

coms 200

fall 2017
qualitative research methods
section 1, #84306, T, 6-8:50 p.m., MND 1026

description

This course explores the landscape of qualitative research methods, with an emphasis in the field of Communication Studies. Students will learn how to develop and execute a qualitative research project on a communication topic of their choice, while understanding the ethical and pragmatic factors that go into using qualitative methodologies. Students will practice planning for, gathering, and analyzing qualitative data using a variety of tools, and developing theoretical and practical claims about communication phenomena. Along the way, students will learn about graduate studies broadly and develop a conference-ready research paper.

Catalogue description: Focuses on qualitative research methods as one methodological option to use in scholarly research. Critically review and analyze existing qualitative research projects; creation of qualitative research project; and response to the research projects of peers. Consideration of ways to successfully integrate into the communication discipline through a variety of class discussions, readings, and activities.

texts & materials

1. **Required:** Readings, as assigned. (Available free online or Canvas)
2. **Required:** American Psychological Association (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th ed). Washington: APA OR relevant resources for APA style.
3. **Required:** Goodall Jr, H. L. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. AltaMira Press.
4. **Required:** Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods*. UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
5. **Required:** Lindemann, K. (2017). *Communicating Research, Communicating Results: Writing the Communication Research Paper*. John Wiley & Sons.
6. **Required:** Graff, G., & Birkenstein, C. (2016). *They say, I say. The Moves That Matters in Academic Writing. 3rd Edition*. W.W. Norton & Company.

course learning objectives

1. To **know** the important contexts and issues that surround qualitative research methods
2. To **know** the important methods and research tools used to assess communication phenomena qualitatively
3. To **appreciate** the complexity that qualitative methodologies offer researchers
4. To **practice** qualitative research skills, including data gathering and analysis
5. To **apply** qualitative methods to a communication research context or problem
6. To **evaluate** qualitative research and approaches
7. To **generate** conference-ready research using qualitative methods
8. To **demonstrate** the skills necessary to be a successful graduate student in Communication Studies at Sacramento State through oral and written work.



coms 200 classroom culture

the process of teaching & learning in coms 200

Good learning is an active process which means that you will be directly involved through discussion, activity and collaboration. A typical class session will involve a great deal of student-to-student interaction. You will: talk about your ideas; develop, present and analyze arguments; write and share your writing; develop conceptual maps and models; and identify concepts in various media. Occasionally, I will talk for 10-15 minutes. As a result, there will be ample opportunity to practice relevant skills and test concepts presented.

ways to participate

As this is a graduate seminar, your participation in classroom discussions and debate is vital. Some participation is structured (e.g., discussion leading and reading reports), but most is left up to you. To best contribute, I recommend students outline articles and/or make notes while they read. In class, you will want to clearly evidence your careful preparation by offering:

1. Factual or clarifying questions
2. Provocative questions for discussion or debate
3. Careful critiques of research findings
4. Evidence that complicates or contradicts current readings
5. Insightful connections between readings
6. Applications to other research or organizational experience
7. Share relevant (but not otherwise assigned) articles with the class, either scholarly or popular press

classroom behavior, conduct & co-constructed norms

Keeping the **golden rule** in mind, you should treat others as you wish to be treated. I intend to treat each student with respect, dignity and courtesy. I assume that your classmates and I will receive the same treatment from you. You are expected to arrive on time, fully prepared to actively engage in class discussion and activities, and to act in a professional, respectful manner. Active participation demonstrates your commitment to the learning process and enhances your understanding of the material.

Specifically, I want to build a classroom climate that is comfortable for all. It is especially important to:

- ♦ display respect for all members of the classroom – including the instructor and students
- ♦ pay attention to and participate in all class sessions and activities
- ♦ avoid unnecessary disruption during class time (e.g., talking out of turn, arriving late, surfing the internet, doing work for other classes, leaving class other than for an emergency, making/receiving calls, text messaging, etc.)
- ♦ avoid racist, sexist, homophobic or other negative language that may unnecessarily exclude members of our campus and classroom.

Co-constructed norms

- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦
- ♦

coms 200 policies & requirements

late work

Unless specifically noted, all assignments are due at the beginning of class time on the date assigned. Late work will be accepted only in extreme circumstances and will be marked down by 50%.

attendance/punctuality

In order to have a meaningful class, everyone needs to arrive **on time** and prepared for the day's activities. You are expected to attend every class session, except in cases of emergency or illness. You will be allowed to make up one excused absence by outlining the week's readings and accomplishing a written synthesis. If you miss more than one class, your participation grade may be negatively impacted.

add/drop policy

I follow the department/university policy on adding and dropping. Students may drop this course during the first two weeks of the semester without restriction or instructor approval.

academic honesty, plagiarism and cheating

Academic misconduct will result in, at the very least, a zero on the assignment in question, and may include a failing course grade and/or possible university sanctions. Please be aware that plagiarism is the stealing of ideas which happens when you use someone else's material (including words, figures, images, structure, style, etc.) without giving the creator proper credit. Please acquaint yourselves with the university's academic integrity policy, which can be found here: <http://www.csus.edu/umannual/student/stu-0100.htm>

Also, while it is common for graduate school papers to be centered around a common research interest, your work for COMS 200 should be original, and not include material prepared for a different course. If you have questions about this, see me immediately. To assist with student learning, honesty, and integrity, you may be asked to submit your essays to Turnitin which will enable you to check your paper for citations and plagiarism. Turnitin also allows me to compare your work with prior publications and papers.

assignment formatting

All written assignments (except in-class or online activities) must be typed and stapled. It is expected that your writing be at the graduate level. Proper grammar, correct spelling and articulate writing style are imperative. Assignments neglecting these elements will receive lower grades as a result. Specific formatting requirements for written assignments include: **one-inch margins**, double-spacing and 12-point Times New Roman or Garamond font. Please also include a **single-spaced** header for each assignment that includes your name and the assignment. Use APA style for references and in-text citations.

electronic devices

In order to create the best learning environment, electronic devices (e.g. ipads, laptops, cell phones, tablets) are not to be used in the classroom without specific direction from me. **Specifically: Cell phones must be turned off and put away during class.** If you need to use your phone for an emergency, no problem. Just step out.

Also, the use of laptops—except for prescribed periods of time—is prohibited. If you believe you have special circumstances, please speak with me.

coms 200 policies & requirements

assignments & evaluations

Throughout the semester, you will have a number of opportunities to demonstrate your achievement of course learning objectives. Detailed criteria and requirements will accompany each assignment.

Engagement & Participation 20%

Engagement and participation is a cornerstone of graduate coursework. Course discussions will only be as good as the comments, questions, observations and connections that students contribute. Therefore, please prepare for class carefully, and be ready to contribute. Part of weekly participation will include reporting on the details of specific articles. (See details/examples of participation activities on page 2.)

Reading Reports (10 reports)..... 10%

Short reports based upon each week's set of readings.

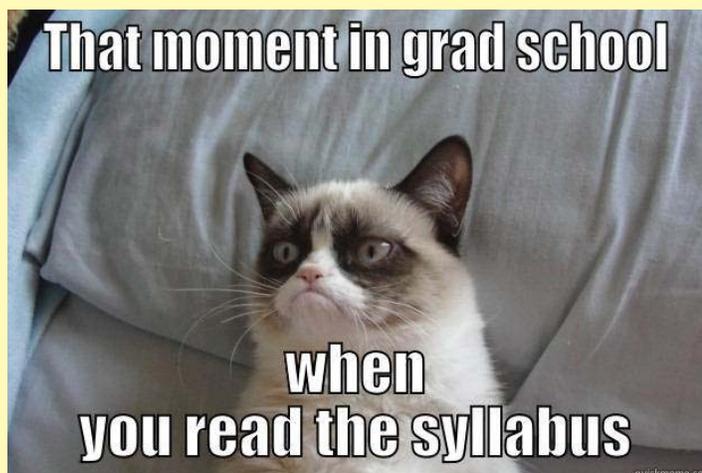
Discussion Assisting (x 2) 20%

You will have the opportunity to assist with discussions of class readings as well as activities that help expand our collective understanding.

Practica 20%

As a means of working toward the final paper, you will complete 10 practica assignments--building blocks that help you practice the skills necessary to be an excellent qualitative researcher and graduate student. Details about each assignment to follow.

- Potential Topic & Approach
- Annotated Bibliography
- IRB training & Application
- Interview Guide
- Proposal
- Fieldnotes
- Analysis Nuts & Bolts
- Advanced Analysis
- Full Draft
- Peer Review



Final Paper (including presentation) 30%

As the culminating experience for COMS 200, you will conceive of and execute a qualitative research study about a communication topic of your choice, including at least 3 interviews and 8 participant observation hours. Projects will be broken up into pieces (see practica assignments), with ample opportunity for feedback and revision before the final assessment. You will formally present your paper during the last regular class of the semester and participate in peer review before turning in a conference-ready 25-page manuscript during finals week. You can work alone or with a partner. (If you co-author a study, your page count remains the same, but you will each need to complete the minimum observation hours/interviews)

coms 200 policies & requirements

grading perspectives

Grades are part of the teaching and learning process. Keep in mind that you earn your grade based on how well your work meets class objectives, fulfills requirements and reflects the academic skills expected of graduate students. It is your responsibility to understand why you have achieved a certain grade and what steps can maintain or improve your grade (see “Grading Questions” below and “Grading Standards” on page 7).

returned assignments

I will do my best to return regular assignments to you seven days after you turn them in. Exams and papers may take up to two weeks. Grades will be posted to Canvas. Please make sure the score on your homework matches the score recorded on Canvas. If it doesn't, you must bring me the hard copy with handwritten score. It is in your best interest to keep ALL assignments until the semester ends in case there is an error in the online grade book.

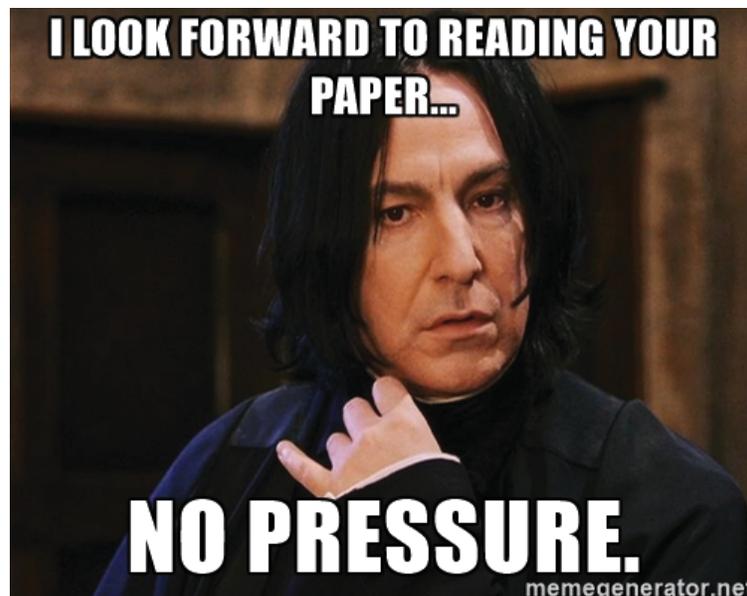
grading scale

Final grades will not be rounded.

≥ 94%A	≥ 88%B+	≥ 78%C+	≥ 68%D+	< 60%.....F
≥ 90%A-	≥ 84%B	≥ 74%C	≥ 64%D	
	≥ 80%B-	≥ 70%C-	≥ 60%D-	

grading questions

If you have questions about a grade or evaluation, I am more than happy to speak with you. Please note, however, I will not discuss grades for an assignment on the day I hand it back to you, nor will I discuss individual grades in the classroom or by email. All such discussions will take place in my office at least one day after the grade has been received. This is to give you time to read the comments/evaluation. If you wish to contest a grade, write out your argument clearly, concisely and completely, and bring it with you to the meeting. **You have seven days to contest a grade from the time the assignment was handed back.**



coms 200 grading standards

A: Outstanding – Original, appropriate criticism of course concepts

“A” work constitutes superior handling of the mechanical and conceptual material covered in class. Not only will “A” work synthesize and interact with the ideas and materials covered, but it will also show some originality of thought, an unusual degree of clarity in expression, and an ability to contextualize ideas, explore implications, and/or raise meaningful questions. “A” serves as a reward for superior presentation of extremely diligent consideration given to conceptually complex work. Such quality of work is achievable, but it is not common.

B: Very Good – Thorough, appropriate synthesis of course concepts

“B” work is marked by a timely completion of the assignment, demonstrating not only a grasp of the material under consideration, but the ability to synthesize and interact with that material, rather than simply repeat it. “B” work goes beyond minimum requirements outlined in the assignment, but not in a disorganized or rambling manner. Not every attempt to go beyond the minimum requirements will succeed. The grade of “B” represents work that is above average, having succeeded by surpassing the standard requirements in the quality of the finished product.

C: Adequate – Solid comprehension of course concepts

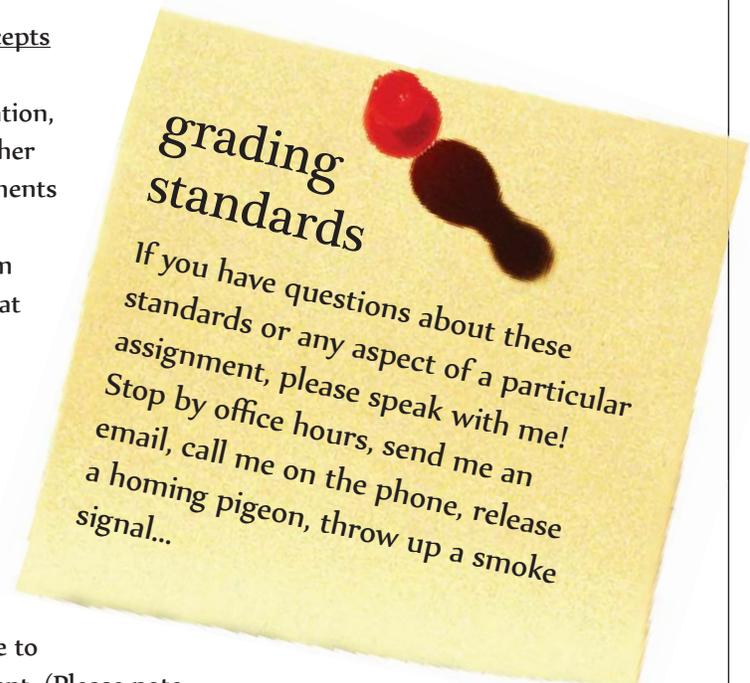
“C” work is marked by timely completion of the assignment, demonstrating a solid grasp of the material. “C” is the standard grade and all assignments are made with this in mind. Assume that fulfilling all aspects of the assignment well will result in a C. If you are looking for a grade higher than this, you will have to go beyond the minimum requirements outlined in the assignment. (Please note, that “going beyond” the minimum does NOT generally entail things like fancy cover sheets, colored fonts, or exceeding the assigned length of the assignment. “Going beyond” almost always applies to the conceptual concerns of the course, fine tuning clarity of expression, etc.)

D: Poor – Lack of understanding/Assignment does not meet most requirements

“D” is given for work that meets the requirements established, but demonstrates serious flaws either in conceptual formation or mechanical limits. “D” work could be seen in, for example, a good idea expressed very poorly or, conversely, a well-written paper that actually says nothing. “D” work: requires major revision; strays from or confuses audience and purpose; lacks substantive development; is overly generalized or uses facts that have questionable credibility; is formatted or designed in a way that is confusing or misleading; demonstrates an inconsistent or sometimes muddled style; demonstrates unsatisfactory mastery of standard written English where required.

F: Fails – Does Not Meet Assignment Requirements

“F” is given for an assignment that fails to meet the mechanical or conceptual requirements of university work. Mechanical requirements would be matters such as turn-in times, length of assignment, grammatical concerns, focus of assignment, etc. Conceptual matters would revolve around the comprehension of ideas and relationships between ideas. “F” work: fails to meet most of the stated assignment requirements; lacks focus on a subject or appropriate audience; includes unsatisfactory format; includes content that is weak, poorly developed, inadequate; lacks logical connections between ideas, sentences, paragraphs; lacks consistency in style and tone; demonstrates habitually poor writing skills where required.



coms 200 resources

violence, discrimination & sexual assault support services

Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find the appropriate resources via the Sac State Violence and Sexual Assault Services Program. More information: <https://shcssacstate.org/wellness-promotion/violence-sexual-assault-support-services>, Sac State Victim Advocate: 916-278-3799, Student Health and Counseling: 916-278-6461; Office of Student Conduct: 916-278-6060

As an instructor, one of my responsibilities is to help create a safe learning environment on our campus. I hope you feel able to share information related to your life experiences in classroom discussions, in your written work, and in our one-on-one meetings. However, I also have a mandatory reporting responsibility regarding sexual misconduct. This means I will seek to keep information you share private to the greatest extent possible but I am specifically required to report sexual misconduct to the university. I can, however, help you find completely confidential resources such as Student Health and Counseling which can be reached at 916-278-6461.

writing resources

It is expected that you write at a level appropriate for a graduating senior, with appropriate structure, clarity, grammar, and style. If you need help with writing, please visit the Writing Center in Calaveras Hall Room 128, just. Students may sign up for tutoring once per week and appointments must be scheduled in person. For more information, call 916-278-6356 or visit: <http://www.csus.edu/writingcenter/>

unique academic needs/disabilities

If you have a disability or unique academic need and require assistance, please inform me as soon as possible so that I may accommodate you. You will need to provide disability documentation to the Office of Services to Students with Disabilities, Lassen Hall 1008. To learn more, please visit: <http://www.csus.edu/sswd/> or call 916-278-7239.

academic support services

Various services are available on campus to support to your academic career, including counseling, tutoring and career advisement. For information, visit the Academic Support Services web site at: <http://www.csus.edu/studentresources/>.

library databases

A multitude of periodical databases are available via the library web site to help you with your academic career and writing every single paper in this course. You will find "Communication & Mass Media Complete" especially helpful for any Communication Studies courses you take (especially this one!). Visit: <http://library.csus.edu/> to learn more.

incompletes

Incompletes will only be considered due to an extreme personal situation. In that case, you must provide a compelling reason and substantive documentation. At that same time, you must also provide a concise plan and time-line for completing the course. I will then determine if your situation meets the requirements for an incomplete grade.

Canvas

Course announcements and assignments are distributed in large part via Canvas. You are required to check this site frequently for e-mails, assignments and updates.

coms 200 tentative course calendar*

wk	date	topic/readings	assignment due
1	8/29	<p>Introductions/Welcome</p> <p>IRB Updates</p> <p>So you decided to go to grad school?</p> <p>Thinking like ethnographers</p> <p>Goodall Jr, H. L. (2000). Writing the new ethnography. AltaMira Press.</p>	
2	9/5	<p>Contextualizing qualitative research</p> <p>Tracy—#1 Developing Contextual Research that Matters</p> <p>Tracy—#2 Entering the Conversation of Qualitative Research</p> <p>Tracy—#3 Paradigmatic Reflections and Theoretical Foundations</p> <p>Denzin, N. K. & Lincoln, Y.S. (2011). Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research. Handbook of qualitative research, 4</p>	Reading Report #1
3	9/12	<p>Planning a qualitative project/Finding scholarly sources</p> <p>Tracy—#4 Fieldwork and Fieldplay: Negotiating Access & Exploring the Scene</p> <p>Lindemann (whole book, except chapter 6 and 8)</p>	<p>Reading Report #2</p> <p>Practica #1—Potential Topic & Approach</p>
4	9/19	<p>Proposal Writing & Reading Scholarship</p> <p>Tracy—#5 Proposal Writing: Explaining Your Research to Institutional Review Boards, Instructors, Dissertation Committees and Funding Agencies</p> <p>Way, D., & Tracy, S. J. (2012). Conceptualizing compassion as recognizing, relating and (re) acting: A qualitative study of compassionate communication at hospice. <i>Communication Monographs</i>, 79(3), 292-315.</p> <p>Miller, K. I. (2007). Compassionate communication in the workplace: Exploring processes of noticing, connecting, and responding. <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research</i>, 35(3), 223-245.</p> <p>Skim through They Say/I Say</p>	<p>Reading Report #3</p> <p>Practica #2—IRB Training & Application</p>

coms 200 tentative course calendar*

wk	date	topic/readings	assignment due
5	9/26	<p>Data Gathering--Interviews & Fieldwork</p> <p>Tracy--#6 Field Roles, Fieldnotes and Field Focus Tracy-- #7 Planning the Interview: Sampling, Recruiting and Questioning</p> <p>Master's Student Success-- Allie Boyd, MA</p>	<p>Reading Report #4</p> <p>Practica #3--Annotated bibliography</p>
6	10/3	<p>Data Gathering--Interviews & Fieldwork, continued</p> <p>Tracy, S. J. (2014). Fieldwork horse-assery: Making the most of feeling humiliated, rebuffed, and offended during participant observation research. <i>Management Communication Quarterly</i>, 28(3), 459-466.</p> <p>Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and "ethically important moments" in research. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 10(2), 261-280.</p> <p>Ellis, C. (2007). Telling secrets, revealing lives: Relational ethics in research with intimate others. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 13(1), 3-29.</p>	<p>Reading Report #5</p> <p>Practica #4--Interview guide</p>
7	10/10	<p>The art of the interview--Workshop</p> <p>T #8: Conducting the Interview: Embodied, Mediated and Focus Group Approaches</p> <p>Guest, G., Bunce, A., & Johnson, L. (2006). How many interviews are enough? An experiment with data saturation and variability. <i>Field methods</i>, 18(1), 59-79.</p> <p>Malvini Redden, S., & Way, A. K. (2017). 'Adults don't understand': exploring how teens use dialectical frameworks to navigate webs of tensions in online life. <i>Journal of Applied Communication Research</i>, 45(1), 21-41.</p> <p>Revisit They Say/I Say</p>	<p>Reading Report #6</p> <p>Practica #5--Research Proposal</p>
8	10/17	<p>The art of fieldwork</p> <p>Writing the New Ethnography, Chapter 3 (Revisited)</p> <p>Readings TBA</p>	<p>Reading Report #7</p> <p>Practica #6--Fieldnotes</p>

coms 200 tentative course calendar*

wk	date	topic/readings	assignment due
9	10/24	<p>Intro to data analysis T #9 –Data Analysis Basics: A Pragmatic Iterative Approach</p> <p>Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 12(2), 219-245.</p> <p>Thornberg, R., & Charmaz, K. (2014). Grounded theory and theoretical coding. In U. Flick (Ed.), <i>The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis</i> (pp. 153-169). Los Angeles: SAGE.</p>	<p>Reading Report #8</p> <p>Practica #7–Analysis Nuts & Bolts</p>
10	10/31	<p>Exemplars Readings TBA</p>	Reading Report #9
11	11/7	<p>Qualitative quality Tracy # 11 – Qualitative Quality: Creating a Credible, Ethical, Significant Study</p> <p>Bochner, A. (2000). Criteria Against Ourselves, <i>Qualitative Inquiry</i>, 6(2), 266-272.</p> <p>Denzin, N. K. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. <i>Journal of Mixed Methods Research</i>, 6(2), 80-88.</p> <p>Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. <i>Organizational Research Methods</i>, 16(1), 15-31.</p>	Reading Report #10
12	11/14	Writing Day	No Class
13	11/21	<p>Advanced Data Analysis Tracy #10 – Advanced Data Analysis: The Art and Magic of Interpretation</p> <p>Readings TBA</p>	Practica #8–Advanced Analysis

coms 200 tentative course calendar*

wk	date	topic/readings	assignment due
14	11/28	Writing and Workshopping T#12 - Writing Part 1: The Nuts and Bolts of Writing Qualitative Tales T #13 - Writing Part 2: Drafting, Polishing, and Publishing	Practica #9–Full Draft BRING THREE HARD COPIES
15	12/5	Presentations & Peer Feedback Berkun, S. (2009). #35 – How to give and receive criticism. Retrieved from http://scottberkun.com/essays/35-how-to-give-and-receive-criticism/	Practica #10–Peer Review
16	12/12	Final Papers Due	

Recommended Resources:

- Bazeley, P., & Jackson, K. (Eds.). (2013). *Qualitative data analysis with NVivo* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications Limited.
- Bhattacharya, K. (2017). *Fundamentals of qualitative research: A practical guide*. New York, NY: Taylor & Francis.
- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd Ed). Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Clair, R. P. (2003). *Expressions of ethnography: Novel approaches to qualitative methods*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press.
- Ellingson, L. L. (2009). *Engaging crystallization in qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Ellingson, L.L. (2017). *Embodiment in qualitative research*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Ellis, C. (2004). *The ethnographic I: A methodological novel about autoethnography*. Lanham, MD: Rowman AltaMira.
- Flick, U. (Ed.) (2014). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis*. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Galman, S. C. (2016). *The good, the bad, and the data: Shane the lone ethnographer's basic guide to qualitative data analysis*. New York: Routledge.
- Given, L. M. (Ed.). (2008). *The SAGE encyclopedia of qualitative research methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Goodall, H. L., Jr. (2000). *Writing the new ethnography*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Goodall, H. B. (2008). *Writing qualitative inquiry: Self, stories, and academic life*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Jones, S. H., Adams, T. E., & Ellis, C. (Eds.). (2016). *Handbook of autoethnography*. Routledge.
- Leavy, P. (2015). *Method meets art: Arts-based research practice*. New York, NY: Guilford Publications.
- Lindlof, T. R., & Taylor, B. C. (2010). *Qualitative Communication Research Methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Madison, D. S. (2005). *Critical ethnography: Method, ethics, and performance* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2013). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Saldaña, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- * Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley-Blackwell. [and several 2nd edition draft chapters]
- * Assigned readings, model assignments, and auxiliary resources, along with assignment turn-in via Canvas
- * Access to Nvivo Qualitative Data Analysis Software (free 14 day trial or a \$120 12-month license for students) and its tutorials <http://www.qsrinternational.com>