POLI 8120
Qualitative Research Methods

Course Objectives:

This course in Qualitative Research Methods will provide students with an understanding of the qualitative research designs and methods available to political scientists and public administrators. The methods learned in this course can be used to conduct research in the areas of political science and public administration. Emphasis will be placed on methods used in policy evaluation. The goal of this course is to provide students with the knowledge to design research projects and the ability to describe and present data.

E-Mail:

It is the student’s responsibility to be current on their e-mail, as that is the conventional medium of communication for this course. E-mail to the instructor will be answered within two business days.

Prerequisites:

POLI 8110

Required Texts:


Justification for Graduate Credit:

This course is progressively more advanced in academic content than undergraduate programs and fosters independent learning. Specific factors that warrant graduate credit are:

1. there are specific requisites (e.g., POLI 8110)

2. content is of sufficient depth to justify graduate credit (e.g., extensive reading in major disciplinary journals);

3. content develops the critical and analytical skills of students including their application of the relevant literature, in both seminar discussions and written assignments;
4. rigorous standards for student evaluation (major writing assignments and oral presentations);

5. course instructors must hold Level 2 Graduate Faculty Status.

Course Requirements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Percent of final grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Midterm Examination</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Examination</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>TBD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grades will be assessed on your performance on the homework assignments, examinations, and individual papers and presentations. Grades will be assigned according to the following scale:

- A 90-100
- B 80-89
- C 70-79
- D 60-69
- F Below 60

**Homework**

Homework will be assigned according to the syllabus course schedule. Students are responsible for turning in all homework assignments at the beginning of the following class period. Late work is accepted only with excuses described in the Tiger Cub.

Article Reviews - Each week students will locate an article in a peer-reviewed journal that relates to one of the topics covered in the assigned readings for that week. The student will bring one copy of the article to class along with a brief written synopsis of the article including five main points and be prepared to discuss the article.

**Examinations**

The examinations will be essay and will include questions from both the textbooks and class lectures. Examinations will be take-home and students will have one week to complete them. Examinations will be due at the beginning of class on the assigned date. Students must provide a hardcopy of their examination. Hardcopies can be placed in the instructor’s mailbox in the Political Science Department before class or they can be handed in at the beginning of class. Students are responsible for ensuring that examinations are received. If you examinations are going to be missed, permission via email must be received prior to the examination. If the instructor is not contacted prior to the examination only documented excused absences will be considered. Make-up examinations adhere to the Tiger Cub policy.

**Independent Writing Assignment**
There will be a 10-15 page individual paper assignment. For the paper students will be designing a research study. Students will come up with a research project idea and then design a research proposal that relates to that idea. Early in the semester students will be provided with a rubric outlining the requirements of the paper. Students will provide the instructor with research topics by the third week of class. The paper will use APA 5th edition guidelines, 12 point Times New Roman, and 1 inch margins.

**Attendance and Participation**

This class meets once a week. Students are expected to come to class *on time*, *be prepared to discuss* the assigned reading for that session, and *with any assignments* that are due that day. Plan to attend class the entire time neither coming in late nor leaving early as this is distracting to other students. Recording devices are not permitted in the classroom.

Students are allowed one unexcused absence over the course of the semester. If a student should miss more than one class unexcused, the final grade will be lowered 5 points for each class missed (e.g., second unexcused absence the highest final grade possible for the class will be a 94%, third unexcused absence the highest final grade possible for the class will be a 89%, and so forth).

**Academic Integrity: Honor Code and Oath of Honor**

Students are expected to be familiar with and abide by the Auburn University Honor Code and the Oath of Honor:

"In accordance with those virtues of Honesty and Truthfulness set forth in the Auburn Creed, I, as a student and fellow member of the Auburn family, do hereby pledge that all work is my own, achieved through personal merit and without any unauthorized aid. In the promotion of integrity, and for the betterment of Auburn, I give honor to this, my oath and obligation."

And to acknowledge that all work turned in for this course is original. Your work must be your own. *Any suspicions of plagiarism or cheating will be immediately and thoroughly pursued and investigated in accordance with university policy regarding academic honesty which is detailed in Tiger Cub. All writing and examinations that are submitted must include a written statement signed by each student stating the following: "This work complies with the Auburn University Oath of Honor."*

**Policy on Adding and Dropping Courses**

Students are responsible for registering for classes and for verifying their class schedules. Notably, students may withdraw with a “W” until mid-semester. Refer to Tiger Cub for detailed university policy.

**Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act**
Students needing accommodations should arrange a meeting the first week of class. Come during office hours or email for an alternate time. Bring the Accommodation Memo and Instructor Verification Form to the meeting. Discuss items needed in this class. If you do not have an Accommodation Memo but need special accommodations, make an appointment with The Program for Students with Disabilities, 1244 Haley Center, 844-2096 (V/TT) or email: haynemd@auburn.edu. Refer to Tiger Cub for detailed information regarding university policy for students with disabilities.

Course Schedule:

CONTEXTUAL FRAMEWORK

Week 1
- Course Introduction and Overview
- Discussion on library research
- Homework: Article Review

Week 2
- Readings: Flick pp. 1-54
  Kuhn

  Homework: Article Review

THEORY

Week 3
- Topic for writing assignment due

  Readings: Flick pp. 55-94
  Blackboard: Lincoln and Guba; Denzin and Lincoln “Introduction to the Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research” and “Ethics and Politics of Qualitative Research.” (D&L1)

  Homework: Article Review

RESEARCH DESIGN

Week 4
- Readings: Flick pp. 95-146
  Blackboard: Denzin and Lincoln “Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences” and “Three Epistemological
Stances for Qualitative Inquiry: Interpretivism, Hermeneutics, and Social Constructionism.” (D&L2)

- Homework: Article Review

STRATEGIES OF INQUIRY

Week 5
- Readings: Yin
  Blackboard: Denzin and Lincoln “Case Studies.” (D&L3)

- Homework: Article Review

Week 6

  • Clarify any questions regarding writing assignment
  • Midterm examination review: Q & A session
  • Midterm examination distributed

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Week 7
- Midterm examination due beginning of class

- Readings: Flick pp. 147-212

- Homework: Article Review

Week 8
- Readings: Blackboard: Denzin and Lincoln “The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text” and “Focus Groups in Feminist Research.” (D&L4)

- Homework: Article Review
Week 9
• Readings: Flick pp. 213-280
• Homework: Article Review

Week 10
• Readings: Blackboard: Denzin and Lincoln “Rethinking Observation: From Method to Context” and “Applied Ethnography.” (D&L5)
• Homework: Article Review

Week 11
• Readings: Flick pp. 281-364
• Homework: Article Review

Week 12
• Research papers are due
• Homework: Article Review

FUTURE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Week 13
• Readings: Flick pp. 365-410
• Homework: Article Review

Week 14
• Readings: Blackboard: Denzin and Lincoln “Qualitative Inquiry: Tensions and Transformations” and “The Seventh Moment: Out of the Past.” (D&L7)
• Homework: Article Review

WRITING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH FOR PUBLICATION
Week 15
  • Class Lecture