

Prof. Sarah J. Mahler  
Office Hours: T 3-4:30 & by appt (virtual or F2F)

Office: SIPA 309 Tel: 305-348-2995

## Syllabus<sup>1</sup>: Qualitative Research Methods ANT3497

Spring 2018 W 1-2:50 PM Ocean Bank Convocation Center Rm 117

### Course Description:

This course is designed for social sciences majors and other students who have some research methods background and who wish to collect and analyze qualitative data (text, images, documents, etc.). Although you will learn a range of systematic methods for collecting qualitative data, the emphasis in this course is on analyzing that data. In order to ensure sufficient time to learn data analysis, only three classic data collection methods will be covered—participant observation, focus groups, and interviewing; only interviewing will be used to collect data. Additionally, however, you will learn an increasingly important skill—how to analyze qualitative data that you do not have to elicit. Primarily you will analyze social media data that people create and which you can “collect” but which you do not ask them to create.

This is an “unofficial hybrid” course which means it meets weekly for 2 hours and the third credit hour has you learning online through materials prepared for you on the course website. The course emphasizes hands-on data analysis exercises so every week a large portion of class time will be devoted to *doing research-related activities in class* and not lecture. *Please bring your laptop to each class if you have one.*

Course Learning Objectives: At the end of the course, I expect that you will be able to:

- Define what qualitative data and research are and involve
- Design qualitative research
- Collect and manage/organize qualitative data using various methods
- Apply quality control to improve your data’s validity
- Analyze real qualitative data accurately
- Report research findings and discuss their importance and limitations

### Course Prerequisites

Students must have taken SYA3300 or an equivalent research methods course prior to registering for this course unless given instructor permission.

### Course Readings and Content:

\*Required textbook - Guest *et al.* 2013 Collecting Qualitative Data Sage. This book has been ordered by the FIU bookstore and should be available for purchase there. A copy is also on 24-hour reserve at the library).

Additional course materials (readings in PDF, videos, etc.) will be available through the course website.

## COURSE SCHEDULE: (See course website for more details)

### **UNIT 1: OVERVIEW OF Qualitative Data Research and Analysis**

Week 1 (Jan 10): Course Introduction

Week 2 (Jan 17): Research Design Review & Simple Deductive Coding of Qual Data

Week 3 (Jan 24): Research Design Elements & Deductive Coding of Visual Data

### **UNIT 2: Qualitative Data Collection & Analysis – Participant Observation and Focus Groups**

Week 4 (Jan 31): Qualitative Data Collection with Participant Observation; Coding Data Inductively as well as Deductively

Week 5 (Feb 7): Qual Data Collection with Focus Groups; Comparing data using demographic variable(s)

Week 6 (Feb 14): QUIZ #2 today (on Data Collection Methods) and In-Class Data analysis practicum of Major Assignment 1

### **UNIT 3: Design & Application of Qualitative Data Collection Instruments: Structured & Semi-Structured Interviews**

Week 7 (Feb 21): Qual Data Collection with Structured Interviews

Week 8 (Feb 28): Qual Data Collection with Semi-Structured Interviews

Week 9 (March 7): Conducting good Interviews, recording data, managing data (labeling) and transcribing.

### **SPRING BREAK**

### **UNIT 4: More Data Analysis Techniques and Writing Up Research Reports**

Week 10 (March 21): Analysis of larger datasets than typical tweets: Codes-> themes to write up → substantiation with illustrative quotes

Week 11 (March 28): Developing a Codebook for systematic application of codes to qual data; continued identification of illustrative quotes for codes

Week 12 (April 4): Analysis of data from interviews

Week 13 (April 11): Writing up Qualitative Research + Final Report guidelines

Week 14 (April 18): Demographic comparisons with coded data

Week 15 (April 25): Final reports due (Major Data Analysis project #2)

#### **ASSIGNMENTS' DUE DATES & POINTS**

<b>Due by Class in:</b>	<b>Brief Assignment Description (see Canvas for details)</b>	<b>Max Points</b>
Week 2	Self-Introduction	10
Week 2	IRB Certificate	30
Week 3	Identify Research Design Elements in Qual Studies	20
Week 4	Coding tweets with photos	20
Week 7	Major Data Analysis Project 1	40
Week 10	"Surveys" in	20
Week 11	Interviews + transcript (25 points) + self-evaluation (5 pts)	30
Week 12	Codebook	20
Week 14	Coded data	30
Week 15	Major Data Analysis Project 2	60
Weeks 3, 6 & 9	3 Quizzes (10 points each; drop lowest)	20
Total Course Points Possible		300*
Equivalence in 4-point grade system (set by FIU)		
	A	Over 279
	A-	270-279
	B+	250-69
	B	225-49
	B-	200-224
	C+	175-199
	C	150-174
	D	75-149
	F	under 75
*There are likely to be a few opportunities to earn extra credit in the course		

**Assessments, Grades, & Tardiness:** Assignments are found in the module for the week they are due except the first two assignments which appear in Module 1 (as a heads up) and Module 2 when they are actually due. These assignments will be graded with a rubric located in the "Course Info" module. Each assignment will indicate the criteria from the rubric that will be used to assess it. You are encouraged to work collaboratively with other students but in most cases will not be required to work together. When you submit an assignment collaboratively, every participant receives the same grade. Make sure that you label your assignments so that all participants' names are visible on the submission.

There will be three short quizzes given in class. The lowest grade will be dropped--or might become some free extra credit points ;)

**Tardiness:** If you submit an assignment after it is due (which is by class time on the due date) but before a week later, you will receive a deduction of ½ grade. If you submit it later than a week after it is due, you will receive a full grade deduction. Since your assignments are in points, that deduction will vary by the possible points. The only exception to this tardiness rule is that students with a bona fide excuse (death in immediate family, major illness, etc.) and substantiate that excuse (obituary, doctor’s note, hospital record, etc.) to the instructor. The instructor will work out arrangements on a case-by-case basis.

**Accurate Recording of Your Grades:** The instructor will make every effort to record your grades accurately in the course’s grade book. However, YOU must check your grades to ensure that they are accurate. If you find any inaccuracies, notify the instructor by email immediately and check back that corrections are made. Once the course enters the final week of the semester no requests for changes to grades will be honored. Therefore, make sure your grades are accurate during the entire semester.

## THE FINE(R) PRINT:

### FIU POLICIES

Please review the [FIU's Policies](#) webpage. The policies webpage contains essential information regarding guidelines relevant to all courses at FIU, as well as additional information about acceptable netiquette for online courses.

---

**Plagiarism/Academic Honesty:** As an FIU student, you are always expected to abide by the university’s policies particularly those governing academic honesty and plagiarism as they appear in the FIU Student Handbook. This includes taking the FIU pledge to be “honest in my academic endeavors,” “not represent someone else’s work as my own,” and “I will not cheat nor will I aid another’s cheating.” In this course you cannot share the quizzes, quiz responses, etc. or any other assessment information with anyone unless expressly permitted by the instructor in writing. If you are not familiar with how to avoid plagiarism, consult FIU library tutorials and information. Additionally, should anything you produce cite any data, research or information that you have not generated and which is not general knowledge then you *must* cite it appropriately following the conventions of your discipline (anthropology, sociology, geography, etc.) and/or a particular journal. If you do not cite others’ work adequately you can be accused of plagiarism and FIU takes these accusations very seriously. Please consult [FIU’s plagiarism avoidance resources](#) if you need assistance. **The program Turnitin will be used for grading some assignments in this course to ensure that you abide by these rules regarding proper citation and plagiarism prevention.** You can check to make sure that you have not submitted work that plagiarizes and your instructor will as well.

### COURSE COMMUNICATION

Communication in this course will take place via **Email**. Please use Canvas email for most correspondence with your professor. Only if/when you (1) encounter an obvious instructor-

generated problem (such as a malfunctioning link in a module or a misspelling on a quiz), or (2) need an immediate response (less than 24 hours) should you email me using my FIU email: ([mahlers@fiu.edu](mailto:mahlers@fiu.edu)). So, please use that email to notify me of any broken links, missing info, etc.

---

### **ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATION**

The Disability Resource Center collaborates with students, faculty, staff, and community members to create diverse learning environments that are usable, equitable, inclusive and sustainable. The DRC provides FIU students with disabilities the necessary support to successfully complete their education and participate in activities available to all students. If you have a diagnosed disability and plan to utilize academic accommodations, please contact the Center at 305-348-3532 or visit them at the Graham Center GC 190. Please also notify me, your instructor, so I can work to accommodate your needs.

---

---

<sup>1</sup> Syllabus Caveat: Please note that the instructor reserves the right to alter the syllabus due to need and emergent circumstances. Students will be advised about any change made to the syllabus.