

ERMA 7220: Applied Qualitative Research¹
Auburn University - College of Education
Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, & Technology
Spring 2015

1.

<u>Class Time:</u>	Wednesday, 5:00-7:50pm
<u>Location:</u>	Haley Center, Room 2213
<u>Instructor:</u>	Carey E. Andrzejewski (334)-844-3012 dr.a@auburn.edu Office Hours: Tuesdays 10:00am-12:30pm, Wednesdays 2:00-4:30pm, and by appointment
<u>Credit Hours:</u>	3 semester hours
<u>Prerequisites:</u>	ERMA 7210 or FOUN 7210

2. **Date Syllabus Prepared:** January 2015

3. **Course Description:** Common advice for successful fieldwork is to eat a good breakfast. Others view the requirements of field research in a bit broader terms. Steinar Kvale's list includes the following as "minimum" competencies: Knowledge of philosophical analysis, an in-depth understanding of the development of rational thought in Western culture, a critical perspective on social trends, training in the formal analysis of language, expertise in a variety of research methods, an awareness of the ethical dimensions of human science research, and aesthetic sensibility. This section of FOUN 7220 falls somewhere between these two perspectives on preparing you to do research. Welcome to the course.

This course is based on the assumption that qualitative researchers learn their trade through both scholarship (i.e., deskwork) and firsthand experience (i.e., fieldwork). We take away lessons from doing our own research and from the research experiences of others. For this reason, the course has two aims. The first aim is to help you become familiar with the field's methodological literature, leading advocates, and ongoing debates. The second aim is to hone your skills conducting fieldwork, analyzing qualitative data, writing research reports, and reflecting meaningfully on these processes, including (as Brinkmann and Kvale suggest) their theoretical, methodological, and ethical dimensions.

Each of these goals alone is ambitious, and doubly so when attempted in the same course. As a result, FOUN 7220 will make significant demands on your time. Please think carefully about your schedule and decide early whether you are able to make this commitment. The course readings will serve as the basis for class discussions and requirements, so you will miss out on a lot and experience painful boredom unless you complete the readings before the dates for which they are assigned.

4. **Student Learning Outcomes:** By the completion of this course, you will be able to: 1) conduct open and guided observations, conduct open and guided interviews, and collect and analyze written documents; 2) design grounded surveys and engage in data reduction and preliminary analysis; 3) code (by hand and with software), categorize, and write up an

¹ This syllabus is based on syllabi by Drs. Patti Lather, Daniel Henry, Antoinette Errante, and Aaron Kuntz.

array of qualitative data, experimenting with various narrative strategies in this process, including tables, graphs, and charts; 4) identify and position themselves with regard to various issues in contemporary procedures and theories of interpretation; and 5) develop skills for writing about qualitative research, both theoretically and practically.

5. **Required Materials:** [1] Berg, B. L., & Lune, H. (2011). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (8th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon. [2] Bernard, H. R., & Ryan, G. W. (2010). *Analyzing qualitative data: Systematic approaches*. Los Angeles: Sage. [3] Brinkmann, S., & Kvale, S., (2015). *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing* (3rd ed.). Los Angeles: Sage. [4] Van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography* (2nd ed.). Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. [5] Web access. You must have access to a web browser, and you must check your email accounts (Tiger Mail and Canvas) several times a week. [6] Supplementary resources, which will be provided by the instructor via Canvas or in class. [7] Patience, time management, and a sense of humor.
6. **Course Format:** This course utilizes a workshop format. The class meetings will include small group discussions, class discussions, lectures, student presentations, and collaborative activities. It is important to the collective enterprise that students keep current with the assigned readings, attend class meetings, and participate in the discussions as informed members. Your participation will ensure that our time together will be productive and worthwhile.

7. **Course Policies:**

- A. Professionals show up on time and prepared every day for work. Yes, professionals occasionally have to take sick or personal days, but the best professionals are always there. If you have to miss a class, you will be responsible for the notes, assignments, and other duties that have been discussed.
- B. Professionals complete assignments on time. Assignments are due in class on the date given. Assignments handed in after this time will be considered late. **Late work will not earn an A. Only in extenuating circumstances will I accept late work more than one week past the deadline**
- C. Professionals use appropriate means for discussing disagreements. If you don't understand something, ask during class. If you still don't understand, email, phone, or catch me in the building. If you think you deserve a different grade, please contact me within 48 hours. Please don't be so unprofessional as to take class time to discuss grades or other points of contention.
- D. Professionals take responsibility for their own learning. That said, my purpose is to help class members become the very best they can possibly become at this point in their professional development. Please allow me to assist in any way possible including, but certainly not limited to: listening, providing feedback, answering questions, sharing and addressing concerns, brainstorming, clarifying course content or expectations, and mediating or facilitating work with collaborating peers. Always feel free to contact me by phone or by email.
- E. Professionals give credit where credit is due. All portions of the Auburn University student academic honesty code (Title XII) will apply to university courses (see <https://sites.auburn.edu/admin/universitypolicies/Policies/AcademicHonestyCode.pdf> as posted on the University Policies website, www.auburn.edu/studentpolicies). All

academic honesty violations or alleged violations of the SGA Code of Laws will be reported to the Office of the Provost, which will then refer the case to the Academic Honesty Committee. Written assignments that include material that is similar to that from course reading materials or other sources should include a citation including source, author, and page number. Quotation marks should be used if the material is copied directly from the readings and in-text citations should be used (Author, year, page). If the material is paraphrased, (Author, year) should appear immediately following the paraphrased material. Failing to do so constitutes violation of the Auburn University Academic Honesty Code. In addition, written assignments that are similar or identical to those of other students in the class (past or present) is also a violation of the Code. **Finally, you may not submit the work of someone else or work that you have submitted for another class to satisfy a requirement of ERMA 7220.**

F. Professionals understand that teaching and learning are ongoing processes for everyone. There are things I haven't thought of here. Understand that I am learning along with you and your classmates. Please help me take a collaborative approach to solving any problems that may arise.

G. Professionals make others aware of what they need to be successful. Please inform me within the first week of class if you require adaptations or modifications to any assignment because of special needs (disabilities, religious observances, and so on).

8. **Disability Accommodations:** Students who need accommodations are asked to electronically submit their approved accommodations through AU Access and to arrange a meeting during office hours the first week of classes, or as soon as possible if accommodations are needed immediately. If you have a conflict with my office hours, an alternate time can be arranged. To set up this meeting, please contact me by e-mail. If you have not established accommodations through the Office of Accessibility, but need accommodations, make an appointment with the Office of Accessibility, 1228 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT).

9. **Course Requirements and Evaluation:** See class calendar for due dates.

A. CITI Training. The university requires online ethics in research training before you begin conducting research with human or animal subjects. Please upload a copy of your completion certificate to Canvas.

B. Reader's 'Questions' (or Comments, Points of Clarification, Discussion Topics, Ah-has, Bugaboos, etc.): Two 'questions' are due each week based on the assigned readings. Please do your best to keep them brief. The questions should be genuine; that is, questions for which you do not have an answer. They should also be as focused as possible and specific to the readings. As you read, ask yourself: Is there anything puzzling about what the author is saying? Is any of the terminology confusing? What don't I understand? What particular points would I like to know more about? How does this reading relate to the work I'm doing for my portfolio? These questions will also be discussed in class, as time allows. Although not graded per se, only as part of the participation grade, 'questions' for all the readings are a course requirement. At its heart, research is asking questions. There will be a place to post your 'questions' to Canvas, and they are due before the start of class. The earlier you post them, the more likely it is that they will become a part of our class discussion.

- C. Reading Quizzes: Quizzes based on the assigned reading for the week may be given during any class, at any time, without prior notice. It is your obligation to read and to work to understand the reading. I warn you, the reading for this class is not designed for casual reading. To understand it, you will need to devote adequate time. Scores on reading quizzes will be factored into the participation grade.
- D. A Collection of Notes on the Normal Environment of Waiting (5 points): All qualitative research is ethnographic in the sense that it seeks to understand other peoples' lived worlds. For the people with whom you do research, those worlds are ordinary, as ordinary as waiting. Your task is to collect notes / observations on the ways in which people (you?) behave while waiting over the next week. Collect sufficiently many so that you have two or three nice ones (Think thick description as described by Clifford Geertz.). Turn in not more than three pages of field notes.
- E. Reflective Journal (20 points total): This semester, you will be asked to keep a reflective journal. The reflective journal will be a place for you to document your emerging subjectivity (i.e., those particular things about you that help and/or hinder your research), methodological learning (i.e., what you have come to understand about research practice and yourself as a researcher), and your experiences conducting fieldwork. You are required to make reflective notes here about your experiences before, during, and after each phase of the research process (see Section G). You should integrate responses to class sessions and readings as seems appropriate. You will also craft reflective memos regarding my feedback on major projects. These should be about one page and focus on what you did do or would do based on this feedback. Your final journal entry should synthesize and summarize your growth as a researcher over the course of the semester. Feel free to use a personal tone; after all, this is about you (see Appendix for guidelines and advice).
- F. Audit Trail (5 points total): Your audit trail, on the other hand, will be less personal as it is a place to document what you have done—the specifics of what you did, from/with whom, when, where, how long did it take, etc? Be as detailed as you can so that the information you document can easily become a methods section or chapter. This is also a place to keep track of how your research design is evolving. Use an organizational convention that works for you and that you think you can maintain (calendar, bulleted list, paragraphs, tweets, wiki, blog, etc.).
- G. Qualitative Research Methods Portfolio in Three Parts (60 points total): This class offers an opportunity to do fieldwork on a relatively small scale. Ideally, this will be a pilot or prior ethnography for your dissertation, but at the least, the course should allow you to 'practice' the major qualitative methods for generating, analyzing, and writing up data.

Please submit the elements of your portfolio to Canvas. See course calendar for due dates.

In recognition of the very different places at which students may be in their doctoral careers, there is *some* flexibility regarding the requirements for the portfolio.

As I aspire to a workshop format in this class, it is critical that you come to class having done the reading and common assignments and prepared to contribute to class discussion.

I. Part I: Data Collection

- a. Research Purpose—A statement regarding your research interest(s) or question(s).
- b. Open Observation (5 points)—Notes from at least one hour of open observation. You may visit the site(s) more than once to have a total of 60 minutes of observation time. An open observation is conducted without a predetermined focus. Go into the field and see what there is to see. The relevance to your research purpose should be based on location.
- c. Structured or Guided Observation (5 points)—Notes from at least one hour of observation structured or guided by a theoretical perspective where you attempt to go beyond description. You may visit the site(s) more than once to have a total of 60 minutes of observation time. Now the relevance is based both on location and the particulars to which you attend.
- d. Interview (8 points)—A minimum of one, at least 30-minute, interview evidenced by verbatim transcription. Your transcript(s) should be typed and formatted consistently.
- e. Document (2 points)—At least one document you could analyze related to your field site and research question. Different from the extant literature, this document should be an artifact of a research context that interests you.
- f. Reflective Journal (5 points) - Reflective journaling totaling at least three typed pages that documents your experiences and learning collecting data (see above description and Appendix).
- g. Data Collection Audit Trail (2 points)

II. Part II: Data Analysis

NOTE: You may use the data from Part I, or you may choose to analyze another data set. If you choose another data set, please submit a new Research Purpose. If you continue with the data from Part I, please remind me of your Research Purpose.

- a. Processing Part I Feedback Reflective Journal (1 point) - At least one reflective journal entry of at least one typed page responding to the feedback you received on Part I (see above description and Appendix). **The deadline for this assignment will be determined based on the completion of the Part I feedback. Stay tuned.**
- b. (New) Research Purpose - A statement regarding your research interest(s) or question(s).
- c. Coded Data (4 points)—Do initial coding of data corpus, applying a priori codes and looking for emergent themes and patterns. Submit a “meaty” section of coded data. Choose a segment that is representative of the work you have done to analyze your data. Be sure the segment you choose is also representative of your codes. That is, make sure it’s aligned with your codebook.
- d. Codebook (6 points)—Submit a complete codebook; a codebook is a list of codes, identifications of kind of code (e.g., a priori or emergent) and source (e.g., data or citation from the literature), operational definitions or

inclusion/exclusion criteria, and data exemplar (e.g., a quote or observation to which you would uniquely attach that code).

- e. Grounded Survey (4 points) – Based on your completed analysis, develop a 1-2 page survey instrument and administer it to at least one person. Remember this is a *grounded* survey. You should prioritize emergent themes and ideas rather than relying heavily on items you could have easily written before you had any data. You should submit the completed survey. I encourage you to gather feedback about your survey. You may also consider using it as a member check.
- f. Warrant and Assertion (6 points) – Code and categorize your own data and then warrant an assertion. This entails constructing evidentiary warrants for a claim you want to make (i.e., asserting a pattern or theme and warranting it with examples from your data).

More precisely, code and categorize your data and identify a recurring pattern. State the pattern and illustrate it with 3-5 quotes from your data, using exact quotes from your observation notes, interview transcript, document, or even grounded survey responses. Do not paraphrase or “clean up” the data. If tone of voice or pacing is important, try to show this by the way you display the quote. Follow the warrants with at least two paragraphs of interpretive commentary. Explain to the reader what you think the data mean, and add whatever contextual information you need to from your field notes or reflective journal that adds meaning to the data or clarifies their significance. These paragraphs should make the relationship between your assertion and your warrants absolutely clear.

Include at least one instance of disconfirming data – data that contradicts or does not perfectly align with your assertion. I will be looking for evidence that you made a good faith effort to look for disconfirming evidence. If you find it, share what it is and provide an explanatory paragraph. If you looked for it and didn’t find it, say so and describe how you conducted the search.

- g. Reflective Journal (5 points) – Reflective journaling totaling at least three typed pages that documents your experiences and learning analyzing data (see above description and Appendix).
- h. Data Analysis Audit Trail (1.5 points)

III. Part III: Writing Up Data²

NOTE: Choose at least 20 points worth of ‘tales’ to write. You may repeat a ‘tale’ as long as the total points attempted is at least 20. Make sure to upload them to the correct assignment in Canvas. You may use the assertion from Part II or some other assertion. You may also use different assertions for any or all of the ‘tales.’ You must base Part III on the data you analyzed for Part II.

- a. Processing Part II Feedback Reflective Journal (1 point) – At least one reflective journal entry of at least one typed page responding to the feedback you received on Part II (see above description and Appendix). **The deadline for this assignment will be determined based on the completion of the Part II feedback. Stay tuned.**

² These assignments as well as the assertion and warrant assignment were adapted from assignments designed by Fred Erickson and Patti Lather.

- b. Realist Tale (5 points)—Expand an assertion and its warrants into 1-2 pages that could be included in an empirical article. Remember, realist tales present data and findings *as if* what you found is absolutely real. That is, they don't position the author within the text, and they don't critique the context or the societal structures at work (see Van Maanen). They are written as if the data are generalizable.
- c. Impressionist/Literary Tale (5 points)—Expand an assertion and its warrant into a 2-3 page vignette.

More precisely, present a few sentences to identify the context of the event and then be as concrete, vivid, and precise as you can in describing the sequence of events in the incident. Present specific details of non-verbal behavior, direct quotes of speech, and describe the physical setting. Make clear to your reader that this is an instance of the assertion. At the end of the vignette, reiterate your assertion and follow it with a few sentences of interpretive commentary, telling the reader the point of the vignette (see Van Maanen).

- d. Frequency Tale (2.5 points)— “The issue is not whether or not to count, but how to decide what to count” (Erickson, 1977). Search your data corpus for frequency data and construct a frequency figure. This entails assembling evidence for an assertion about typicality or a-typicality in your data. Pay particular attention to the title of the figure; your assertion should be clear in the title. Try to show patterns in your data. Make an assertion based on the pattern you are claiming. Illustrate your assertion with a bar graph, contingency table, or other simple frequency figure. Present this with at least one paragraph of explanatory discussion, which tells the reader what to pay special attention to in the figure (e.g., “Notice that over the last three days I observed, only one-third as many irrelevant comments by students appeared in my field notes. This suggests that...”).
- e. Synoptic Tale (2.5 points)—Search your data for an emerging theory and construct a synoptic chart. This entails assembling evidence for relationships between or among patterns or themes in your data. Pay particular attention to the title of the chart; your assertion should be clear in the title. The synoptic chart should illustrate patterns or assertions in your data of a more analytic/conceptual type. That is, they should assert a relationship among themes or patterns (selective coding, in grounded theory terms). Present this with an accompanying discussion of at least one paragraph.
- f. Inductive Formal/Theoretical/Structural Tale (7.5 points)—Consider the ways in which your data suggest an emerging theory. This entails adding theoretical framings to your findings in order to play with different analytic perspectives. This will maximize the likelihood of your discovering things you hadn't noticed before, or had taken for granted, in your data. Use grounded theory. That is, use your data to assert a new/grounded(ish) theory (maybe the one emerging in your synoptic chart) (see Van Maanen).
- g. Deductive Formal/Theoretical/Structural Tale (7.5 points)—Consider the ways in which an existing theory sheds light on your data. This entails adding theoretical framings to your findings in order to play with different analytic perspectives. This will maximize the likelihood of your discovering things you hadn't noticed before, or had taken for granted, in your data. Use an a priori

theory. That is, use an existing theory to shed light on what is going on in your data. When you use an a priori theory as an analytic lens, what do you see in your data? Include an annotated bibliography, in APA format, of 2-4 scholarly sources that you drew on for your a priori theoretical framing of the data. The annotation should include 2-3 sentences summarizing the main point of the reading and its relevance to your project (see Van Maanen).

- h. Alterna-Tale (5 points) – It is increasingly common in qualitative research for data stories to be told in ‘non-traditional’ formats. These include collage, satire, poetry, film, drama, and other kinds of performances. Your task is to present your findings in one of these, or some other not-yet-thought-of, formats. Have fun with this one. That is, the alterna-tale is a representation of your data and findings that does not fit into one of the other categories. It’s something else.
- i. Reflective Journal (5 points) – Reflective journaling totaling at least three typed pages that documents your experiences and learning writing up your data (see above description and Appendix).
- j. Synthesizing Reflective Journal (3 points) – Reflective journaling totaling at least two typed pages that synthesizes your experience creating your portfolio.
- k. Writing Up Data Audit Trail (1.5 points)

H. Participation and Preparedness (10 points): Preparing for and engaging in class are essential not only to your success in class but also to the success of your classmates. This grade will be based on attendance, completion and thoughtfulness of reader’s questions, reading quiz grades, completion of CITI training, and the quality of your contributions to class discussions and activities.

10. **Grading Scale for the Final Grade:**

89.5 – 100% (≥ 89.5 points)	A
79.5 – 89.49% (≥ 79.5 and < 89.49 points)	B
69.5 – 79.49% (≥ 69.5 and < 79.49 points)	C
59.5 – 69.49% (≥ 59.5 and < 69.49points)	D
Below 59.5% (< 59.49 points)	F

Appendix: Hallmarks of High Quality Reflective Journals

Carey E. Andrzejewski, ERMA 7220: Applied Qualitative Research

Entries in your reflective journal should document your substantive thinking about one or more of the following questions:

- What have I learned about qualitative methodology?
- Who am I becoming as a researcher? Who do I want to be as a researcher?
- What is the nature of “my particular pair of spectacles”? How do I see the world in unique ways? How do my views, my lenses, my biases, and my assumptions shape what I can, and cannot, see in my data? How do they shape the data I collect, the analyses I conduct, the conclusions I reach, and the ways I disseminate my work?
- What sense am I making of the class readings? ... the field experiences? ... the class experiences?
- How are my readings, fieldwork, and class experiences related?
- In what ways am I building skills as a qualitative researcher? What has gone well? What mistakes have I made in my fieldwork? What will I do differently next time? Why?
- How is my sense of my class project evolving? How are my ideas for my dissertation evolving? How are my ideas for my professional program of research evolving?
- How am I working to align my research topic, research questions, research design (data collection and analysis plans), and writing for my class project? ... for my dissertation? ... for my professional program of research?

There are also five criteria that can be used to assess the degree to which reflective practice is productive. I will assess your journals based on the degree to which your writing meets these criteria. They are:

1. **Specificity and Clarity:** Does the reflective writing draw on specific language and terminology rather than broad, vague terms? Does it clearly communicate a message, epiphany, discovery, concern, or question?
2. **Accuracy:** Does the reflective writing refer to concepts in qualitative research in ways that demonstrate accurate, or evolving, understanding? Does the reflective writing include appropriate, if informal, citations where the thoughts, ideas, and words of others have been used? That is, this document will be most useful for you if you use it as a place to record ideas that you may cite in future work (conference presentations, journal articles, chapter 3 of a dissertation, etc.).
3. **Synthesis:** Does the reflective writing provide evidence that you have drawn on more than one source of information (reading, field experience, class experience, etc.) to reveal deep thinking about qualitative methodology? It will be particularly important to incorporate ideas from the readings. Including citational support for your ideas is a good scholarly habit.
4. **Self-Focus:** Does the reflective writing include substantive statements about your learning and experiences? After all, reflection is ultimately about *you*.
5. **Future-Focus:** Does the reflective writing include specific statements about your future practice as a (qualitative) researcher?

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- Davis, E. A. (2006). Characterizing productive reflection among preservice elementary teachers: Seeing what matters. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 22(3), 281-301.
 - Based on guidelines developed by Dr. Heather A. Davis

Week	Readings <i>Italics indicates article/chapter is on Canvas.</i>	Assignments Bold indicates hard deadlines; <i>italics</i> indicates work-in-progress that should be brought to class.
1 (1/14). Introduction – The post-modern turn, reflectivity, and bricolage. Oh, and... the syllabus	<i>Understanding Contemporary Society: Chapters 1 and 2</i> <i>Kincheloe (2001)</i> <i>Ortlipp (2008)</i>	
2 (1/21). Research Ethics / Ethnographic Research / What is culture anyway? And, how do we observe it?	B&L Ch 3 B&K Ch 4 VM Prologue-Ch 2 <i>Ponterotto (2006)</i>	The Normal Environment of Waiting
3 (1/28). Reflectivity / The Art of Observation Cont.	<i>Rhodes (2000)</i> B&L Ch 6 B&R Chs 1& 2, Appendix	CITI completion certificate <i>Open observation field notes</i> <i>Structured observation guide</i>
4 (2/4). Conducting Interviews (More than a conversation)	B&K Chs 6-9 B&L Ch 4 B&K Ch 17	<i>Interview Guide</i>
5 (2/11). No class. Time to focus on collecting data		
6 (2/18). Objectivity and Validity / The Beauty of Documents	K&B Chs 15 & 10 <i>Eisner (1988)</i> <i>Phillips (1990)</i> <i>Creswell & Miller (2010)</i> <i>Whittemore, Chase, & Mandle (2001)</i> B&L Ch 8	<i>Document</i>
7 (2/25). No Class. Time to focus on collecting data		
8 (3/4). Now what?	B&R Chs 3 & 7	Portfolio Part I
9 (3/11). Coding, Categorizing, and Writing Memos	B&L Ch 11 B&K Ch 11 B&R Ch 4	<i>Data you want to analyze (with Atlas.ti) and emerging codebook</i>
10 (3/18). Using computers – pros and cons	B&K Chs 12-14 B&R Chs 5 & 15	<i>Data you want to analyze (with Atlas.ti (?)) and emerging codebook</i>
11 (3/25). No Class. Spring Break. Time to focus on analysis		
12 (4/1). Analytic Induction	B&R Chs 8-14, 16 (choose 3)	<i>Ideas/data/drafts for your assertion and warrant and your grounded survey</i>
13 (4/8). Now what?	VM Chs 3-5	Portfolio Part II
14 (4/15). What stories can you tell?	B&K Ch 16 B&L Ch 12 <i>Anderman, Andrzejewski, & Allen (2011)</i>	<i>Drafts of tales for writing workshop</i>
15 (4/22). No class. AERA. Time to focus on writing		
16 (4/29). What story are you going to tell? / The role of theory	VM Chs 6 & Epilogue <i>Andrzejewski & Davis (2008)</i> <i>Andrzejewski (2011)</i>	<i>Drafts of tales for writing workshop</i>
Final (5/6). “Celebrate good times, come on...”		Portfolio Part III