

Fall 2018 MMC 9206: Digital Qualitative Research Methods

CRN: 39254

3 Credit Hours (i.e. expect 6 hours out of class work each week)

THURSDAY: 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm.

Annenberg Hall Room 5

Professor: Adrienne Shaw

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Office: Annenberg Hall Room 203a

Office Hours: Thursdays 12-3pm (sign up on Canvas) or by appointment

Email/Slack hours (when I respond): 11-1pm M-F

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce students to the specific theoretical, methodological, ethical, and technical aspects of conducting qualitative research both on and in digital realms. It will draw on humanistic and social science approaches to studying the internet broadly, virtual worlds, social media, digital media and cultures, digital distribution technologies, etc. We will consider the challenges posed by digital technologies to traditional forms of textual analysis, ethnography, interviewing, and historical analysis. The course will cover studies of digital texts/objects, audiences, and producers, as well as consider how new technologies blur these traditional media and communication boundaries. In addition, we will look at how digital tools can aid analysis of qualitative data and offer new forms of research dissemination and publication.

The learning objectives of this course include:

1. To introduce students to challenges posed by digital technologies to traditional qualitative research methods
2. To help students understand specific and complex ethical concerns in digital qualitative research
3. To allow students to experience the digital qualitative research process by planning, conducting, and writing up a study on a specific communication phenomenon
4. To help students develop the expertise necessary to utilize qualitative data analysis software
5. To introduce students to digital publication, presentation, and archiving tools

Pre-requisites: MMC 9102 or equivalent with instructor permission.

Syllabus changes: This syllabus, its assignments, and related course calendars are subject to reasonable change and adaptation with the understanding that the changes shall not be punitive in nature and do not significantly interfere with the successful completion of course objectives. Any update to the course syllabus will be announced in class, posted on Canvas and/or announced via Temple University email and Slack.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

As one of the goals of this course is to introduce you to disseminating and commenting on scholarship posted online, you will be required to **create and manage your own website with blog** (I recommend but do not require WordPress). In addition, as a class we will be using Slack to comment on your work, course materials, etc. You will need to create a Slack account by the first day of class and your research website by the end of the second week of classes.¹

Books: There are three books we will read in their entirety that are on reserve in Paley (Phillips as an ebook) and available in the campus bookstore. They are highlighted in the syllabus below. We are reading them during the second half of the semester, giving you plenty of time to acquire a print or digital copy.

Slack: You are required to join our Slack team, where I will make announcements about the course, post relevant links, and answer any of your **non-personal** questions about course materials, assignments, etc. Slack is private to this course so please use the name you've told me to call you as your username.

Assignment Types:

There are three main assignment types for this course, worth a total of **1000 points**. You can find them listed by due date in the “modules” of the course on Canvas. There you will find the detailed instructions for each assignment as well as information on where/how it is submitted.

1. **Regular participation (300 points):** This includes attendance (100 points), in class engagement (100 points), IRB CITI Certification and setting up your Slack account and project site (40 points), and discussion questions (60 points)
2. **Weekly Blog posts (300 points):** Ten weeks out of the semester (see schedule) you are required to post to our course blog following the instructions listed for that week's post in the related Canvas module. Each post is worth 30 points, and there are 11 possible posts, but the lowest scoring one will be dropped from your final grade. These should be clearly written, with proper grammar, citations (APA style), 250-500 words in length, and fulfill the requirements of the prompt for that week.
3. **Final Project (400 points):** In addition to these regular assignments, your final project has been broken up into smaller mile-stone assignments. Detailed instructions for each are on Canvas.
 - a. Draft paper (100 points)
 - b. Peer review (50 points)
 - c. Presentation (50 points)
 - d. Final paper (200 points)

Extra credit: There will be no extra credit offered in this course.

¹ If you do not have regular access to the Internet or a computer, come talk to me at the beginning of the semester so we can develop an alternative submission process

You can use Canvas to see a clear break down of assignments, points values, and use the “what if” tool to gauge your final grade.

Grades: The following grade scale is used in this course:

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|----------|----------|----------|------------|
| A 93-100 | B 83-86 | C 73-76 | D 63-66 |
| A- 90-92 | B- 80-82 | C- 70-72 | D- 60-62 |
| B+ 87-89 | C+ 77-79 | D+ 67-69 | F Below 60 |

Course Engagement/Attendance: Active participation is crucial to your learning in this course. You earn your “course engagement” grade by coming to class regularly, taking notes, bringing your annotated (marked-up) readings to class, respectfully contributing to class discussions (demonstrating that you completed the readings), asking questions, engaging in classroom activities, and offering responses to the course materials. I do not differentiate between excused and unexcused absences as the net effect is the same. You are allowed **one** absence before your course engagement grade is affected. If you find yourself regularly missing classes you might consider seeking a medical withdrawal. If you are more than 15 minutes late (or leave more than 15 minutes early) it will count as half an absence.

Discussion Questions: On our Slack there is a channel called **#discussion-questions**. You are required to submit **two discussion questions about that day’s readings, no later than 3pm before each class session**. The questions should reflect active engagement with the readings. You can post questions early, but **always** label questions with the day of class they are for and reading (author/page) they about. **You can post questions for the first week of class.**

Final Project/ Blog:

As your final product from this course you will complete a digital qualitative research project. Digital here is being used expansively, to include digital modes of research, digital topics, and research within digital spaces. **The end result will be a paper ready for submission to an academic conference or journal.** I will be applying for a course IRB waiver, which means I need you to submit a brief (paragraph) outline of your project and methods by the second week of the semester so we can get approval. You will need **current CITI certification** as well, which is due Sept 3. Some details of your project may change, but any changes that make it no longer an “exempt” research project are not allowed.

We will be working on these projects over the course of the semester. You will need to maintain a website about your project and post weekly to your blog following assigned prompts available in Canvas. Each post should be **250-500 words**, not including citations. You will post a link to your blog posts in the Slack channel #blog-posts.

Peer-review, presentations, and final papers:

Your papers for this course should be 6000-7000 words (not including citations, appendices, etc.). All citations must be in APA style. See Canvas for more detailed expectations for the paper. In addition to writing your final papers, you will practice two key elements of academic professional life: offering peer-reviews and presenting your research in a short period of time.

Draft Final and Peer-review: By **November 12**, you should submit a complete draft of your final paper to Canvas. I will then randomly assign each of you one of your classmates' papers to **peer-review** (for the purposes of this assignment this will not be double-blind review), these will be due **November 19**. I will give you a document listing the review criteria, and you should provide additional marginal comments as appropriate. You will then submit the paper you reviewed with comments and your completed review sheet to me via Canvas. Both will be graded and further instructions are on Canvas.

Presentation: This will be a short **10-12 minute** presentation, similar to what you might give at a conference. More detailed expectations are on Canvas. These presentations will take place **in class on December 6**

Final Paper: When submitting your revised paper, you must include a cover letter detailing how you addressed the reviewer (my and your classmates' comments) on your draft. These are due via Canvas on **December 17**.

| COURSE SCHEDULE | | | |
|-----------------|--|--|---|
| Date | Topics | Due in Class | Due the following Monday by 11pm |
| Aug. 30 | Introduction | See Reading List | Set up Slack account, website shell with blog, and complete/submit CITI certification |
| Sept. 6 | Digital Dissemination | See Reading List Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #1 |
| Sept. 13 | Ethics | See Reading List Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #2 |
| Sept. 20 | Studying people: Online, offline, or both? | See Reading List Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #3 |
| Sept. 27 | Interviews and focus groups online | See Reading List Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #4 |
| Oct. 4 | Analysis of texts as digital | See Reading List Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #5 |

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| Oct. 11 | Meet in Digital Scholarship Center! Using digital tools in qualitative research | See Reading List Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #6 |
| Oct. 18 | Case Study #1 part 1: Rogue Archives Guest Speaker Abigail De Kosnik | Required Text Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #7 |
| Oct. 25 | Case Study #1 part 2: Rogue Archives | Required Text Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #8 |
| Nov. 1 | Guest Lecture Larisa Kingston Mann | See Reading List Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #9 |
| Nov. 8 | Case Study #2 part 1: Open TV | Required Text Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Draft papers due on Canvas (it is fine if you are still collecting data) |
| Nov. 15 | Case Study #2 part 2: Open TV Guest Speaker Aymar Jean Christian | Required Text Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Peer Review of classmates' drafts due on Canvas |
| Nov. 22 NO CLASS THANKSGIVING BREAK | | | |
| Nov. 29 | Case Study #3 part 1: Trolling Guest Speaker Whitney Phillips | Required Text Discussion questions (x2 by 3pm) | Weekly Blog #10 |
| Dec. 6 | Presentations | Presentations | Weekly Blog #11 |

Your final paper is due DECEMBER 17 at 11pm via Canvas.

Reading List:

Readings are available on Canvas unless from required books. Check “content” page for links to readings available online.

August 30:

- Pooley, J. (2018, July 31). The Trials of Media Research. *Culture Digitally*. Retrieved from <http://culturedigitally.org/2018/07/the-trials-of-media-research/>
- Introduction: “Digital Media and Social Theory” from Couldry, N. (2012). *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice*. Polity: Cambridge, UK.
- Introduction from Hargittai, E. and Sandvig, C. (2015). *Digital Research Confidential: The secrets of studying behavior online*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

September 6:

- Gilbert, E. and Karahalios, K. (2015). Social software as social science. In Hargittai, E. and Sandvig, C. (eds.) *Digital Research Confidential: The secrets of studying behavior online* (p. 139-154). MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Hemsley, J., Stromer-Galley, J., Tanupabrungsun, S., Hedge, Y., Zhang, F., McCracken, N. (2017, April 6). [Collection and classification of Illuminating 2016 social media data](#). *Illuminating 2016*. Retrieved from
 - Explore Illuminating 2016 Project: <http://illuminating.ischool.syr.edu>
- Christian, AJ. (2017). [The value of representation: Toward a critique of networked television performance](#). *International Journal of Communication* 11: 1552-1574
 - Explore OpenTV: <http://www.weareo.tv/>
- Shaw, A. and Friesem, E. (2016). [Where is the queerness in games?: Types of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer content in digital games](#). *International Journal of Communication* 10: 3877-3889
 - Explore LGBTQ Game Archive: <https://lgbtqgamearchive.com/>

September 13:

- Convery, I. and Cox, D. (2012). A review of research ethics in internet-based research. *Practitioner Research in Higher Education* 6(1): 50-57.
- Pollock, E. (2009). Researching white supremacists online: methodological concerns of researching hate ‘speech’. *Internet Journal of Criminology*, 1-19.
- Bruckman, A., Luther, K., and Fiesler, C. (2015). When should we use real names in published accounts of internet research? In Hargittai, E. and Sandvig, C. (eds.) *Digital Research Confidential: The secrets of studying behavior online* (p. 243-258). MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Skim: Association for Internet Researchers Ethical Statements: <https://aoir.org/ethics/>

September 20:

- Selections from Miller, D. and D. (2000). *The Internet: An ethnographic approach*. New York: Berg.
- Selections from Boellstorff, T. (2008). *Coming of Age in Second Life*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Selections from Taylor, T. L. (2006). *Play between worlds: Exploring online game culture*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.

- boyd, d. (2015). Making sense of teen life: strategies for capturing ethnographic data in a networked era. In Hargittai, E. and Sandvig, C. (eds.) *Digital Research Confidential: The secrets of studying behavior online* (p. 79-102). MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

September 27:

- Miltner, K.M. (2014). “There’s no place for lulz on LOLCats”: The role of genre, gender, and group identity in the interpretation and enjoyment of an Internet meme. *First Monday* 19(8), <http://pear.accc.uic.edu/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/5391>
- James, N. and Busher, H. (2006) Credibility, authenticity, and voice: dilemmas in online interviewing. *Qualitative Research* 6(3): 403-420
- Seitz, S. (2016). Pixilated partnerships, overcoming obstacles in qualitative interviews via Skype: a research note. *Qualitative Research* 16(2): 229-235.

October 4:

- Selections from Nakamura, L. (2008). *Digitizing Race: Visual Cultures of the Internet*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis.
- Miltner, K.M., and Highfield, T. (2017). Never gonna gif you up: Analyzing the cultural significance of the animated GIF. *Social Media and Society*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305117725223>
- Massanari, A. (2015). #Gamergate and the Fapping: How Reddit’s algorithm, governance, and culture support toxic technocultures. *New Media and Society*. Published OnlineFirst: <http://nms.sagepub.com/content/early/2015/10/07/1461444815608807.abstract>

October 11: Meet in the Digital Scholarship Center

- Black, M.L. (2016). The World Wide Web as complex data set: Expanding the digital humanities into the twentieth century and beyond through internet research. *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing* 10(1): 95-109.
- Brown, N.M., Mengershall, R., Black, M.L., Van Moer, M., Zerai, A., and Flynn, K. (2016). Mechanized Margin to Digitized Center: Black Feminism’s Contributions to Combatting Erasure Within the Digital Humanities. *International Journal of Humanities and Arts Computing* 10(1): 110-125.
- Foucault Welles, B. (2015). Big data, big problems, big opportunities: using internet log data to conduct social network analysis research. In Hargittai, E. and Sandvig, C. (eds.) *Digital Research Confidential: The secrets of studying behavior online* (p. 223-242). MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.
- Ankerson, M.S. (2015). Read/write the digital archive: strategies for historical web research. In Hargittai, E. and Sandvig, C. (eds.) *Digital Research Confidential: The secrets of studying behavior online* (p. 29-54). MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

October 18: Case Study #1- part 1—Rogue Archives—Guest Speaker Abigail De Kosnik

- **REQUIRED BOOK** Read to page 160. De Kosnik, A. (2016). *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

October 25: Case Study #1- part 2—Rogue Archives

- **REQUIRED BOOK** De Kosnik, A. (2016). *Rogue Archives: Digital Cultural Memory and Media Fandom*. MIT Press: Cambridge, MA.

November 1: Guest Lecture Larisa Kingston Mann

TBD

November 8:

- **REQUIRED BOOK** Read through **chapter 3**. Christian, A.J. (2017) *Open TV: Innovation beyond Hollywood and the rise of web television*. NYU Press: New York.

November 15: Case Study #2 part 2— Open TV—Guest Speaker Aymar Jean Christian

- **REQUIRED BOOK** Finish reading Christian, A.J. (2017) *Open TV: Innovation beyond Hollywood and the rise of web television*. NYU Press: New York.

November 29: Case Study #3—Trolling—Guest Speaker Whitney Phillips

- **REQUIRED BOOK** Phillips, W. (2015). *This is Why We Can't Have Nice Things: Mapping the relationship between online trolling and mainstream culture*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Phillips, W. (2018). Am I why I can't have nice things? A reflection on personal trauma, networked play, and ethical sight. In Papacharissi, Z. (ed.) *A Networked Self and Love*. New York: Routledge. ← Trigger warning: this piece discusses sexual and emotional violence

Course Policies

There are more detailed descriptions of the late assignments, attendance, disabilities and accommodations, and inclusivity policy available on Canvas.

Late Assignments: Due dates are in place to structure the course and to help all of us organize our time. There is also a time after which an assignment can no longer meet its pedagogical goals. For that reason, discussion questions and assignments due in class cannot be accepted late. For other assignments, I am willing to grant you a negotiable, no penalty extension for any reason if you **contact me by the due date/time and let me know what date/time to plan on submitting the assignment** (I will respond by my next email hours). Note, however, that if you do not submit the assignment by the scheduled deadline I cannot guarantee you will get comments on your assignment (just a score/grade). If you do not contact me by the original deadline or fail to meet your own extended deadline, you will receive a zero for the assignment (no exceptions).

Inclusivity Policy: There is an inclusivity policy on Canvas. You will be asked to sign this at the start of the semester, committing yourself to promoting a safe and inclusive classroom for all students, guests, and instructors.

Accommodations: The need for accommodations should never get in the way of your access to education. I will do my best to work with any student who requires accommodations and to minimize the access barriers posed by course structures and materials. If you have any physical, cognitive, or economic need for accommodations, email me at the start of the semester. You might also contact Disability Resources and Services at 215-204-1280 in 100 Ritter Annex for additional assistance.

Academic Honesty: Plagiarism is the representation of someone else's ideas, quotations, or research as your own. It is a form of theft. Examples of plagiarism: buying a paper written by someone else, quoting or summarizing an author's argument without correctly citing them, using ideas found on websites for your assignments without correctly citing them, "borrowing" a classmate's ideas for your own, writing without attribution, and using your own papers for more than one class without explicit consent of all instructors. **PLAGIARISM IS NOT TOLERATED AND WILL CONSTITUTE AN IMMEDIATE FAILURE OF THE ASSIGNMENT AND POSSIBLY THE COURSE.** Instances of plagiarism and/or cheating will be reported to the University Disciplinary Committee at my discretion. **The penalty structure is listed on the policies section of the Canvas site**

Student and Faculty Academic Rights and Responsibilities Policy: Freedom to teach and freedom to learn are 2 inseparable facets of academic freedom. The University has a policy on Student and Faculty and Academic Rights and Responsibilities (Policy #03.70.02) which can be accessed through the following link: http://policies.temple.edu/getdoc.asp?policy_no=03.70.02

Conduct Code: Individuals enrolled in this course are expected to conduct themselves in a civil and respectful manner, both toward their instructor and fellow students. In accordance with Temple's Student Conduct Code (Policy Number: 03.70.12), acts of misconduct for which students are subject to discipline include, but are not limited to, intentional interference with or disruption of class as well as behavior or conduct which poses a threat to the mental, emotional, or physical well-being of self or others. Non-compliance, interference or resistance to this code is considered actionable when a student fails to comply with a reasonable verbal or written instruction or direction given by a University employee (e.g. instructor, teaching assistant or staff member). In such cases of violation, it is the University employee's right and responsibility to seek out the appropriate sanctions (e.g. suspension, separation, probation, enrollment restrictions, or expulsion from the University) pursuant to the conduct code policies.