

Texas A&M University-Commerce, Spring 2013  
PSCI 512.01W      Qualitative Research Methods  
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                                 Office Hours: TR 10:00am – noon, and by appointment

**Course Objectives:** This course is designed to introduce you to some principles and methods of qualitative research particularly as applied in the discipline of political science. The course will give you an overview of some of these methods through a combination of theoretical discussion and hands-on practical experience. Topics include approaches to qualitative research, designing qualitative approaches to research, ethics of social research as well as the various methods of qualitative research such as interviews, ethnography, case studies, and narrative, etc.

**Learning Outcomes:** This course has several objectives.

1. To familiarize you with the debates concerning the methodological and epistemological issues involved in qualitative research.
2. To familiarize you with the various methods and methodologies of qualitative research and give you practical exercises throughout the semester to allow you to practice those tools.

**Required Texts:**

Interviews in Qualitative Research. Nigel King and Christine Horrocks. 2010. Sage Publications. ISBN: 978-4129-1257-0

Conducting Online Surveys. Valeria M. Sue and Lois A. Ritter. 2012. Sage Publications. ISBN 978-1-4129-9225-1

A Handbook for Social Science Field Research: Essays and Bibliographic Sources on Research Design and Methods. Ellen Perelman and Sara R. Curran (editors). 2006. Sage Publications. ISBN 1-4129-1681-X

**Other assigned readings posted on E-college and noted in the course schedule.**

**Research Design Topics:** For those of you who come to campus, it would help if you make an appointment to talk face-to-face with me about your research design. For those of you who cannot make it to campus, I am willing to Skype with you so we can talk about your research design. E-mail me if you prefer to Skype and we can set up virtual appointments.

**Assignments and Grades:**

**1. Discussions 60 points and Assignments 20 points:** 80 points. Discussions are based on the required reading and consist of both Original Posts (OPs) and Reply Posts (RPs). Specific details about discussion posts are in a separate section of this syllabus. Please note that if you took an e-college class with me in the past, this semester's discussions do not follow my typical pattern of OPs and RPs. Each week has a different requirement of OPs and RPs and posting deadlines. **Discussion prompts will be coded in red.** All details including due dates are in the

assignment section of the syllabus and on the assignment tab for each week on e-college. Assignments will consist of hands-on exercises. There are NO reply posts to assignments. **Assignments will be coded in green.** These exercises are detailed in the reading section of the syllabus and are posted on e-college with due dates. I will not accept any late discussions or exercises. In most cases, assignments are posted in the corresponding week's discussion tab—there will be a separate discussion thread for assignments. Only your draft research design assignments are e-mailed to me and not posted under the discussion tab.

There are a total of 15 weeks to the semester, including discussion on the research design papers. All discussion posts must be submitted by the deadlines for each week. Do not wait until the last minute to post and/or reply because you are not adding to the discussion and you will not receive full credit for posts entered in the last hours. I will leave the threads visible but once discussion has closed, you will not be able to post about that segment of the readings.

2. **Research Design:** 20 points. You are required to prepare a research design that utilizes one of the qualitative methods we are learning about this semester. The paper needs to include a discussion of your research question, the justification for that question (why is it important), a literature review (what research has already been done on this topic), an explanation and defense of your research methodology, a section discussing what kind of data you will use and how you will collect it (or generate it) and how you will analyze your data, and a tentative conclusion. You will need to justify your methods using the readings from the course. Please note that a research design does not mean you actually conduct the research—the design is similar to a thesis proposal—that is, what you will do when you begin your research. I will post a word document that gives some basis guidelines on developing a research design in the document sharing section.

- You must upload your paper in the Document sharing section of our class by Saturday, May 4 by 11:59pm. The papers should be no less than fifteen and no more than twenty-five, double-spaced pages in length (not including your bibliography). Papers must be formatted according to the American Political Science Association (APSR) style guidelines, typed, double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font. For formatting correctness, go to the most recent edition of the APSR (through the library database) and review the references/bibliography as formatted in the journal's current articles.

The last week of class you are required to provide constructive feedback on two of your classmates papers. Please note that we will be reading about several different ways to construct a research design paper but in general it should follow the tenets described above.

- (Grade scale: 100-90=A; 89-80=B; 79-70=C)

#### Discussion Board Instructions and Requirements:

Format and style. Do not use slang or text speak, such as TBH, or BTW etc. and do not use weird fonts. Your writing should reflect careful analysis of the readings. It should be error free and written in complete sentences. **Do not use long quotes from the readings as part of your posts.** I strongly recommend that you type your posts in a word document and save it, then copy and paste it to e-college. Do not use all CAPS please.

### Discussion Board types of posts: Original Posts (OP) and Reply Posts (RP)

- In response to the readings, you must contribute to the discussion prompts for week's reading segment. You will find the discussion prompts in the "Assignment" tab for each week and in the syllabus. **In some cases, my discussion prompts can get lengthy and contain multiple questions—do NOT attempt to answer each question within the prompt—but you must indicate which prompt you are focusing on and stay on topic.**
- For each week's reading, you must post that week's required Original Posts (OP) to my discussion prompts. Your OPs must be at least 300 words in length. You will not receive full credit for discussion posts if you post or respond in only a few sentences. You must include a word count in your posts.
- The number of RPs each week will depend on the number of OPs. There is always 1 RP for every OP. Some weeks there will only be 1 OP, so this means only 1 RP. Other weeks it will be 2 OPs and 2 RPs. Be sure to read the assignment for each week carefully so you know how many OPs and RPs are required for that particular week and when they are due.
- Because discussions are meant to be interactive, you also need to post Reply Posts (RP) to your classmates' postings. When replying, please address your fellow classmate by name. Reply Posts (RP) should be at least 100 words minimum and 200 words maximum. If you do not address your classmates by name(s) or your RPs are not the prescribed length, you will not receive full credit for your RPs.
- When making both OP and RP, I am looking for your careful reading of the material and your ability to analyze the readings, respond to questions, and use of the readings to provide evidence of your participation. I am NOT looking for you to summarize or simply quote from the readings.

### Grading Rubric for Discussion Posts (OP and RP)

4 Points: Your OPs are at least 300 words in length, and your RPs are at least 100 words in length and are addressed to your fellow classmate(s) discussions and your replies address the questions in the prompts and demonstrate an understanding of the reading material and critical thinking. You do NOT wait until the last hours of the discussion to post both OPs and RPs.

2-3 Points: OPs are less than 300 words, RPs are less than 100 words each and do not address your classmates by name, discussions and replies merely summarize the material. Posting only in the last hours of discussion.

0-1: no postings, or missing OPs, RPs posts, waiting until the last minute to post.

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ALL students with disabilities should be referred to the Office of Disability Resources and Services where they can fill out an application, attach recent documentation, and apply for eligibility. The OSDR is located in room 132 of Gee Library and their phone number is (903) 886-5835.

“All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student's Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)

As instructor, I reserve the right to amend, modify, or adjust this syllabus as appropriate.

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Plagiarism. “What is Plagiarism—Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

“In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward. But can words and ideas really be stolen? According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file). Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to changing the words of an original source is not sufficient to prevent plagiarism. If you have retained the essential idea of an original source, and have not cited it, then no matter how drastically you may have altered its context or presentation, you have still plagiarized.” ([www.plagiarism.org](http://www.plagiarism.org))

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Reading and Course Outline and Discussion assignments:

**Week 1      January 14-19**

- Introduction to the course
- **Discussion Prompt “Introductions” (due Wednesday January 16 at 11:59pm)** Introduce yourself to the other members of the class. Talk about your research interests (regardless of your discipline). Don’t worry about the feasibility of what you want to study or even if you are not certain exactly what you would like to research...most of you have some idea of what you want to know more about, what inspires you or what you want to study in more depth. Don’t talk about the mechanics of your research interests but keep it topical. Also, what books, scholarship, etc., has informed your research interests to date. **There is NO reply post to this OP.**
- **This week we just want to get a sense of the methodological direction that Political Science has taken over the past 50 years. We will read several journal articles whose contents might seem like another language to many of you—in the coming weeks the terminology and concepts will become much clearer. I am also easing our way into the texts to give everyone an opportunity to purchase their textbooks as well. Also note that this is the ONLY week that your two OPs and RPS posts are due on Saturday. Read the assignment section for each week carefully so you know the due dates for both discussions and assignments.**
- **Read** Introduction Lecture Notes in Document Sharing section. (**Read first**).
- **Read** Forward and Introduction in the Perelman and Curran book (P&C).
- **Read** Mahoney and Goertz, A Tale of Two Cultures...
- **Read** Dahl, The Behavioral Approach to Political Science...
- **Read** Review Essay by George Thomas, Qualitative Foundations of Political Science Methodology
- **Discussion Prompt Research in Political Science (due Saturday January 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm)—this discussion requires 2OPs and 2 RPs.** Discuss the articles and their various approaches for understanding political life. Why the qualitative/quantitative divide? Can we bridge this gap? What are the shortcomings of each? What do you believe is your ontological world view especially with regards to what you want to research? What are the 6 interrelated stimuli that Dahl discusses that paved the way for behavioralism and is behavioralism just a “mood”? What is Shapiro’s position on method-driven versus theory-driven research? What is the difference between them? Discuss the major contributions of writers on qualitative research methods that Thomas reviews—how do they compare/contrast?

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**Week 2      January 21-26      Elements of a Qualitative Research Design**

- **Read** P&C Chapter 10 Essentials for Research Design. When reading, substitute “thesis” or the 595 Project in place of “dissertation”.
- **Read** Sage Chapter 3 Designing a Qualitative Study in the document sharing section
- **Read** Chapters 1 and 2 in the King and Horrocks text (hereafter K&H)
- **Read** Shapiro, Problems, Methods, and Theories in the Study of Politics...

- **View** “Concept Map—what the heck is this?” in the Weblibliography section
- **View** BYU Concept Mapping in the Weblibliography section. This page has several links to a variety of concept mapping designs.
- **Discussion Prompts “What is a Qualitative Research Design”—this discussion requires 2 OPs and 2 RPs. One OP and one RP must be posted by Thursday, January 24<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm and the second OP and RP must be posted by Saturday, January 26 at 11:59pm**
- What do the authors have in common when they talk about qualitative research? How do they differ? Why is writing the research proposal the most difficult part of your research? What are the three logics that P& C discuss? How do these logics relate to your research? What do the authors say about “causality”—that is the idea that A causes B.
- What are the different formats to qualitative research that the Sage Chapter 3 notes and how do they differ from P&C? How does Chapter 3 organize qualitative research and where do you think your research would fall (at least initially). Discuss the issue of ethics raised in this chapter (note we spend an entire week on this topic later in the semester). Does your research fall into these ethical areas?
- What are the differences between methods and methodology according to K&H? What are the differences among the differing epistemological positions?
- **Assignment: Begin to think about your research topic by developing a concept map. Review the two sites under the Weblibliography section and design a concept map. Pick the format that works best for you. Post your concept map in the discussion section by Saturday, January 26 at 11:59pm. There are NO RPs to this assignment. When posting your concept map in the discussion tab, do not create a topic, just use your name in the topic/subject line.**
  - Suggested reading in document sharing: Gerring article: What Makes a Concept Good...

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**Week 3      January 28-February 2      Political Science and History**

- **Read** Kavanagh, “Why Political Science Needs History”
- **Read** Yetiv, “History, International Relations and Integrated Approaches...”
- **Read** Thies, “Pragmatic Guide to Qualitative Historical Analysis in Study of International Relations.”
- **Discussion Prompts on the relationship between History and Political Science. This discussion requires 2OPs and 2 RPs. One OP and one RP must be posted by Thursday, January 31<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm, the second OP and RP must be posted by Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm.**
- Discuss the specific problems encountered by political scientists as they conduct archival research or rely on secondary source material produced by historians as analyzed by Cameron Thies. Be sure to discuss what he means by qualitative historical analysis, the selection of source materials and the differences between primary and secondary sources. What are Thies’s recommendations to reduce bias? What historical materials do you need to conduct your own research? How will you overcome the quandary identified by Thies?

- Discuss Yetiv’s article what are the limits and uses of history? How does Yetiv “operationalize” (define) history? Discuss Kavanagh—how do History and Political Science compare? How does Kavanagh conceptualize History, why did Political Science abandon its reliance on History....
- **Assignment: please submit to me via e-mail a one page word document of your proposed research topic with a list of at least 5 sources that you have perused to date. I want to know exactly what you want to research—be specific. Don’t worry about how you are going to undertake your research, at this stage we just want to identify the topic and the direction your reading of the literature should take...If it is longer than one page, I will return it to you! This is due to me by Saturday, February 1<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm. Make sure you get an e-mail confirmation from me that I received your document.**

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**Week 4      February 4-9 Archives**

- **Read** P&C Chapter 1 Archives
- **Read** Skemer, “Political Science and the use of archives”
- **Read** Schmidt, “Using Archives: Guide to Effective Research”
- **Read** Using Archival Sources in Legislative Research—Extension of Notes from the American Political Science Association.
- **Discussion Prompts on Archival Research. This discussion requires only 1 OP and 1 RP this week. Discussion posts are due by Thursday, February 7 at 11:59pm**
- Discuss the individual experiences of the researchers using archives. How did archival work enrich their research? What is the difference between a library and an archive? How would you begin to find an archive related to your research? What does Frisch and Kelly give as the five reasons to consider taking the road less traveled (and why do they call archival work the road less traveled?). What search strategies does Linda Whitaker provide?
- **Assignment: Find an archive. Assume that you have the means and time to visit this archive to conduct research. What types of materials do they have that would contribute to your research? What is the process for using the archives—what hours are they open, can you photocopy materials, is there a fee, are there limits on the amount of materials you may request, can you bring a laptop, will you have internet access, do they have materials that you can access online, etc. This assignment must be posted in the discussion section of this week’s by Saturday, February 9 at 11:59pm.**

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**Week 5      February 11-16      Case Study**

- **Read** P&C Chapter 2 and Chapter 9, Case Study and Essentials for the Case Study Method
- **Read** Odell, “Case Study Methods in International Political Economy”
- **Read** Flyvbjerg, “Five Misunderstandings About Case Study Research”
- **Read** Yanow, Schwartz-Shea & Freitas, Case Study Research in Political Science”
- **Read** Gerring, “What is a Case and What is it Good For?”

- **Discussion Prompt on Case Study. This discussion requires 2 OPs and 2 RPs this week. One OP and one RP must be posted by Thursday, February 14 at 11:59pm and the second OP and RP must be posted by Saturday, February 16 at 11:59pm.**
  - Talk about the controversy of using a case study—is it really just a tension between small-n and large-n studies in political science? Discuss Yanow, et al differences between a single-site case study and a multi-site case study—is it just a difference of N? What happens when you add “comparative” to case study? In what ways have researchers who utilize case study developed strategies to overcome validity and selection bias?
  - What are the major contributions that Flyvbjerg brings to the discussion about the case study? What did his experience at Harvard teach him about the use of case studies. What strategies does he discuss for selecting cases? How does Odell differ from Flyvbjerg in defining types of case studies? What advantages and disadvantages does Odell discuss?
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### **Week 6      February 18-23      Ethnography**

- **Read** P&C Chapter 3, Chapter 8, Chapter 11, Chapter 12
- **Read** Gagnon, “Thoughts on ethnography and political science”
- **Read** Lorraine Bayard de Volo and Edward Schatz, “From the Inside Out: Ethnographic Methods in Political Research.”
- **Read** Mitropolitski, “For an inductive, interpretative and ethnographic (re)turn in political science. The case of the European integration and its influence on the post-communist democratization.”
- **Read** Wedeen, “Reflections on Ethnographic Work in Political Science.”
- **Read** Qualitative Methods, Newsletter of the APSA Organized Section on Qualitative Methods, Symposium on Field Research pages 1-15. (You do not need to read the Symposium on Discourse and Content Analysis pages 15 on...)
- **Read** Lee Ann Fujii, “Conducting Fieldwork in the Aftermath of War and Genocide.”
- **Discussion Prompt for Ethnography. This discussion requires 2 OPs and 2 RPs. One OP and one RP are due by Thursday, February 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm and the second OP and RP is due by Saturday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:59pm.**
- Talk about Gagnon’s ethnographic experiences. How do Gagnon’s experiences compare/contrast with Lee Ann Fujii’s work in Rwanda? Discuss Fujii’s preparation and the actual methodology of her research, how does she defend her methodology, who influenced her choice of methods? Discuss Bayard de Volo and Schatz’s view of ethnography and what do they consider to be the inaccuracies about ethnographic work? How do they distinguish political science ethnographic work from anthropology? What are the objections to the use of ethnography in Political Science and what do they suggest to overcome these objections? In what ways does the work of Fujii and Gagnon fulfill this?
- What is the HDA approach to research and why is it considered to be the “main” in political science? Why is the inductive approach frowned upon? How does Mitropolitski show us that both the HDA approach and the inductive approach can explain the same phenomenon? Wedeen talks about the differences between positivist and interpretive ethnography—what contributions has ethnography made to political science research? What was the influence of Geertz on ethnography in political science and later Scott? What is productive complementarity and how can methods be mixed?

- What practical information does the symposium on Field Research provide and what of the experiences of the contributors? What about afterwards? What about the issue of ethics of working in the field? How do the authors this week address the issue of ethics generally and in their own fieldwork? What do the authors have to say about processing the field experience and when fieldwork is concluded?
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**Week 7      February 25- March 2      Oral Histories and Narrative**

- **Read** P&C Chapter 4
  - **Read** K&H Chapter 11
  - **Read** Thomson, “Four Paradigms Transformations in Oral History.”
  - **Read** Jones, “Blended Voices: Crafting a Narrative From Oral History Interviews.”
  - **Read** Patterson and Monroe, “Narrative in Political Science.”
  - **Read** Stivers, “Reflections on the Role of Personal Narrative in Social Science.”
  - **Read** Shensav, “Political Narrative and Political Reality.”
  - **Discussion Prompt on Oral Histories and Narrative. This discussion requires 2 OPs and 2 RPs. One OP and RP is due by Thursday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm and the second is due by Saturday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:59pm.**
  - How can oral histories be both a source and a method? When are they useful for research in political science? What are some of the so-called pitfalls of relying on oral histories both practically and in terms of validity?
  - In Jones’s research, what do you do with the information? That is, how do you edit, extract, and condense your narratives? What kinds of decisions must the researcher make? What process did Jones use—what principles guided her decision making? What is the responsibility of the editor? As Patterson and Monroe note, what do the philosophical assumptions claim about the role of narrative as a method of research? (We read about these the first weeks of the class) What are the various forms of narrative and how are they used in research in both social science research in general and political science research in particular? What does Patterson and Monroe tell us about the work of Somers and Gibson and speculate what they have to offer to political science about the use of narrative. What caveats are in order?
  - Discuss Stivers and her propositions ranging from subjectivity to truth—how does this apply to your own research? Thomson discusses memory. How can memory inform our research in political science and how could memory function as a methodology?
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**Week 8      March 4-9      Surveys and Secondary Data**

- **Read** P&C Chapter 6, Surveys and Secondary Data Sources
- **Read** Sue and Ritter (S&R) Chapter 1, Introduction
- **Discussion Prompt on Surveys and Secondary Data Sources. This discussion requires only 1 OP and 1 RP this week and it is due before Saturday, March 9 at 11:59pm.**
- Discuss the issues addressed in P&C about the potential value of qualitative data in research design, how to find and use survey data collected by others, when and how to conduct’s one’s

own survey and how to best utilize survey data in one's analysis. Also discuss the various forms of survey in the S&R text.

- **Assignment:** Select any one of the following secondary data sites. Peruse their websites and write a summary of their objectives, the type of datasets they provide, how they conduct their surveys, their methods (how the survey's were administered, etc.). Post your observations in the discussion section for this week by Saturday, March 9 at 11:59pm.
  - <http://www.latinobarometro.org/latino/latinobarometro.jsp>
  - <http://www.afrobarometer.org>
  - <http://www.pewglobal.org>
- **Assignment:** Submit via e-mail a draft of your research design in progress to date. You need to also include a working bibliography. You need to e-mail me a draft of your research design by Saturday, March 9 at 11:59pm.

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**Week 9      March 18-23    Interviews and Ethical Issues**

- **Read** K&H Chapters 3, 4, and 7.
- **Read** Wood, "Field Research During War: Ethical Dilemmas"
- **Read** Adams and Megaw, "Researchers and the Rural Poor—Asking Questions in the Third World."
- **Read** Rivera et al, "Interviewing Political Elites, Lessons from Russia."
- **Read** Woliver, "Ethical Dilemmas in Personal Interviewing."
- **Discussion Prompt on Interviews and Ethical Issues. This week there are two OPs and two RPs. One OP and one RP must be posted by Thursday, March 21<sup>st</sup> at 11:59pm. The second OP and RP must be posted by Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> at 11:59pm.**
- Discuss the elements of designing a qualitative interview as well as the practical and moral issues pertaining to the ethics of qualitative interviewing.
- Discuss Wood's methods and the process of her interviews, what ethical challenges did she face? What do Adams and Megaw offer with regards to interviews in the Third World and what lessons do Rivera et al offer from elite interviewing in Russia. What observations does Woliver offer? What do elite interviews offer us as researchers? What are the methodological challenges and informational benefits of elite interviews?

**Assignment:** Go to the Afrobarometer survey at <http://www.afrobarometer.org> and under the Survey and Methods tab, write a summary that describes how they designed their study, gained access, and the types of questions they asked. Did they get informed consent? Did they follow the protocols of ethics? Give examples from the survey of the questions the Afrobarometer asked that correspond to each one of the six types of questions (page 36-37 in K&H text). This assignment is due on Saturday, March 23<sup>rd</sup> by 11:59pm.

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**Week 10      March 25-30      Focus Groups and Remote Interviewing**

- **Read** K&H Chapters 5, and 6.
- **Read** Morgan, "Focus Groups"

- **Discussion Prompts on Focus Groups and Remote Interviewing. This week there is only 1 OP and 1 RP. Use the time to work on your research designs! Your OP and RP are due no later than Saturday, March 30<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm. Do not wait until the last hours to post!!**
  - Discuss the potential use of focus groups and political science research. What practical issues does one have to consider when relying on focus groups. What are the various methods for conducting remote interviews? What are the practical and ethical issues associated with remote interviewing. If you could incorporate remote interviewing in your research, how would you do this?
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### **Week 11      **April 1-6**      **Reflexivity and Data Analysis****

- **Read** K&H Chapters 8 and 9
  - **Read** Aberbach and Rockman, “Conducting and Coding Elite Interviews.”
  - **Read** Fuji, “Shades of Truth and Lies...”
  - **Read** Berry, “Validity and Reliability Issues in Elite Interviewing”
  - **Read** Leech, “Asking Questions: Techniques for Semi-structured interviews.”
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  - **Discussion Prompts on Reflexivity and Data Analysis. This week there are 2 OPs and 2 RPs. One OP and RP is due by Thursday, April 4<sup>th</sup> at 11:59 pm and the second OP and RP is due no later than Saturday, April 6<sup>th</sup> by 11:59pm.**
  - Discuss reflexivity and how it can inform and benefit your own research. What are the elements/process involved in analyzing your interview data. What insights does Berry provide regarding validity and reliability? Discuss thematic analysis. How useful is this type of analysis and what types of interviews is it best suited for?
  - Discuss Fujii’s article—what are the meta-data that she refers to? What were her strategies for analysis and attending to the meta-data, what are backstage decisions? What insights do Aberbach and Rockman provide and how useful are Leech’s techniques.
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### **Week 12      **April 8-13**      **Planning the Online Survey and Sampling****

- **Read** S&R Chapters 2 and 3 (We read Chapter 1 earlier in the semester)
  - **Read** Gallup’s article on “How Polls are Conducted”
  - **Examine this website:** <http://electionstudies.org/nesguide/nesguide.htm>
- This is the website for the American National Election Studies (ANES). They collect data on nine topic areas.
- **Sign up for Survey Monkey**—please note, this is FREE. Do not pay for any enhanced features, etc. Peruse this website and familiarize yourself with how to create a survey, what types of surveys you can create, how to analyze, etc.
  - **Discussion Prompt on Planning the Online Survey and Sampling. This discussion requires 1 OP and 1 RP. Your OP and RP must be posted by Thursday, April 11 at 11:59pm.**
  - In what ways can survey’s enhance research in Political Science—be specific. Compare and contrast Gallup’s methodology with ANES. How do these compare with Survey Monkey. In

what way can online tools like Survey Monkey aid your own research? What about the use of Facebook for surveys? What would be the advantages/disadvantages of FB as an online survey tool?

- **Assignment:** For this assignment you are going to create two charts. Style and format are up to you but each chart must only be one page in length. Basically they are to function as a quick information/reference guide. These charts are due on Saturday, April 13 at 11:59pm.
  - Chart 1: Create a one-page chart that essentially describes/summarizes the types of online surveys featured in the text and the advantages/disadvantages of each. Again, this chart is meant to be a quick reference guide.
  - Chart 2: Create a one-page checklist of ethical/legal guidelines for conducting survey research—be sure to make use of the information in Appendix A.

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### **Week 13**      **April 15-19 Writing Survey Questions, Developing the Instrument, Conducting the Survey**

- **Read** S&R Chapters 4, 5, and 6.
- **Visit the following websites to understand more fully the levels of measurement. These are important to understand even when we undertake qualitative research. The type of data you collect with surveys determines how you can measure your data and how you write your survey questions. The textbook does not give us enough information on these categories and I have included the websites below for more details.**
  - <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/measlevl.php>
  - <http://weber.ucsd.edu/~aronatas/levmeas.html>
  - [http://infinity.cos.edu/faculty/woodbury/stats/tutorial/Data\\_Levels.htm](http://infinity.cos.edu/faculty/woodbury/stats/tutorial/Data_Levels.htm)
  - [http://www.polsci.wvu.edu/duval/ps601/Notes/Levels\\_of\\_Measure.html](http://www.polsci.wvu.edu/duval/ps601/Notes/Levels_of_Measure.html)
- **Discussion Prompts. There is one OP and RP due this week. Your OP and RP are due no later than Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.**
- Discuss questions 2 and 3 at the end of Chapter 4 (page 75).
- **Assignment:** Complete the exercises in Chapter 5 (pages 105-106). Read the exercise carefully! Post your survey in the discussion tab no later than Saturday, April 19<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.

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### **Week 14**      **April 22-27 Analyzing Surveys**

- **Read** S&R Chapter 7 (up to page 158, we are not going to utilize inferential statistics—only descriptive statistics) and Chapter 8
- **Please note that there are no discussions this week—just an assignment.**
- **Assignment:** create a survey using Survey Monkey on any topic of your choice. Make sure that you have at least 10 questions which is the max allowed with free Survey Monkey. Once you create the survey, you need to add our classmates (and me) to your list of recipients and send the survey. I will provide everyone's information to all of you in e-mail. Please note that this is a learning experience only and no one should use any of the replies for anything other than our learning experience this semester.
  - Please respond to your classmates surveys as quickly as possible. Yes, this will take a bit of time because you are responding to anywhere from 12-15 surveys—however, they

- are short in length. Because I am going to ask you to look only at validity (and not reliability), your responses to the survey questions are your own (message me if you need further interpretation of this)
- Once you collect the responses, use the analyze result feature on Survey Monkey and report your findings as follows:
    - One paragraph explaining why you chose the survey you did.
    - What were your findings—here you can reproduce any charts, tables, etc. that you found useful to help report findings. Were your findings valid? What made them so?
    - Talk about the process and usefulness of using a tool like Survey Monkey—the ease of use, the advantages, disadvantages, etc.
  - Please complete this assignment no later than Saturday April 27<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm
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**Week 15**      April 29-May 4

- Complete research designs and make revisions as necessary. Your research design papers must be uploaded to e-college by Sunday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm.
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**Finals Week**    May 6-11 This is under Week 15 on our e-college course page.

Read two research designs of your fellow classmates and provide feedback under the discussion prompt.

- **Discussion Prompt on Presentations: Please provide feedback on 2 of your classmates research designs (due by May 11<sup>th</sup> at 11:59pm).** This is meant to be constructive. Please comment on the significance of your classmates design—did they do a good job of substantiating why their research is important (this means their literature review was solid). Do you have a clear idea of what they want to do and how they want to do it? Comment on their methodology—is it appropriate for the subject matter, did they address any ethical issues involved, etc.

As instructor, I reserve the right to amend, modify, or adjust this syllabus as needed.

**“All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.” (See Student’s Guide Handbook, Policies and Procedures, Conduct)**

**Students with Disabilities:**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

**Office of Student Disability Resources and Services**  
**Texas A&M University-Commerce**  
**Gee Library, Room 132**  
**Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835**  
**Fax (903) 468-8148**  
[StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

## **TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS**

**Technology:** Please take the “Student Orientational Tutorial” linked to your main courses page within eCollege that you should have completed prior to beginning this course. In addition to reliable web service on a daily basis for your online sessions, you also need access to Microsoft Word or to word processing software that you can save files in “Microsoft Word” compatible style. You also need a reliable place to save and keep copies of your coursework files for storage and reference.

You need the following to assist you in preparing to use technology successfully in this course.

- Internet access/connection – high speed recommended (not dial-up)
- Internet browser software (Internet Explorer and Mozilla Firefox work best)
- Word Processor (MS Word)

Additionally, the following hardware and software are necessary to use eCollege:

Our campus is optimized to work in a Microsoft Windows environment. This means our courses work best if you are using a Windows operating system (XP or newer) and a recent version of Microsoft Internet Explorer (6.0, 7.0, or 8.0).

It is strongly recommended that you perform a “Browser Test” prior to the start of your course. To launch a browser test, login in to eCollege, click on the ‘myCourses’ tab, and then select the “Browser Test” link under Support Services.

## **ACCESS AND NAVIGATION**

This course uses eCollege, the Learning Management System used by Texas A&M University-Commerce. To get started with the course, go to: <https://leo.tamu-commerce.edu/login.aspx>. You will need your CWID and password to log in to the course. If you do not know your CWID or have forgotten your password, contact Technology Services at 903.468.6000 or [helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu](mailto:helpdesk@tamu-commerce.edu).

## **COMMUNICATION AND SUPPORT**

Emailing the professor’s university email address located at the top of this syllabus is the best way to reach me. In every email, please make sure to provide your full name at the end, which course you are enrolled in, and a description of what your request or question is.

I will communicate with students through the email address you have on file in MyLeo (make sure yours is up to date and working throughout the semester) and eCollege announcements. In all forms of class communication including all online forums, students are expected and required to maintain a respectful tone and use semiformal to formal language.

### **eCollege Student Technical Support**

Texas A&M University-Commerce provides students technical support in the use of eCollege. The student help desk may be reached by the following means 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Chat Support:** Click on '*Live Support*' on the tool bar within your course to chat with an eCollege Representative.

**Phone:** 1-866-656-5511 (Toll Free) to speak with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

**Email:** helpdesk@online.tamuc.org to initiate a support request with eCollege Technical Support Representative.

**Help:** Click on the '*Help*' button on the toolbar for information regarding working with eCollege

**Technological Failure:** “If at any time you experience technical problems (e.g., you can't log in to the course, you can't see certain material, etc.) please contact the eCollege HelpDesk, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The HelpDesk can be reached by clicking on the HelpDesk link in the Help pages as described above, or by sending an email directly to helpdesk@online.tamuc.org. You may also reach the HelpDesk by calling (toll-free) 1-866-656-5511.” This information is also available through the “Technical Support” tab on the course main menu. Course instructors are not responsible for technical failures and should only be notified in cases of repeated failure or lack of response by the HelpDesk.