

Ph.D. Seminar in Information Systems & Technology: Qualitative Research Methods LIS 3600 (CRN 22981)

Dr. Stuart Shulman • Spring 2007 • University of Pittsburgh

Office: IS #604B • **SIS Office Hours:** Weds. 1-3 pm & by appointment

Office: UPLAC #604 • **UCSUR Office Hours:** Tues. 1-3 pm & by appointment

E-mail: Shulman@pitt.edu • **Home Page:** <http://shulman.ucsur.pitt.edu>

Phone: 412.624.3776 • **Fax:** 412.624.4810

Law Librarian Blog

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Tuesday, November 1, 2005

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 2007 Ph.D. Seminar in Information Systems and Technology focuses on qualitative research methods. This seminar is a hands-on review of the literature, tools and strategies that inform many qualitative researchers. Although the course is housed in 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 or a similar COTS product of their choice.

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 explicitly 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 and suggested readings catalogued on the class web site, 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 QRFB 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 about 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 QRFB 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 an 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 COTS qualitative data analysis software, such as ATLAS.ti, Ethnograph, NVivo, or MaxQDA. Students registered in the course will receive training in the use of ATLAS.ti during class time in UCSUR's Qualitative Data Analysis Program (<http://qdap.ucsur.pitt.edu>) lab, and they will have lab user privileges throughout the semester.

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 strongly discouraged. Regular participation in class is required for a passing grade and exemplary participation is required for a good or excellent grade. In particular, we have several guest speakers lined up to talk about their ongoing qualitative research, it is imperative that each and every student engage with these guests by asking thoughtful questions and offering constructive criticism.

Student Presentations: Every student will make a conference-style presentation with Q&A.

Reading Schedule

Week One (January 3): Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods

- Class introductions
- Knowledge inventory
- Overview of requirements
- Grounded theory exercise
- Brainstorming early project ideas and areas of interest

Week Two (January 10): The (Soft?) Nature of Qualitative Research

- (S) Chapters 1 & 2
- (G&C) Chapter 1
- (H&M) Chapter 4

Week Three (January 17): Evaluating the Validity of Qualitative Research

- (G&C) Chapter 2
- (S) Chapter 8
- (H&M) Chapters 2 & 8
- (King, Keohane & Verba) "The Science in Social Science," from *Designing Social Inquiry*

Week Four (January 24): Designing Qualitative Research

- (G&C) Chapters 3 & 4
- (S) Chapter 12
- (H&M) Chapters 1

Week Five (January 31): Fieldwork

- (G&C) Chapters 5, 6 & 11
- (S) Chapter 6

Week Six (February 7): Texts

- (G&C) Chapter 10
- (S) Chapters 5

Week Seven (February 14): Ethnography

- (H&M) Chapter 3, 5 & 7
- (S) Chapter 3

Week Eight (February 21): Focus Group Research

- (S) Chapter 10
- (G&C) Chapter 9

Week Nine (February 28): Interviews

- (G&C) Chapter 8
- (S) Chapters 7, 8 & 9

Week Ten (March 14): Talk

- (H&M) Chapter 14
- (S) Chapter 4

Week Eleven (March 21): Visual Data

- (S) Chapter 7

Week Twelve (March 28): Empirical Studies and Policy

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

Week Thirteen (April 4): Writing-up Results and Reflecting on Qualitative Research

- (H&M) Chapter 16
- (G&C) Chapter 13
- (S) Chapters 9 & 10

Week Fourteen (April 11): Student Presentations

Week Fifteen (April 18): Student Presentations