Psychology 352: Advanced Research Methods: Qualitative Data Analysis
Narratives of Peer Conflict in Middle Childhood

Professor: **Dr. Marsha Walton**   116 Clough

Office hours:

	Thursdays	1:00 -3:00 drop-in (no appointments needed)
	Other times	by appointment

Seminars:	Mondays	11:00 – 11:50 Clough 108
Labs:	Thursays	11:00 – 12:45 Clough 108

Course Description
Fascinating developmental changes in sense of self, moral voice and understanding of the social world are reflected in the stories children tell about their own experiences. Students in this research course will be involved in analyzing stories told by elementary school children about their own experiences. We will seek to discover the ways their stories and their narrative skills reflect their developing sense of self, their moral development, their ability to understand interpersonal conflicts, and their way of making sense of their worlds. Our primary goal, as we study children's narratives about their everyday experience will be to see what the world looks like from the point of view of elementary school children, and to discern how they understand the social world they are entering.

This course is designed to give students the opportunity to develop research skills by participating in ongoing faculty research. The Students will focus on the ability to make careful and astute observations of children's behavior and to listen carefully for their ways of construing their own experience. They will learn methods for analyzing qualitative data, including the development of coding systems, the establishment of inter-coder reliability, the use of qualitative analysis software and of descriptive statistics to produce sophisticated and theoretically grounded representations of qualitative data. Students will participate in an interpretive community, doing close readings and proposing deep interpretations of the reports children give of their own experience in their own words. We will work in teams, consistent with the collaborative model that dominates contemporary psychological research.

Classroom Climate
The Psychology Department at Rhodes College is committed to creating an academic climate that is safe, respectful, and appreciative of all students, staff, and faculty regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, size, socioeconomic background, religion, spirituality, physical ability, mental ability, or any other aspect of one's identity. We believe that a climate of mutual respect allows us to ask difficult questions and to participate in honest discussions about difficult issues, even in the context of strong disagreement. Creating this kind of open, honest, and respectful climate is our mutual responsibility.

Course Objectives
Knowledge Objectives: Students will review research and theory on the development of narrative skills and on the importance of narrative to moral and social development in middle childhood. Students will also read about and discuss the epistemological underpinnings of research in this area and will come to understand the contributions of qualitative and interpretive data analysis procedures. We will seek to deepen our understanding of the relationship between the questions psychologists ask and the methods they use to investigate those questions.

Student Skills Objectives: The student work and the use of class time in Advanced Methods focus on exercising and improving a set of skills used by professionals in psychology and in many other related fields. Most notably, these will include:

◆ research skills: students will use many of the research skills they learned in psychology 200, the statistics they learned in psychology 211, and library research and writing skills they developed in most other psychology courses. They will focus attention on learning to manage a data set, conduct data analyses, write a research report in APA format, and disseminate results of their study to appropriate audiences. In addition to the practice and honing of these previously acquired skills, students will learn:
  - to use software designed to facilitate analysis of qualitative data
  - to do close readings and deep interpretations of qualitative data
  - to discern patterns and develop coding schemes that allow a systematic analysis of these patterns
  - to establish coding reliability and to understand professional standards of coding rigor
◆ collaboration skills: almost all psychological research is done in a collaboration model. Students will have an opportunity to gain experience working as part of a research team and to gain experience providing and receiving critical peer feedback on all aspects of the work.
◆ professional communication skills: students will have opportunities to enhance oral and written communication skills in two areas:
  • the ability to make formal written and oral presentations to professional audiences.
  • the ability to contribute to conversations that encourage the thoughtful expression of different points of view and that deepen our mutual understanding of the work we are doing.

Research Ethics, Scientific Honesty and the Honor Code

Work in this course is real research, designed to further our knowledge – not just classroom exercises designed for educational purposes. Any failure to follow the ethical guidelines that protect the dignity and privacy of the children who participate in our research is egregious and may result in expulsion from the class. It is imperative that students in this course treat our data with respect and care, and that standards of scientific honesty be upheld. Any deliberate misrepresentation of data or alteration of data is an honor code offense. If any student becomes aware of any such dishonesty and fails to report it, this failure will also be an honor code offense.

All work in this course should be pledged. Students are encouraged to collaborate and to help each other as much as possible on all assignments. Sources used should be cited in accordance with APA style, and the assistance of classmates who edit and provide useful feedback should be acknowledged in a note to the final paper. In this course, we replace the standard college pledge (that I have neither given nor received help) with the following: "I pledge that this work reflects my own ideas and my current understanding of this material." For all co-authored work, students should additionally sign the following pledge: "I pledge that I have done my fair share of this work, and that I have provided assistance to my collaborators as I have been able to do so." If a student should feel unable to sign either of the above pledges, he or she should attach a brief written explanation.

Reading

A bibliography of previous articles that have been published from work in this lab, and research and theory that has been highly influential will be available on our course Moodle site. We will read some of these together to get us oriented, we will divide up some of them and report to each other.

<u>Course Requirements</u>
All assignments will be turned in by email to me. Please name your files with your name and the assignment identifier. For example, abbotLog1.docx would be a file name for the first log turned in by a student named abbot. It is very important that files be named this way so that they do not overwrite each other when I move them to the folder from which I will grade them. When I receive your file, I will send a 'got it' email back to you. Please keep up with these, and check on your assignment if you do not receive a 'got it,' in a day or two.

In-Class Presentations, Research Reports, and Updates (10% of final grade)
Many of the seminar sessions will be occasions for sharing the articles we have read that week. We will select some articles that are so important that all of us will read them, and we will take turns leading discussions of these. Much of the research will be divided among us, and we will summarize these articles for the group.

Collaboration and Peer Review (10% of final course grade)
Students will work on research teams and will be expected to give feedback to one another at every step of the research process. This will involve weekly team meetings outside of our class time sharing sources with one another, editing one another's written work, and asking the kind of critical questions that helps others clarify their thinking. Collaboration may also involve assistance with data selection, data management, coding and reliability assessment, and data analysis. We will enter this process with different skills, and an important part of this course will be teaching one another.

There will be three components of the collaboration grade:
- assessment made by team members of collaboration effectiveness, quality of group members' contributions, and fair distribution of work.
- my assessment of the feedback you provide on drafts of your classmates' work, and of your contributions to class discussions.
- Attentiveness to intermediate deadlines that help your team stay on schedule. (There will be intermediate deadlines for topic statements, coding manuals, reliability reports, etc.)

Professional Log of Contributions (10% of final course grade)
Each student will keep a weekly log that will detail work done for the project. Time should be recorded in quarter hour units, and the work should be described, as a professional consultant would document billable hours. A sample log is at the end of this document. Every second week, students will turn in the log by email. Students are required to work at least 10 hours a week for an A, 9 hours a week will be given a 90, 8 hours an 80, etc. These will be graded biweekly, so there will be no penalty for falling behind for one week as long as the hours are made up in the two-week period.

Introduction to Paper: (15% of final course grade)
Students will produce an abbreviated literature review that presents the theoretical and methodological grounding for this research and describes the studies that have preceded and given rise to the research questions. We will not do an exhaustive review of the research literature (this will be a part of the senior seminar paper.) For this course, the introduction will (1) orient the reader and provoke interest in the general research area, (2) describe the theoretical perspective that focuses our attention on children's narratives, (3) describe the previous research from our lab that has set us up for the study we now undertake, (4) clearly present the specific research questions to be addressed, and (5) explain why an exploratory and qualitative analysis is appropriate for this study.

Students will individually author this introduction, which should include a reference section and which must be written in strict accordance with APA style guidelines. Although students are encouraged to assist one another, to discuss this material and to edit for one another (and to acknowledge this assistance

appropriately), this part of the paper will be individually graded. Late papers will receive a 3-point per day penalty.

Research Proficiency (15% of final course grade)
This course will require students to work carefully and thoughtfully with a set of data. Students must demonstrate all of the following:
- Familiarity with all ethical guidelines pertinent to the project, and meticulous compliance with these. Inattentiveness in this area will result in a zero for this part of the course, and could result in failure of the entire course.
- Careful and orderly management of data files, with clear variable names and value labels, clear file names, and complete documentation.
- Careful and thorough documentation of all work completed, including clear labeling of output files. Collaborators should always be able to tell what has been accomplished. Research memos should explain and document coding decisions and questions of interpretation.
- Meticulous attention to coding procedures and reliable, accurate coding.
- Appropriate use of analysis software to answer research questions and to produce visual and graphic representations.

Final Research Paper (25% of final course grade)
Each research group will conduct a research project and submit a final paper based on their work. Papers must be written according to APA style (5th edition of the Publication Manual). Late papers will be penalized by ½ letter grade for each day that they are late.

Most work in our discipline is collaborative, and in accordance with this standard practice, students may elect to co-author the final paper for this course. Any student may choose, however, to author their papers independently. For those students who collaborate, each member of the team will be expected to edit and revise each section of the paper, although different individuals may make the first draft of various sections. All members of the team will receive the same grade for this part of the course, based on the quality of the final, co-authored work.

Professional Presentation of Research Project (15% of final course grade)
Each student or student research group will be required to present their work at a departmental poster session, scheduled for December 11. The department has funds to pay for the production of black and white research posters at a commercial printer or for color posters printed on campus. Please retain receipts and submit them to Christy Waldkirch, the departmental administrative assistant, for reimbursement.

Important Due Dates
Logs due:
9/11	9/25
10/9	10/27
11/10	11/24
12/10	

Major Paper and Poster Due Dates:
10/16	introduction due
12/4	poster title and abstract (for publishing to department)
12/8	poster due electronically
12/11	poster presentation
12/15	final paper due

Class Schedule and Assignments

Key to Schedule
logs
presentations
written work
holiday

Date	Day	Reading	Topic/ Class Activity	Assignment Due
8/28	Th		Introductions, Introduction to Qualitative Analysis Introduction to Child Narratives	Email 'relevant previous experience Q'
9/1	M	Labor Day		
9/4	Th	Engel 1 Freeman	Discuss Freeman, Engle 1 Introduction to Data, Project topics, Research Ethics	
Date		**Reading**	**Topic/ Class Activity**	**Assignment Due**
9/8	M	Willig 1 mVivo instructional videos	Discussion of Willig	nVivo videos
9/11	th	Engle 2-8	Discussion of Engle Logistics for nVivo	Team presentation of relevant features of Engel reading. Logs due 8/28- 9/10
9/15	m	Team-specific reading assignments: TBA	Each team will read an article based on previous work with our data that is relevant to your project.	Team Presentations of research article – 10 minutes for each team. Send plan for weekly project team meeting times to me by midnight.
9/18	Th	initial read through data	Discussion of our data. Types of questions we may ask Generating ideas about research questions.	Bring example stories from data that illustrate issues or features relevant to your research group. Plan to present these in class.
9/22	M	Esterberg 2002	Nuts and bolts of qualitative data work	
9/25	th	Individual team consultations	project group progress reports	Logs due 6/11-9/24
9/29	m	Maracek et al	Forming an Interpretive Community	Half the class will read each, and will summarize for the other half. 15-minute presentation by each group.

10/2	th	Individual team consultations		
10/6	m			Team progress reports: coding and reliability work
10/9	Th		Discussion of nodes and memos	coding manuals and due by midnight. Logs due: 9/25 – 10/8
10/13	M		Formulating research questions, organizing introductions	
10/16	Th	Project group consultations		Introduction to me by midnight.
10/20		Fall Break		
10/23	th	Project group consultatons		
10/27	m		Tea Progress reports	Logs due 10/9 -10/26 Coding reliability reports due by midnight.
10/30	th	Individual team consultations	project group meetings, reviewing nodes and memos	
11/3	m			
11/6	th	Project group meetings		
11/10	m		data coding and planning data analysis	Logs due 10/27 – 11/9
11/13	Th	project group meetings		
11/17	m		Discussion of data analysis	
11/20	Th	project group meetings	No class session. Individual consultations on lit reviews.	draft of methods section by midnight
11/24	m		Data representations	Logs due 11/10- 11/23
11/27		Thanksgiving		
12/1	m		Representations of results	10-minute presentation by each group, showing graphics and presentation of analytic or descriptive categories.
12/2	T			draft of results section by midnight
12/4	th		Present and give feedback to one another on posters.	send text and graphs/tables for poster to me by 9 a.m. Mock-up of poster, presented

				in a way that facilitates getting feedback from classmates (posters should not be printed until I have approved them)
12/4	Th 7-9		Optional extra session to practice poster presentations. **Please make arrangements to attend this extra session so each group has time to get feedback.**	Poster title and abstract due by midnight
12/8	M			Posters printed and electronic versions turned in to me by midnight
12/10	w			Last Log Due: 11/24 -12/10
12/11	th			poster Presentations
12/15	th			Final paper to me by 8 p.m.

Weekly Log (due on alternate Thursdays)

Activity	date	start time	end time	total hours
Team meetings (include class sessions):				
Members present:				
Brief description of work accomplished				
Library research:				
Brief Description of searches				
Reading (list articles read)				
Data work:				
Brief description:				
Writing:				
Brief description:				
Total hours for this report period				