Description of Course:

This course is designed to provide research design skills using feminist, interdisciplinary qualitative and quantitative methods, to engage the student in the process of research to further their understanding of the systematic ways that knowledge is produced and to help students develop a critical lens for evaluating the production of knowledge on the dimensions of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation and other dimensions of difference.

Course Objectives:

1. To examine the process of the production of knowledge, the assumptions that underlie theoretical developments and the provisional caveat that is intrinsic in existing knowledges.

2. To critically assess existing knowledge and theoretical frameworks and how to determine the best methodology to support a research project.

3. To understand the uses of grounded theory for both developing new theory and expanding existing theories.

4. To become familiar with the processes involved in designing and planning a qualitative and quantitative study including criteria for sample selection, development of tools for data collection and analyses.

5. To clearly understand the process of informed consent and ethics related to anonymity, confidentiality, and the use of data.

6. To learn skills required in producing a scientific report that expands existing theoretical frameworks and offers a research agenda for further study.
**Teaching Methods:**

This course will be a lecture-discussion seminar for graduate students. All students are expected to have read material to assure an active participation in the discussion. The lectures will focus on a critical analytic approach to understanding the complex factors that influence qualitative and quantitative research and the methods that are employed in such research. The instructors expect that everyone will come to class prepared to be open-minded and respectful of the opinions of others as we investigate these issues throughout the semester.

**Required Texts:**


**Reading Packet:**
Will be disseminated in class.

**Recommended:**


At the end of the syllabus, a selected list of methods books and articles organized by specific method has been included for your information and use to conduct your pilot study.
Course Requirements and Assignments:

OFFICE HOURS: I will require a formal meeting with each student at the start of the semester. Additionally, please come and speak with me if you have any questions or concerns- don’t wait until the last minute!

IMPORTANT: All written assignments must be typed, double-spaced and 12pt. Font (Times and Times New Roman are the only acceptable font styles). Use APA style format as presented in the Publication Manual 5th Edition. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. It is expected that all assignments submitted will be paginated, proofread, spell-checked and adhere to grammatical standards. Please note: Emailed submissions are NOT acceptable. A paper that does not adhere to these standards may lose up to 10 points. Use standard spacing and margins. Multiple page submissions should be stapled or well-bound together.

ASSIGNMENTS: Students are responsible for all assigned readings. Read PRIOR to the assigned class time. Class lectures and discussions will cover material supplemental to the readings, in addition to guiding you through them. Assignments are due on the date scheduled. You are encouraged to consult with me at any time for assistance and ideas on improving your performance.

LATE ASSIGNMENTS: Late assignments will drop one letter grade-level (1 day late a B+ assignment converts to a C+) per day they are late from the original due-date. Being absent from class does not excuse you from having a hardcopy of your assignments delivered at the appropriate time (do not send via email).

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND BEHAVIOR: Active participation is required and will be considered in the assignment of final grades. This participation includes: coming to class prepared (having read and thought about the reading and having completed assignments in hand); being ready to begin class on time (arriving on time, putting unrelated materials away, ending conversations, etc.); responding to instructor questions, contributing to class discussion, and asking thoughtful questions; listening attentively and respectfully to all class members; participating in individual and group exercises; and contributing to harmony in the classroom (not monopolizing class discussion and not acting in a disruptive manner, for example, but showing good will toward others, offering some humor when appropriate, coming to the instructor with questions or concerns, etc.). In a word, it comes down to respect. If you are not present in class, you cannot participate and learn. Just as the instructor is responsible for facilitating, monitoring, evaluating, and contributing to this process, students are responsible for fully and seriously participating in the course.

EMAIL: You are required to keep your email account current. At times throughout the semester I may be sending assignments and/or messages to the class or to specific individuals. Please be aware emailed assignments are not acceptable.
ABSENCES: If you miss two classes you are encouraged to drop the course. Attendance will be taken at each class meeting. Absence is at times unavoidable; nonetheless your grade is likely to suffer. Students will not be penalized because of observances of their religious beliefs; students shall be given an opportunity, whenever feasible, to make up within a reasonable time any academic assignment that is missed due to individual participation in religious observances. It is the student’s responsibility to inform the instructor of any intended absences for religious observances by the end of the Schedule Adjustment period.

**Code of Integrity:**

The University of Maryland, College Park has a nationally recognized Code of Academic Integrity, administered by the Student Honor Council. The Code sets standards for academic integrity at Maryland for all undergraduate and graduate students. As a student you are responsible for upholding these standards for this course. It is very important for you to be aware of the consequences of cheating, fabrication, facilitation, and plagiarism. For more information on the Code of Academic Integrity or the Student Honor Council, please visit [http://www.shc.umd.edu](http://www.shc.umd.edu)

To further exhibit your commitment to academic integrity, remember to sign the Honor Pledge on all examinations and assignments: “I pledge on my honor that I have not given or received any unauthorized assistance on this examination (assignment).”

**Definitions:**

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: any of the following acts, when committed by a student, shall constitute academic dishonesty:

**CHEATING:** intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise.

**FABRICATION:** intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information in an academic exercise.

**FACILITATING ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate any provision of this Code.

**PLAGIARISM:** intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another, as one’s own in any academic exercise.

**Special Needs:**

The University wishes to provide appropriate accommodations for students with special needs. In order to insure that accommodations can be properly made, students with special needs should inform me at the beginning of the semester.

Also if you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, contact the Learning Assistance Service, 2201 Shoemaker Bldg., X 4-7693. Their educational counselors can help with time management, reading, note-taking and exam preparation skills.
Course Requirements and Expectations:

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<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annotations</td>
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<td>Class Presentation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical analysis of article</td>
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<td>Research Presentations</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Paper</td>
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Attendance & Participation (10%)
The university expects each student to take full responsibility for his or her academic work and academic progress. To progress satisfactorily, the student must meet all of the requirements of each course for which he or she is registered. Students are expected to attend class regularly, for consistent attendance offers the most effective opportunity open to all students to gain command of the concepts and materials of their courses of study. Additionally, classes are most productive if we are all prepared and present. Attendance is taken every class. You are responsible for all in-class work. Further, all students are expected to be on time to class as a courtesy to their peers and instructor.

Annotations (20%)
You will be writing annotations of four peer-reviewed, empirical journal articles selected for your research project. The importance of this exercise is for you to be aware of prior work conducted in your own area of research interest and to learn how to critically assess the scientific merit of a qualitative and quantitative research study. Your experience in analyzing and responding to written works in this way should help you deepen your understanding of how knowledge is produced and what is good science. The outline for each annotation, 2 pages in length, is:

1. Purpose of article- descriptive purpose or questions
2. Literature used to claim the importance for the type of study conducted- what were the theoretical assumptions of the author(s)?
3. Methods used including sample, how selected, location, design used, instruments or tools used e.g. interview guide, participant observation, limitations of study
4. Results are what were found based on purpose of article; do you agree? Are there problems in the method that make you question the results? Are there any results not fully substantiated?
5. What are the conclusions for future research, or practice or policy? Are they consistent with the findings? Can you make additional recommendations?

Due Dates are listed on your course outline.

Class Presentation on a Selected Chapter/Reading (10%)
Each of you will be responsible for facilitating a discussion using the required material assigned for the particular topic of the class. You will bring in discussion questions, and/or prepare mini-lectures, or think of other productive ways to structure our class time. The presentation must summarize three key-points, and discuss the relevance of these points to the area of feminist qualitative and quantitative methodology. As a discussion leader you should be prepared to present for approx. 15 minutes. I will discuss topic areas and assigned days for each of you in class.

Critical analysis of article (15%)
You will select one of your annotations to present a critical analysis as the basis of class discussion. It can be an excellent article or a poorly executed study. Each student will be expected to provide a copy to class peers and instructor on the Monday prior to class presentation. Your critique will be based on the outline of annotations (see above) and should answer the following questions with a critical lens: Does the introduction of the study contextualize the issue or problem under study? If not, why not? What is the problem(s) that the study seeks to address? What is the methodology used in the study, and is it thoroughly described? What are the gaps? Do the results answer the questions posed? Is the discussion consistent with the literature review? Are the implications or conclusions justified based on study questions and methods? Are there major “leaps” not justified by results? Is the study as a whole clear and easy to understand?

Presentation of Pilot Study Results (15%)
Each student is required to select a specific research study of interest for presentation and development as a final paper. The study must be approved by me and one meeting is required to discuss your substantive approach to the research. A detailed outline of the final paper (approximately 5 pages) with ten references is due on February 27, 2008. The presentation must follow the same outline as the paper format described below. The student will have 20 minutes to make the presentation of the final paper at the end of the semester.

Final Research Paper (30%)
A final research paper is required that executes a pilot study/ and or designs a dissertation study.

Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting the Pilot Study:

You are expected to conduct a small pilot study on some topic related to women’s lives. You should select a topic that is related to your own interests and can further your knowledge in a particular area. The choice of subject must be one that can be narrow enough to be adequately studied, yet broad enough to form the basis for an interesting and comprehensive exploratory investigation.

Learning how to properly conduct a pilot study is an important tool to ensure your work is efficient and productive. The Social Research Update 2001 (Issue 35) states, The term pilot study is used in two different ways in social science research. It can refer to so-called feasibility studies which are "small scale version[s], or trial run[s], done in
preparation for the major study" (Polit et al., 2001: 467). However, a pilot study can also be the pre-testing or 'trying out' of a particular research instrument (Baker 1994: 182-3). One of the advantages of conducting a pilot study is that it might give advance warning about where the main research project could fail, where research protocols may not be followed, or whether proposed methods or instruments are inappropriate or too complicated. These are important reasons for undertaking a pilot study, but there are additional reasons, for example convincing funding bodies that your research proposal for the main study is worth funding. Thus pilot studies are conducted for a range of different reasons.

Reasons for conducting pilot studies

- Developing and testing adequacy of research instruments
- Assessing the feasibility of a (full-scale) study/survey
- Designing a research protocol
- Assessing whether the research protocol is realistic and workable
- Establishing whether the sampling frame and technique are effective
- Assessing the likely success of proposed recruitment approaches
- Identifying logistical problems which might occur using proposed methods
- Estimating variability in outcomes to help determining sample size
- Collecting preliminary data
- Determining what resources (finance, staff) are needed for a planned study
- Assessing the proposed data analysis techniques to uncover potential problems
- Developing a research question and research plan
- Training a researcher in as many elements of the research process as possible
- Convincing funding bodies that the research team is competent and knowledgeable
- Convincing funding bodies that the main study is feasible and worth funding
- Convincing other stakeholders that the main study is worth supporting

Template for Final Pilot Study Paper or Prospectus:

Your final research paper should include: 1) a title and an abstract; 2) an introduction to the issue or problem under investigation, including a rationale addressing the importance of the topic; 3) a clear statement of the problem and related research question(s); 4) a brief literature review (no more than 10-15 pages) that contextualizes your project within a theoretical approach; 5) a comprehensive discussion of methods— including sampling and procedures used in the study as well as methodological techniques (10-12 pages); 6) a comprehensive discussion of major findings or expected findings that are anchored in thoughtful data analysis; 7) a conclusion and 8) a list of bibliographic sources or references used. It is expected that at minimum 25 empirical articles related to your topic from scholarly journals are included. Internet sources do not count as scholarly citations. The final paper is expected to be between 30-40 pages.

More specifically, your final paper should include:
a. **Title/Abstract:** The abstract should be no more than 100 words and include a summary of the major arguments or findings in the paper and describe the methods and the situation or setting studied.

b. **Introduction:** Introduce and contextualize the thesis that will be used in approaching the data, and identify the source of the data in the first three or four paragraphs.

c. **Problem/Research Question(s), Hypothesis or Thesis:** Clearly elaborate and justify your aims in researching this topic.

d. **Literature Review/Theoretical Approach:** Give an overview of the state of the field and discuss how your theoretical approach leads you to make the methodological choices you have (see next section). The literature review should also identify major gaps in the literature that you will address and ways in which your work will expand existing theoretical frameworks.

e. **Methods:**

1. Approach (e.g., Positioned Subject, Grounded Theory, Life History, Participant-Observation, Interviewing) and Reflexivity (your role as researcher—potential biases, background influences, etc.)
2. Research Methods/Techniques (e.g., Participant-Observation, Interviewing, Documents)
3. Sampling: Site Selection (where will you be conducting your research and why). Include a description of setting.
4. Study Participants (Who are your participants, how many are there and why)
6. Plan of Analysis
7. Timeline

f. **Ways of Addressing Trustworthiness (Validity):** Multiple data sources and methods, triangulation member checks, thick description, etc.

g. **Findings:** What new knowledge or insights come from your study? What were major themes? What data support these themes? What data/themes challenge or confirm existing findings?

h. **Conclusion:** short summary of what has been reported, draws conclusions about it, and suggests what further research is appropriate.

i. **Bibliographic sources** or references cited in paper

Papers should be approximately 25-30 double-spaced pages (excluding references, charts, tables, etc.).
Final Research papers are due on May 14, 2008.
February 6 Week 1: Research as a Process
Reading assignment: Drew & Hardman: *The Research Process*
(51-76) and assignment to write out your idea.
WHAT IS YOUR RESEARCH QUESTION, WHY IS THE QUESTION IMPORTANT, WHAT DOES IT CONTRIBUTE TO EXISTING KNOWLEDGE IN THE FIELD, WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES FOR ANSWERING THIS QUESTION, AND WHAT METHODS DO YOU THINK WOULD BE MOST USEFUL IN ANSWERING THE QUESTION AND WHY?.

February 13 Week 2: Overview of Research Process and Discussion of assignment
Corbin and Strauss, Chapters 1-3

February 20 Week 3: Development of Research Questions and Multi-Methodologies
Corbin and Strauss, Chapters 4-7

**Annotation 1 Due**

**February 27 Week 4:** Research Design and Components of a Study Proposal
Creswell, Chapters 4,5,6, sand 11
Dissertation prospectus handout

March 5 Week 5: How to conduct a literature review as evidence for study proposal
Pan, 2004
Gerbert, 1999
Cresswell, Chapter 2
Student presentations of critique of article

**Annotation 2 Due**

**Outline of final paper due**

March 12 Week 6: Presentation of mini-Research paper

March 19 Week 7 **SPRING BREAK (March 17-21)**

March 26 Week 7: Quantitative Methods: Survey Design and Secondary Data Analysis
Creswell, J. Chapters 7, pp.119-130 and 9
Aday, Chapters 2 and 3 – in packet
April 2 Week 8: Qualitative Approaches
Corbin and Strauss, Chapters 8-10,
Cresswell, Chapter 7 –pp.131-141 ,Chapter 10
Executive Summary of Qualitative Research, 2003
QRIG handout

April 9 Week 9: Data Analyses and data quality
Corbin and Strauss, Chapters 11-12
Patton, 1999
**Annotation 3 Due**

April 16 Week 10: Human Subjects Protection: Informed Consent
All students are to download university human subject’s form and fill out for your study including those who request an exemption.

April 23 Week 11: Writing a Prospectus
Cresswell, Chapter 3,7 and 8
Corbin and Strauss, Chapter 13-14

April 30 Week 12: Class Presentations
**Annotation 4 Due**

May 7 Week 13: Class Presentations

**May 14 – Final Research papers Due by 5 PM in my office at CRGE.**

**Selected References of Methods Books and Articles**


**Feminist Standpoint**


**Interviewing and Focus Groups**


**Geography**


**Autobiography**

**Literary Critique**


**Textual Analysis**

McRobbie, Angela. The Politics of Feminist Research: Between Talk, Text, and Action. In Feminism and Youth Culture: From “Jackie” to “Just Seventeen”.


**In-depth Interviewing**


**History**


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1 Drawn from Annette Lareau’s Qualitative Methods course
**Participant Observation**


**Interpreting Data**


**Grounded Theory**


**Miscellaneous**


Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality. (1999). *Qualitative Methods in Health Services Research. Volume 34, Number 5*


**PROGRAM REFERENCES**

**Qualitative Data Software**

ATLAS-TI

Online Support:  [http://www.atlasti.com/support.html](http://www.atlasti.com/support.html)


NUDIST & NVIVO
Home Page: http://www.qsrinternational.com/


Local Software Consultant/Trainer: Kelly Godfrey
KEGODFRE@uncg.edu
336-334-5882

**Useful Qualitative Journals**


*Qualitative Sociology* (New York: Human Sciences Press.) Call #: HM1 .Q34

*Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage Publications, c1987.)
Call #: HT101 .U6772

Call #: GN301 .E85

*Symbolic Interaction* (Berkeley: University of California Press)

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