

Ph.D. Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods

LIS 3300 (CRN 34859)

Dr. Stuart Shulman • Spring Term, 2008 • University of Pittsburgh

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Law Librarian Blog

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Security Alert: Think Twice About Using AOL Instant Messenger

C/Net is reporting the spread of a worm via AOL IM. One security expert calls this unnamed worm "a very nasty bundle" of malicious software including for the first time a so-called "rootkit."

"A rootkit is a tool designed to go undetected by the security software used to lock down control of a computer after an initial hack," the C/Net report explains. It's part of a "disturbing trend" using the popular IM systems to spread viruses.

[Read all about it.](#)

November 1, 2005 in [Web Communications](#) | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack \(0\)](#)

No Established Right of Access to a Prison Law Library for Defendants Representing Themselves

So ruled the Supreme Court in an unsigned opinion in *Kane v. Espitia*, 04-1538.

Bloomberg report

Mark Giangrande, DePaul Law Library, and Ron Jones, University of Cincinnati Law Library



Web Log (Blog)

Focus Group

Course Overview: The spring 2008 Ph.D. Seminar in Qualitative Research Methods is a hands-on review of the literature, tools, and strategies that inform a variety of qualitative researcher methods. Although the course is offered by a School of Information Sciences (SIS), it is intended to help prepare Ph.D. students across a wide range of disciplines who are conducting, or may be contemplating, a qualitative study or thesis. Opportunities for interesting qualitative research abound in traditional forms (ex., interview and focus group data or open ended survey answers) and novel new sources (ex., database and web content, or blog postings). Each student will learn to use ATLAS.ti, a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) qualitative data analysis package, and will complete a semester-long research project utilizing ATLAS.ti. Students will receive training in the use of ATLAS.ti during class time in UCSUR's Qualitative Data Analysis Program (QDAP) lab (<http://qdap.ucsur.pitt.edu>), and they will have user privileges on QDAP's "Coding Analysis Toolkit" (CAT), which is described on the QDAP web site at: <http://www.qdap.pitt.edu/cat.htm>.

Student skills developed and utilized in such a project can then be extended to the task of preparing and executing a successful dissertation, or carrying out critical professional activities, such as program or project evaluation. The SIS mission statement highlights the "uniquely interdisciplinary" nature of the education we offer. This seminar is interdisciplinary, both in the selection of texts and canonical readings (including a wide range of social science perspectives in addition to information science approaches), as well as the regular use of expert presenters from around the campus who have experience with diverse approaches to qualitative methods. The SIS mission also calls for education that prepares students to "develop resources and tools to create, organize, find, transmit, preserve, integrate, and use information," which is in fact an excellent way to describe the effective use of the qualitative research methods at the center of this seminar. Finally, the use of replicable and transparent qualitative methods is now ascendant amongst the competing priorities of educators, researchers, and funding agencies interested in advancing the use of computers and qualitative methods in research. Doctoral students who complete this seminar will be better positioned to write viable grants in support of their doctoral and post doctoral research efforts.

Reading: Readings must be completed for the day listed on the syllabus. In addition to supplemental handouts, required journal articles, and suggested readings catalogued on the syllabus, the required books are:

G.E. Gorman & P. Clayton, *Qualitative Research for the Information Professional: A Practical Handbook* (2nd Ed.)
D. Silverman (ed.), *Interpreting Qualitative Data* (3rd Ed.)
A.M. Huberman & M.B. Miles (ed.), *The Qualitative Researcher's Companion*

Qualitative Research Fluency Blogs (QRFBS): Each student will create and post weekly to a qualitative research fluency blog. The QRFBS will archive the path to qualitative research fluency that you find best suited to your needs and aspirations, and it will link together the efforts of each student with those of the others. In addition to the reading responses described below, the QRFBS are places to think out loud in response to readings, share the ideas animating your project, as well as to post responses to guest lectures by scholars visiting class.

Reading Responses: There are weekly required reading responses. Each response must be in the form of a post to your QRFBS that situates the assigned readings for that week in relationship to: a) your semester-long major project, and/or b) the goals of the class. The response should be a PhD-level analytical critique and argumentative extension of some aspect of the readings, rather than merely a summary of them. Outstanding posts will take advantage of the particular attributes of the blog medium to creatively link your analysis to other web-based resources and include images where appropriate.

Semester-Long Qualitative Project: Each student will design, implement and write up results from a semester-long qualitative research project. There is wide latitude about the size, scope, and nature of the data used in the project. The projects can be individual or small groups. Each project will make use of the COTS qualitative data analysis software ATLAS.ti. The final report should be written to the standards of a professional conference paper.

Class Participation: This is a seminar in which your ability to talk in an informed, analytical and interesting manner counts. Silent observation of seminar discussions is not permitted. Regular verbal participation in class is required for a passing grade and exemplary participation is required for a good or excellent grade.

Student Presentations: Every student will make a conference-style presentation about their semester-long project to be followed by questions and answers.

Reading Schedule

Week One (January 9): Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods [No in-class meeting Week One]

Dr. Shulman is attending [HICSS](#) and the ASU [Institute for Qualitative and Multi-method Research](#) all week

- Web-based class introductions and exercises spread out over the course of the week
 - Knowledge inventories and an overview of course requirements
 - Discussion of introductory readings via Blackboard and setting up QRFBS
 - Brainstorming early project ideas and areas of interest
- (King, Keohane & Verba) "The *Science* in Social Science," from *Designing Social Inquiry*
 - <http://press.princeton.edu/chapters/s5458.pdf>
- (Gibbs, Friese & Mangabeira) "The Use of New Technology in Qualitative Research"
 - <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/2-02/2-02hrsg-e.pdf>
- (Fielding & Lee) "Why Use Computers in Qualitative Research?"
 - Taken from *Computer Analysis and Qualitative Research*
 - Printed hard copies are available outside my UCSUR office (UPLAC #313)
- **Suggested** (browse): FQS Issue, "Using Technology in the Qualitative Research Process"
 - <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-e/inhalt2-02-e.htm>

Week Two (January 16): The (Soft?) Nature of Qualitative Research

- (S) Chapters 1 & 2
- (G&C) Chapter 1
- (H&M) Chapter 4
- (Carvajal) “The Artisan’s Tools: Critical Issues When Teaching and Learning CAQDAS”
- **Suggested:** (Bryman) “Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Research: How is it done?”
- **Suggested:** (Mason) “Mixing Methods in a Qualitatively Driven Way”

Week Three (January 23): Evaluating the Validity of Qualitative Research

- (G&C) Chapter 2
- (S) Chapter 8
- (H&M) Chapters 2 & 8
- (Morse) “Perfectly Healthy, but Dead: The Myth of Inter-Rater Reliability”
- **Suggested:** (Holloway & Tordes) “The Status of Method: Flexibility, Consistency and Coherence”
- **Suggested:** (Golafshani) “Understanding Reliability and Validity in Qualitative Research”

Week Four (January 30): Designing Qualitative Research

- (G&C) Chapters 3 & 4
- (S) Chapter 12
- (H&M) Chapter 1
- **Suggested:** (Morse) “The Politics of Evidence”
- **Suggested:** (Morse) “The Significance of Saturation”

Week Five (February 6): Fieldwork

- **Project status memo due in class for peer review sessions**
 - **Domain | Relevant Theory | Possible Questions, Data & Method**
- (G&C) Chapters 5, 6 & 11
- (S) Chapter 6
- **Suggested:** (Rogers-Dillon) “Hierarchical Qualitative Research Teams: Refining the Methodology”

Week Six (February 13): Texts

- (G&C) Chapter 10
- (S) Chapters 5
- (Bong) “Debunking Myths in Qualitative Data Analysis”
- **Suggested:** (Shulman) “Perverse Incentives: the Case Against Mass Emails”

Week Seven (February 20): Ethnography

- **Advanced research design memo due in class for peer review sessions**
 - **Specific Research Question(s) | Relationship Between Theory and Data/Method**
- (H&M) Chapter 3, 5 & 7
- (S) Chapter 3

Week Eight (February 27): Focus Group Research

- (S) Chapter 10
- (G&C) Chapter 9
- (Asbury) “Overview of Focus Group Research”

Week Nine (March 5): Interviews

- **Outline due in class for peer review sessions**
 - **Full Paper Outline | Annotated Bibliography | Preliminary Data Report**
- (G&C) Chapter 8
- (S) Chapter 4

Spring Break

Week Ten (March 19): Talk

- (H&M) Chapter 14
- (S) Chapter 9 & 10

Week Eleven (March 26): Visual Data

- (S) Chapter 7
- (Mason) "Visual Data in Applied Qualitative Research: Lessons from Experience"

Week Twelve (April 2): Empirical Studies and Policy

- (S) Chapters 11
- (G&C) Chapter 12
- (H&M) Chapter 12

Week Thirteen (April 9): Writing-up Results and Reflecting on Qualitative Research

- (H&M) Chapter 16
- (G&C) Chapter 13

Week Fourteen (April 16): Student Presentations

Full final paper due in class

Week Fifteen (April 23): Student Presentations