

Winter Quarter, 2005-06

Education 418

Foundations of Case Study Research

Instructor: Patricia J. Gumport

Email: gumport@stanford.edu

Office: 238 CERAS. Office Hours: By Appointment

TA: Corrie J. Potter

Email: cjpotter@stanford.edu

Office: 231 CERAS. Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00am-12:00pm and by appointment

Schedule: Tuesdays 3:15pm-6:05pm. First class meeting is January 10, 2006. Last class is March 21, 2006.

Location: SCANCOR Conference Room, 527 CERAS

Course Units: 3 – 5 (See note on page 2)

Enrollment: The enrollment is capped at 15. Preference will be given to PhDs in APA, then SSPEP.

Overview

This course is a small, upper-level seminar that examines the rationales and techniques of case study strategies commonly used by educational researchers. The principal objective is twofold: to develop skills for conducting case study research; and to cultivate interpretive sensibilities for the series of judgments that are required at every turn in the conduct of this kind of inquiry. The hands-on components of the course are paired with readings that examine the conceptual underpinnings of case study research. These readings are not “how to” recipes. Instead, the readings illuminate how choices about research design and methodology are not neutral or value-free. Students should be prepared to critically examine the readings for assumptions about the nature of reality and inquiry, and the implications of these assumptions for their research practice.

Part One of the course begins with a quick overview of the modes of inquiry associated with case studies and selected social science research traditions. Field research methods in general, and case studies in particular, are commensurate with a distinctive set of research objectives, questions and theoretical premises. We will review rationales for case study design and defining a case (e.g., as a theoretical case, an event, a set of activities, or social process in an organization or subunits). We will discuss purposive sampling—how to focus inquiry and obtain meaningful data. We also spend a week considering comparative case study traditions.

Part Two of the course is focused on interviews and documents as two types of data sources. Interviews and documents have become increasingly prominent data sources among social scientists studying education as a site of social action. Some field-based studies reflect theoretical interests in fundamental sociological processes, such as organizational conflict and change, professional power and socialization, knowledge production and legitimation. Other studies are empirically-motivated with explicit attention to policy implications. As we consider the insights in these readings, we will engage in data collection and analysis exercises, identifying the respective strengths and limitations of interview and documentary data. We will briefly read about and discuss analytical traditions, such as grounded theory, commonly used in education research with interview and documentary data sources. (Note: Students interested in observation, participant observation, and ethnography should look to other Stanford courses.)

The hands-on data collection and analysis exercises in Part Two of the course can be tailored to students' research interests. The research question pursued through class assignments does not need to be related to students' dissertation interests, though it may be. The emphasis in this class is on practicing specific skills in using interviews and documents as part of case studies—not on honing research questions or developing the literature review or conceptual framework for the dissertation.

Finally, in Part Three, we will consider strategies for validity and reliability as well as the relevance of standard evaluative criteria in the social sciences. We will discuss objectivity, subjectivity, and their consequences for researchers and subjects. In our last week we discuss ethical and political implications to consider in the design and implementation of case study research.

Note on Units

This course involves 5 units worth of work, with a lot of assigned reading and weekly class assignments. Students are free to take the class for fewer than 5 units, but all students are expected to complete all assignments and participate actively in class. We intend to cover a lot of ground swiftly and intensively, both in readings and written assignments, and each student should be committed to engaging fully throughout the quarter.

Evaluation

The course may be taken for a letter grade or pass/no-credit. Your grade in the course will be based on your written assignments (60%) and class participation (40%).

Texts

Required readings are drawn from two sources. Both are available from the Stanford Bookstore.

1. Gumport, Patricia J. and Corrie J. Potter. 2006. *Education 418: Course Reader*. (Asterisks below note items in Course Reader.)
2. Yin, Robert. 2003. *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Third Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Recommended readings are available from the instructor/TA.

Summary of Assignments

The assignments require active participation, thorough class preparation and a commitment to keep up with weekly exercises. We expect you to do the readings before class, and integrate relevant ideas from the readings into your assignments. *Bring to class all parts of the assignment, including memos.* There will be in-class exercises as well.

- Exercise 1 – Due Week 2: 1/17/06 Identify Research Interest/ Topic to Pursue in Exercises. Locate your research in Burrell and Morgan’s quadrants. Describe what could be considered a “case(s)”. Submit as memo (One page max).
- Exercise 2 – Due Week 3: 1/24/06 State Research Question, and Design a Single Case Study to address the question. Submit as memo (Two pages max).
- Exercise 3 – Due Week 4: 1/31/06 Design a comparative case study to address your research question from Exercise Two (your research question can be revised as needed). Submit as memo (Two pages max).
- Exercise 4 – Due Week 5: 2/7/06 Revise research question as needed for purpose of doing course assignments. Design a sampling/selection strategy for interviews. Discuss selection rationale, explain decisions you made, and note any tradeoffs you faced. Develop semi-structured interview protocol for first interview. Submit as memo with protocol attached.
- Exercise 5 – Due Week 6: 2/14/06 First Interview with Field Notes.
- Exercise 6 – Due Week 7: 2/21/06 Second Interview with Field Notes. Transcribe part of an Interview. Begin Coding.
- Exercise 7 – Due Week 8: 2/28/06 First Document with Notes and Codes.
- Exercise 8 – Due Week 9: 3/7/06 Second Document with Notes, Coded, and Emergent Themes Identified.
- Exercise 9 – Due Week 10: 3/14/06 Memo (Four pages max). Integrate analyses of interviews and documents. Reflect on the relative merits and limitations of interview and document data for your research objectives.
- Exercise 10 – Due Week 11: 3/21/06 Memo (Three pages max). First, problematize your objectivity. Where did your subjectivity enter in to your data collection and analysis? What assumptions did you and your interviewees bring to the project about representation and objectivity? Second, examine the ethics and politics of your research design.
- Final Exercise – Due Week 11: 3/21/06 Reflection Memo – self-assessment, evaluation. Please describe your perspective on the course: what you contributed and learned; and what I should keep/change for the next time I teach this course.

Course Timeline by Topic

Part 1: Case Study Research Design

Week 1:	1/10/06	Course Overview
Week 2:	1/17/06	Foundations
Week 3:	1/24/06	Research Design
Week 4:	1/31/06	Comparative Methods

Part 2: Data Collection and Analysis

Week 5:	2/7/06	Data Collection – Interviews
Week 6:	2/14/06	Coding and Analyzing Interview Data; Grounded Theory
Week 7:	2/21/06	Interviews Cont., Introduction to Documents
Week 8:	2/28/06	Working with Documents: Approaches to Content Analysis

Part 3: Issues in Case Study Research

Week 9:	3/7/06	Approaches to Validity and Reliability; Triangulation
Week 10:	3/14/06	Problematizing Objectivity
Week 11:	3/21/06	Ethical and Political Issues

Weekly Topic and Field Research Assignment

Week 1: 1/10/06 Course Overview

Read:

Yin chapter 1

*Eisenhardt, Kathleen M. 1989. "Building Theories from Case Study Research." *Academy of Management Review* 14:532-550.

Week 2: 1/17/06 Foundations

Read:

*Burrell, Gibson and Gareth Morgan. 1979. *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*. Aldershot (UK): Gower Publishing Company Limited.

Introduction and Chapters 1-3. Pp. viii-37.

*Kaplan, Abraham. 1964. *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company. **Pp. 3-18.**

→ [Read Kaplan for distinction between logic-in-use and reconstructed logic; the role of logic in inquiry.]

*Ragland-Sullivan, Ellie and Peter Barglow. 1981. "Job Loss: Psychological Response of University Faculty." *Journal of Higher Education* 52:45-66.

*Gumport, Patricia J. 1993. "Fired Faculty." Pp. 135-154 in *Naming Silenced Lives: Personal Narratives and the Process of Educational Change*, edited by D. McLaughlin and W. Tierney. New York: Routledge.

→ [For both Ragland-Sullivan and Barglow and Gumport pieces: Locate each piece on Burrell and Morgan's dimensions. Think about logics-in-use and reconstructed logics in the pieces. What is a "case" in each of these pieces?]

Exercise 1: Identify Research Interest/ Topic to Pursue in Exercises. Locate your research in Burrell and Morgan's quadrants. Describe what could be considered a "case(s)". Submit as memo (One page max).

Week 3: 1/24/06 Research Design

Read:

Yin chapters 2, 5

→ [How does the design of your case study affect what you are able to say when you are finished? What is the relationship between analysis and design?]

Exercise 2: State Research Question, and Design a Single Case Study to address the question. Submit as memo (Two pages max).

Recommended Reading:

*Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2003. *The Craft of Research, Second Edition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Chapters 3 and 4, Pp. 40-71.

→ [Read if you need help coming up with and/or focusing your research question].

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Week 4: 1/31/06 Comparative Methods

Read:

*Lijphart, Arend. 1971. "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method." *American Political Science Review* 65:682-693.

*George, Alexander L. and Timothy McKeown. 1985. "Case Studies and Theories of Organizational Decision Making." *Advances in Information Processing in Organizations* 2:21-58.

*Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2:131-150.

→ [Understand the logic of the three errors Geddes discusses; don't worry about the details of the pieces she is critiquing.]

*Clark, Burton R. 1972. "The Organizational Saga in Higher Education." *Administrative Science Quarterly* 17:178-184.

→ [Identify any comparative logic(s) that Clark uses.]

Exercise 3: Design a comparative case study to address your research question from Exercise Two (your research question can be revised as needed). Submit as memo (Two pages max).

Week 5: 2/7/06 Data Collection - Interviews

Read:

Yin Chapters 3, 4

***Patton, Michael Q.** 1980. *Qualitative Evaluation Methods*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
Chapter 7: "Qualitative Interviewing", Pp. 195-263.

***Hammer, Dean and Aaron Wildavsky.** 1993. "Chapter 5: The Open-Ended, Semi-structured Interview." Pp. 57-101 in *Craftways: On the Organization of Scholarly Work, Second Edition*, edited by A. Wildavsky. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers.

Exercise 4: Revise research question as needed for purpose of doing course assignments. Design a sampling/selection strategy for interviews. Discuss selection rationale, explain decisions you made, and note any tradeoffs you faced. Develop semi-structured interview protocol for first interview. Submit as memo with protocol attached.

Week 6: 2/14/06 Coding and Analyzing Interview Data; Grounded Theory

Read:

***Strauss, Anselm L.** 1987. "Chapter 3: Codes and Coding." Pp. 51-81 in *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

***Harry, Beth, Keith M. Sturges, and Janette K. Klinger.** 2005. "Mapping the Process: An Exemplar of Process and Challenge in Grounded Theory Analysis." *Educational Researcher* 34 (2):3-13.

***Charmaz, Kathy.** 2005. "Chapter 20: Grounded Theory in the 21st Century." Pp. 507-535 in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, Third Edition*, edited by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications.

→ [Contrast Charmaz's use of grounded theory with the grounded theory in Harry, Sturges and Klinger. Is this the same method?]

Exercise 5: First Interview with Field Notes.

Week 7: 2/21/06 Interviews Cont., Introduction to Documents

Read:

***Merriam, Sharan B.** 1998. "Chapter 6: Mining Data From Documents." Pp. 112-133 in *Qualitative Research and Case Study Applications in Education (Revised Edition)*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.

***Huberman, A. Michael and Matthew B. Miles.** 1994. "Chapter 27: Data Management and analysis Methods." Pp. 428-444 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Exercise 6: Second Interview with Field Notes. Transcribe part of an Interview. Begin Coding.

Week 8: 2/28/06 Working with Documents: Approaches to Content Analysis.

Read:

***Perakyla, Anssi.** 2005. "Chapter 34: Analyzing Talk and Text." Pp. 869-886 in *Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, Third Edition*, edited by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications.

***Lewis, R. Barry.** 2004. "NVivo 2.0 and Atlati 5.0: A Comparative Review of Two Popular Qualitative Data-Analysis Programs." *Field Methods* 16 (4):439-469.

***Johnson, R. Burke and Anthony J. Onwuegbuzie.** 2004. "Mixed Methods Research: A Research Paradigm Whose Time Has Come." *Educational Researcher* 33 (7):14-26.

Exercise 7: First Document with Notes and Codes.

Week 9: 3/7/06 Approaches to Validity and Reliability; Strategies of Triangulation

Read:

***Eisenhart, Margaret A. and Kenneth R. Howe.** 1992. "Chapter 14: Validity in Educational Research." Pp. 643-680 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*, edited by M. D. LeCompte, W. L. Millroy, and J. Preissle. San Diego: Academic Press.

***Mathison, Sandra.** 1988. "Why Triangulate?" *Educational Researcher* 17 (2):13-17.

***Armstrong, David, Ann Gosling, John Weinman, and Theresa Marteau.** 1997. "Research Note: The Place of Inter-Rater Reliability in Qualitative Research: An Empirical Study." *Sociology* 31 (3):597-606.

Exercise 8: Second Document with Notes, Coded, and Emergent Themes Identified.

Week 10: 3/14/06 Problemetizing Objectivity

Read:

***Guba, Egon G. and Yvonna S. Lincoln.** 2005. "Chapter 8: Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences." Pp. 191-215 in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage.

***Kaplan, Abraham.** 1964. *The Conduct of Inquiry: Methodology for Behavioral Science*. San Francisco: Chandler Publishing Company. **Pages 126-144.**

→ [Understand the difference between Act Meaning and Action Meaning.]

***Keller, Evelyn Fox.** 1982. "Feminism and Science." *Signs* 7 (3):589-602.

***Farrell, Elizabeth F. and Eric Hoover.** 2005. "Getting Schooled in Student Life." *Chronicle of Higher Education* 51 (47):(July 29, 2005).

Exercise 9: Memo (Four pages max). Integrate Analyses of Interviews and Documents. Reflect on the relative merits and limitations of interview and document data for your research objectives.

Week 11: 3/21/06 Ethical and Political Issues

Read:

***Cassell, Joan.** 1978. "Risks and Benefits to Subjects of Fieldwork." *The American Sociologist* 13:134-143.

***Punch, Maurice.** 1994. "Chapter 5: Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research." Pp. 83-97 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, edited by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage.

***Lincoln, Yvonna S.** 2005. "Institutional Review Boards and Methodological Conservatism." Pp. 165-181 in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, Third Edition*, edited by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications.

***Ladson-Billings, Gloria and Jamel Donnor.** 2005. "The Moral Activist Role of Critical Race Theory Scholarship." Pp. 279-301 in *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, Third Edition*, edited by N. K. Denzin and Y. S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks (CA): Sage Publications.

Exercise 10: Memo (Three pages max.) First, problematize your objectivity. Where did your subjectivity enter in to your data collection and analysis? What assumptions did you and your interviewees bring to the project about representation and objectivity? Second, examine the ethics and politics of your research design.

Final Exercise: Reflection Memo – self-assessment, evaluation. Please describe your perspective on the course: what you contributed and learned; and what I should keep/change for the next time I teach this course.