PSYCH 621  Advanced Qualitative Research Seminar Spring 2014

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Course Description
This seminar is an advanced qualitative research workshop that explores the theory and practice of qualitative research at an advanced level. The focus of the course is on method in qualitative research, particularly the exploration of the epistemology and practices of phenomenological methods in psychology. The workshop component of the course creates a space for the participants to develop, consult, and discuss appropriate methods for their own dissertation research and lead to a draft of a “method section” for their dissertations or other research projects of choice.

Required Readings
The readings for the course are structured to provide an introduction to phenomenological research as an example of a productive and rigorous method for qualitative research. We will

a) Lay out some of the basic philosophical concepts of phenomenology (experience, ephoon, reflexivity, noesis, field, horizon, transcendence etc.)
b) Explore their applications in research in the social sciences
c) Trace the diverse variations phenomenological research has assumed
d) Discuss the advantages and limitations of the phenomenological method

The course will begin with selections from the classic text,
Which is a discussion of the philosophical phenomenological method and lays the groundwork for understanding the phenomenological epistemology and terminology as it applies to research in general.

This will be followed with readings from Amedeo Giorgi’s book
Which provides a rigorous application of Husserlian Phenomenology to psychological research. In this reading we explore some of the basic requirements of scientific research and show how qualitative research in psychology fulfills the demands of validity, repeatability, and objectivity.

The readings from IPA will introduce us to qualitative research design as well as thematic analysis.
The main readings will conclude with sections from Max van Manen’s book on hermeneutic phenomenological research:

Throughout the semester we will examine a number of Duquesne dissertation method sections to get a sense of how to design a qualitative study, how to elicit experiential accounts, how to analyze the data, and how to write up the results. We will pay special attention to feminist applications of the phenomenological method. Dissertations and supplementary readings will be posted on the Blackboard course website.

**Course Requirements**

Workshop participants are expected to complete all weekly readings and assignments and contribute to the seminar discussion. Final grades will be based on class participation, quality and level of preparation for individual class presentations, and the final paper.

Over the course of the semester, each student will be responsible for three presentations:
1. preparation and presentation of a section or topic from the assigned readings
2. presentation of the method section of a Duquesne dissertation
3. Presentation of their own proposed research project, which includes other articles or dissertations with a similar approach.

At the end of this course the students must submit a 10-15 page paper that presents their chosen method(s), the rationale for the appropriateness of the method for the phenomenon under investigation, and a discussion of the relevant literature on method.

Final papers are due on May 5th at noon. Late papers will not be accepted and "I" grades will not be granted in the absence of extraordinary circumstances.

**Learning goals:**

1. Students will acquire a sound knowledge of the philosophical foundations of qualitative psychological research.
2. Students will have knowledge of the scientific assumptions and procedures as they pertain to qualitative psychological inquiry. They will have competent research skills in design, data collection, and analysis that can be adapted to diverse areas of human experience and behavior.
3. Students will have a general knowledge of the main theoretical approaches to qualitative research, and will gain specialized knowledge of phenomenological research theories and applications within the field.
4. Students will understand the importance of considering individual and cultural differences in the research situation. This includes being aware of their own cultural and individual assumptions and how the research process itself is culturally produced.
5. Students will conduct themselves academically, in both their research and theorizing, in a manner that is sensitive to the well-being of their research participants, and the course emphasizes the
ethical and political dimensions of qualitative research.

6. Students will demonstrate scholarship worthy of our scholar-practitioner model of training.

The fulfillment of these learning goals will be demonstrated through the above assignments, and will be part of the rubric for grading the final paper.

Course outline
Jan. 9  Introduction
Jan. 16  Ihde, p. 15 - 55
Jan. 23  Ihde, p. 55-112
Jan. 30  Giorgi, p. 57-66 (The Research Process)  
           p. 87-137 (The Phenomenological Method)
Feb. 6+13 Giorgi, p. 139 (The Application of the Method)  
           Duquesen Dissertations TBA
Feb 20   Smith, p. 40-107 (Planning and IPA research study/ Collecting Data/Analysis)
Feb 27   No class, conference
Mar. 6   No class, spring break
Mar. 13  Smith, p. 135-159 (IPA studies)
Mar. 20  dissertation workshop
Mar. 27  dissertation workshop
Apr. 3   van Manen  p. 35-74 (Turning to the Nature of Lived Experience)
Apr. 10  van Manen  p. 77-110 (Hermeneutic Phenomenological Reflection)
Apr. 17  no class, Easter Break
Apr. 24  Review and wrap-up
May 5    Noon: final paper is due

As outlined in the University Code of Student Rights, Responsibilities, and Conduct, academic dishonesty (plagiarism etc.) will not be tolerated and will be subject to disciplinary actions and failure of the course. Students with documented disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodations if needed. If you need accommodations, please contact the Office of Freshman Development and Special Student Services in 309 Duquesne Union (412-396-6657) as soon as possible. Accommodations will not be granted retrospectively.