

**New York University  
International Education Program  
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences  
Fall 2013**

**INTE.GE.2007: Comparative Studies of Education: Qualitative Methods  
Tuesdays 4:55 – 6:35  
Room: SILVER 206**

**September 4, 2013**

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### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course provides an introduction to qualitative methods used in comparative education and the social sciences. It is intended to provide an overview of particular techniques in research design, data collection, and data analysis most commonly associated with qualitative research. Upon completing this course, you should be able to:

- (1) understand and critique qualitative studies that you read,
- (2) supervise someone else's qualitative work (e.g., an independent consultant hired to conduct a qualitative study for an organization for which you work),
- (3) conduct your own qualitative inquiry, having acquired a particular skill set which should be highly valued in your future jobs (keep your reference books on hand!).

Part One includes an introduction to qualitative methods. We will begin with an overview of key perspectives on research, different types of studies, and the main differences between qualitative and quantitative traditions. In addition, understanding how to think, write, critique, and argue about social science research is an important piece of this section.

Part Two focuses on research design and data collection. We will read "how-to" methods books and you will employ these methods. We will also read examples from experienced researchers that illustrate how these researchers employ these methods and to what effect. We will debrief your experiences, discuss issues that arise, and answer questions you have about hands-on practice. Key methods include individual interviews, focus groups, observation, and document review.

Part Three provides the opportunity for you to share your own research experiences from the semester, draft reports, and completed studies.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

This course requires the active participation of all class members through small and large-group activities, presentations, active listening, debate, and discussion. Other instructional methods employed in the course include lectures and guest presentations. You are expected to work with other students outside of class to prepare assignments. Please feel free to take advantage of my office hours to talk about questions concerning assignments and comments or questions you have about course readings and topics. **If you have logistical questions, please consult with a classmate first, then contact me with your question if your classmate cannot help you.**

Specific requirements are as follows:

- 1) *Class Attendance and Participation (20%)*: Class attendance and regular participation is required for this course. This includes **active listening, comments on readings, and small group activities**. I expect your participation to demonstrate familiarity with the assigned reading. If you must miss a class for any reason, please let me know in advance.
- 2) *Academic Integrity Wagner Oath (P/F)*: I take academic integrity very seriously. All assignments must adhere to standards of academic ethics. Your work must reflect your own writing and ideas. According to the Steinhardt School of Education Statement on Academic Integrity, you violate the principle of academic integrity by turning in work that does not reflect your own ideas or includes text that is not your own; when you submit the same work for two different courses without prior permission from the instructor; when you receive help on a take-home examination when you are expected to work independently; when you cheat on exams; and when you plagiarize material.

Any student who submits work that constitutes plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary sanctions, which range from failure of the course to dismissal from the school.

By **Tuesday, September 10<sup>th</sup>**, please complete the NYU Wagner Academic Oath form located at: <http://wagner.nyu.edu/students/academicOath> Post the acknowledgement that the form has been completed on Classes under the "Assignments" tab. You will receive a "P" for this assignment if you complete the oath. If you do not complete this oath, you will fail the class.

- 3) *Protection of Human Subjects tutorial and approval (P/F)*: All students must take and pass the University Committee on Activities Involving Human Subjects on-line Tutorial by **Tuesday, September 17<sup>th</sup>** to receive a "P" for this assignment. This can be found at <http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihstutorial>. Students must post a copy of their score on Classes under the "Assignments" tab by the start of class on the due date.
- 4) *Group Problem Statement with Research Question (20%)*: Working in groups of 3 or 4, please develop a **problem statement with potential research question(s)** (two-three pages, maximum) related to a topic of your own choosing. The problem statement should summarize the intellectual puzzle, or the gap in knowledge, that requires your investigation. The research question should be focused enough to be answerable and feasible in the course of the semester and should clearly require qualitative - not quantitative - methods. Please also list methods you anticipate using as well as your anticipated data sources (sample). These may include observational, interview, focus group, or document review techniques. You may also use another method of your choice. This assignment should include five-six academic references that relate to your question and support/defend your problem statement. Submit your problem statement, research question(s), data collection methods and sources, and references in a Word file in Classes under the "Assignments" tab by **Tuesday October 1<sup>st</sup>, 4 p.m. Bring a hard copy with you to class**. We will continue to workshop the research questions in class.
- 5) *Data Collection Protocols (10%)*: In your groups, create protocols to use in collecting the types of data appropriate to your research question(s). (Each group must develop at least two protocols.) More specific guidance in developing data collection protocols will be provided in class. You must receive feedback from the TA and me as well as a grade on the protocols **prior to** collecting any data in the field. The protocols are due on **Monday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 11:59 p.m. and should be posted in Classes under the "Assignments" tab. Please bring hard and soft copies (on a memory stick) to class on the 22nd**.
- 6) *Transcripts/Field Notes and Researcher Memo (10%)*: Each student is required to prepare and submit at least one of the following four types of transcript/field notes (i.e., raw data) in addition to a Researcher Memo. The transcript/field notes and Researcher Memo are due on **Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 4 p.m and should be posted in Classes under the "Assignments" tab**. Please bring hard copies of your transcripts/field notes to class on Tuesday, November 5<sup>th</sup>. Although researchers do not usually share field notes with others, we will share and discuss these notes in class. *NB*: Transcripts and field notes are critical ingredients for qualitative work. To yield the most accurate results, it is best to transcribe and record your notes *as soon as possible* after you have completed the field work.
  - a) **Observation field notes**: These field notes should reflect at least one 1.5-hour observation of a public or private setting of your choosing using the observation protocol you developed. Choose a setting that allows you to engage with some aspect of the research question you have chosen. Remember, private settings require verbal permission from the people you will be observing. Observations must conform to NYU's guidelines regarding research involving human subjects. Please use common sense, as well, in conducting this work and do not put yourself or your "subjects" at undue risk.

- b) **Individual interview transcript:** This transcript should reflect the (1-hour, minimum) individual interview you will have conducted using the interview protocol you developed. Choose an individual who will allow you to engage with some aspect of the research question you have chosen. Interviews must conform to NYU's guidelines regarding research involving human subjects. Please use common sense, as well, in conducting this work and do not put yourself or your "subjects" at undue risk.
  - c) **Focus group discussion:** This transcript should reflect a focus group discussion you will have conducted (1-1.5-hour, minimum) using the focus group discussion protocol you developed. Group members may conduct the focus group session together (in pairs), however if you submit the transcript for this assignment you must have been the focus group facilitator.
  - d) **Document review:** These document review notes should reflect your analysis of at least one document (comprising at least 5 pages) or other material (non-human) data source.
  - e) **Researcher memo:** You will complete one 2-3-page (double-spaced) Researcher Memo in which you reflect on two aspects of qualitative research: 1) reflexivity/subjectivity (i.e., your role as researcher in the process of collecting data), and 2) preliminary "insights," "a-ha moments," etc. from the data you have collected to date.
- 7) **Group Data Analysis and Final Research paper (40%):** After you have completed the data collection for the research question you are studying, you will write it up in a paper (15-20 pages maximum (not including References or Appendices), double-spaced, 12 pt. font). The paper should contain the following sections:
- a) Introduction (1-2 pages): This contains your problem statement, research question(s), and the significance of the investigation. Here you should also provide a "road map" of the rest of the paper—i.e., a paragraph containing a sentence summarizing each of the following sections.
  - b) Literature review (3-5 pages): This section describes the key academic literature on the topic under study. Be sure to discuss only the literature that is relevant to your research. Do not quote sources extensively—it is almost always better to paraphrase and cite than to quote.
  - c) Methods and Sample (3-5 pages): Here you will describe how you selected your informants, how you chose the sites for observation, how you conducted your data collection, which difficulties you ran into in the process, and how you attempted to address these difficulties, and limitations. (*NB:* for this paper this section should be longer and more detailed than it would be for a typical article or organization report.)
  - d) Findings and Discussion (6-8 pages): Here you categorize and describe your key findings, along with explanation (interpretation) as to what your findings mean. Provide support for your argument, and be sure to clearly distinguish your opinions from those of your participants.
  - e) Conclusion (1-2 pages): Briefly recap what you have told your reader up to this point, and summarize your main arguments/conclusions in answer to your research question(s), and note areas/questions meriting future research. If appropriate, provide recommendations for policy or practice.

All first drafts are due (P/F) on **Tuesday, November 26<sup>th</sup> at 4 p.m.** to be posted under the "Assignments" tab in Classes as well as brought to class as a hard copy, and you will present your research project to the class on either November 26<sup>th</sup> or December 3<sup>rd</sup> (date to be assigned by November 5<sup>th</sup>). During these sessions, you will receive feedback from your classmates and me. We will also hold one class session over dinner scheduled outside of normal class hours specifically devoted to "workshopping" your papers. **This extra class session will be held immediately following class on Tuesday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>. Location TBD.** You will be able to incorporate this feedback into your final paper. **Final papers are due by midnight on Tuesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> and should be posted under the "Assignments" tab in Classes.**

- 8) **DEADLINES and Policy on late assignments:** Papers are due on the dates and at the times listed. In other words, if a paper is due at 4:55 p.m., that means 4:55 p.m., not 4:56 p.m. In fact, Classes will not let you post an assignment past the time at which it is due. Barring serious illness or family emergency (both require documentation), **late papers will be reduced by 1/3 of a grade for each 24-hour period** for which they are turned in after the deadline. For example, a paper turned in one day late with a grade of B would be marked down to a B-. Exceptions are granted only in extreme circumstances and require written documentation. Examples of exceptional circumstances include a learning disability (documented by NYU in the form of a written letter from the Center for Students with Disabilities) or hospitalization. Changing topics, regions, countries of study for an assignment, poor time management, and procrastination *do not count as exceptional circumstances*.
- 9) **Criteria for grading written work:** Preparation and accuracy of data, strength and clarity of written arguments and quality and logic of analysis.

- 10) *Special Accommodations*: Any student attending NYU who needs an accommodation due to a chronic, psychological, visual, mobility and/or learning disability, or is Deaf or Hard of Hearing should register with the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980, 240 Greene Street, [www.nyu.edu/csd](http://www.nyu.edu/csd).

### **STRONG RECOMMENDATION**

The **NYU library** offers guided tours. I strongly recommend that you make an appointment with the library staff for a tour. They will describe which search engines and other kinds of tools are available and will explain how to conduct on-line searches for academic literature, among other key research activities. They have an excellent reputation. This type of tutorial can save you tremendous time in preparing your research study.

### **ASSIGNMENTS SUMMARY TABLE:**

<u>Description:</u>	<u>Percentage of grade:</u>	<u>Date due:</u>
1. Attendance and participation	20%	All classes
2. Academic integrity	P/F	All classes/assignments & Sept. 10 (Form)
3. Human subjects	P/F	All assignments/activities & Sept. 17 (Tutorial)
4. Problem statement/RQ(s)	20%	October 1
5. Data collection protocols	10%	October 14
6. Transcripts/field notes & Researcher memo	10%	November 5
7. Final research paper (draft)	P/F	November 26
8. Final research paper and poster	40%	December 10

### **REQUIRED READINGS**

The required readings are available in the NYU bookstore and on line via the NYU Classes webpage. The required readings that are not available either in the bookstore or on NYU Classes are available through the NYU library's ejournals. Additionally, we have requested that these materials be made available at the course reserves desk at Bobst Library (to be checked out for two hours at a time). If you have difficulties locating readings, please ask the NYU library staff or a classmate to assist you.

#### **NYU Bookstore:**

1. Bajaj, Monisha. (2011). *Schooling for Social Change: The Rise and Impact of Human Rights Education in India*. New York & London: Continuum.
2. Booth, W., Colomb, G. & Williams, J. (2008). *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
3. King, Elisabeth. (2013). *From Classrooms to Conflict in Rwanda*. Cambridge University Press. [Note: Since this book is not yet out in paperback, it is more expensive than most of the other books. Feel free to team up and share a copy with a classmate.]
4. LeCompte, M. & Schensul, J. (1999). *Designing & Conducting Ethnographic Research*. AltaMira Press.
5. Maxwell, J. (2000). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
6. Rubin, H. & Rubin, I. (2005). *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

### **RECOMMENDED READINGS**

1. Creswell, J. (2012). *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* [3<sup>rd</sup> Ed]
2. Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I. & Shaw, L. L. (1995). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. Ragin, C. (1994). *Constructing social research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.
4. Schensul, S., Schensul, J. & LeCompte, M. (1999). *Essential ethnographic methods*. AltaMira Press.
5. Wolcott, H. (2001). *Writing up qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
6. Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

## **Course Schedule and Required Readings**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Please note: this schedule and the assigned readings are subject to change (with advanced notice to you).

\* Readings with one star are available on NYU Classes. The rest are in your required books or online via the NYU library databases.

### **Part I: Introduction to qualitative methodology**

#### **September 3: Course introduction; syllabus review Introduction to Social Science Research & the Qualitative Paradigm**

- Rubin, H. & Rubin, I. Chapter 2.
- Ragin, C. Ch. 1: What is Social Research?; Ch. 2: The Goals of Social Research \*
- Klees, S. (2008). Reflections on theory, method, and practice in comparative and international education. *Comparative Education Review* 52(3), 301-328.\*

#### **September 10: Qualitative Research Design: Ethnography, Case Study, Grounded Theory, Mixed-Methods Research**

- LeCompte & Schensul: Chapter 4 (only pp. 61-68, 82-95).
- Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods*. (Chapter 1 and Chapter 2). \*
- Burde, D. (2012). Assessing impact and bridging methodological divides: Randomized trials in countries affected by conflict. *Comparative Education Review* 56(3), 448-473.

**DUE by posting to Classes:** Wagner Academic Code Form (Test Results)

#### **September 17: Logic, Argument, and Theory in Social Science Research**

- Maxwell, J.: Chapters 1, 2 and 3.
- Booth, W., Colomb, G. & Williams, J.: Section II: Asking Questions Finding Answers (pp. 29-67); and Section III: Making a Claim and Supporting It (pp. 105-170)
- LeCompte & Schensul: Chapter 9
- Human Subjects Tutorial: <http://www.nyu.edu/ucaihs/tutorial/>

**DUE by posting to Classes:** Human Subjects Exam Results

### **Part II: Qualitative Data Collection**

#### **September 24: Reviewing the Literature and Constructing a Problem Statement Key Methodological Techniques: Protocol Design and Sample Selection**

- Creswell, J.: *Educational research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. Chapter 4: Reviewing the literature.\*
  - King, E. pp. TBD.
  - Rubin, H. & Rubin, I.: Chapter 3.
  - LeCompte & Schensul: Chapter 5.
- Additional resource for literature reviews:  
[http://www.gse.harvard.edu/library/services/research\\_instruction/litreviewguides530.html#sample](http://www.gse.harvard.edu/library/services/research_instruction/litreviewguides530.html#sample)
- Maxwell, J.: Chapter 5.
  - Small, M. (2009). 'How many cases do I need?': On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research. *Ethnography* 10(1), 5-38.\*

#### **October 1: Key Methodological Techniques: Semi-Structured and Unstructured Individual Interviews Guest Speaker: Dr. Rachel Wahl**

- Rubin, H. & Rubin, I.: Chapters 5-9.
- King, E. pp. TBA.

- Wahl, R. 2013. Policing, Values, and Violence: Human Rights Education with Law Enforcers in India. *Journal of Human Rights Practice*.

**DUE by posting to Classes:** Problem Statement (including research questions)

**October 8: Key Methodological Techniques: Observations; Document Review  
Guest Speaker TBA**

- Wragg, E.C.: *An introduction to classroom observation* (Chapters 1 and 5) \*
- Tobin, J., Hsueh, Y., and Karasawa, M. (2009). (Chapters 1, 2, 5). \*
- Magno, C. & Kirk, J. (2008). Imaging girls: Visual methodologies and messages for girls' education. *Compare* 38(3), 349-362 \*
- Klees, S., Samoff, J., and Stromquist, N. (Eds.): *The World Bank and education: Critiques and alternatives* (Chapter 6) \*

**October 14: DUE by posting to Classes by 11:59 p.m. October 14:** Data Collection Protocols

**October 15: FALL RECESS ~~~ No class**

**October 22: Key Methodological Techniques: Focus Group Interviews**

- Morgan, D. (1997): Focus groups as qualitative research (pp. 1-65) \*
- Krueger, R. (1994): Focus groups: A practical guide for applied research (pp. 54-69, 104-106) \*
- Additional reading TBA

**October 29: Key Methodological Aspects: Reflexivity/Subjectivity, building credibility; Researcher Memos**

- Lew, J. (2010). Insider and outsider: Reflexivity and intersubjectivity in ethnography. In K.A. Scott and W.J. Blanchette (Eds.), *Research in urban educational settings: Lessons learned and implications for future practice* (pp. 163-176). Charlotte, NC: Information Age. \*
- Researcher reflection from Annette Lareau. From: Lareau, A. (2003). *Unequal childhoods: Class, race, and family life*. Berkeley: University of California Press.) \*
- Bajaj, M. pp. TBA

**November 5: Stuck in the Field: Problem-Solving and Overcoming Obstacles  
Guest Speaker: Professor Monisha Bajaj**

- Bajaj, M. pp. TBA
- Additional reading TBA

**DUE by posting to Classes from each individual student:**

Researcher Memo and any *one* of the following: Observation Field Notes, Individual Interview Transcript, Focus Group Interview Transcript, Document Review Analysis

**November 12: Data Coding and Analysis; Writing the results**

**Guest Speaker: Using Dedoose or Atlas.ti (to be confirmed)**

- LeCompte, M. & Schensul, J.: *Analyzing & interpreting ethnographic data* (Chapters 1, 4-7). \*
- Rubin & Rubin: Chapters 11-12.

**Part III: Research Process and Results**

**November 19: Putting it All Together**

- Maya Rosenfeld (2002) "Power structure, agency, and family in a Palestinian refugee camp" \*
- Rolon-Dow, Rosalie. 2004. "Seduced by Images: Identity and Schooling in the Lives of Puerto Rican Girls"
- Vavrus, F. and Seghers, M. 2010. "Critical discourse analysis in comparative education: A discursive study of "partnership" in Tanzania's poverty reduction policies." *Comparative Education Review*. 54(1):77-103.

**November 26: Reading and critiquing qualitative studies in comparative and international education**

- Presentations of *draft* research reports

**DUE by posting to Classes:** First Draft of Research Project

**December 3: “Do’s and Don’t’s” of qualitative research: Lessons learned**

- Presentation of *draft* research reports

*DOUBLE CLASS TODAY – CLASS TO CONTINUE OVER DINNER – VENUE TBA*

- **December 10: No class**

**DUE by posting to Classes:** Final Research Papers