Course Information

Prefix & number	Title
EDUC 504	Seminar in Qualitative Data Analysis
Instructor	**Prerequisites or restrictions** (if any)
Deirdre Kelly	Previous course in qualitative research (e.g., EDST 529, EPSE 595)

Focus or Content

Focus:

Qualitative data analysis (QDA) involves both a disciplined use of intuition and introspection as well as a systematic sense-making of various forms of "data" (e.g., field notes based on participant observation, interviews, or documents). There are many ways to produce the coherent stories that are the end result of qualitative data analysis. To date, however, qualitative researchers have been better at writing about the dilemmas and tensions that arise in field work or in representing the research than they have been at elucidating the steps in between. Thus, although analysis occurs at every phase of qualitative inquiry, this course will focus primarily on the middle steps of the QDA process.

Topics will include:
- Quality criteria for qualitative research
- Meanings of data analysis and coding
- Different analytic approaches or strategies, including:
  - Ethnography
  - Narrative analysis, analysis of narrative, and counter-storytelling
  - Reflexive thematic analysis
- The uses and abuses of computer data analysis software
- The ethics and politics of data analysis
- Ways of presenting data
- Writing as a method of inquiry

Goals, Objectives or Learning Outcomes

Purpose:

This seminar is designed to provide a workshop environment where students can analyze data generated or identified for a qualitative master's thesis or doctoral dissertation. Qualitative data analysis is difficult to tease apart from writing; the process of writing helps qualitative researchers clarify their thinking about their research problem. Student writing in progress will, therefore, comprise a primary text for the course. I hope that students in the workshop will be or become co-instructors, in the sense that they encourage their peers to think and write more effectively.

By the end of the course, students should be able to:
- Describe various ways of thinking about qualitative data analysis (QDA), including as both art and science

- Assess a qualitative research project in terms of how it combines description, analysis, and interpretation
- Think through whether and how computer-aided QDA software might help in your research project
- Identify and illustrate different approaches and analytic strategies such as ethnography (including interviewing), analysis "from the bottom up" (i.e., emphasis on induction and abduction), reflexive thematic analysis, and narrative analysis and counter-storytelling
- Identify and illustrate different ways that qualitative researchers explore and develop an understanding of patterned meanings in their data set
- Identify and illustrate various strategies for fine-tuning results (e.g., creating vignettes, creating a conceptual framework, developing a metaphor, reviewing the theoretical framework or research question, creating a display)
- Identify factors such as voice, style, and audience that shape the writing of the narrative report of research
- Think through how best to quote (directly and indirectly) participants in the narrative report of research to substantiate claims; the aesthetics and ethics of selecting and editing quotes.

Assignments or Assessment Process

The target audience for this course consists of magistral and doctoral students who plan to conduct, or are in the midst of doing, a qualitative empirical study for their thesis or dissertation.

All students will be expected to engage to some degree in each of the activities listed below, although not all of the activities will be assigned a mark:

Reading and analysis journal: (ungraded)
Keep a journal of (a) connections between the readings and the ongoing work on your research project, and (b) your analytic decisions and reflections (e.g., about selection, the literature, "aha" moments, new questions, hunches, utility of various analytic strategies, procedures used to generate categories, emerging themes, coding systems, ethical dilemmas, writing strategies). Keeping a research journal can aid you in ensuring robust, defensible qualitative practices.

Presentation of work in progress (in-class workshops): (graded: 20% of mark)
Select an analytic dilemma or challenge to present to the class for members' comments and assistance. Distribute via email copies of the interview excerpt, field notes, or other relevant document to seminar members the day before the workshop session. As a written preface to distributed materials, presenters should provide background to the dilemma or challenge and include any requests and expectations (what they want the group's help with).

Individual writing projects: (graded: part 1 due mid-term, 40% of the mark; part 2 due at end of term, 40% of the mark)
Set some goals with regard to your own work and writing that are appropriate to the stage of your research project. For example, students working on their thesis or dissertation proposal could write a description of their data analysis section. Other students might draft all or part of a data analysis chapter of their thesis or dissertation. I will also share numerous possible short writing assignments following from various in-class topics and activities; students will be

free to pick and choose among these, if inspired and depending on what makes sense to them in light of their individual circumstances and stage of research.

Notes/Other
Because students who are working on their research proposals or writing their thesis or dissertation are typically far along in their studies, they may not want or need to take another course for a grade or credit. Recogizing this, I welcome such students to sign up to take this course as official auditors. This means that the course will appear on your transcript but will not be graded. I expect official auditors to fully participate, and I will provide feedback on your written assignments.