HU5100 Qualitative Humanistic Research: Methods and Methodology

Instructor: Jingfang Ren  
Office: Walker 335  
Time: T TH 3.35-4.50  
Location: Walker 139  
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Office hours: T TH 2.00-3.00pm, W 9.00-12.00, or by appointment  
Class mailing list: HU5100FA08-L@MTU.EDU

Course Description
This course is designed to help you develop an informed understanding of major methodological approaches to qualitative inquiry. During this course, we will be reading about a variety of methods and methodologies commonly used in qualitative humanistic research and analyzing examples of studies employing these methods and methodologies. You will also have the opportunity to practice qualitative research through a group research project and through the writing of a full-length research proposal for an individual project.

Course Materials

Required texts

Supplemental readings and handouts (print or electronic) provided by instructor.

MTU Policies

Academic Dishonesty  
Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offenses. MTU’s Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “knowingly copying another’s work or ideas and calling them one’s own or not giving proper credit or citation,” and the policy covers copying sections or entire papers from printed or electronic sources as well as handing in papers written by students for other classes or purchasing academic papers. Plagiarism and cheating are not only dishonest but they cheat you out of learning. If you ever have any questions about this issue, or about how to cite someone else’s work properly, please talk with me or consult a coach in the Writing Center.

Discrimination  
MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Dean of Students, 487-2212. For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department chair, or the Affirmative Action Office at 487-3310.

Class Policies and Requirements

Attendance  
You are expected to attend all class meetings and to be in class and ready to contribute to the discussion at the beginning of class. You may
have two (2) absences for any reason during the semester. Documented, excused absences will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and require a written memo explaining the circumstances with supporting documents when applicable (e.g., doctor's note, conference itinerary). For each unexcused absence after the first two (2), you will lose 50 points of your final grade. Even when absent, you are responsible for completing and turning in assignments when they are due. You may contact another student about in-class work missed when you are absent or come to see me during my office hours.

Late Work

All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the dates indicated on the course calendar. Late papers and assignments are generally NOT accepted; however, personal emergencies will be taken into consideration as long as you discuss your situation with me in person, by phone, or via email at least 24 hours ahead of time. In addition, you may use up to one (1) "computer excuse", regardless of the situation, to turn in late work.

The late work policy does apply even if you lose your work due to technological failures. You are responsible for keeping complete copies of your work for the semester. In team writing situations, make sure that all team members always have the most current version of the document that the team is working on at any stage of the document cycle.

Revision

You are encouraged to revise and resubmit your work for further evaluation or grade change. I may also revise the syllabus and course calendar throughout the semester to better serve your needs.

Conferences

See me in my office—335 Walker—when you have questions about an assignment, when you would like to try out some ideas before an assignment is due, or when you just want to chat about research in general or a particular research project you undertake. If you can't make my regularly scheduled office hours (T TH 2.00-3.00pm, W 9.00-12.00), just email me to set up an appointment, and I'll try my best to accommodate your schedule.

Summary of Major Projects and Assignments

I. Research proposal and poster (individual; 400 pts)
   - Identify a research problem
   - Conduct a review of relevant literature
   - Propose a plan of research including methodological framework and methods for gathering and analyzing data
   - Present your plan of research in the form of a poster (public)
   - Write a full-length research proposal (instructor)

II. Research project and oral presentation (group/class; 250 pts)
   - Develop research questions
   - Make methodological decisions throughout the project
   - Gather and analyze data
   - Report on your findings
Other Assignments

In addition to the two major projects, you will also complete some smaller assignments throughout the semester, including the following:

- Read assigned texts
- Ask questions or offer comments on required readings (email to class list by noon on the days when these readings are due) (100 pts)
- Lead discussion of sample studies and prepare a one-to-two page written analysis/handout (200 pts)
- Participation and in-class writing (holistic and cumulative; 50 pts)

Extra credit opportunities: “technology and research” essay (100 pts)

Evaluation Criteria

For each assignment, I’ll use a specific set of criteria that highlight and support the goals of that particular assignment. These criteria are typically provided in the last section of the assignment sheet/prompt.

Grade Conversion

The assignments are “worth” the above indicated amounts. In addition, you must complete all assignments to receive a passing grade in this course. Late assignments (except the one for which you used your “computer excuse”) lose 50pts for each day (anytime past 12.00 noon) of the due day. Use the table below to convert points to letter grades.

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<th>Grade</th>
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Grading

For each assignment, I’ll use a specific set of criteria that highlight and support the goals of that particular assignment. These criteria are typically provided in the last section of the assignment sheet/prompt.