

Advanced Qualitative Research Methods: Case Study (RMTD 470)

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Course Overview

Course Description

This course will be an in-depth study of a qualitative research methodology, case study research. Students will have an opportunity to consider the value of case study research within social science research, explore various approaches to doing case studies, and engage in doing a case study. Through the process of studying case study research methodology in-depth, various issues common across qualitative research methodologies will be addressed, such as the flexibility in research design and the ethical dimensions of qualitative research. Course content is applicable to research and evaluation contexts in education as well as other social and human service practices.

The outcomes of the course are the following:

- Understand the characteristics of various qualitative research methodologies, particularly case study research methodology (Conceptual Framework 1);
- Be able to conduct a qualitative research study, including developing research questions, designing a study, generating data, analyzing and interpreting data, and representing findings, using a particular methodology, such as case study (Conceptual Framework 2);
- Be able to critically self-reflection on actions as social inquirers, including the ways in which one does and does not promote social justice (Conceptual Framework 6—8)

Required Text

Stake, Robert E. (1995). *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Yin, Robert K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods* (4th Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Grading

<u>Scale</u>		<u>Assignments</u>	<u>Points</u>
93-100	A	Article Critiques	20
90-92	A-	Group Discussion of Case Study	10
86-89	B+	Case study ideas	N/A
83-85	B	Research questions	5
80-82	B-	Research plan	15
Below 80	C	Data gathering and reflection	10
		Final Project: Revised Research Plan	30
		Class participation	10

Class participation is based on attendance, contributions to group discussion and small group activities, timeliness of assignments, and presentation of your final project.

Late assignments: I strongly discourage turning in assignments after the due date. The nature of the course is that the assignments build on one another. As a result, turning in one late assignment affects the appropriate completion of subsequent assignments. I will accept late assignments and do not reduce points for late assignments, but I will also provide less feedback and will not as rapidly return your graded assignment to you. If you know in advance that you will be gone when an assignment is due, please plan ahead and submit it early. If you have an unexpected personal circumstance, please talk to me about your concerns with completing course obligations.

Learning Community at Loyola University Chicago and School of Education

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is an expression of interpersonal justice, responsibility and care, applicable to Loyola University faculty, students, and staff, which demands that the pursuit of knowledge in the university community be carried out with sincerity and integrity. The School of Education's Policy on Academic Integrity can be found at:

http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_integrity.shtml. For additional academic policies and procedures refer to: http://www.luc.edu/education/academics_policies_main.shtml

Accessibility

Students who have disabilities which they believe entitle them to accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act should register with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSWD) office. To request accommodations, students must schedule an appointment with an SSWD coordinator. Students should contact SSWD at least four weeks before their first semester or term at Loyola. Returning students should schedule an appointment within the first two weeks of the semester or term. The University policy on accommodations and participation in courses is available at: <http://www.luc.edu/sswd/>

Harassment (Bias Reporting)

It is unacceptable and a violation of university policy to harass, discriminate against or abuse any person because of his or her race, color, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, age or any other characteristic protected by applicable law. Such behavior threatens to destroy the environment of tolerance and mutual respect that must prevail for this university to fulfill its educational and health care mission. For this reason, every incident of harassment, discrimination or abuse undermines the aspirations and attacks the ideals of our community. The university qualifies these incidents as incidents of bias.

In order to uphold our mission of being Chicago's Jesuit Catholic University-- a diverse community seeking God in all things and working to expand knowledge in the service of humanity through learning, justice and faith, any incident(s) of bias must be reported and appropriately addressed. Therefore, the Bias Response (BR) Team was created to assist members of the Loyola University Chicago community in bringing incidents of bias to the attention of the university. If you believe

you are subject to such bias, you should notify the Bias Response Team at this link:

<http://webapps.luc.edu/biasreporting/>

Diversity

A characteristic of qualitative research is an awareness of one's own values, beliefs, and biases. We will address diversity issues (gender, race, religion, ability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, methodological preferences, etc.) throughout the course in our readings and discussions as they relate to those biases and to engaging in ethical research. In order to foster a learning community in the classroom, openness to and respect of various perspectives and backgrounds is essential.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of Loyola's School of Education is "professionalism in service of social justice." This course contributes to the realization of this framework by engaging students in the knowledge of qualitative research, skills of inquiry, and ethics necessary to be professional and just qualitative researchers.

The following is the exact wording of the School of Education's Conceptual Framework:

The School of Education at Loyola University Chicago, a Jesuit and Catholic urban university, supports the Jesuit ideal of knowledge in the service of humanity. We endeavor to advance professional education in the service of social justice, engaged with Chicago, the nation, and the world. To achieve this vision the School of Education participates in the discovery, development, demonstration, and dissemination of professional knowledge and practice within a context of ethics, service to others, and social justice. We fulfill this mission by preparing professionals to serve as teachers, administrators, psychologists, and researchers; by conducting research on issues of professional practice and social justice; and by partnering with schools and community agencies to enhance life-long learning in the Chicago area.

Technology

In recent decades, as computing technology has advanced so have computer software and other tools to assist with qualitative research. Based on interests of students in the course, such tools may be addressed.

Weekly Schedule with Course Readings & Assignments

Week 1 (Sept. 1): Introduction to Course, What is Case Study?

Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. Ch. 3: Qualitative Case Study Research, pp. 39—54.

Mabry, L. (2009). Case study in social research. In P. Alasuutari, L. Bickman, and J. Brannen (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods*, pp. 214—227. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Stake, Ch. 10: Harper School (p. 137-160)

Chubbuck, S.M. & Zembylas, M. (2008). The emotional ambivalence of socially just teaching: A case study of a novice urban schoolteacher. *American Educational Research Journal*, 45(2), 274—318.

Week 2 (Sept. 8): What is Case Study? (Con't)

Stake, Ch. 1: The Unique Case (p. 1-14)

Yin, Ch. 1: Introduction (p. 1-23)

Thomas, G. (2011). A typology for the case study in social science following a review of definition, discourse, and structure. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 17(6), 511—521.

Anagnostopoulos, D. (2006). “Real students” and “true demotes”: Ending social promotion and the moral ordering of urban high schools. *American Educational Research Journal*, 43(1), 5—42.

TOPIC IDEAS DUE

Week 3 (Sept. 15): Case Study Research Planning and Design*

Stake, Ch. 2: Research Questions & Ch. 3: The Nature of Qualitative Research (p. 15-48)

Yin, Ch. 2: Designing Case Studies (p. 24-65)

Flyvbjerg, B. (2001). *Making Social Science Matter: Why Social Inquiry Fails and How It Can Succeed Again*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press. Ch. 11: Social science that matters, p. 166—168 & Ch. 9: Methodological guidelines for a reformed social science, p. 129-140.

Week 4 (Sept. 22): Case Study Research Planning and Design (Con't)*

Wells, A.S., Hirshberg, D., Lipton, M., & Oaks, J. (1995). Bounding the case within its context: A constructivist approach to studying detracking reform. *Educational Researcher*, 24, 18—24.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings of case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219—245.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS DUE

Week 5 (Sept. 29): Data Gathering*

Stake, Ch. 4: Data Gathering (p. 49-70)

Yin, Ch. 3: Conducting Case Studies: Preparing for Data Collection & Ch. 4: Conducting Case Studies: Collecting Evidence (p. 66-125)

Week 6 (Oct. 6): Researcher Role and Ethics*

Stake, Ch. 6: Case Researcher Roles (p. 91-106)

Nespor, J. (2000). Anonymity and place in qualitative inquiry. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 6, 546—571.
Clark, M.C., & Sharf, B.F. (2007). The dark side of truth(s): Ethical dilemmas in researching the personal. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 13, 399—416.

RESEARCH PLAN DUE

Week 7 (Oct. 13): Analysis and Interpretation*

Stake, Ch. 5: Analysis and Interpretation & Ch. 7: Triangulation (p. 71-90, 107-120)
Yin, Ch. 5: Analyzing Case Study Evidence (p. 126-163)

ARTICLE CRITIQUE DUE

Week 8 (Oct. 20): Analysis and Interpretation (Con't)*

Corbin, J.M. & Strause, A.L. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Ch. 4, Strategies for Qualitative Data Analysis, pp. 65—86.
Stake, R. (2006). *Multiple Case Study Analysis*. New York, NY: Guilford Press. Ch. 3, Cross-Case Analysis, pp. 39—77.

DATA GATHERING AND REFLECTION DUE

Week 9 (Oct. 27): TAKE A BREATH*

Topic(s) will be selected based on students' interests and instructors' discretion. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- Extra week spent on fieldwork and data collection
- Extra week spent on data analysis
- Discussion of social justice in relation to case study research
- Discussion of how case study research methodology may be used by practitioners

Week 10 (Nov. 3): FIELDWORK; NO CLASS MEETING

Week 11 (Nov. 10): Writing Report

Stake, Ch. 8: Writing the Report (p. 121-132)
Yin, Ch. 6: Reporting Case Studies (p. 164-191)

D'Enbeau, S., Buzzanell, P.M., & Duckworth, J. (2010). Problematizing classed identities in fatherhood: Development of integrative case studies for analysis and praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(9), 709—720.

Caully, D. N. (2008). Making qualitative research reports less boring: The techniques of writing creative nonfiction. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14, 424—449.

ARTICLE CRITIQUE DUE

Week 12 (Nov. 17): Evaluating Case Studies

Merriam, S.B. (2002). Assessing and evaluating qualitative research. In S.B. Merriam & Associates (Eds.), *Qualitative Research in Practice: Examples for Discussion and Analysis* (pp. 18—33).
Thomas, G. (2011). *How To Do Your Case Study: A Guide for Students and Researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Ch. 4, p. 61—71.

DRAFT OF FINAL PROJECT DUE (OPTIONAL)

NOV. 24—NO CLASS; THANKSGIVING

Week 13 (Dec. 1): CASE STUDY RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Week 14 (Dec. 8): CASE STUDY RESEARCH PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Week 15 (Dec. 15): Final Examination

FINAL PROJECT DUE (MUST BE UPLOADED ON BLACKBOARD BY 6:30PM)

**indicates a week that an example of a case study will be added to the reading list*

Assignment Descriptions

Assignment Submission

Please submit all assignments electronically via Blackboard. I will repost your assignments with grades and comments. If you have difficulties uploading the file, then please email it to me at lkallemeyn@luc.edu. To assist with file organization, please use the following naming conventions for your assignments if you email them to me: [Assignment Tag]_Firstname. For example, when submitting the first assignment, I would name it **P_Leanne.doc**.

Article Critique [AC]

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate an understanding of research design elements of case study research. Students are expected to include a 2—3 page *critical* review of an empirical research article that utilizes case study methodology and discuss at least one (and not more than four) of the following elements (based on Standards for Reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in American Educational Research Association Publications, or similar standards in your own field of study):

- Research Problem/Question
- Theoretical framework
- Review of the literature
- Methodology, design and logic
- Sample selection, unit of analysis
- Data collection (generation) methods
- Classification (processes of segmenting the data)
- Analysis and interpretation
- Generalization

Be sure to address both *strength(s) and weakness(es)* of the article. If possible, summarize your critique in a thesis statement that can be the organizing argument for the paper. In the process of discussing and critiquing the research design elements of the article, be sure to provide evidence from the article to support your claim(s), as well as utilize course readings to describe the research design elements and substantiate your critique. Finally, keep in mind that what you choose NOT to write about also helps the reader focused on what you view as the major strength(s) and weakness(es) of the article.

Grading Guidelines

- Paper demonstrates an appropriate understanding of a limited number of research design elements for case study research (2 pt)
- Paper addresses both strength(s) and weakness(es) of the article (1 pt)
- Paper includes appropriate evidence from the article to support the critique (1 pt)
- Paper includes an integration of course readings to describe design elements and substantiate the critique (1 pt)

- Paper reflects appropriate discretion of which research design elements NOT to focus on in the paper (1 pt)
- Paper has a clear argument/thesis, good organization, and relatively no grammatical errors, typos, etc. (1 pt)

Group Discussion of a Case Study

With a partner, choose a research article or book that utilizes case study research methodology in your field or area of interest. You may locate your own article, or choose one identified in the Yin text or from the lists that I posted on Blackboard. Carefully review the study so that you will be prepared to lead a 30 minute discussion and/or activity on the article. Be sure to email lkallemeyn@luc.edu the article or book section at least one week prior to your assigned week, so that it can be posted in Blackboard and your colleagues will have an opportunity to review it. For your discussion, consider doing some or all of the following:

- Provide a synopsis of the study
- Prepare discussion questions based on the case study that relate to topics for that particular week of the course (and prior topics in the course, as appropriate)
- Prepare discussion questions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the study
- Develop a class activity related to the article

Be sure that all aspects of the discussion/activity focus on *how* the study was conducted, not what the study found.

When grading the discussion, I will be looking for the following:

- Article/Book section utilizes case study methodology (2 pt)
- Evidence of equitable collaboration between partners, and that both partners have a thorough understanding of the article/book section. (2 pt)
- Class discussion focuses on the study's methodology, or aspects of how the study was conducted/reported (2 pt)
- Class discussion connects the article/book section to topics/ideas discussed in the course (2 pt)
- Evidence that discussion is engaging and relevant to other members in the class (2 pt)

Case Study Research Project

Throughout this course, you will conduct a small case study. This study is not meant to be a masters research project and/or a dissertation research project. I do encourage you to use this opportunity to explore the topic you are interested in pursuing for a masters and/or dissertation project, as it will be a means to further understand the topic, refine research questions and plans, develop data gathering protocols, etc. If you obtain IRB approval for your project, you may use this project as a pilot study for your dissertation.

Throughout the course, the following interim assignments and final paper will be due:

Case Ideas [TI]: Half-page to one-page summary of 1) your research interests, including two or three topics or issues you are interested in exploring in a case study, and/or 2) description of potential cases you would like to study. This assignment will not be graded.

Research Questions [RQ]: List of 3 to 5 research questions and/or foreshadowing issues based on your case ideas and what you have learned in the class for developing a research question and identifying issues.

When grading the research questions, I will be looking for the following:

- Questions can be addressed using case study research methodology (2 pt)
- Questions point to the case (1 pt)
- Questions point to the context (1 pt)
- Questions point to the issue(s) (1 pt)

Research Plan [RP]: Due to the nature of case study research, a pre-ordinate, prescriptive research plan is inappropriate. Even still, case study researchers identify a place to begin, a direction in which they intend to go, and an anticipated means of proceeding. Such a plan is particularly helpful for a novice researcher.

The following elements are important to include in your plan:

- Purpose/rationale for the study
- Description of the Case/Unit of Analysis—This description should be as detailed as possible based on your current understandings of the case. It should also indicate how you anticipate bounding the case. It would also provide a rationale for why you selected this case.
- Description of the Context—This description should be as detailed as possible based on your current understandings of the case. It should also indicate how you anticipate bounding the context of the case.
- List of research(s) questions and/or foreshadowing issues
- Justification for why case study research methodology is appropriate for addressing your research problem
- Methods/Data Gathering—Be sure to identify what data you will generate, how you will generate the data, and what sources you will generate data from.
- Procedures, or activities necessary to carry out your data gathering
- Schedule for completing your case study—Keep in mind deadlines for additional assignments this semester.
- Budget (if needed)

When grading the research proposal, I will use Stake's checklist on p. 54.

Data Gathering & Reflection [DGR]: Submit the data that you have collected, such as an interview transcript or fieldnotes. You will likely have your initial notes as well as a "cleaned

up” version. Also, submit a two page reflection on the process of collecting this data. Did this help you understand your case and its context? Why or why not? Is it necessary to rethink your research question and/or investigate additional areas of literature? What additional data sources may be helpful? Is it necessary to rethink how you gather the data? What would you do differently next time? What is your rationale?

Presentation: Prepare a 10 minute presentation about your final project. Be sure to include an overview of your case study research design, including particular strengths of the design as well as limitations or questions you have about the design. This presentation will give you an opportunity to receive feedback on your final project from your peers. Please prepare a powerpoint presentation and/or handout to support your presentation.

Final Project [FP]: Choose one of the following options.

For Option 1, you may develop an elaborate research plan, or methodology for a study. In a dissertation, the third chapter typically focuses on methodology, so you could also think of this project as the methodology chapter of a dissertation. This plan will be an expansion and revision of the research plan that you submitted at the beginning of the semester. You may want to expand the research plan to represent your dissertation study rather than a research project feasible for a course assignment. You may also want to make revisions to your research plan based on what you learn from doing a pilot study for the course project.

How you choose to organize the chapter is up to you. Be sure that you cite appropriate literature that informs the design of your research, in addition to what you may include in your literature review. The following are critical components to include:

- Brief overview of the purpose of study
- Brief overview of literature that informs your study
- Research questions
- Research design, including justification for the design
- Case selection process
- Description of case, including how you are bounding the case and context
- Data generation tools—what they are, why you have chosen them, how they were developed/identified
- Procedures for doing data generation
 - When, where, how many
 - How you will record fieldnotes, or the equivalent
 - Sampling within the case
 - Researcher role/position
 - Timeline/management plan
- What you will do to help ensure validity
- Data analysis
- Description of the final report—plan for the organization and format of the final report
- Strengths and limitations of study based on the design, including the validity of the study

For Option 2, you may develop a report of your case study project for this class. Consider who your audience will be for the report (excluding me) and organize the content of the report accordingly. For example, if you are planning on submitting the research for a conference presentation, you may want to organize the report as a journal article or a poster. If you are conducting this study within your own work context, then you may want to prepare the report in the form of a powerpoint presentation and handout, which you intend to give to the appropriate stakeholder group. Another option is to organize the report based on Stake's recommended outline for a case study (refer to p. 123). Either way, in this option the emphasis will be on the findings from your study. You will also include a description of the methodology and methods, but it will not be as elaborate as it will be in Option 1. The methodology section in this option will be more similar to what would be included in a journal article or other report to describe the methodology and methods. You can also use the checklist on page 131 to be a helpful guide for what I will be looking for in the final project.