

# QUALITATIVE RESEARCH



## Course texts

**Required:** The Practice of Qualitative Research, Second Edition

Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber & Patricia Leavy, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage: 2011

**Required:** Salsa Dancing Into the Social Sciences

Kristen Luker, Boston, MA: Harvard University Press: 2008

\*Publication Manual of the APA (6th Edition), [www.apastyle.org](http://www.apastyle.org) or

Chicago Manual of Style (16th Edition) [www.chicagomanualofstyle.org](http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org).

## Course description

This course is both theoretical and practical in its approach to qualitative research. We will cover the history of academic research and philosophy; the present state of qualitative research (and cultural and critical studies in mass media); compare other methods; learn its tools and methods and explore its ethics. We will read examples of qualitative mass media studies in current journals and books.

You will use the methods you learn in this class through several group projects.

The Mayborn School  
of Journalism does  
not require students  
to purchase  
textbooks from the  
University Bookstore.

## Course standards

The Mayborn School of Journalism effective is accredited by the Accrediting Council on Education in Journalism and Mass Communication. This national accreditation also extends to the Mayborn Graduate Institute of Journalism, the only accredited professional master's program in Texas. About one-fourth of all JOMC programs in the United States are accredited by ACEJMC. National accreditation enhances your education here, because it certifies that the department and graduate institute adhere to many standards established by the council. Among these standards are student learning outcomes, covered by journalism courses in all sequences. This course, JOUR 5260, will help to meet the student learning outcomes that have I have selected, including your ability to:

Conduct field research using qualitative methods

Think critically, creatively and independently

Conduct research and evaluation information by methods appropriate to the communications professions

Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information.

Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes you serve

Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the profession

Attain a qualitative vocabulary

Understanding of the difference between quantitative and qualitative research

Build knowledge of various qualitative traditions, methods, and objects of research

Design a research study and to complete a project using academic protocols

Comprehend standards in the qualitative research community, its writing forms, and APA or Chicago style, as demonstrated in a final paper.



*Come by and see me  
sometime!*

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**Office hours:**

*M & Th: 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.*

*T: 11 a.m. - noon*  
[meetme.so/MeetDrClark](https://meetme.so/MeetDrClark)

*Virtual office hours by  
request.*

# AEJMC course competencies

- Demonstrate an understanding of the history and role of professionals and institutions in shaping communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of gender, race ethnicity, sexual orientation and, as appropriate, other forms of diversity in domestic society in relation to mass communications;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the diversity of peoples and cultures and of the significance and impact of mass communications in a global society;
- Understand concepts and apply theories in the use and presentation of images and information;
- Demonstrate an understanding of professional ethical principles and work ethically in pursuit of truth, accuracy, fairness and diversity;
- Think critically, creatively and independently;
- Conduct research and evaluate information by methods appropriate to the communications professions in which they work;
- Write correctly and clearly in forms and styles appropriate for the communications professions, audiences and purposes they serve;
- Apply tools and technologies appropriate for the communications professions in which they work.

## Grades

Your grade for this course will be based on:

- Five qualitative group projects (50 percent of grade—10 percent each for in-depth interviews, focus groups, ethnography, content analysis/case study and oral history).
- Online assignments/class participation (20 percent)
- Final individual paper/qualitative project (30 percent)

### Online essays

When the class meets online, you will be given questions under the “discussions” feature of Blackboard/Learn. Each student is expected to answer the questions based on the readings and presentation given. Essay-style answers should be 500-750 words long.

# Academic honesty

When you submit work for this class, that is the same as making a statement that you have produced the work yourself, in its entirety.

Plagiarism, fabrication, copyright infringement, and similar uses of other people's work are unacceptable. You are expected to comply with the UNT Student Code of Conduct: [http://conduct.unt.edu/student\\_conduct](http://conduct.unt.edu/student_conduct)

Plagiarism, in a nutshell, is using other people's written words as your own. Some people consider the use of 7-10 words in a row, copied from another source, as plagiarism. Be sure to include citations when using other people's writing, because plagiarism is a serious offense in any discipline, especially in journalism. It's a firing offense in the professional world. In the Mayborn School of Journalism, students face a range of penalties for plagiarism (depending on the importance of the assignment): a grade of zero on a minor assignment; a request that the student drop the class; withdrawal of the student from the class, initiated by the professor; an "F" in the course; a referral to the UNT Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities; a notation on the student's transcript; and expulsion from the university. A combination of these penalties may also be used.

**Mayborn policy** The codes of ethics from the Society of Professional Journalists, American Advertising Federation and Public Relations Society of America address truth and honesty. The Mayborn School of Journalism embraces these tenets and believes that academic dishonesty of any kind – including plagiarism and fabrication – is incongruent with all areas of journalism. The school's policy aligns with UNT Policy 18.1.16 and requires reporting any act of academic dishonesty to the Office for Academic Integrity for investigation. If the student has a previous confirmed offense (whether the first offense was in the journalism school or another university department) and the student is found to have committed another offense, the department will request the additional sanction of removing the student from the Mayborn School of Journalism. The student may appeal to the Office for Academic Integrity, which ensures due process and allows the student to remain in class pending the appeal.

# Attendance

If you are absent, you will still be responsible for the material on those days. Consult the syllabus, posted readings and assignments, and ask your classmates about any material you missed before contacting me for additional information. Given the hybrid nature of this course, class only should be missed for illness, disaster or death.

Journalism instructors reserve the right to drop any student who does not attend the first class day of the semester.

## Re-taking failed classes

Students will not be allowed to automatically take a failed journalism course more than two times. Once you have failed a journalism course twice, you will not be allowed to enroll in that course for 12 months. Once you have waited 12 months after failing a course twice, you may make an appeal to the professor teaching the course to be allowed to enroll a third time.

## Accommodation

The School of Journalism cooperates with the Office of Disability Accommodation to make reasonable accommodations for qualified students. If you have a disability and have not registered with ODA, please do so and present your written accommodation request to me by the 12th day of class. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at <http://www.unt.edu/oda>. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

## Academic organizational structure

Understanding the academic organizational structure and appropriate Chain of Command is important when resolving class-related or advising issues. When you need problems resolved, please follow the chain of command: First, consult with your instructor and/or advisor; then, meet with the Mayborn Graduate Institute's director. Next, your grievance may be taken to the dean.

## Electronic devices

When applicable, the first two rows of seats in this classroom are reserved for people who are not using electronic devices for note-taking. Cell phones should NEVER be used in class, including text messaging. You may be asked to leave class for using a cell phone. You may use a laptop or tablet to take notes. However, you may not engage in activities that disturb other students or the professor.

## About the syllabus

This is a tentative outline. It is subject to change per the instructor's discretion. If you miss class, it is your responsibility to keep up with changes in this syllabus and additional assignments. It is also your responsibility to communicate with your group and make arrangements to do your part of the work. All assigned articles may be found in the UNT Electronic Library. Most are located in the Communication and Mass Media Complete database.

**Syllabus credit:** This syllabus has been adapted from the Fall 2014 JOUR 5260 syllabus created by Dr. Tracy Everbach.

**Photo credit and context:** Photo courtesy of [EveryVoice.org](http://EveryVoice.org). I selected this photo because I am currently conducting a qualitative research project on #BlackLivesMatter participants' motivations.

	Reading, in-class activities	Homework assignments
	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Luker, Ch. 1	
<b>Week 1: Aug. 24 (F2F)</b>	Intro to qualitative research <b>In class:</b> form research groups	<b>Hwk: Work on your daisy; find topics of interest; write very general RQs.</b>
<b>Week 2: Aug. 31 (F2F)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Chs. 1&2 Hesse-Biber & Leavy	Creswell, “ <u>Five approaches</u> ” Luker, Ch. 2
	<b>In class:</b> Finding resources	<b>Hwk: Submit initial RQs via Blackboard</b>
<b>Week 3: Sept. 7 NO CLASS MTG</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Baym	Luker, Ch. 3
	LABOR DAY	NO CLASS MEETING
<b>Week 4: Sept. 14 (F2F)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Chs. 3&4 Hesse-Biber & Leavy	Luker, Ch. 4
	<b>In class:</b> Ethics & the IRB	<b>Hwk: <u>Ethics certification</u></b>
<b>Week 5: Sept. 21 (Online)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Ch. 5 in Hesse-Biber & Leavy; Luker	Deuze: Popular journalism and professional ideology
	Begin working with your group on in-depth interview project	<b>Hwk: Respond to question by Friday at 11:59 p.m.</b>
<b>Week 6: Sept. 28 (F2F)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Luker, Ch. 6	
	<b>In class:</b> Groups 1-4 present	<b>Interview projects due</b>
<b>Week 7: Oct 5 (F2F)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Ch. 6 in Hesse-Biber & Leavy	Luker, Ch. 7; <u>JFK oral history project</u>
	<b>In class:</b> Extended work session	

	Reading, in-class activities	Homework assignments
<b>Week 8: Oct. 12 (Online)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Ch. 7 in Hesse-Biber & Leavy;	Curtin & Maier article
	<b>Online (optional, via Google Hangouts):</b> Completing your IRB application	
<b>Week 9: Oct. 19 (F2F)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Luker Ch. 8	Work on oral history projects and focus group projects with your group.
<b>Week 10: Oct. 26 (Online)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Luker, Ch. 9;	Work on focus group and oral history projects with your group. <b>Online question due by 11:59 p.m. Friday, Oct. 31.</b>
<b>Week 11: Nov. 2 (F2F)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Ch. 8 of Hesse-Biber & Leavy; Everbach article <b>In class: Turn in focus group projects.</b>	<b>Literature review due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 6</b>  Begin work on ethnography project with your group.
<b>Week 12: Nov. 9 (F2F)</b>	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Luker Ch. 10. <b>In class:</b> Groups 1-4 present ethnography group projects.	Work on final paper. <b>Ethnography projects due. Online question due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 13.</b>

	Reading, in-class activities	Homework assignments
Week 13: Nov. 16 (Online)	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Chs. 9 and 10 of Hesse-Biber & Leavy; Faux and Kim article.	<b>Literature review and method section due by 11:59 p.m. on Friday, Nov. 20.</b> Begin work on content analysis or case study project with your group.
Week 14: Nov. 23 (F2F)	<b>Pre-reading:</b> Luker, Ch. 11. <b>In class:</b> Groups 5-8 present content analysis/ case studies.	Work on final paper.
Week 15: Nov. 30 (F2F)	Final paper discussions/ wrap-up.	<b>Oral histories due</b> by midnight, Thursday, Dec. 3. <b>Final papers due</b> by midnight, Monday, Dec. 7.