiotics and QRM</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 7</td>
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<td>Epistemological Foundations</td>
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<td>Seminar 2</td>
<td>Epistemological Foundations</td>
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<td>Attitudes, Attributions and Affects</td>
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<td>Seminar 3</td>
<td>Scott Roberts, Ph.D., Christina Wasson, Ph.D.</td>
<td>7, 8, 9, 10</td>
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<td>Seminar 4</td>
<td><em>Idiothetic</em> v. <em>Nomothetic</em> Scientific Inquiry</td>
<td>13, 14, 15</td>
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<td>Applied QR Methods</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individualized QR Research</td>
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