

CST 602: Engaging Communication Research Methodology
Tuesday, 5:30 – 8:20 Stone 217

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Office hours: Thursday 1:00 – 3:00 & by appointment

Department of Communication Studies mission statement

We research, teach, and practice communication to cultivate the ethical voices of people that speak in critical, constructive, and transformative ways to identities, relationships, and communities.

Course purpose

This course is planned for early master's students in the Department of Communication Studies and forms part of the required three-course core (600, 601, 602). The first course introduces students to the discipline of communication and the second introduces students to communication theory. The third course, outlined here, introduces students to foundational issues in communication research. Collectively, these courses have as their purpose the preparation of graduate students for self-directed communication scholarship.

CST 602: Engaging Communication Research Methodology provides a foundation for students to complete guided and independent research projects in fulfillment of the master's degree in Communication Studies. After situating communication scholarship in the positivist, interpretivist, and criticalist paradigms, the course instructs students in formulating research problems and questions, designing a study to answer a research question, selecting and implementing data collection and analysis methods, and presenting the results to an audience. Given the strengths of the department faculty, the course emphasizes interpretive and critical methodologies and methods.

Learning outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will be able to:

- Articulate their own epistemological stance for the conduct of research;
- Engage in conversation regarding the possibilities and limitations of other epistemologies, and respond to the criticisms of their own stance from these other perspectives;
- Formulate communication research problems and research questions;
- Design a study to answer a research question:
- Choose a research methodology and method appropriate to their problems/questions; and
- Collect and analyze data to answer their research question.

I will rely on a number of teaching strategies in this course including lecture, group discussion, student presentations, and student-led research. However, I will emphasize discussion in our seminars; I hope that we create a learning community as we engage course material and one another.

Required readings:

The following books overview critical issues in communication research, such as developing conceptual frameworks and research questions and choosing appropriate data collection and analysis strategies. Thus, they serve as our core course texts.

Lindlof, T. R. & Taylor, B. C. (2002). *Qualitative communication research methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Maxwell, J. A. (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Reserve and electronic readings:

The following book chapters and journal articles enhance the issues covered in the above books by providing in-depth discussion of and/or illustrating central issues in communication research.

Agne, R. R. & Tracy, K. (2001). 'Bible babble': Naming the interactional trouble at Waco. *Discourse Studies*, 3, 269-294.

Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review*, 28, 13-33.

Alvesson, M. & Karreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. *Human Relations*, 53, 1125-1149.

Aoki, E. (2000). Mexican American ethnicity in Biola, CA: An ethnographic account of hard work, family, and religion. *The Howard Journal of Communications*, 11, 207-227.

Ashcraft, K. L. & Kedrowicz, A. (2002). Self-direction or social support? Nonprofit empowerment and the tacit employment contract of organizational communication studies. *Communication Monographs*, 69, 88-110.

Carbaugh, D. (1991). Communication and cultural interpretation. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 77, 336-342.

Carbaugh, D. (1999). "Just listen": "Listening" and landscape among the Blackfeet. *Western Journal of Communication*, 63, 250-270.

Cheney, G. (2000). Interpreting interpretive research: Toward perspectivism without relativism. In S. R. Corman (Ed.), *Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground* (pp. 17-45). New York: Guilford.

Conquergood, D. (1991). Rethinking ethnography: Towards a critical cultural politics. *Communication Monographs*, 58, 179-194.

- Conquergood, D. (1994). Homeboys and hoods: Gang communication and cultural space. In L. R. Frey (Ed.), *Group communication in context: Studies of natural groups* (pp. 23-55). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- Corey, F. C. (1996). Personal narratives and young men in prison: Labeling the outside inside. *Western Journal of Communication*, 60, 57-75.
- Covaleski, M. A., Dirsmith, M. W., Heian, J. B., & Samuel, S. (1998). The calculated and the avowed: Techniques of discipline and struggles over identity in Big Six public accounting firms. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43, 293-327.
- Fassett, D. L. & Warren, J. T. (2005). The strategic rhetoric of an "at-risk" educational identity: Interviewing Jane. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 2, 238-256.
- Feen-Calligan, H. (2005). Enlightenment in chemical dependency treatment programs: A grounded theory. In J. W. Creswell, *Educational Research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating qualitative and quantitative research* (2nd ed.) (pp. 419-434). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.
- Fontana, A. & Frey, J. H. (2000). Ch. 24, The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed, pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Kuhn, T. (2006). A 'demented work ethic' and a 'lifestyle firm': Discourse, identity, and workplace time commitments. *Organization Studies*, 27, 1339 - 1358.
- Langellier, K. M. (1989). Personal narratives: Perspectives on theory and research. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 9, 243-276.
- Meyers, M. (2004). African American women and violence: Gender, race, and class in the news. *Critical Studies in Media Communication*, 21, 95-118.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Ch. 4: Early steps in analysis. In *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (pp. 50-89). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Ch. 5: Within-case displays: Exploring and describing. In *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (pp. 90-142). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Ch. 6: Within-case displays: Explaining and predicting. In *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (pp. 143-171). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Miller, K. I. (2000). Common ground from the post-positivist perspective: From “straw person” argument to collaborative coexistence. In S. R. Corman (Ed.), *Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground* (pp. 46-67). New York: Guilford.
- Mumby, D. K. (2000). Common ground from the critical perspective: Overcoming binary oppositions. In S. R. Corman (Ed.), *Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground* (pp. 68-86). New York: Guilford.
- Peterson, E. E., & Langellier, K. M. (1997). The politics of personal narrative methodology. *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 17, 135-152.
- Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). Ch. 1, Introduction: The Discipline and practice of qualitative research. In *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 1-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Philipsen, G. (1992). An ethnographic approach to communication studies. In B. Dervin, L. Grossberg, B.J O’Keefe, & E. Wartella (Eds.), *Rethinking communication: Vol. 1, Paradigm Issues* (pp. 258-268). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Schryer, C. F., Lingard, L. & Spafford, M. M. (2005). Techné or artful science and the genre of case presentations in healthcare settings. *Communication Monographs*, 72, 234-260.
- Smith, J. K. & Deemer, D. K. (2000). Ch. 34, The problem of criteria in the age of relativism. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed, pp. 877-896). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Spradley, J. P. (1980). Part two: The developmental research sequence. In *Participant observation* (pp. 39-85). New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston.
- Suddaby, R. (2006). From the editors: What grounded theory is not. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49, 633-642.
- Taylor, B. C. (1999). Browsing the culture: Membership and intertextuality at a Mormon bookstore. *Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies*, 5, 61-95.
- Tracy, K. & Haspel, K. (2004). Language and social interaction: Its institutional identity, intellectual landscape, and discipline shifting agenda. *Journal of Communication*, 54, 788-816.
- Trujillo, N. (1993). Interpreting November 22: A critical ethnography of an assassination site. *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 79, 447-466.
- Warren, J. T. (2001). Doing whiteness: On the performative dimensions of race in the classroom. *Communication Education*, 50, 91-108.
- Wright, J. (2000). The communication of social support within an on-line community for older adults: A qualitative analysis of the SeniorNet community. *Qualitative Research Reports in Communication*, 1, 33-43.

Honor Code

All members of the UNCG academic community should know, understand, and uphold the Academic Honor Policy. Students should familiarize themselves with the Honor Policy by reading the current *UNCG Student Handbook/Calendar*. Please include the statement of academic integrity on a cover sheet attached to your written work. Violation of the Honor Policy will result in full and appropriate penalty by UNCG.

Course Assessments

I will evaluate your performance in this course based on your ability to explore a topic in depth and detail, displayed through the quality of your oral and written presentation skills. I expect you to demonstrate the ability to analyze and synthesize course material and extend this material through your own original work. You may expect me to aid you in developing your facility in these areas.

Your major project for the semester is a research proposal. Class assignments will help you progress toward this goal.

Course requirements

• Class participation	100
• Conceptual framework	200
• Methodology presentation	100
• Observation	100
• Interview	100
• Research proposal /study	400
	1000 points total

Participation

I wish to stress scholarly discussion in this graduate seminar as we are, in many ways, colleagues engaged in the mutual exploration of a topic. Successful exploration requires full participation from all members. Full participation means that you attend class having read and reflected on course material, that you bring thoughtful questions and comments about the course material, that you analyze and synthesize ideas and comments to extend ideas in original ways, and that you engage others in respectful argument and discussion.

Conceptual framework

This assignment will help you narrow and focus your research topic. You will define the set of concepts that you will use to examine your research topic, as well as describe the relationships among these concepts. You will create a visual map of this framework, along with an accompanying narrative that describes the concepts, relationships, and relevance to the phenomena you are studying. See Maxwell, pp. 52-53 for a more detailed description.

Methodology presentation

With other students, you will develop a presentation on a communication research methodology. The presentation should cover the theoretical commitments of the methodology, the methods and their use within the methodology, and the strengths and limitations of the methodology.

Observation

Participant observation is a fundamental research method in communication research. This assignment should introduce you to the world of observing human behavior and interaction. In light of your research questions you should develop an observation protocol to guide your time in the field. Using the protocol, conduct approximately one hour of participant observation in an appropriate setting. After leaving the field write fieldnotes capturing your observations. The fieldnotes should be as long as they need to be to capture the details of the site. Finally, write a reflection on your experience in light of course readings.

Interview

Along with observation, interviewing others is central to communication research. In light of your research questions develop an interview protocol. Conduct one audiotaped 30-minute interview with a research subject using the protocol. Transcribe the interview. Finally, reflect on your interview ability and experience in light of course readings.

Research proposal

To close the semester I want you to develop a research proposal that includes the collection and analysis of pilot data. In this paper you should lay out your research problem and research questions, discuss your research design, including your planned data collection and analysis methods, analyze your pilot data, including observation and interview data collected for previous assignments, and speculate on the conclusions and implications that may stem from your work.

Ungraded assignments

For the most part, these will be used in class to guide discussion with peers.

- Research interests statement and reading list
- Conceptual framework
- Draft interview protocol
- Draft observation protocol
- IRB certification: All research involving human subjects should be reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board prior to the commencement of the research project. If you plan to make your results public via oral or written presentation this review and approval is particularly important. While you may not wish to undergo IRB review, nor may it be feasible to receive such approval this semester, we will review IRB policies and procedures. Toward this end I ask you to complete the on-line certification available through the UNCG Office of Research Services. The tutorial should take 1-2 hours.

Tentative course schedule

Unit One: Foundations	
Week 1: January 15	<p>Course overview; Introduction to research L&T, Preface & Ch. 1 Maxwell, Ch. 1 Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). Ch. 1, Introduction: The Discipline and practice of qualitative research. In <i>Handbook of qualitative research</i> (2nd ed., pp. 1-28). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [Review from CST 600]</p>
Week 2: January 22	<p>Research paradigms: Positivism, Interpretivism, Criticalism L&T Ch. 2 Cheney, G. (2000). Interpreting interpretive research: Toward perspectivism without relativism. In S. R. Corman (Ed.), <i>Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground</i> (pp. 17-45). New York: Guilford. Miller, K. I. (2000). Common ground from the post-positivist perspective: From “straw person” argument to collaborative coexistence. In S. R. Corman (Ed.), <i>Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground</i> (pp. 46-67). New York: Guilford. Mumby, D. K. (2000). Common ground from the critical perspective: Overcoming binary oppositions. In S. R. Corman (Ed.), <i>Perspectives on organizational communication: Finding common ground</i> (pp. 68-86). New York: Guilford. Research interests statement & reading list due</p>
Week 3: January 29	<p>Research Design 1: Your interests/goals Research ethics and IRB L&T, Ch. 3 Maxwell, Ch. 2 Conquergood, D. (1994). Homeboys and hoods: Gang communication and cultural space. In L. R. Frey (Ed.), <i>Group communication in context: Studies of natural groups</i> (pp. 23-55). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.</p>
Week 4: February 5	<p>Research Design 2: Conceptual Frameworks and Research Questions Maxwell, Chs 3 & 4 Ashcraft, K. L. & Kedrowicz, A. (2002). Self-direction or social support? Nonprofit empowerment and the tacit employment contract of organizational communication studies. <i>Communication Monographs</i>, 69, 88-110. [Journal Finder] Covaleski, M. A., Dirsmith, M. W., Heian, J. B., & Samuel, S. (1998). The calculated and the avowed: Techniques of discipline and struggles over identity in Big Six public accounting firms. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>, 43, 293-327. [JF] Schryer, C. F., Lingard, L. & Spafford, M. M. (2005). Techne or artful science and the genre of case presentations in healthcare settings. <i>Communication Monographs</i>, 72, 234-260. [JF] Due: Bring draft conceptual framework to class</p>

Unit Two: Data Collection Methods	
Week 5: February 12	<p>Participant Observation L&T Chs. 4 & 5 Maxwell, Ch. 5 Spradley, J. P. (1980). Part two: The developmental research sequence. In <i>Participant observation</i> (pp. 39-85). New York: Holt, Rinehart, & Winston. Taylor, B. C. (1999). Browsing the culture: Membership and intertextuality at a Mormon bookstore. <i>Studies in Cultures, Organizations and Societies</i>, 5, 61-95. [JF] Trujillo, N. (1993). Interpreting November 22: A critical ethnography of an assassination site. <i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i>, 79, 447-466. [JF]</p> <p>Due: Bring draft observation protocol to class</p>
Week 6: February 26	<p>Interviewing L&T Ch. 6 Alvesson, M. (2003). Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. <i>Academy of Management Review</i>, 28, 13-33. [JF] Fassett, D. L. & Warren, J. T. (2005). The strategic rhetoric of an “at-risk” educational identity: Interviewing Jane. <i>Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies</i>, 2, 238-256. [JF] Fontana, A. & Frey, J. H. (2000). Ch. 24, The interview: From structured questions to negotiated text. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of qualitative research</i> (2nd ed, pp. 645-672). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Due: Conceptual framework due Bring draft interview protocol to class.</p>

Unit Three: Methodologies	
Week 7: March 4	<p>Grounded Theory (Presentation)</p> <p>Feen-Calligan, H. (2005). Enlightenment in chemical dependency treatment programs: A grounded theory. In J. W. Creswell, <i>Educational Research: Planning, conducting, and evaluating qualitative and quantitative research</i> (2nd ed.) (pp. 419-434). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.</p> <p>Suddaby, R. (2006). From the editors: What grounded theory is not. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i>, 49, 633-642. [JF]</p> <p>Wright, J. (2000). The communication of social support within an on-line community for older adults: A qualitative analysis of the SeniorNet community. <i>Qualitative Research Reports in Communication</i>, 1, 33-43. [JF]</p>
Week 8: March 18	<p>Ethnography of Communication (Presentation)</p> <p>Aoki, E. (2000). Mexican American ethnicity in Biola, CA: An ethnographic account of hard work, family, and religion. <i>The Howard Journal of Communications</i>, 11, 207-227. [JF]</p> <p>Carbaugh, D. (1991). Communication and cultural interpretation. <i>Quarterly Journal of Speech</i>, 77, 336-342. [JF]</p> <p>Carbaugh, D. (1999). "Just listen": "Listening" and landscape among the Blackfeet. <i>Western Journal of Communication</i>, 63(3), 250-270. [JF]</p> <p>Philipsen, G. (1992). An ethnographic approach to communication studies. In B. Dervin, L. Grossberg, B.J O'Keefe, & E. Wartella (Eds.), <i>Rethinking communication: Vol. 1, Paradigm Issues</i> (pp. 258-268). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Critical Ethnography (Presentation)</p> <p>Conquergood, D. (1991). Rethinking ethnography: Towards a critical cultural politics. <i>Communication Monographs</i>, 58, 179-194. [JF]</p> <p>Warren, J. T. (2001). Doing whiteness: On the performative dimensions of race in the classroom. <i>Communication Education</i>, 50(2), 91-108. [JF]</p> <p>Attend one of the Harriet Elliott Lectures, March 19 & 20</p>
Week 9: March 25	<p>Discourse Analysis (Presentation)</p> <p>Alvesson, M. & Karreman, D. (2000). Varieties of discourse: On the study of organizations through discourse analysis. <i>Human Relations</i>, 53, 1125-1149. [JF]</p> <p>Agne, R. R. & Tracy, K. (2001). 'Bible babble': Naming the interactional trouble at Waco. <i>Discourse Studies</i>, 3, 269-294. [JF]</p> <p>Kuhn, T. (2006). A 'demented work ethic' and a 'lifestyle firm': Discourse, identity, and workplace time commitments. <i>Organization Studies</i>, 27, 1339 - 1358. [JF]</p> <p>Meyers, M. (2004). African American women and violence: Gender, race, and class in the news. <i>Critical Studies in Media Communication</i>, 21(2), 95-118. [JF]</p> <p>Tracy, K. & Haspel, K. (2004). Language and social interaction: Its institutional identity, intellectual landscape, and discipline shifting agenda. <i>Journal of Communication</i>, 54, 788-816. [JF]</p>

Week 10: April 1	<p>Narrative Analysis (Presentation) Corey, F. C. (1996). Personal narratives and young men in prison: Labeling the outside inside. <i>Western Journal of Communication</i>, 60, 57-75. [JF] Langellier, K. M. (1989). Personal narratives: Perspectives on theory and research. <i>Text and Performance Quarterly</i>, 9, 243-276. [JF] Peterson, E. E., & Langellier, K. M. (1997). The politics of personal narrative methodology. <i>Text and Performance Quarterly</i>, 17, 135-152. [JF]</p>
Unit Four: Data Analysis Methods	
Week 11: April 8	<p>Early Steps in Analysis L&T Ch. 7 Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Ch. 4: Early steps in analysis. In <i>Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook</i> (pp. 50-89). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p> <p>Due: Observation due Interview due</p>
Week 12: April 15	<p>Making Good Sense of Data Maxwell, Ch. 6 Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Ch. 5: Within-case displays: Exploring and describing. In <i>Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook</i> (pp. 90-142). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1994). Ch. 6: Within-case displays: Explaining and predicting. In <i>Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook</i> (pp. 143-171). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p>
Week 13: April 22	Continued Analysis
Further Considerations	
Week 14: April 29	<p>Authoring, Writing, & Evaluating L&T Ch. 9 M&H Ch. 12 Smith, J. K. & Deemer, D. K. (2000). Ch. 34, The problem of criteria in the age of relativism. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), <i>Handbook of qualitative research</i> (2nd ed, pp. 877-896). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.</p>
May 8	Research proposal & IRB certification due