



# BHS 415

## Advanced Qualitative Methods

Semester: Winter 2015  
Days: Wed/Fri 2:30-3:45pm  
Room: RE LL122

Number of credits: 3

Prerequisite:  
BHS 240  
3 credits at SO 300-level

Instructor: Brianne M. Collins  
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Phone: 403-606-3638  
Office: Sessional Office, L2078  
Office hours: Wed/Fri 4:00-5:00pm,  
or by appointment

### Course Description:

This seminar style course examines the basic techniques for collecting, interpreting, and presenting qualitative data, drawing on research methodologies in areas such as ethnography, grounded theory, case studies, interviews, and focus groups. Special emphasis is given to the epistemological and ontological undercurrents to qualitative research methodology, and “lived experience,” or the process of humans constructing meaning through social interaction.

### Expected Learning Outcomes:

It is the aim of the course that students acquire the following skills:

1. An understanding of the epistemological and ontological assumptions involved in qualitative research, especially with respect to the relationship between theory, method, and practice.
2. First-hand data collection experience using a variety of qualitative methodologies.
3. Development of data coding, analysis, and interpretation skills.
4. Experience in clearly communicating research findings.

### Important Dates:

First day of classes: January 7, 2015

Registration revision period: January 18, 2015

Last day to request revised examination: March 2, 2015

Last day to withdraw from course: March 20, 2015

Last day to apply for time extension for coursework: March 30, 2015

Last day of classes: April 10, 2015

**This course has no final exam.**

## Course Outline:

Date	Topic	Readings
Wed, Jan 7	Course Introduction	Syllabus
Fri, Jan 9	Qualitative Paradigms	Chapter 1
Wed, Jan 14	Qualitative Paradigms	Chapter 1 Fausto-Sterling, 2000
Fri, Jan 16	Power and Inequality	Chapters 2 & 3
Wed, Jan 21	Reflexivity	Finlay, 2002
Fri, Jan 23	Qualitative Research Questions; Sampling and Ethics	Brinkman & Kvale, 2005
Wed, Jan 28	Interviews*	Chapter 9
Fri, Jan 30	Focus Groups	Morgan, 1996
Wed, Feb 4	Thematic Analysis	Aronson, 1994 Braun & Clarke, 2006
Fri, Feb 6	Thematic Analysis – Seminar Presentation(s)	Hussain & Griffiths, 2009
Wed, Feb 11	Thematic Analysis (Activity)	---
Fri, Feb 13	Writing the Research Report & Communicating the Data	Chapter 22
Wed, Feb 18	<b>No Class – Reading Week</b>	---
Fri, Feb 20	<b>No Class – Reading Week</b>	---
Wed, Feb 25	Textual Analysis	Chapter 15 Arney & Bergen, 1983
Fri, Feb 27	Textual Analysis – Seminar Presentation(s)	Walsh & Malson, 2010
Wed, Mar 4	Textual Analysis (Activity) & Texts*	---
Fri, Mar 6	Ethnography	Chapters 6 & 8
Wed, Mar 11	Institutional Ethnography (Guest Speaker: Monetta Bailey)	TBD
Fri, Mar 13	Ethnography – Seminar Presentation(s)	Pascoe, 2005
Wed, Mar 18	Observations* (Activity)	---
Fri, Mar 20	Analyzing Talk and Text; Conversation Analysis	Paräkylä & Ruusuvoori, 2011 Holstein, 1988
Wed, Mar 25	Discourse Analysis	Edley & Wetherell, 2001 Willig, 1996
Fri, Mar 27	Discourse Analysis – Seminar Presentation(s)	Schneider, 2003
Wed, Apr 1	Research Project Presentations	---
Fri, Apr 3	<b>No Class – Good Friday</b>	---
Wed, Apr 8	Research Project Presentations	---
Fri, Apr 10	Research Project Presentations	---

**NOTE:** This course outline is subject to change. Make sure to attend classes and to check Ambrose email and Moodle.

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## Course Requirements & Evaluation:

Requirement	Evaluation
Subjectivity Statement	5%
Seminar Presentation	20%
Data Collection Assignments (3 x 8%)	24%
Research Project: Research Question (1%), Written Report (30%) & Presentation (15%)	46%
Participation	5%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**NOTE:** Failure to complete and submit all requirements will result in an automatic failing grade in the course.

### **(1) Subjectivity Statement (5%) – Due: Wednesday, January 28 by 11:59pm on Moodle**

Students will develop a subjectivity statement as an exercise in reflexivity. Along with a brief description of students' research interests—specifically the topic that will be explored in this course—students will consider the relationship between this interest and their identity as researchers. Some aspects that might be considered include personal history, gender, ethnicity, religion, and political views. Students must also conclude by identifying where they presently position themselves epistemologically and ontologically (with the expectation that this subjective statement is fluid and will more than likely change as the course progresses and, even, beyond this course). The statement should be three pages (2.5 minimum, 3.5 maximum) not including title page and, if applicable, references. Formatting should strictly adhere to APA or ASA style (e.g., 1 inch margins, Times New Roman and 12 point font, double spaced, appropriate heading levels). The assignment is to be submitted on Moodle by 11:59pm on Wednesday, January 28. Late assignments will receive a zero (but still must be completed and submitted in order to pass the course).

### **(2) Seminar Presentation (20%) – Presented on the date signed up for during the first week of classes**

At the beginning of the semester, students will each sign up to present on one of the four primary methodologies to be covered in the course (i.e., thematic analysis, textual analysis, ethnography, or discourse analysis). All four methodologies must be covered before students can sign up to present on the same methodology as another student (depending on enrolment).

Along with presenting the journal article assigned in the course outline for that day that all students in the class will have read, students will also need to locate two additional journal articles (no more than 10 years old) that clearly used the particular methodology under discussion. In a 30 minute presentation (minimum 25 min/maximum 35 min), students will succinctly summarize the studies (with particular attention given to methodology and interpretation). Students will also need to draw on course concepts (e.g., epistemology, power, reflexivity, sampling) and the readings on the particular methodology on which they are presenting in order to position these articles in the broader qualitative field. Some consideration should also be given to the advantages and disadvantages of the methodology and the practical side of carrying it out. Presenters are encouraged to be creative (e.g., interaction with classmates, Powerpoint and/or handouts, videos, demonstrations of methodology, etc) and will be graded on their ability to (a) fulfill the above requirements; (b) communicate things logically and coherently from beginning to end; and (c) creatively and confidently communicate ideas throughout. More information on the presentation will be provided in class and posted on Moodle.

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**(3) Data Collection Assignments (3 x 8% = 24%) – Due at 11:59pm on Moodle on the dates indicated below**

In order for students to gain practical, hands-on experience with qualitative data collection and to work towards their final research project, students will gather their own data throughout the semester (**after** the instructor has approved a students' research question, see requirement #4 below). After discussing each data collection method in lecture (except focus groups), students will complete a data collection exercise and assignment that will contribute to the final research project (see requirement #4 below). The assignments will be due by 11:59pm on Moodle as follows:

**Interviews:** Tuesday, February 24, 2015

**Texts:** Tuesday, March 17, 2015

**Observations:** Tuesday, March 24, 2015

Each assignment is worth 8% of your final grade. Late assignments will receive a zero (but still must be completed and submitted in order to pass the course). Detailed information on the data collection assignments will be provided in class and posted on Moodle.

**(4) Research Project (46%)**

The purpose of this project is to provide students with practical experience with data collection, analysis, academic writing, and oral presentations. After deciding on the research question (cannot exceed minimal risk) with, and receiving approval from, the instructor (see part A below), students will work on the project throughout the semester. The three data collection assignments (requirement #3 above) will contribute the research data to the project, which will then be analyzed and interpreted for presentation both in written report form (see part B below) and in an oral presentation to the class at the end of the semester (see part C below). Detailed information on this project and its three parts will be provided in class and posted on Moodle.

**(A) Selecting a Research Question (1%) – Due by email to instructor by 11:59pm on Tues, January 27**

Students will begin by selecting a research topic (cannot exceed minimal risk) *in consultation* with the instructor prior to Tuesday, January 27. As soon as possible, students should email the instructor to make an appointment to discuss their topic and research question before this date. Students should then send a follow up email to the instructor with their finalized research question by 11:59pm on Tuesday, January 27 for final approval. Late emails will receive a zero (but still must be submitted in order to pass the course *and* in order to begin any data collection).

**(B) Written Report (30%) - Due at 11:59pm on Moodle the day *before* scheduled research presentation**

Based on the research question selected and the data collection completed through the related assignments, students will analyze and interpret the results of their study. The outcome of this project will be provided by students in written report form; specifically, a 15-page report (min 14 pages/max 15 pages; excluding title page, table of contents, appendices, and references) will be composed that includes an introduction to the research question investigated, a literature review, methods section, analyses, and a discussion of the interpretation and significance of the findings. Students will also be required to include appendices that will include data collection components (e.g., transcripts) and evidence of analyses being worked out (e.g., coding). Formatting should strictly adhere to APA or ASA style (e.g., 1 inch margins, Times New Roman and 12 point font, double spaced, appropriate heading levels, etc). The report should be submitted on Moodle by 11:59pm the day *before* students are scheduled to present their research to the class (last three classes of the semester). Late reports will receive 10% off per calendar day. Detailed information will be provided in class and posted on Moodle.

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**(C) Presentation (15%) - Presented on the date signed up for during the first week of classes**

Based on their written research project, students will give a 30 minute (minimum 25 min/maximum 35 min) oral presentation in class at the end of the semester (last three classes). Students will cover the main sections of their research project in a logical and coherent manner. Students are expected to use Powerpoint and to engage with the class professionally and confidently. In order to get a sense of the structure and tone of research presentations of this type conducted in the fields of psychology and sociology, it is highly recommended that students attend the Ambrose Research Conference (ARC) to be held on March 30, 2015. Detailed information will be provided in class and posted on Moodle.

**(5) Seminar Participation (5%)**

As the course will be conducted in seminar format, students will be expected to contribute to class discussion on an ongoing basis throughout the semester. Course readings, lectures, student seminar presentations, and ongoing student projects will provide the material for discussions. In order to ensure participation is of high quality, it is imperative that students complete the readings *in advance* of *each* class to ensure they are able to converse with others in the course. Contributions can be offered via questions, critiques, commentary, connecting current material to past courses/knowledge, and/or interacting about one's developing research project as it relates to the topic under discussion. Students should aim for quality not quantity. The instructor will provide students with a mid-term assessment of their participation to guide their contribution for the remainder of the course. Although attendance is not what is being graded, expect that missing classes may impact your participation grade.

**Submission of Assignments:**

Course requirements are to be submitted as per the instructions in the above section.

**Attendance, Learning and Classroom Etiquette:**

Students are expected to attend all classes and should inform the instructor *in advance* via email if a class is to be missed.

In the Behavioral Science Department we believe that learning is an active and interactive process, a joint venture between student and teacher and between student and student (i.e., learning is not just “downloading” information from teacher to student). Therefore, it is expected that instructors will come to each class well read and prepared to engage students on the topic at hand, giving the students the utmost attention and respect. In turn, students will take an active role in the learning process. This includes: (a) regular class attendance, (b) reading course material in advance of class, (c) showing up to class on time, and (d) attentively and proactively being “present” at class (i.e., not on the internet, not texting, not conversing with the person beside you). Committing to this type of “active learning” significantly increases the learning experience for both teacher and student, and reflects the Christian ethos of excellence and respect that lies at the heart of the Ambrose educational experience. Failure to adhere to this will result in the professor either asking the student to leave the classroom for the remainder of the lecture or, in extreme cases (i.e., three or more ‘offenses’), to possibly withdraw from the entire course.

**Grade Summary:**

The available letters and percentages for course grades are as follows. A detailed chart of what constitutes an ‘A,’ ‘B,’ or ‘C,’ etc. is also included below:

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<u>Letter Grade</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>GPA</u>
A	96% and above	4.0
A	91 – 95%	4.0
A-	86 – 90%	3.7
B+	82 – 85%	3.3
B	75 – 81%	3.0
B-	72 – 74%	2.7
C+	68 – 71%	2.3
C	63 – 67%	2.0
C-	60 – 62%	1.7
D+	56 – 59%	1.3
D	50 – 55%	1.0
F	Below 50%	

Please note that final grades will be available on the student registration system. Printed grade sheets are no longer mailed out.

### **Required Textbook and Readings:**

Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2004). *Approaches to qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. [Available in the Ambrose Bookstore].

There are also a number of journal articles listed in the course outline that will be required readings throughout the course. Detailed bibliographic details will be provided for each on Moodle.

### **On Reserve:**

American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Johnson, W.A., Jr. (2010). *The sociology student writer's manual* (6<sup>th</sup> Ed). Boston, MA: Pearson

### **Instructor Electronic Communication Policy:**

All emails will be returned within 48 hours during the week (Monday to Friday). In most cases, emails received on weekends will be responded to on Monday. Although I may respond to occasional emails on a weekend (i.e., if I am working on course material during that particular weekend), please remember that responses on a weekend cannot be guaranteed. In addition, as email is not always a practical means to address questions or concerns regarding course content or requirements, I may email students with a request to meet to discuss their email in lieu of responding in full via email. I am happy to schedule a phone or Skype appointment in lieu of meeting in person if a prompt in-person meeting is not feasible due to scheduling conflicts.

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## Policies:

All students have received an Ambrose e-mail account upon registration. It is the student's responsibility to check this account regularly as the Ambrose email system will be the professor's instrument for notifying students of important matters (Cancelled class sessions, extensions, requested appointments, etc.) between class sessions. If students do not wish to use their Ambrose accounts, it is highly recommended that they forward all messages from the Ambrose account to the other account.

During the **Registration Revision Period** students may to enter a course without permission, change the designation of any class from credit to audit and /or voluntary withdraw from a course without financial or academic penalty. These courses will not appear on the student's transcript. Courses should be added or dropped on the student portal by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. After that date, the original status remains and the student is responsible for related fees.

Students intending to withdraw from a course after the Registration Revision Period must apply to the Office of the Registrar by submitting a Request to Withdraw from a Course by the **Withdrawal Deadline**, please consult the List of Important Dates. Withdrawal from courses after the Registration Revision period will not be eligible for tuition refund. A grade of "W" will appear on the student's transcript.

Students wishing to withdraw from a course, but who fail to do so by the applicable date, will receive the grade earned in accordance with the course syllabus. A student obliged to withdraw from a course after the Withdrawal Deadline because of health or other reasons may apply to the Registrar for special consideration.

Students, who find a conflict in their exam schedule must submit a **Revised Examination** Request form to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Requests will be considered for the following reasons only: 1) the scheduled final examination slot conflicts with another exam; 2) three final exams within three consecutive exam time blocks; 3) the scheduled final exam slot conflicts with an exam at another institution; 4) extenuating circumstances. Travel is not considered a valid excuse for re-scheduling or missing a final exam.

### Electronic Etiquette

Students are expected to treat their instructor, guest speakers, and fellow students with respect. It is disruptive to the learning goals of a course or seminar and disrespectful to fellow students and the instructor to engage in electronically-enabled activities unrelated to the class during a class session. Please turn off all cell phones and other electronic devices during class. Laptops should be used for class-related purposes only. Please do not use iPods, MP3 players, or headphones. Do not text, read, or send personal emails, go on Facebook or other social networks, search the internet, or play computer games during class. The professor has the right to disallow the student to use a laptop in future lectures and/or to ask a student to withdraw from the session if s/he does not comply with this policy. Repeat offenders will be directed to the Dean. If you are expecting communication due to an emergency, please speak with the professor before the class begins.

### Academic Policies

It is the responsibility of all students to become familiar with and adhere to academic policies as stated in the Academic Calendar. Personal information, that is information about an individual that may be used to identify that individual, may be collected as a requirement as part of taking this class. Any information collected will only be used and disclosed for the purpose for which the collection was intended. For further information contact the Privacy Compliance Officer at [privacy@ambrose.edu](mailto:privacy@ambrose.edu).

### Extensions

Although extensions to coursework in the semester are at the discretion of the instructor, students may not turn in coursework for evaluation after the last day of the scheduled final examination period unless they have received permission for a "**Course Extension**" from the Registrar's Office. Requests for course extensions or alternative examination time must be submitted to the Registrar's Office by the deadline date, please consult the List of Important Dates. Course extensions are only granted for serious issues that arise "due to circumstances beyond the student's control".

### Appeal of Grade

An appeal for change of grade on any course work must be made to the course instructor within one week of receiving notification of the grade. An appeal for change of final grade must be submitted to the Office of the Registrar in writing within 30 days of receiving notification of the final grade, providing the basis for appeal. A review fee of \$50.00 must accompany the appeal to review final grades. If the appeal is sustained, the fee will be refunded.

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## Academic Integrity

We are committed to fostering personal integrity and will not overlook breaches of integrity such as plagiarism and cheating. Academic dishonesty is taken seriously at Ambrose University College as it undermines our academic standards and affects the integrity of each member of our learning community. Any attempt to obtain credit for academic work through fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest means is academic dishonesty. Plagiarism involves presenting someone else's ideas, words, or work as one's own. Plagiarism is fraud and theft, but plagiarism can also occur by accident when a student fails or forgets to give credit to another person's ideas or words. Plagiarism and cheating can result in a failing grade for an assignment, for the course, or immediate dismissal from the university college. Students are expected to be familiar with the policies in the current Academic Calendar that deal with plagiarism, cheating, and the penalties and procedures for dealing with these matters. All cases of academic dishonesty are reported to the Academic Dean and become part of the student's permanent record.

Students are strongly advised to retain this syllabus for their records.

## Grading Chart:

	<b>Theory, Method, Data:</b> Correctly employs paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research. Both breadth and depth of resources are relied upon, demonstrating an integrated understanding of the area of study	<b>Analysis and Application:</b> Student is able to extend past summarizing research/theory, and clearly analyze and apply the research/theory (e.g., implications and consequences)	<b>Logical and Coherent Argument:</b> Logical and coherent argument that flows from beginning to end	<b>Grammar and Spelling:</b> Writing is clear and effective, communicating central ideas	<b>Formatting:</b> Use of appropriate writing style (i.e., APA, ASA) and other formatting particulars (i.e., page length, font size, margins)	<b>Oral Presentations:</b> Material is clearly, confidently, and creatively communicated. Both breadth and depth of resources are relied upon, demonstrating an integrated understanding of the area of study
<b>A</b>  <b>86-100</b>	Consistently achieved – paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are summarized and used accurately and in relevant ways	The majority of assignment demonstrates a balance in summarizing and describing theory/research and analysis and application	Clearly states central thesis and purpose of paper  Each sentence/paragraph logically leads to the next  Carefully selected details which support general statements and central thesis	Few to no spelling, grammar, or other writing errors.  Words, sentences, and paragraphs flow smoothly	Consistently achieved	Communicates effectively main theme, thesis, or primary focus of presentation.  Establishes order to ideas and points out relationships between them.  Number and quality of main points are sufficient

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						<p>Presentation of ideas develops to a logical conclusion and/or summary</p> <p>Strong presentation style, demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact</p>
<b>B</b> <b>72-85</b>	Mostly achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are summarized and used fairly accurately	Some idea of how chosen topic bears on the development of sociological/psychological thought (i.e., some analysis and application beyond merely summarizing existing theory/research)	<p>Clear central thesis</p> <p>Appropriate details/synthesis most of the time</p> <p>Sentences/paragraph generally flow logically together</p>	<p>Some spelling, grammar, and writing errors</p> <p>Some awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs</p>	Mostly achieved	<p>Communicates to some degree the main theme, thesis, or primary focus of presentation</p> <p>Ideas follow a general logical flow with presenter providing some synthesis between points</p> <p>Number and quality of main points are sufficient</p> <p>Logical conclusion and/or summary provided that develops from the presenters points</p> <p>Moderate presentation style, demonstrated through non-verbal communication,</p>

						body language, voice, and eye contact
C 60- 71	Inconsistently achieved - paradigms, theories, concepts, and empirical research are often summarized or used inaccurately, or not at all.	Little to no connection made to the development of paradigmatic thought in terms of analyzing or applying the theory/research	Adequately limited central thesis  Details/synthesis may be repetitious or absent altogether  Sentences/paragraphs rarely, if ever, flow logically together	Several spelling, grammar, and writing errors  Several awkward transitions between words, sentences, and paragraphs	Inconsistently achieved	Unclear presentation of main theme, thesis or focus of presentation  Little order to ideas and relationships between points not clarified clearly  Number and quality of main points are lacking in sufficiency  Weak conclusion and/or summary  Presentation style lacking as demonstrated through non-verbal communication, body language, voice, and eye contact  <i>And so on....</i>