CRS 713: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER, APPAREL, & RETAIL STUDIES
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
FALL 2014
MONDAYS, 6 – 8:50 P.M.
369 STONE BUILDING

PROFESSOR: Dr. Nancy Hodges
209 Stone Building
phone: 334-5250
email: njnelson@uncg.edu
Office Hours: M 1:30-2:30 and by appointment

CATALOG DESCRIPTION:
Exploration of development and use of qualitative research methodology in consumer, apparel, and retail studies. Focus on application of qualitative methodology to diverse research problems, data collection procedures, and analysis approaches.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES:
On completion of this course, the student will be able:
- To be knowledgeable of the philosophical foundations of qualitative approaches to research.
- To understand the development of qualitative research in consumer and apparel research.
- To understand the difference between qualitative and quantitative methodologies and their appropriate applications in consumer, apparel and retail research.
- To be knowledgeable of the diverse techniques employed in qualitative methodology within consumer, apparel, and retail research.
- To apply qualitative methods within the research process.

CONTENT OUTLINE:
The course is discussion based and is divided into three main parts. The first part is devoted to exploring the foundations and development of qualitative methodology. Issues to be discussed include: the relationship between epistemology and methodology, uses of the qualitative approach, the qualitative vs. quantitative debate within academia at large and within consumer, apparel and retail research specifically, and basic qualitative methodological perspectives including phenomenology, hermeneutics, ethnography and other approaches as they apply to research in the field.

The second part of the course explores the variety of data collection techniques commonly used within qualitative methodology including depth interviews, focus groups, participant observation, narratives, case studies, and visual methods. This portion of the course also integrates an examination of typical data gathering techniques such as field notes, transcriptions,
and photo/video documentation for use in various types of consumer and apparel research, including consumer behavior, marketing methods and research, and related topics.

The third and final part of the course covers issues important to the analysis of qualitative data, including thematic interpretation, grounded theory, and computer-aided approaches to data analysis. Issues of validity, ethics and representation within contemporary qualitative research are also addressed.

**EVALUATION:**

**Discussion Leadership and Participation**

The course is conducted in seminar format, with several content related readings assigned for discussion each week. Attendance is required. Students are expected to participate in the discussion of all readings, but will be assigned leadership of several readings on a rotating basis. Learning is emergent, in that it is the result of reading and discussing the ideas and concepts that surface within the articles. It is therefore expected that ALL students will contribute to the discussion each night. Do not underestimate the impact that lack of participation has not just on one's grade, but on the overall learning outcomes that one gains from being actively engaged in discussion.

**Reaction Papers**

All students are expected to submit a weekly reaction paper (3 pages maximum) in preparation for each discussion. Due at the end of the class period, reaction papers must address all of the readings covered for the week, and should consist of more than just a summary of the readings. Reaction paper content should be based on thoughts, questions, insights, and ideas (and should be organized as a “thematic interpretation” of reading content—analysis and synthesis—rather than an annotated bibliography). Paper content should indicate a thorough and critical reading of each article and thoughtful preparation for the week’s discussion. Paper content should NOT consist of simply “I like this paper/I hate this paper/This paper was hard,” or similarly lame surface comments. A total of 10 reaction papers will be submitted. There are a total of 11 weeks of discussion. You therefore have one week “off,” wherein you do not have to hand in a reaction paper. Use it wisely. However, you must still be prepared for and participate in the discussion for that week.

**Term Paper and Presentation**

A term paper that addresses qualitative research methods relative to consumer, apparel and retail studies and a presentation of the findings are also required. Potential topics for the paper can range from exploration of a specific qualitative method or methods, a specific concept relevant to qualitative research (e.g., validity, sampling, etc.), or an issue of importance to current discussions of qualitative research (e.g., voice, representation, power, etc.). Students will work with the Professor to determine an appropriate topic for the research paper. **APA guidelines must be followed in the preparation of the paper and an abstract must be included.** A succinct presentation of the topic during class time is also required. Presentations will occur during the final class meeting.
The breakdown for evaluation is as follows:
  - 100 points Discussion leadership
  - 100 points In class participation
  - 100 points Reaction papers (10 points per paper)
  - 150 points Term paper
  - 50 points Presentation

500 points total. Grades will be assigned on a ten point scale of A, A-, B+, B, B-, C+, C, & F. The UNCG Academic Honor Code and Integrity Policy will be followed for all assignments including the term paper, presentation, and reaction papers.

**TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE:**

**Week One: August 18**
- Introductions/Course overview
- Assign readings

**Week Two: August 25**
*Topics:*
  - Philosophical foundations of qualitative inquiry
    - Ontology
    - Epistemology
    - Methodology
  - Defining terms

*Required Readings:*

**Week Three: September 1**
No Class—Labor Day Holiday

**Week Four: September 8**
*Topics:*
  - Qualitative research design
  - The qualitative/quantitative debate
  - Mixed methods

*Required Readings:*


**Week Five: September 15**

**Topics:**
- Phenomenology
- Hermeneutics
- The study of “experience”
- Other interpretivist frameworks

**Required Readings:**


**Week Six: September 22**

**Topics:**
- Ethnography
- Gender, race and ethnicity

**Required Readings:**


**Week Seven: September 29**

**DUE: Approval of Term Paper Topic by Dr. Hodges**

**Topics:**
- Data Collection:
  - Interviews
- Doing Interviews

**Required Readings:**


**Week Eight: October 6**

**Topics:**
- Data Collection:
  - Focus Groups
  - Narratives/Texts
  - Historical research

**Required Readings:**

Kitzinger, J. (1999). The methodology of focus groups: The importance of interaction between research participants. In A. Bryman & R. Burgess (Eds.), Qualitative research, volume II (pp. 138-155). London: Sage.


**Week Nine: October 13**

No Class—Fall Break

**Week Ten: October 20**

*Topics:*

- Data Collection:
  - Participant Observation
  - Fieldwork
  - Visual data

*Required Readings:*


**Week Eleven: October 27**

*Topics:*

- Data Collection:
  - Participant sample/consent
  - Data gathering and handling tools

*Required Readings:*


**Week Twelve: November 3**

**Topics:**
- Data Analysis:
  - Hermeneutic phenomenological interpretation
  - Thematic analysis
- Doing Thematic Analysis

**Required Readings:**

**Week Thirteen: November 10**

**DUE: Abstract Draft of Term Paper Topic**

**Topics:**
- Data Analysis:
  - Ethnographies
  - Grounded Theory
- Peer review of abstract drafts

**Required Readings:**
Week Fourteen: November 17

Topics:
- Issues in qualitative research:
  - Theory
  - Validity
  - Ethics, etiquette, and representation

Required Readings:

Week Fifteen: November 24

No Class

Week Sixteen: December 1
- DUE: Final Term Papers and Presentations
- Wrap-up