



## **Learning Outcomes for Course**

- Gain focused training in qualitative research methods.
- Learn how to analyze qualitative data.
- Develop critical literacy about how research standpoints and orientations shape findings.

## **Learning Outcomes (First-Year Seminar)**

- Connect with a faculty member early in the educational process.
- Learn intensively among a small cohort of students.
- Analyze and communicate issues associated with a specific, advanced topic, covering a wide range of knowledge.
- Produce knowledge through self-directed inquiry and active learning.

## **Learning Outcomes for IDEAs in Action Gen Eds**

“Research and Discovery”:

- Frame a topic, develop an original research question or creative goal, and establish a point of view, creative approach, or hypothesis.
- Obtain a procedural understanding of how conclusions can be reached in a field and gather appropriate evidence.
- Evaluate the quality of the arguments and/or evidence in support of the emerging product.
- Communicate findings in clear and compelling ways.
- Critique and identify the limits of the conclusions of the project and generate ideas for future work.

## **Texts**

1. Tracy, Sarah J. 2019. *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact*. 2nd Edition. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell.
2. Readings on Canvas or webpages

## **Grading**

Participation	10%
Observational Assignment	20%
Photo Essay	20%
Peer Interview Analysis	25%
Positionality Essay	25%

[Grading Scale: A =93-100, A- =90-92, B+ =87-89, B =83-86, B- =80-82, C+ =77-79, C =73-76, C- =70-72, D+ =67-69, D =63-66]

## **Course Expectations**

*Attendance:* This class will be conducted with a focus on in-class discussions and activities. Because of this format, you are expected to attend all classes for the full scheduled time. Excessive tardiness will be counted as an absence. You can miss up to 2 classes throughout the semester without penalty, but you must turn in assignments ahead of time and arrange to get notes from a colleague. Your final grade will go down by 3 points (out of 100) for each additional class missed above these 2. Finally, if you fail to show up for a scheduled meeting with the instructor without canceling 24 hours in advance, your participation grade will be docked 3 points.

- *COVID-19 Note:* If you have a positive COVID diagnosis, please do not come to class. If you don't have a positive diagnosis but are experiencing COVID symptoms, please consider donning a mask and practicing social distancing to the best of your ability.

*Reading:* Complete all readings (and other assignments) prior to the class meeting for which they are scheduled. Most of the readings will be drawn from the textbook, websites, or articles posted to Sakai. You must bring readings (or copies of them) to class for the dates they are assigned. In some cases, I may distribute photocopied readings to you in class. See the course outline below for details.

*Participation:* Through communication, ideas are formed, revised, borrowed, and developed. It is through argument, description, explanation, and improvisation—within a community—that individual learning flourishes. This course requires full participation (including active listening, facilitating, note-taking, and question-asking) to create an environment of open and shared learning. An effective participant is not someone who simply talks frequently, but someone who reliably offers thoughtful insights that help others to learn. The rubric for participation grades is as follows:

- Initiate (1-3 pts): you are present in class but seldom speak.
- Apprentice (4-5 pts): you actively listen and speak occasionally, but you don't explicitly connect your comments to the reading.
- Journey person (6-7 pts): you actively listen, contribute somewhat reliably, and usually connect your comments to the reading.
- Adept (8-9 pts): you actively listen, contribute regularly, and always make explicit connections to the reading.
- Expert (10 pts): you actively listen, contribute regularly, and always make explicit connections to the reading, often identifying themes *across* weeks too. Additionally, you *quickly* zero in on correct answers, allowing plenty of space for others to expand on your points or make their own contributions.

*Technology:* Laptop computers, tablets, and mobile phones should be used in class only as learning-facilitation tools. During class, it is not acceptable to play games, send email, surf the web, answer mobile phones, text message, tweet, or engage in other non-class-related activities. Your participation grade will be penalized if you break this rule. Why? Not only do these practices negatively affect your learning and participation, but they also distract others and create an environment of disrespect.

### **Course Assignments**

1. Observational Assignment: This will be a detailed ethnographic description and analysis of an *unfamiliar* place or event. (6-7 pages, double spaced; Due February 2).
2. Photo Essay: This assignment asks you to use visual research methods to select a research site, ask a specific question about it or the people within it, and develop a photo essay to convey your findings. The photo essay should include a brief (~200 word) framing statement that conveys the research question and explains the “story” told by the photographs. The statement should also reflect on how your compositional, sequencing, and arrangement choices produce knowledge. The essay will be graded on the clarity and creativity of each of these elements (e.g., research orientation, story, photo composition, and presentation). (6-7 pages [suggested]; Due February 21).
3. Peer Interview Analysis: For this assignment, you will draft an interview guide and conduct a 30-minute interview with a classmate about their first-year experience. Then,

you will write a detailed summary of the interview, including a synthesis of its themes. More details about this assignment will be provided to guide your interview. (6-7 pages, double spaced; Due March 23).

4. **Positionality Essay:** Drawing upon the readings in the final unit of the course (“ways of knowing”), this essay should explore the ways that positionality shapes scientific research and research findings. It should also reflect on how your particular standpoint (background, identity, experience, worldview, or culture) could lead you to make assumptions or judgments about the people or activities you might study. (6-7 pages, double spaced; Due April 25).

For each of these assignments, pay careful attention to protecting the people you observe, document, or speak to as part of your research activities. We will be reading about research ethics and the importance of obtaining permission (or “consent”) from the people we study, but please ask the instructor (or GRC) if you had any questions.

I reserve the right to distribute unannounced quizzes on the reading or lecture material. Any missed points on these quizzes will be deducted from your participation grade. Quizzes may not be made-up if you are absent.

### **Writing Guidelines**

Please use 12-point Times New Roman font, 1" margins, and double-spaced lines. Do not use cover pages or folders of any kind unless necessary to preserve your presentation (e.g., sketches or photographs). No late papers will be accepted. Please submit all assignments through Canvas.

### **Academic Honesty**

In order to avoid plagiarism, your assignments must provide full citations for all references: direct quotes, summaries, or ideas. Make sure you put all quotes in quotation marks and include references. While you are encouraged to develop your thinking with your peers, you cannot use their material without citing it. Work from other courses will not be accepted in this course. Allowing your writing to be copied by another student is also considered cheating. Please review the Honor Code for complete guidelines on academic honesty: <http://studentconduct.unc.edu/>. If you have any questions about how to avoid plagiarism, do not hesitate to get in touch with me.

### **Gender-Fair Language**

Language structures thought and action. Biases in language can (and do) naturalize inequalities. Imprecise language also signifies un-interrogated values and sloppy thinking. For these reasons, the use of gender-fair language is expected in this course. For example, do not use words like “mankind” or “men” when referring to people in general; alternate between “she” and “he” instead of always using “he,” or construct sentences in the plural instead of the singular so you can use “they” or “them” and avoid the problem altogether. We will also provide our preferred personal pronouns at the beginning of the course. It is important to respect and use correctly everyone’s preferred pronouns.

### **Graduate Research Consultant**

Our Graduate Research Consultant, Dahlia Boyles, is available to help with the research components of your assignments. You should meet with her at least once during the semester. Please feel free to contact her via email ([dboyles@unc.edu](mailto:dboyles@unc.edu)) to set up an appointment.

The GRC Program is sponsored by the Office for Undergraduate Research. COMM 89 is a

research methods course, and you may be able to use it to meet a requirement of the [Carolina Research Scholar Program](#). Please visit the [OUR website](#) to learn about how you might engage in research while you are at Carolina.

## **Course Schedule (subject to revision)**

### UNIT 1: DEVELOPING A RESEARCH ORIENTATION

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#### **Week One: Introductions: Contextual Research**

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Tuesday, January 10:

- Introductory Discussion

Thursday, January 12:

**Readings:**

- *Qualitative Research Methods*, Cht.1. [pp. 1-24]

#### **Week Two: Entering the Conversation**

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Tuesday, January 17:

**Readings:**

- *Qualitative Research Methods*, Cht.2. [pp. 25-47]

Thursday, January 19:

**Readings:**

- *Cooked: Survival by Zipcode* (in-class video screening)

#### **Week Three: Research Design**

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Tuesday, January 24:

**Readings:**

- Blackstone, Amy. 2018. *Principles of Sociological Inquiry*, Cht.3. [CANVAS]

Thursday, January 26:

- *Qualitative Research Methods*, Cht.4. [pp. 75-103]
- *Qualitative Research Methods*. [pp. 67-71].

#### **Week Four: Observation and Field Notes**

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Tuesday, January 31:

**Readings:**

- *Qualitative Research Methods*, Cht.6. [pp. 129-154].

Thursday, February 2:

- **Observational Assignment Due**
- In-class discussion of observational experiences

## UNIT 2: VISUAL METHODS

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### Week Five: Making Research Photographs

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Tuesday, February 7:

**Readings:**

- Rose, Gillian. 2012. *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials*. 3rd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage, 297-328. [CANVAS]
- *Ordinary Streets* (in-class video screening)

Thursday, February 9:

**Readings:**

- McGarry, Ross. 2019. Repurposing Liverpool's Waterfront as a Liminal 'Military Landscape': A Photographic Essay. *Visual Ethnography* 8 (1):71-82. [CANVAS]

### Week Six: Analyzing Visual Experience

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Tuesday, February 14: Wellbeing Day (no class)

**No Readings**

Thursday, February 16:

**Readings:**

- Pink, Sarah. 2022. Analysing Visual Experience. In *Research Methods for Cultural Studies*, edited by M. Pickering. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 125-149. [CANVAS]
- Ferrara, Filippo Steven. 2020. Photography, Feelings and Homes. *Visual Ethnography* 9 (2). [CANVAS]

### Week Seven: Visual Lives

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Tuesday, February 21:

- **Photo Essay Due**
- *Jawline* (in-class video screening)

Thursday, February 23:

- *Jawline* (in-class video screening)

## UNIT 3: LEARNING FROM OTHERS

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### Week Eight: Interview Planning and Design

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Tuesday, February 28:

**Readings:**

- *Qualitative Research Methods*, Ch7. [pp. 155-180]
- Weiss, Robert Stuart. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. [pp. 9-11] [CANVAS]
- Katie Couric on how to conduct a good interview:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4eOynrI2eTM> [in-class screening]

Thursday, March 2:

- In-class interview activity, *Qualitative Research Methods*. [p.202]

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**Week Nine:**

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Tuesday, March 7:

**Readings:**

- Weiss, Robert Stuart. 1994. *Learning from Strangers: The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies*. New York: Free Press. [pp. 61-119] [CANVAS]

Thursday, March 9:

- Interview guide drafting (in class activity)

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**Week Ten: Spring Break**

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Tuesday, March 14: SPRING BREAK

Thursday, March 16: SPRING BREAK

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**Week Eleven: Data Analysis**

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Tuesday, March 21:

**Readings:**

- *Qualitative Research Methods*, Cht.9. [pp. 208-235]

Thursday, March 23:

- **Peer Interview Analysis Due**
- Analyzing peer interviews as data (in-class activity)

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**UNIT 4: WAYS OF KNOWING**

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**Week Twelve: Feminist Epistemologies**

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Tuesday, March 28:

**Readings:**

- D'ignazio, Catherine, and Lauren F. Klein. 2020. *Data Feminism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [pp. 73-96] [CANVAS]

Thursday, March 30:

**Readings:**

- Haraway, Donna. 1988. Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective. *Feminist Studies* 14 (3):575-599. [10-page excerpt] [CANVAS]

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**Week Thirteen: Quantification**

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Tuesday, April 4:

**Readings:**

- D'ignazio, Catherine, and Lauren F. Klein. 2020. *Data Feminism*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. [pp. 97-123] [CANVAS]

Thursday, April 6: Wellbeing Day (no class)

**No Readings**

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**Week Fourteen: Colonial Visions**

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Tuesday, April 11:

**Readings:**

- Harding, Sandra. 1998. *Is Science Multi-Cultural?: Postcolonialisms, Feminisms, and Epistemologies*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. [pp. 39-54] [CANVAS]

Thursday, April 13:

**Readings:**

- Harley, John Brian. 1989. Deconstructing the map. *Cartographica* 26 (2):1-20. [READ pp. 1-11 ONLY] [CANVAS]

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**Week Fifteen: Scientific Bias**

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Tuesday, April 18:

**Readings:**

- Goodwin, Charles. 1994. Professional Vision. *American Anthropologist* 96 (3):606-633. [CANVAS]

Thursday, April 20:

**Readings:**

- Sekula, Allan. 2018. The Body and the Archive. In *Surveillance Studies: A Reader*, edited by T. Monahan and D. Murakami Wood. New York: Oxford University Press, 105-110. [CANVAS]

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**Week Sixteen: Conclusions**

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Tuesday, April 25:

- **Positionality Essay Due**



**University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**  
**Information for Undergraduate Classes**  
**Spring 2023**

**Syllabus Changes**

The professor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus including project due dates and test dates. These changes will be announced as early as possible.

**Attendance Policy**

**University Policy:** As stated in the University’s [Class Attendance Policy](#), no right or privilege exists that permits a student to be absent from any class meetings, except for these University Approved Absences:

1. Authorized University activities
2. Disability/religious observance/pregnancy, as required by law and approved by [Accessibility Resources and Service](#) and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC)
3. Significant health condition and/or personal/family emergency as approved by the [Office of the Dean of Students](#), [Gender Violence Service Coordinators](#), and/or the [Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office](#) (EOC).

**Class Policy:** Instructors may work with students to meet attendance needs that do not fall within University approved absences. For situations when an absence is not University approved (e.g., a job interview or club activity), instructors determine their own approach to missed classes and make-up assessment and assignments.

**University Approved Absence Office (UAAO):** The [UAAO](#) website provides information and FAQs for students and faculty related to University Approved Absences.

**Note:** Instructors have the authority to make academic adjustments without official notice from the UAAO. In other words, it is not required for instructors to receive a University Approved Absence notification in order to work with a student. In fact, instructors are encouraged to work directly with students when possible.

**Honor Code**

All students are expected to follow the guidelines of the UNC Honor Code. In particular, students are expected to refrain from “lying, cheating, or stealing” in the academic context. If you are unsure about which actions violate the Honor Code, please see me or consult [studentconduct.unc.edu](http://studentconduct.unc.edu).

**Acceptable Use Policy**

By attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, you agree to abide by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill policies related to the acceptable use of IT systems and services. The Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) sets the expectation that you will use the University’s technology resources responsibly, consistent with the University’s mission. In the context of a class, it’s quite likely you will participate in online activities that could include personal information about you or your peers, and the AUP addresses your obligations to protect the privacy of class participants. In addition, the AUP addresses matters of others’ intellectual property, including copyright. These are only a couple of typical examples, so you should consult the full [Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy](#), which covers topics related to using digital resources, such as privacy, confidentiality, and intellectual property. Additionally, consult the [Safe Computing at UNC](#) website for information about data security policies, updates, and tips on keeping your identity, information, and devices safe.

**Accessibility Resources and Service**

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with a disability and/or a chronic health diagnosis resulting in barriers to fully accessing University courses, programs and activities.

Accommodations are determined by the Office of Accessibility Resources and Service (ARS) through their Student and Applicant Accommodations Policy, which documents qualifying disabilities in accordance with applicable state and federal laws. See the ARS website (<https://ars.unc.edu>) for contact information or email [ars@unc.edu](mailto:ars@unc.edu).

### **Counseling and Psychological Services**

UNC-Chapel Hill is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body. The [Heels Care Network](https://caps.unc.edu) website is a place to access the many mental health resources at Carolina. CAPS is the primary mental health provider for students, offering timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services. Go to their website <https://caps.unc.edu/> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health building for an initial evaluation to learn more. Students can also call CAPS 24/7 at 919-966-3658 for immediate assistance.

### **Title IX and Related Resources**

Any student who is impacted by discrimination, harassment, interpersonal (relationship) violence, sexual violence, sexual exploitation, or stalking is encouraged to seek resources on campus or in the community. Reports can be made online to the EOC at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>. Please contact the University's Title IX Coordinator (Elizabeth Hall, [titleixcoordinator@unc.edu](mailto:titleixcoordinator@unc.edu)), Report and Response Coordinators in the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office ([reportandresponse@unc.edu](mailto:reportandresponse@unc.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services (confidential), or the Gender Violence Services Coordinators ([gvsc@unc.edu](mailto:gvsc@unc.edu); confidential) to discuss your specific needs. Additional resources are available at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu).

### **Policy on Non-Discrimination**

The University is committed to providing an inclusive and welcoming environment for all members of our community and to ensuring that educational and employment decisions are based on individuals' abilities and qualifications. Consistent with this principle and applicable laws, the University's [Policy Statement on Non-Discrimination](#) offers access to its educational programs and activities as well as employment terms and conditions without respect to race, color, gender, national origin, age, religion, genetic information, disability, veteran's status, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression. Such a policy ensures that only relevant factors are considered, and that equitable and consistent standards of conduct and performance are applied.

If you are experiencing harassment or discrimination, you can seek assistance and file a report through the Report and Response Coordinators (see contact info at [safe.unc.edu](https://safe.unc.edu)) or the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office at <https://eoc.unc.edu/report-an-incident/>.

### **Diversity Statement**

I value the perspectives of individuals from all backgrounds reflecting the diversity of our students. I broadly define diversity to include race, gender identity, national origin, ethnicity, religion, social class, age, sexual orientation, political background, and physical and learning ability. I strive to make this classroom an inclusive space for all students. Please let me know if there is anything I can do to improve. I appreciate any suggestions.

### **Undergraduate Testing Center**

The College of Arts and Sciences provides a secure, proctored environment in which exams can be taken. The center works with instructors to proctor exams for their undergraduate students who are not registered with ARS and who do not need testing accommodations as provided by ARS. In other words, the Center provides a proctored testing environment for students who are unable to take an exam at the normally scheduled time (with pre-arrangement by your instructor). For more information, visit <http://testingcenter.web.unc.edu/>.

### **Learning Center**

Want to get the most out of this course or others this semester? Visit UNC's Learning Center at <http://learningcenter.unc.edu> to make an appointment or register for an event. Their free, popular programs will help you optimize your academic performance. Try academic coaching, peer tutoring, STEM support, ADHD/LD services, workshops and study camps, or review tips and tools available on the website.

### **Writing Center**

For free feedback on any course writing projects, check out UNC's Writing Center. Writing Center coaches can assist with any writing project, including multimedia projects and application essays, at any stage of the writing process. You don't even need a draft to come visit. To schedule a 45-minute appointment, review quick tips, or request written feedback online, visit <http://writingcenter.unc.edu>.

### **Grade Appeal Process**

If you feel you have been awarded an incorrect grade, please discuss with me. If we cannot resolve the issue, you may talk to our departmental director of undergraduate studies or appeal the grade through a formal university process based on arithmetic/clerical error, arbitrariness, discrimination, harassment, or personal malice. To learn more, go to the [Academic Advising Program](#) website.