
MGMT 932, PROSEMINAR ON QUALITATIVE AND FIELD METHODS IN ORGANIZATIONS

Wednesdays, 1:30-4:30 p.m., Room SH-DH 2034

Professor Sarah Kaplan

SH-DH 2019

slkaplan@wharton.upenn.edu

<http://www-management.wharton.upenn.edu/kaplan/>

COURSE BASICS

Course overview and objectives

This course is designed to provide students with a conceptual and practical understanding of qualitative research methods in organizations, including ethnographic techniques, interviewing, analysis of archival materials and development of case studies. We will examine the different theoretical and analytical stances qualitative researchers take towards their topics. This course will teach the basic ethnographic approach, as well as contrast that approach with other field methods and discuss the types of research questions for which each method is appropriate. In doing so, I hope to shed some light on the mysteries and myths of qualitative research. Accordingly, the course has four substantive objectives:

1. Students should, through practice in class and completion of a few small-scale research projects, gain experience in qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis: observation, interviewing, and writing and analyzing field notes.
2. Students should learn how to build grounded theory using the constant comparative method.
3. Students should gain some insight into the writing process, develop respect for this aspect of our craft, and get some practice writing.
4. Students should learn to critically read and review ethnographic and qualitative research, evaluating the appropriateness of the technique for answering the questions asked, the adequacy of the evidence to support the claims, and the persuasiveness of the arguments.

This course will be useful not only for students interested in undertaking a qualitative study of organizations but also for those who would like to complement a quantitative study with field work or for those who simply would like to be able to understand, read and appropriately review qualitative work.

Required texts

These texts are available in the bookstore and are on reserve at the library.

1. Agar, M. 1986. *Speaking of ethnography*. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills.
2. Becker, H.S. 1986. *Writing for social scientists: how to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
3. Emerson, R.M., R.I. Fretz, L.L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.
4. Strauss, A.L., J.M. Corbin. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*, 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Other readings and webCafé access

All other readings will be available in the course webCafé site:

<https://webcafe.wharton.upenn.edu/eRoom/mgmt/932-fa08-1>

If you are a Wharton student and you are registered for the course, you should automatically have access. If you are a non-Wharton student and have not had webCafé access before, you will need to go to: <http://accounts.wharton.upenn.edu> to set up an account.

Course requirements

1. Complete and be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for each class and be an active participant in discussions.
2. Be a discussion leader for at least one empirical paper in selected class sessions. Assignments to specific readings will be determined on the first day of class (these readings are indicated with a “*”).
3. Complete all assignments as indicated in the syllabus.
4. Complete a final paper due on **December 12th**. Develop an initial research question for a qualitative research project related to your own research (either your dissertation or some other project you are contemplating or engaged in currently). Describe why qualitative methods would be the best approach to answering this question and which types of qualitative methods you might use. Justify the choice of research setting for addressing your research question. Identify a plan for gaining access to the field site and for identifying informants. If proposing an interview study, provide a draft interview guide and justify why these questions are appropriate.

CLASS SESSIONS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Class date	Readings and assignments
September 3	Introduction
Readings:	<p>Van Maanen, J. 1983. <i>Qualitative methodology</i>. Sage, Beverly Hills. Preface (pp. 9-18) and Epilogue (pp. 247-268).</p> <p>Van Maanen, J. 1998. Different strokes: qualitative research in the Administrative Science Quarterly from 1956 to 1996. J. Van Maanen, ed. <i>Qualitative studies of organizations</i>. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks. pp. ix-xxxii.</p> <p>Piore, M.J. 1979. Qualitative Research Techniques in Economics, <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>, 24(4) 560-569.</p>
September 10	Theory and theorizing, different lenses
Readings:	<p>Sutton, R.I., B.M. Staw. 1995. What theory is not. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 40(3) 371.</p> <p>Weick, K.E. 1995. What theory is not, theorizing is. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 40(3) 385.</p> <p>DiMaggio, P.J. 1995. Comments on "What theory is not". <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 40(3) 391.</p> <p>Weick, K.E. 1989. Theory Construction as Disciplined Imagination. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 14(4) 516-531.</p> <p>Orlikowski, W.J., J.J. Baroudi. 1991. Studying Information Technology in Organizations: Research Approaches and Assumptions. <i>Information Systems Research</i> 2(1) 1-28.</p>
September 17	Getting started: Research questions and settings
Readings:	<p>Lofland, J., D.A. Snow, L. Anderson, L.H. Lofland. 2006. <i>Analyzing social settings: a guide to qualitative observation and analysis</i>, 4th ed. Wadsworth/Thomson Learning (originally published in 1984), Belmont, CA., Chapters 1-3.</p> <p>Strauss, A.L., J.M. Corbin. 1998. <i>Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory</i>, 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks. Chapter 4.</p> <p>Dougherty, D. 2002. Grounded theory building: some principles and practices. J.A.C. Baum, ed. <i>Companion to Organizations</i>. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, pp. 849-858 only.</p> <p>Yin, R.K. 1984. <i>Case study research: design and methods</i>. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, Calif., pp. 38-53.</p>
Assignment:	<p>Begin preparing for interview assignment for the October 1 class. Develop a research question, a plan for conducting interviews either in a current research site or in a convenient context within the University. Begin developing your interview guide. You do not need to hand this in today, but please think about it before class in order to inform our discussion.</p>

Class date	Readings and assignments
September 24	Interviewing, part I
Readings:	<p>Spradley, J.P. 1979. <i>The ethnographic interview</i>. Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York., pp. 45-68</p> <p>Dexter, L.A. 1970. <i>Elite and specialized interviewing</i>. Northwestern University Press, Evanston, Ill., Chapter 2.</p> <p>Thomas, R.J. 1993. Interviewing Important People in Big Companies. <i>Journal of Contemporary Ethnography</i> 22(1) 80-96.</p> <p>*Dougherty, D. 1992. Interpretive Barriers to successful product innovation in large firms. <i>Organization Science</i> 3(2) 179-202.</p> <p>*Ibarra, H. 1999. Provisional selves: Experimenting with image and identity in professional adaptation. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>. 764-791.</p> <p>*Orlikowski, W.J., J. Yates. 1994. Genre Repertoire - the Structuring of Communicative Practices in Organizations. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 39(4) 541-574.</p>
Assignment:	Discussion leaders for three empirical papers.
October 1	Interviewing, part II
Assignment:	Assignment: (1) Write an interview guide (list of questions). Conduct at least 3 interviews using your interview guide. Use a tape recorder. (2) Transcribe at least three pages from one of the interviews. (3) Write up an interview note based on your hand written notes and the recording from one of the interviews. (4) Write up a 1-2 page summary of your experience and any insights you gleaned from your interviews. Hand in a document that includes each of the four numbered elements above.
October 8	Observation
Readings:	<p>Van Maanen, J., D. Kolb. 1985. The professional apprentice: observations on fieldwork roles in two organizational settings <i>Research in the Sociology of Organizations</i>. JAI Press Inc., 1-33.</p> <p>Emerson, R.M., R.I. Fretz, L.L. Shaw. 1995. <i>Writing ethnographic fieldnotes</i>. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Chapters 1-3.</p> <p>*Gioia, D.A., K. Chittipeddi. 1991. Sensemaking and Sensegiving in Strategic Change Initiation. <i>Strategic Management Journal</i> 12(6) 433.</p> <p>*Kellogg, K.C., W.J. Orlikowski, J.A. Yates. 2006. Life in the trading zone: Structuring coordination across boundaries in postbureaucratic organizations. <i>Organization Science</i> 17(1) 22-44.</p> <p>*Perlow, L.A. 1999. The time famine: Toward a sociology of work time. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 44(1) 57-81.</p> <p>*Van Maanen, J. 1973. Observations on Making of Policemen. <i>Human Organization</i> 32(4) 407-418.</p>
Assignment:	Discussion leaders for the four empirical papers.

Class date	Readings and assignments
October 15	<p>Analyzing field data – first steps to figuring out what is going on</p> <p>Readings: Emerson, R.M., R.I. Fretz, L.L. Shaw. 1995. <i>Writing ethnographic fieldnotes</i>. University of Chicago Press, Chicago. Chapters 5-6.</p> <p>Dougherty, D. 2002. Grounded theory building: some principles and practices. J.A.C. Baum, ed. <i>Companion to Organizations</i>. Blackwell Publishers, Oxford, UK, pp. 858-864 only.</p> <p>Agar, M. 1986. <i>Speaking of ethnography</i>. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills.</p> <p>Assignment: Establish a broad research question for a field observation study either here at the University or in a current field site. Conduct 3 hours of observations. Code your data from your observations. Write up and hand in a 3 page summary of your findings.</p>
October 22	<p>Coding, analyzing and displaying data</p> <p>Readings: Strauss, A.L., J.M. Corbin. 1998. <i>Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory</i>, 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks. Chapters 8-11, 14.</p> <p>Miles, M.B., A.M. Huberman. 1994. <i>Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook</i>, 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks., Chapter 7.</p> <p>Hargadon, A., R.I. Sutton. 1997. Technology brokering and innovation in a product development firm. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 42(4) 716-749.</p> <p>Kaplan, S. In Press. Framing contests: strategy making under uncertainty. <i>Organization Science</i>.</p> <p>Assignment: Based on your observational study from last week, develop one table, diagram, or other means of displaying your data to support a particular idea proposed in your summary of findings. Please bring copies for all members of the class and a copy to hand in.</p>
October 29	<p>Iterating findings and enfolding theory</p> <p>Readings: Becker, H.S. 1986. <i>Writing for social scientists: how to start and finish your thesis, book, or article</i>. University of Chicago Press, Chicago., Chapter 8.</p> <p>*Gersick, C.J.G. 1994. Pacing strategic change: The case of a new venture. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> 37(1) 9-46.</p> <p>*Kaplan, S. and W.J. Orlikowski. 2008. The temporality of strategy. <i>Working paper</i>.</p> <p>*Zilber, T.B. 2002. Institutionalization as an interplay between actions, meanings, and actors: The case of a rape crisis center in Israel. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> 45(1) 234-254.</p> <p>Assignment: Discussion leaders for the three empirical papers.</p>

Class date	Readings and assignments
November 5	Working with archival texts
Readings:	<p>Phillips, N., C. Hardy. 2002. <i>Discourse analysis: investigating processes of social construction</i>. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA., pp. 1-17.</p> <p>*Creed, W.E.D., M.A. Scully, J.R. Austin. 2002. Clothes make the person? The tailoring of legitimating accounts and the social construction of identity. <i>Organization Science</i> 13(5) 475-496.</p> <p>*Munir, K., N. Phillips. 2005. The birth of the 'Kodak moment': Institutional entrepreneurship and the adoption of new technologies. <i>Organization Studies</i> 26(11) 1665-1687.</p> <p>*Suddaby, R., R. Greenwood. 2005. Rhetorical strategies of legitimacy. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 50(1) 35-67.</p>
Assignment:	Discussion leaders for the three empirical papers.
November 12	Case studies
Readings:	<p>Eisenhardt, K.M. 1989. Building Theories From Case Study Research. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> 532.</p> <p>Multiple cases:</p> <p>*Brown, S.L., K.M. Eisenhardt. 1997. The art of continuous change: Linking complexity theory and time-paced evolution in relentlessly shifting organizations. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 42(1) 1-34.</p> <p>*Zbaracki, M.J. 1998. The rhetoric and reality of total quality management. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 602-636.</p> <p>Single case:</p> <p>*Dutton, J.E., J.M. Dukerich. 1991. Keeping an Eye on the Mirror: Image and Identity in Organizations. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> 34(3) 517-555.</p> <p>*Elsbach, K.D. 2003. Relating Physical Environment to Self-Categorizations: Identity Threat and Affirmation in a Non-Territorial Office Space. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 48(4) 622-654.</p>
Assignment:	Discussion leaders for four empirical papers.
November 19	Quantification
Readings:	<p>Miles, M.B., A.M. Huberman. 1994. <i>Qualitative data analysis : an expanded sourcebook</i>, 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks., pp. 40-43</p> <p>Strauss, A.L., J.M. Corbin. 1998. <i>Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory</i>, 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks. Chapter 3.</p> <p>*Barley, S.R. 1986. Technology as an Occasion for Structuring - Evidence from Observations of CT Scanners and the Social-Order of Radiology Departments. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 31(1) 78-108.</p>

Class date	Readings and assignments
Assignment:	<p>*Black, L.J., P.R. Carlile, N.P. Repenning. 2004. A Dynamic Theory of Expertise and Occupational Boundaries in New Technology Implementation: Building on Barley's Study of CT Scanning. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 49(4) 572-607.</p> <p>*Gioia, D.A., J.B. Thomas. 1996. Identity, image, and issue interpretation: Sensemaking during strategic change in academia. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 41(3) 370-403.</p> <p>*Langley, A. 1989. In Search Of Rationality: The Purposes Behind The Use Of Formal Analysis in Organizations. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 34(4) 598-632.</p>
November 26	Writing up
Readings	<p>Becker, H.S. 1986. <i>Writing for social scientists: how to start and finish your thesis, book, or article</i>. University of Chicago Press, Chicago., Chapters 1, 3 and 4.</p> <p>Davis, M.S. 1971. That's Interesting!: Towards a Phenomenology of Sociology and a Sociology of Phenomenology. <i>Philosophy of the Social Sciences</i> 1(2) 309-344.</p> <p>Golden-Biddle, K., K. Locke. 2007. <i>Composing qualitative research</i>, 2nd ed. Sage, Thousand Oaks, Calif., pp. 81-111.</p> <p>Barley, S.R. 1983. Semiotics and the Study of Occupational and Organizational Cultures. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> 28(3) 393.</p> <p>Compare styles of writing from same field setting for two different journals:</p> <p>Bechky, B.A. 2003. Object Lessons: Workplace Artifacts as Representations of Occupational Jurisdiction. <i>AJS</i>, 109(3) 720-752.</p> <p>Bechky, B.A. 2003. Sharing meaning across occupational communities: The transformation of understanding on a production floor. <i>Organization Science</i> 14(3) 312.</p>
Assignment:	<p>Find a weak opening paragraph from an article published in an organizational or behavioral science journal. Please repair it so it is well-written and does a good job setting the stage for the paper. Explain why you made the changes you did. Please bring copies of the original and repaired paragraph for all class members.</p>
December 3	Evaluating qualitative research (your own and others)
Readings:	<p>Miles, M.B., A.M. Huberman. 1994. <i>Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook</i>, 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks., pp. 262-280.</p> <p>Strauss, A.L., J.M. Corbin. 1998. <i>Basics of qualitative research : techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory</i>, 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks., Chapter 16</p> <p>Pratt, M.G. 2008. Fitting oval pegs into round holes - Tensions in evaluating and publishing qualitative research in top-tier North American journals. <i>Organizational Research Methods</i> 11(3) 481-509. (see also his video on the CARMA website: http://www.carma.vcu.edu/VideoLibrary.asp)</p>
Assignment:	<p>Write a journal quality review of a paper to be handed out in a prior session.</p>

FURTHER READING

Selected book-length ethnographies/qualitative studies in and about organizations:

Barley, S.R., G. Kunda. 2004. *Gurus, hired guns, and warm bodies: itinerant experts in a knowledge economy*. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.

Bearman, P.S. 2005. *Doormen*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Bucciarelli, L.L. 1994. *Designing engineers*. MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass.

Kunda, G. 1986. *Engineering culture: culture and control in a high-tech organization*.

Latour, B., S. Woolgar. 1979. *Laboratory life: the construction of scientific facts*, Originally published Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1986 ed. Princeton University Press, Princeton, N.J.

Mintzberg, H. 1973. *The Nature of Managerial Work*. HarperCollins Publisher.

Morrill, C. 1995. *The executive way: conflict management in corporations*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Orr, J. 1996. *Talking about machines: an ethnography of a modern job*. ILR Press, Ithaca, NY.

Perlow, L.A. 1997. *Finding time: how corporations, individuals, and families can benefit from new work practices*. ILR Press, Ithaca, NY.

Pettigrew, A.M. 1985. *The awakening giant: continuity and change in Imperial Chemical Industries*. Blackwell, Oxford Oxfordshire New York, NY.

Rabinow, P. 1996. *Making PCR: A story of biotechnology*. University of Chicago, Chicago.

Thomas, R.J. 1994. *What Machines Can't Do: Politics and Technology in the Industrial Enterprise*. University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.

Vaughan, D. 1996. *The Challenger launch decision: risky technology, culture, and deviance at NASA*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago.

Other books on methods:

Agar, M. 1980. *The professional stranger: an informal introduction to ethnography*. Academic Press, New York.

Becker, H.S. 1998. *Tricks of the trade: how to think about your research while you're doing it*. University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Ill.

Glaser, B.G., A.L. Strauss. 1967. *The discovery of grounded theory: strategies for qualitative research*. Aldine Publishing Company, Chicago.

Golden-Biddle, K., K. Locke. 2007. *Composing qualitative research*, 2nd ed. Sage, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Grills, S. 1998. *Doing ethnographic research: fieldwork settings*. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, Calif.

Miles, M.B., A.M. Huberman. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis: an expanded sourcebook*, 2nd ed. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

Ragin, C.C., H.S. Becker. 1992. *What is a case?: exploring the foundations of social inquiry*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge England New York, NY, USA.

Yin, R.K. 1984. *Case study research: design and methods*. Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, Calif.