

University of Guelph
Department of Marketing and Consumer Studies
MSc Graduate Program

MCS 6080 – QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS
Winter 2011

Professor: Brent McKenzie, MBA, PhD
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Class Location: MACKS - 317
Class Time: Mondays, 11:30am--2:20pm

Course Description: This course is designed to provide the student with an overarching understanding of qualitative research methods. As this is an MSc course, and *NOT* an MBA course, there is an expectation that the level of critical thinking and knowledge growth falls within the realm of the science of qualitative research methods and/or the empirical nature of their value to academic work.

Course Objectives:

The objectives of this course are to:

1. Increase students' depth of understanding of the differences between quantitative and qualitative research.
2. Provide the students with the historical roots of qualitative research as well as the ongoing debate as to its relevance to the research agenda.
3. Broaden students' knowledge of qualitative research methods by reviewing and discussing a variety of readings.
4. Help students better understand qualitative data gathering and analysis by having them prepare and present an empirical group project and paper.
5. Provide an opportunity to further develop the students' knowledge base within a topic area that they may wish to pursue at the masters thesis level.

Pre-requisite: Enrollment in the Department of Marketing and Consumer Studies program, or appropriate authorization.

Textbooks and Reading Material:

The course will consist of two types of readings – the first are drawn from the text

Warrant, Carol A.B. & Tracy X. Karner (2010) **Discovering Qualitative Methods**, 2nd Edition, Oxford Press (copies should be available in the book store)

The readings in this text will provide the student with a more detailed understanding of the mechanics of conducting a research using qualitative methods.

The second set of readings will highlight the use of qualitative methods in conducting marketing (and management) research. There 3 to 4 readings each week, and the articles will consist of a blend of research technique materials, as well as articles that have used qualitative research methods as the predominant research technique of their study.

M.J. D’Elia, our academic librarian, can provide library assistance if needed. His email is: mdelia@uoguelph.ca. M.J. also holds office hours for student consultation in MINS 255. These office hours are posted on Please contact him for his office hours.

Course Evaluation:

This course follows the grading scheme outlined in the University of Guelph Graduate Calendar: <http://www.uoguelph.ca/GraduateStudies/calendar/genreg/genreg-as.shtml>

90-100 (A+)	Outstanding. The student demonstrated a mastery of the course material at a level of performance exceeding that of most scholarship students and warranting consideration for a graduation award
80-89 (A)	Very Good to Excellent. The student demonstrated a very good understanding of the material at a level of performance warranting scholarship consideration.
70-79 (B)	Acceptable to Good. The student demonstrated an adequate to good understanding of the course material at a level of performance sufficient to complete the program of study.
60-69 (C)	Minimally Acceptable. The student demonstrated an understanding of the material sufficient to pass the course but at a level of performance lower than expected from continuing graduate students.
0-59 (F)	Fail: An inadequate performance

There will be both written and oral assignments for this course.

Course assessment:

- General class discussion and debates 25%
- Weekly written critique of readings 15%
- Major group paper 60% (45% paper, 15% presentation)

Class Discussion and Debates (25%)

As this is a both a lecture based, and seminar course, there is a strong expectation of active and lively debate and discussion of the lecture materials as well as the weekly readings. Each

student is expected to come to class prepared to; (1) actively discuss the weekly materials (2) take turns leading part of the weekly discussions (3) provide constructive feedback to one's classmates in terms of their contribution to the overall class learning.

Readings Critique (15%)

Each week, starting from **week 4 to week 8 (inclusive)**, each student must write and hand in a 1.5-2.0 page critique for each of the articles/readings assigned for that week. The critique would be due at the START of each class. Note that each week's critique is worth 3%.

Format for writing the critique

- (1) Title of the Reading/Article
- (2) Focus of the Reading/Key Terms ~ 1/4 page – (point form is acceptable)
- (3) Critique of the Reading/Article ~ 1/2-3/4 page - (point form is acceptable)
- (4) Personal Insights/Comments ~ 1/2-1 page - (point form is acceptable)

As noted, the length should be one and one half to two pages , single spaced, 1 inch margins, 12 font, plus any additional references if used.

Major Paper (60%)

Group Project and Paper (45%)

The purpose of the major project in MCS 6080 is to allow each student (as part of a research team) to plan and conduct a research project and paper utilizing qualitative research methods. The project/paper for this course requires the student to develop a new empirical study based on an assigned area of research that will be discussed during the first two weeks of the course. The purpose of the project/paper is to enhance student understanding of how a research study that employs qualitative research methods is constructed and carried out. This paper is expected to be of academic conference quality (e.g. ASAC, AOM, etc.) with a potential for future submission into a marketing/management conference.

NOTE: The topic for the major project and paper will be assigned by the instructor and the number of students enrolled in the class will determine the size and number of the groups.

A hard copy of the paper is due to the instructor at the start of class during **Week 11, on Monday, March 28th, 2011**. Any papers submitted after this time will be given a 10% (absolute value, not relative value) per day late penalty, including weekends. Papers should be between 40-45 double-spaced pages, including all tables and figures, (but not including author information, title of the paper, and abstract), and all footnotes, endnotes, appendices, and references. You are required to use Times New Roman font size 12, and spell check and proof read your paper prior to submission. Also, with the exception of the title page, all pages are to be numbered.

Format for writing the paper

- a. Abstract
- b. Overview of the topic/theory
- c. Subsequent (if existing) literature that has empirically examined the theory/question
- d. Qualitative research methodology and support for its selections
- e. Data analysis (all steps and actions).
- f. Data exhibits
- g. Research findings
- h. Conclusions, limitations, and future study

Students are required to adhere to the APA publication manual for abstract development, spacing, margins, headings, referencing styles, writing styles etc. Please consult the 5th or 6th edition of the APA publication manual for detailed instructions (available at the library or can be purchased at the bookstore).

To assist in developing academic writing capabilities, grammar, argument construction, order, etc. are all relevant to grading.

Paper Presentation (15%)

Each group will also make a presentation of their paper during week 12. The presentation should be between 30-45 minutes, with an appropriate amount of time available for discussion.

Weekly Topic Schedule:

Week 1 – Monday January 10th

- * **Introduce the course and course logistics.**
- * **Explain all course assignments with emphasis on the project and empirical paper.**
- * **Discuss the class's beginning thoughts on the role of qualitative research methods.**
- * **Discuss weekly readings process.**

Week 2 – Mon. Jan. 17th - The Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research Debate – Historical Perspectives

Readings: The Case for Quantitative/Qualitative Research

- (a) Text – Chapter 1
- (b) Smith, J.K. (1983), *“Quantitative Versus Qualitative Research: An Attempt to Clarify the Issue”*, Educational Researcher, March, 6-13.
- (c) Walle, A. (1997), *“Quantitative versus Qualitative Tourism Research”*, Annals of Tourism Research, 24/3, 524-536

- (d) Onwuegbuzie, A. & Leech, N. (2005) *“On Becoming a Pragmatic Researcher: The Importance of Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methodologies”*, International Journal of Social Research Methodology, 8/5, 375-387.
- (e) Hanson, D. & Grimmer, M. (2007), *“The mix of qualitative and quantitative research in major marketing journals, 1993-2002”*, European Journal of Marketing, 41, 1/2, 58-70.
- (f) Belk, R. (2009), *“The modeling empiricism gap: Lessons from the Qualitative-Quantitative gap in Consumer Research”*, Journal of Supply Chain Management, 45,1, 35-37

Week 3 – Mon. Jan. 24th – NOTE: THERE WILL BE NO CLASS THIS WEEK – each group is required to develop a preliminary list of source materials for their project (refer to class discussions in week 1 and 2) – a summary of this list, and support for why these sources will be of value to your research – the list must be emailed (word document) to me at bmckenzi@uoguelph.ca by 2:20pm on the 24th.

Weeks 4 – 8 (for these weeks, weekly written critiques are required)

Week 4 – Qualitative Research Techniques – Part I – Field Research
 Week 5 – Qualitative Research Techniques – Part II –Historic Research/Oral Histories
 Week 6 – Qualitative Research Techniques – Part III – Case Studies
 Week 7 – Qualitative Research Techniques – Part IV – Interviews and Focus Groups
 Week 8 – Qualitative Data Analysis and Reporting – Content Analysis/Writing Well

Week 4 – Monday January 31st

Discussion: What is the value of conducting Field Research?

Readings:

- (a) Text: Chapters 3, 4, 5.
- (b) Fisk, G. (1948), *“Methods of Handling Certain Field Research Problems”*, Journal of Marketing, 382-384
- (c) Carter, R. (1956), *“Field Research in Journalism: A Tentative Review and Appraisal”*, Journal of Marketing, October, 137-148.
- (d) Vallaster, C. (2000), *“Conducting Field Research in Asia: Fundamental Differences as Compared to Western Societies”*, Culture & Psychology, 6/4, 461-476

Week 5 – Monday February 7th

Discussion: Historical research – how hard could that be?

Readings:

- (a) Chapter 8

- (b) McDowell, W. H. (2002), "*Historical Sources*", in Historical Research: A Guide, 54-76
- (c) Mitchell, R. (1996), "*Oral history and expert scripts: demystifying the entrepreneurial experience*", *Journal of Management History*, 2/3, 50-67

Week 6- Monday February 14th

Discussion: What makes a case study useful? interesting?

Readings:

- (a) Patton, E., & Appelbaum, S. (2003), "*The Case for Case Studies in Management Research*", *Management Research News*, 26/5, 60-71
- (b) Eisenhardt, K., & Graebner, M. (2007), "*Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges*", *Academy of Management Journal*, 50/1, 25-32.
- (c) Cepeda, G., & Martin, D. (2005), "*A review of case studies publishing in Management Decision 2003-2004: Guides and criteria for achieving quality in qualitative research*", *Management Decision*, 43/6, 851-876.

Week 7

Discussion: Questions, questions, questions:

- (a) Text: Chapters 6 and 7
- (b) Darroch, J. (2009), "*Drucker on marketing: an interview with Peter Drucker*", *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 37/8, 8-11
- (c) Ronkainen, I.A., & Meneze, I. (1996), "*Implementing global marketing strategy: An interview with Whirlpool Corporation*", *International Marketing Review*, 13/3, 56-63

Week 8

Discussion: I've got my materials, now what?

Readings:

- (a) Text: Chapter 9, 10.
- (b) McDowell, W. H. (2002), "*Research Notes*", in Historical Research: A Guide, 126-132
- (c) McDowell, W. H. (2002), "*The Preparation of Drafts*", in Historical Research: A Guide, 133-143

Week 9 and Week 10: Work on Projects

Discussions with instructor

Week 11: Mon. Mar. 28th Projects Due – at the start of class
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Readings/Discussion: The future for Qualitative research

Kelle, U. (2006) *“Combining qualitative and quantitative methods in research practice: purposes and advantages”*, Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3, 293-311

Carlson, L. (2008) *“Qualitative vs quantitative research traditions: a needless and useless debate that hampers advertising and marketing knowledge development”* International Journal of Advertising, 27/4, 660-663

Kover, A.J. (2008) *“Qual vs quant ... again!”*, International Journal of Advertising, 27/4, 663-665

Week 12: Mon. Apr. 4th - Project Presentations – (plus course wrap up and review)
