



**Mission Statement:**

Our mission is to serve as a leading center of Christian thought and action providing an excellent education from a biblical perspective and global context in pivotal professions to equip Christian leaders to change the world.

## ***COURSE SYLLABUS***

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SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATION & THE ARTS  
COMMUNICATION STUDIES

**COM 703 MAT (Modular)**  
Communication Research: Qualitative Methodologies  
Spring Semester, 2011

DOCTORAL STUDIES PROGRAM

**INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION**

Associate Professor  
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*Second floor Communication Building*

**All students are required to read and have a thorough understanding of the syllabus. Any questions or concerns need to be addressed to the instructor.**

\*After reading the syllabus please send me a note stating that you have read and understood the requirements for this class. If you do not understand something on the syllabus please contact me immediately so I can clarify the issue.

**Course Description****COM 703 Communication Research: Qualitative Methodologies**

Advanced study of ethnography, focus group interview techniques, participant observation, in-depth personal interview, and other methodologies currently employed in the communication field.

**RATIONALE/COURSE OVERVIEW**

Qualitative research entails the examination and careful study of people and the group or cultural context within which they live. Typically, qualitative research and ethnographic studies are conducted on a small scale involving prolonged, intimate and detailed contact between the ethnographer and the person or group he or she is studying. Such study comprises both description and interpretation and hence crosses the gap between “science” and the “humanities.” This advanced level qualitative and ethnography course is designed to acquaint students with the theoretical and practical challenges and problematics inherent in the qualitative and ethnographic enterprise.

Qualitative research and ethnography, by its very nature, entails intimate involvement with the “Other.” In keeping with the current “postmodern” milieu, it is this very involvement which will form the locus of this course as each student explores the ways in which the “other” can be engaged and described without “undue” exploitation. Thus, issues of ethics, ideology, hegemony, respect, authority and openness will play a vital role in each student’s choice of “other” engagement.

Central to this research methodology is the placing of qualitative research and ethnographic analysis within a larger theoretical discourse. Hence, the importance placed on both “grounded theory” and a theoretical perspective, which can enrich and enlarge the potential insights operating in a specific research project. Thus, each student will be strongly encouraged to pursue and investigate specific “social science” and “interpretive” theories as they apply to their project.

As a graduate level course designed for students from a variety of backgrounds and academic experience each student is free to choose any subject for their qualitative or ethnographic project, especially as it relates to his or her academic and professional interests. However, in light of the brief and intense nature of this class each student will be given the opportunity to work on a project with the professor. For those choosing this option they will also be given the opportunity to participate in writing a chapter or section of a book using a qualitative or ethnographic approach to research.

While there are several types of qualitative research this class will focus primarily on ethnographic research. However, every attempt will be made to incorporate into the class examples and instruction on several other kinds of qualitative research.

## Integration of Faith and Learning

To begin this section on the integration of faith and learning, we would like to refer to a brief comment made by John Courtney Murray, given at the inaugural series of St. Thomas More Lectures at Yale University. This class, as Father Murray reminds us, raises the question of the uniqueness of our subject matter and the problem of God amid the whole range of problems that we face.

If God is a reality, his reality is unique; it will therefore present to man a unique problem. The problem of God exhibits only the barest analogy with the standard model of a problem as it is found in science. In the scientific world of observation and inference, hypothesis and verification, the data are, as it were, “out there.” The scientist is distant and detached from them; other things being equal any number of men who are scientists can do the same experiment and record the same results. No personal issues arise in the scientific problem. In contrast, the problem of God is primary among the fateful human questions that, as Pascal said, “take us by the throat.” The whole man--is profoundly engaged both in the position of the problem and its solution. In fact, he is in a real sense a datum of the problem itself, and his solution of it has personal consequences that touch every aspect of his conduct, character, and consciousness. Moreover, the problem of God is unique in that no man may say of it, “It is not my problem.” Dostoyevsky’s challenge is valid: “If God is not, everything is permitted.” But the challenge needs to be amended to include, “except one thing.” If God is not, no one is permitted to say or even think that he is, for this would be a monstrous deception of oneself and of others. It would be to cherish and propagate a pernicious illusion whose result would necessarily be the destruction of man. On the other hand, if God is, again one thing is not permitted. It is not permitted that any man should be ignorant of him, for this ignorance, too, would be the destruction of man. On both counts, therefore, no man may say that the problem of God is not his problem.

Murray, J. C. (1964). *The problem of God*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

As indicated by the quotation above the issues raised in this class speak to the whole of our life not just the academic. We cannot divorce the sacred from the secular, one’s heart from one’s mind, or the God of reason from the God of history.

Furthermore, we engage the content of this class as communication scholars looking at theology and not as theologians looking at communication. By this we mean that you are to respond to questions raised in the class or to specific class assignments as a communication scholar speaking or writing to other scholars in the field. Although the professor provides a framework or structure for the class it is the responsibility of the student to integrate the subject matter of the class into their own worldview.

### **Program Goals – Ph.D. in Communication**

1. Christian Worldview - Doctoral students will critique the worldviews commonly held by communication scholars and will formulate their own Christian worldview as a developing communication scholar.
2. Academics - Doctoral students will summarize and explain common ontological, epistemological and axiological approaches to the study of communication and will compose their own definition of communication based on their approach to the field.
3. Christian Community - Doctoral students will contribute to the academic Christian community of communication scholars through their participation in on-line or on-campus doctoral colloquiums and academic conference gatherings with other Christian scholars.
4. Mission Impact - Doctoral students will identify the major international organizations in the field of communication study and will explain their contributions to the field.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

This course will offer an equal emphasis on theory and practice with the aim of helping each student come to appreciate both the experiential and theoretical dimensions of the ethnographic act. At the end of this course the attentive student should be able to:

- A. ...recognize and be sensitive to the problematics and challenges inherent in engaging, describing, and interpreting the “other” who forms the center of his or her ethnographic “text.”
- B. ...be conversant with some of the key thinkers and theorist of ethnography and its discourse, theory and practice.
- C. ...be reasonably proficient in the speaking, listening, observing, note taking, and interviewing skills required of ethnographers.
- D. ...analyze, interpret, and “write up” ethnographic data in terms of a given methodological and/or theoretical perspective.

### **TEXTBOOKS: REQUIRED:**

- Duneler, M. (1999). *Sidewalk*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

- Pink, S. (2007). *Doing visual ethnography*. (2ed. ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Riessman, C. K. (2008). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Van Manen, M. (1990). *Researching lived experience: Human science for an action sensitive pedagogy*. Albany, NY: The State University of New York Press.

### **TEXTBOOKS: RECOMENDED**

- Atkinson, R. (2002). *The Life Story Interview*. . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications
- Creswell, J. W. (1998). *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2000). *Handbook of Qualitative Research (Second Edition)*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Emmison, M. & Smith, P. (2002) *Researching the Visual*. . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Erickson, K. & Stull, D. (1998). *Doing Team Ethnography: Warnings and Advice*. (Vol.42). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Fetterman, D. M. (1989). *Ethnography Step by Step*. (2ed ed.). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Geertz, C. (1983). *Local Knowledge: Further Essays in Interpretive Anthropology*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
- Goddall, H. L.(2000). *Writing the New Ethnography*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press
- VanMaahen, J. (1988). *Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

1. Class participation (in class discussion, short assignments, and in class projects) will contribute to the student's grade. Each student is responsible for assigned readings and course participation. Discussion and debate are crucial for the successful integration of scholarly materials. Other students depend on your participation in the class and in providing them with your written assignments and dialogue.
2. One critical book reviews will be required for this class. This assignment is designed to give you experience in reading and understanding published works in the area of qualitative research. Hopefully by reading, analyzing and discussing a key book in the field you will gain better insight to the differing methodological issues confronting qualitative researchers. This paper is to be no longer than three pages and you will be called upon to publicly defend your review. Due: March 1, 2011.
3. Each student is required to write an abstract for each of two articles assigned by the professor. The assignment is to be no longer than two typed pages and is due on the day the article is discussed in class. The articles to be abstracted should deal with some aspect of ethnographic theory and/or practice or a particular social science or "interpretive" theory, which can increase your sensitivity to the operative dynamics entailed in

ethnographic projects. The abstracts can be based on an article from a scholarly journal or on a chapter from a scholarly book. The recommended readings are intended to stimulate thinking in this regard. The critical book review and each article or chapter abstract should include the following:

- A review of the major points made in the article or book.
- A critical analysis of the major points made in the article or book.
- A discussion of how the information in the article or book integrates into what we already know about the field of communication and the world in general. Relate the assigned readings to other articles and to chapters assigned in the major texts.

The first article review on the Fraser, Brown, Wright and Kiruswa is due March 2, 2011. The second article review (article to be announced) is due March 3, 2011.

4. Each student will submit, for class critique, a proposal for his or her major ethnographic project. Such a proposal will include a brief “literature review,” justification for the project, proposed methodological approach to the subject and any relevant theoretical possibilities. Due: March 4, 2011.

5. Each student must submit a twenty to twenty-five page paper based on his or her proposal and major ethnographic project. Such projects will include, a “literature review,” methodology section, analysis and interpretation of observational data, and a theoretical orientation. All papers must follow the MLA or APA guidelines. Transcripts of the in-depth interviews and field notes must be made available if so desired by the professor. Due: April 18, 2011.

6. Each student will write a critical review of an assigned research paper. This review will be due April 25, 2011 and needs to follow either the APA or the MLA style sheet.

#### **COURSE EVALUATION:**

1. Assignment	(class participation)	20%
2. Assignment	(critical book review)	10%
3. Assignment	(article reviews)	10%
4. Assignment	(Final paper proposal)	5%
5. Assignment	(Final paper)	50%
6. Assignment	(Final paper review)	5%
Total		100%

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
A	96-100
A-	93-95
B+	90-92
B	85-89
B-	81-84
C+	78-80

### **Incomplete Grades**

It is University policy that incomplete grades are to be given only for legitimate deficiencies due to severe illness or emergencies or other significant reasons acceptable to the professor and not because of neglect on the student's part. I cannot deviate from this policy. Please consult the Regent University Academic Catalogue for a more complete statement of university policy. If any of your assignments are late for any reason I may grade your work but I will not be responsible for providing extensive feedback on late assignments.

### **Academic Honesty**

As should be expected, particularly at a Christian university, students will adhere to the highest standards of academic honesty. This includes the avoidance of plagiarism, defined as the uses of written and oral words of another person, including another student, without the expressed acknowledgment of the speaker or writer's indebtedness to that person. This also applies to the use of papers and other materials previously submitted to instructors of other classes, either at Regent University or other institutions. Any violation of this policy will normally result in failure of the course.

### **Student Feedback**

You will be given the opportunity to provide me, as well as the college administration, with written feedback and to evaluate the course structure and its conduct. However, you should feel free to bring any concerns to my attention at any time during the semester. We welcome your input, feedback and constructive criticism on this course.

If you have more than 2 absences you will lose 5 points from your final grade for each additional absence. Assignments turned in late will result in a drop in grade. Assignments turned in late may be graded and returned but with only limited or no written feedback.

## COURSE SCHEDULE

### Pre-on campus assignments (January 3 -- February 27)

Topic: Introduction to Communication and Theology

Readings: Read all texts

Assignments Due

\*Think about a paper topic you want to write on as you are reading the material assigned. The paper topic is to be discussed the week you are on campus and you should be prepared to present your initial proposal.

### FOR THE ON CAMPUS PORTION OF THE CLASS (FEBRUARY 28 – MARCH 4)

#### **Day 1 February 28, 2011**

Topic: Introduction to the class. What is an ethnographer & what is qualitative research?

Readings: Patton: Part I (Chapters 1 – 4)

Assignment Due: none

#### **Day 2 March 1, 2011**

Topic: Qualitative design and interviewing and data collection

Readings: Patton: Part I (Chapters 5 – 7); Duneler, M., *Sidewalk*.

Assignment Due: Respond to the readings Book Review of Duneler, M., *Sidewalk*.

#### **Day 3 March 2, 2011**

Topic: Qualitative analysis and interpretation.

Readings: Patton: Part II (Chapters 8 – 9); Pink, 2ed, edition.

Article by Fraser, Brown, Wright & Kiruswa

Assignment Due: Respond to the readings & article review (TBA)

#### **Day 4 March 3, 2011**

Topic: Narrative Analysis

Readings: Riessman, Chapters 1-7

Assignment Due: Respond to the readings & article review

#### **Day 5 March 4, 2011**

Topic: Paradigms and Perspectives in transition

Readings: Max Van Manen, Chapters 1-7

Assignment Due: Respond to the readings & final paper proposal due.

### Post-on campus assignments (March 5 – April 25)

Topic: Work on Major Paper

Readings: Read for Major Paper

Assignments Due: Write and work on major paper. Paper is due: April 18, 2011. Paper must be emailed to me and submitted on blackboard by midnight on the April 18, 2011.

You will be assigned to review another paper from one of your class mates and you have until April 25, 2011 to turn in a critical review of their paper.

## **UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND RESOURCES**

Please review the following links for important information on University policies:

- [Academic Calendar/Registrar Information](#)
- [Bookstore](#)
- [Honor/Plagiarism Policy](#)
- [Regent Library](#)
- [Student Services](#) (includes links to student handbook, disability services, University calendar, University Writing Center, etc.)
- [Technical Support – University Helpdesk](#)
- Grading Policies (incompletes, extensions, IPs, etc.)
- Grading Policies (incompletes, extensions, IPs, etc.)
- Disability Statement – the student is responsible for contacting the assistant director of Student Services at 757.352.4486 to request accommodations, provide necessary documentation, and make arrangement with each instructor. The following website is designed to help our disabled students learn of their rights and responsibilities with regard to disability services. The site also has resources for faculty to become better informed of their responsibilities toward the disabled students in their classes.  
[www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/student\\_life/disabilities.cfm](http://www.regent.edu/admin/stusrv/student_life/disabilities.cfm)

## **STUDENT COURSE EVALUATION**

Becoming Christian leaders includes learning how to evaluate others by providing honest evaluations that include positive affirmation and constructive feedback, as appropriate. In addition, such evaluation leads to the continual improvement of courses and student learning. Consequently, university policy requires that all students submit a formal student evaluation of teaching form at the end of the academic term. This mandatory requirement must be completed before students will be able to access their final course grade. This form is only available in an online format. Prior to the end of the course, students will receive an e-mail indicating that the form is available. Instructions on accessing the evaluation will be included. Since these evaluations are only available for a limited time, students should complete the evaluation as soon as they receive the e-mail notification that the evaluation form is available. Instructors will not have access to course evaluations until after grades have been submitted and will only have access to anonymous summary data. Students are also encouraged at any point during the term to offer comments that may be helpful to the improvement or refinement of the course. Students can access the online evaluation system at: <http://eval.regent.edu/regentsurvey/students.cfm>. If you have questions about the online evaluation please contact [evaluation@regent.edu](mailto:evaluation@regent.edu).

***At times, due to unforeseen circumstances, course content may be subject to change. Please check with your professor to insure you have the most recently updated Syllabus for this course.***

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### **Bibliography**

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Ben-Amos, Dan and Kenneth S. Goldstein. Eds. *Folklore: Performance and Communication*. The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

Bird, S. Elizabeth. "Travels in Nowhere Land: Ethnography and the 'Impossible' Audience." *Critical Studies in Mass Communication*. 9. 1992: 250-260.

Bower, Gordon H. and Randolph K. Cirilo. "Cognitive Psychology and Text Processing." In *Handbook of Discourse Analysis*. Vol. One: Disciplines of Discourse. Ed. Teun A. Van Dijk. New York: Academic Press, 1975.

Bowman, Barbara, Garda W. Bowman, and Ruth C. Resch. "Humanizing the Research Interview: A Posthumous Analysis of LeRoy Bowman's Approach to the Interviewing Process." *Quality and Quantity*. 18. 1984: 159-171.

Brodkey, Linda. "Writing Ethnographic Narratives." *Written Communication*. 4. 1987: 25-50.

Clifford, James. *Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988.

Conquergood, Dwight. "Rethinking Ethnography: Towards a Critical Cultural Politics." *Communication Monographs*. 58. 1991: 179-194.

Dijkstra, Wil. "Interviewing Style and Respondent Behavior: An Experimental Study of

the Survey Interview.” *Sociological Methods & Research*. 16. 1987: 309-334.

Ellen, R.F. *Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct*. New York: Academic Press, 1984.

Fine, Elizabeth C. and Jean Haskell Speer. *Performance, Culture, and Identity*. Westport, CONN: Preager, 1992.

Fitzgerald, Thomas K. “Media and Changing Metaphors of Ethnicity and Identity.” *Media, Culture and Society*. Vol. 13. 1991: 193-214.

Graesser, Arthur C. and Leslie F. Clark. “Constructing Structures During Narrative Prose Comprehension.” *Structures and Procedures of Implicit Knowledge*. Norwood, NJ: Ablex Publishing, 1985.

Mishler, E.G. *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986.

Morrissey, Charles T. “Riding a Mule Through the ‘Terminological Jungle’: Oral History and Problems of Nomenclature.” *Oral History Review*. 12. 1984: 13-28.

#### COM 703 Qualitative Research

O’Flaherty, Wendy Doniger. *Other People’s Myths: The Cave of Echoes*. New York: Macmillan, 1988.

Paredes, Americo. “On Ethnographic Work Among Minority Groups: A Folklorist’s Perspective.” *The New Scholar*. 6. 1 977: 1-32.

Patton, M.Q. *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods*. 2nd ed. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1990.

Philipsen, G. “Speaking Like a Man in Teamsterville: Cultural Patterns of Role Enactment in an Urban Neighborhood.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech*. 61. 1975: 13-22.

Reissman, C.K. *Narrative Analysis*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage, 1993.

Roemer, Michael. *Telling Stories: Postmodernism and the Invalidation of Traditional Narrative*. Lanham, MD: Rowan and Littlefield, 1995.

Sanders, Robert E. “The Interpretation of Discourse.” *Communication Quarterly*. 29. 1981: 209-217.

Speer, Jean Haskell. “Folklore and Interpretation: Symbiosis.” *The Southern Speech Communication Journal*. 40. 1975: 365-376.

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Twigg, Reginal. "The Problem of 'Serious' Fiction: Modernization and the Textual Politics of Nineteenth-Century Literary Realism and Ethnography." *Text and Performance Quarterly*. 14. 1994: 1-20.

Werner, Oswald and G. Mark Schoephe. *Systematic Fieldwork: Foundations of Ethnography and Interviewing*. Vol. 1. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1987.

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