



**BALL STATE
UNIVERSITY**

W E F L Y

EDST 650: Introduction to Qualitative Research

Section: Online (Asynchronous)

Credit Hours: 3

Term: Spring, 2026

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Office Hours: By appointment only, via Zoom

Instructor Bio

Dr. Brown has a Ph.D. in Education Policy and Evaluation from Arizona State University. He is a methodological pragmatist whose research focuses on the effects of language policies on emergent bilingual student populations. Previously, he was an educator who taught social studies for two years in the Dominican Republic and four years at a public school in rural Indiana. In addition to this K-12 experience, Dr. Brown taught English to immigrants at a nonprofit adult education program for two years and served as a professional development facilitator for the Indiana Department of Workforce Development. He is also a professor in the Global Education M.Ed. program at Arizona State University. Dr. Brown is married with two daughters, ages 5 and 8, and enjoys spending time outdoors, making culinary creations, and playing board and card games with his friends and family.

BSU Mission Statement

The mission of the professional education program at Ball State University is to prepare engaged educational experts who are sensitive and responsive to the contextual bases of teaching, learning, and development.

Course Description

Overview of qualitative research methods from ethnography to hermeneutics.

Course Objectives

Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. **Explain** the philosophical foundations, paradigms, and major traditions of qualitative research (e.g., ethnography, phenomenology, hermeneutics, case study).
2. **Analyze** the role of researcher positionality, ethics, and cultural sensitivity in qualitative inquiry, particularly within diverse urban educational contexts.
3. **Apply** qualitative data collection methods (e.g., interviews, observations, document analysis) to investigate lived experiences and institutional practices.
4. **Evaluate** the politics of interpretation by considering multiple perspectives, stakeholder voices, and the influence of power dynamics on qualitative findings.
5. **Design** a qualitative research proposal that aligns with a specific educational issue, integrating methodological rigor, ethical considerations, and sensitivity to urban diversity.
6. **Synthesize** literature and empirical findings to situate research questions and interpretations within broader scholarly and societal debates.
7. **Present** qualitative research findings in oral and written forms that demonstrate effective communication, critical thinking, and professionalism (NACE competencies).
8. **Collaborate** with peers in discussions and group activities to **develop** teamwork, problem-solving, and intercultural fluency skills applicable to academic and professional contexts (NACE competencies).
9. **Reflect** critically on personal assumptions, cultural perspectives, and research practices, and **adapt** approaches to enhance inclusivity and equity in qualitative inquiry.

Note: These course objectives, grading schema, and some of the corresponding assignments are from Dr. Giraldo-Garcia, who graciously shared components of her syllabus to achieve alignment between EDST 650 course sections.

Course Delivery and Online Etiquette

This course is delivered fully online through asynchronous modules that include readings, recorded lectures, and applied learning activities. Active and thoughtful participation is expected through discussion boards, reflective writing, and course assignments, with clear guidelines provided throughout the semester. To support a respectful and inclusive learning environment, students are expected to engage professionally, value diverse perspectives, and communicate respectfully. Because qualitative research often involves sensitive topics and lived experiences, confidentiality, cultural humility, and ethical responsibility are essential. Critical dialogue is encouraged and should always be grounded in scholarly inquiry and mutual respect.

Required Texts

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
- Luker, K. (2009). *Salsa dancing into the social sciences*. Harvard University Press.
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2019). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological*. Sage Publications.

Additional Readings Provided by the Instructor*

- Boote, D. N., & Beile, P. (2005). Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation literature review in research preparation. *Educational researcher, 34*(6), 3-15.
- Lincoln, Y. S., Lynham, S. A., & Guba, E. G. (2011). Paradigmatic controversies, contradictions, and emerging confluences, revisited. *The Sage handbook of qualitative research, 4*(2), 97-128.
- Mason, J. (2018). *Intellectual puzzles and research questions*. In *Qualitative researching* (3rd ed., pp. 3–20). Sage Publications.
- Pring, R. (2015). *Philosophy of educational research* (3rd ed.). New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Reyes, V. (2020). Ethnographic toolkit: Strategic positionality and researchers' visible and invisible tools in field research. *Ethnography, 21*(2), 220-240.
- Saldana, J. (2013). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (2nd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Smagorinsky, P. (2008). The method section as conceptual epicenter in constructing social science research reports. *Written communication, 25*(3), 389-411.
- Tomaszewski, L. E., Zarestky, J., & Gonzalez, E. (2020). Planning qualitative research: Design and decision making for new researchers. *International journal of qualitative methods, 19*.

*The instructor reserves the right to add or remove texts to meet the needs of the class.

Course Assignments

Most assignments should be submitted via Canvas when they are due, unless noted in the syllabus as part of the class's activities. All work must be word-processed, double-spaced, using the 12-point font (preferably Times New Roman). All written assignments are expected to conform to the guidelines and reference formats specified in the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (7th ed.) (APA). APA will be essential for citations and

references in ALL your written work. The grading of your assignments will always consider your adherence to the APA writing style. Although we have support materials on Canvas, please do not hesitate to contact the Writing Center if you need more direct assistance with APA (<http://cms.bsu.edu/academics/centersandinstitutes/writingcenter>).

Assignments	Points
Module Discussion Posts (x2)	10
Final Paper Prep Assignments (x6)	20
Annotated Bibliography	10
Semi-Structured Interviews	20
Coding Exercise	20
Qualitative Methods Presentation	20
IRB Form & CITI Completion	30
Final Paper Presentation & Peer Review	40
Final Paper	10
Total	290

Course Grading Schema

Grading Scale	%	Points
A	95 – 100	4.0
A-	90 – <95	3.7
B+	87 – <90	3.3
B	80 – <87	3.0
B-	77 – <80	2.7
C	70 – <77	2.0
F	Course failure	Zero points

In general:

“A” grade signifies outstanding achievement.

“A-” grade indicates excellent work with some minor weaknesses in content or structure.

“B+” grade indicates substantial achievement with some weaknesses in content or structure.

“B” grade signifies average-level work, which lacks depth, contains some content errors, and/or has some significant technical weaknesses.

“B-” grade constitutes barely adequate graduate-level work, with significant weaknesses in content and/or structure.

“C” grade signifies unacceptable graduate-level work with significant weaknesses in content and/or technical structure.

Late assignments will be accepted only with **advance permission** from the instructor. A grade of ‘incomplete’ will be granted only under dire circumstances and after consultation with the instructor.

Module Discussion Posts

Discussion posts are opportunities for you to reflect on the weekly readings and share your ideas with your colleagues. In addition to your response to the discussion prompts, you will need to respond to two of your colleagues’ postings.

Final Paper Prep Assignments

You will have six final paper preparation assignments for the course. Final Paper Prep assignments are designed with two aims. First, the assignments should provide you with an opportunity to think through major components of your paper to streamline the writing of the paper later in the term. Consider these assignments the first draft of the various sections of your final paper. Second, they allow me to provide feedback to troubleshoot potential problems early in the course. Both aims are designed to save you time over the long run. The final paper that you submit should be a compilation of the various paper prep components, with the suggested edits, along with transitional sentences/paragraphs to aid in the flow of the paper.

Annotated Bibliography

Your annotated bibliography must contain citations of at least ten (10) empirical peer-reviewed articles. The “annotation” of your bibliography is essentially an abstract of the study and should include the following information:

- 1) Title
- 2) Author(s)

- 3) RQs/Study Aims
- 4) Theoretical/Conceptual Framework
- 5) Site and Sample
- 6) Methods used
- 7) Results
- 8) Their Main Conclusion

Semi-Structured Interview

You will be tasked with constructing an interview protocol sheet for a semi-structured interview. Depending on the research questions you are seeking to answer in your proposal (not all RQs warrant the use of semi-structured interviews), the semi-structured interview protocol can be used as a component of your methods section for your final paper and can be included in one of your appendices. If your study proposal does not warrant the use of semi-structured interviews as a data collection tool, then you will construct a protocol based on a hypothetical study that aligns with your topic of interest. After constructing your protocol, you need to find an individual who would constitute a hypothetical member of your sample and conduct the interview with them. All interviews should be transcribed (Zoom can do this for you, for virtual interviews).

Coding Assignment

Using your interview transcript, you need to conduct a coding analysis that aligns with the objectives of your proposed study RQs or hypothetical RQs. You will also need to generate a codebook that corresponds with your analysis. More guidance and examples will be provided in the Canvas course.

Qualitative Methods Presentation

You will be assigned a method typically used in qualitative research and will need to prepare a 10-15 minute presentation that provides a detailed overview of the method (i.e., semi-structured interviews), some “best practices” for utilizing the method, strengths and weaknesses of the method, and an example of a study that utilized the method being discussed.

CITI Certification

You must complete this online course for IRB certification. Please go to <https://www.citiprogram.org> and locate on the CITI homepage “Create an account.” Click on “Register.” Under “Select your organization affiliation,” enter Ball State University. Then click on “Continue to step 2.” You will be prompted for your name and email, then click “Continue to step 3.” Once you have chosen a username and password, you can progress to the course material and testing. Before attempting the test, please read the material (especially the background

material on human subjects' protection). Since you will be working with human subjects (versus animals, chemical agents, etc.), Ball State University's required CITI training is the "**Social & Behavioral - Basic/Refresher**" course. Please note that this course requires 10 modules; students must complete two modules from each of two categories, for a total of 14 required modules.

Having completed this certification is an accomplishment you can list on your résumé. Please submit a copy of the completion confirmation to your instructor.

IRB Protocol

Students will be given an IRB protocol to complete that aligns with their course paper proposal. This will be an opportunity to engage in the first stages of the IRB approval process.

University Policies and Statements

University Statement

We are committed to ensuring that all members of the community are welcome, through valuing the various experiences and worldviews represented at Ball State and among those we serve. We promote a culture of respect and civil discourse. If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, be sure to get in touch with the instructor of record as soon as possible. Ball State's [Disability Services Office](#) coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disability Services can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

Freedom of Expression

In this course, we are committed to fostering a learning environment that values intellectual diversity, encourages free expression, and promotes open inquiry. As members of the Ball State Community, we treat each person with civility, courtesy, compassion, and dignity, and we learn from differences in people, ideas, and opinions. Please review Ball State University's [Statement on Freedom of Expression](#), the resources on Ball State's [Freedom of Expression webpage](#), and [Ball State's Beneficence Pledge](#).

Attendance Policy

Your regular participation and timeliness are essential to your academic success. In online courses, this takes the form of early participation in discussion via forums, chat, and other electronic means provided. As this is an online course, it is up to each student to stay on track and avoid falling behind. You must be self-motivated and disciplined to meet all due dates. Late assignments may be subject to a 10% penalty. It is your responsibility to complete assignments and keep pace with the class. You may submit assignments late only with my permission and for

a legitimate reason (e.g., personal illness or a family emergency); please contact me by email to discuss the situation and make the necessary arrangements.

Attendance in Ball State University online classes is measured by your active participation in course activities at least once each week. Be sure to complete your coursework as assigned to ensure you are recorded as attending the course. You **MUST** work at the pace set for the course. ALL due dates are enforced.

See [this study](#) on the link between attendance and student success. Be sure to follow the following guidance:

- [University policies regarding student absences](#). Absences will be excused for the following: funeral and bereavement leave, jury duty, late course addition, military absences, observance of religious holidays, pregnancy leave, student-athletes participating in University- or department-approved activities, and university advisories.
- Students may encounter other circumstances (e.g., car accidents, job interviews) that result in course absences. Only faculty members can excuse these absences, and adjustments are at the instructor's discretion. Where possible, and with sufficient documentation, faculty should support student educational activities.
- In general, students are expected to notify all their instructors when they anticipate being absent for any reason (e.g., a funeral) or as soon as possible after the absence begins (e.g., an unexpected injury or illness). The student may need to provide documentation (with confidential information redacted when appropriate) to each instructor if requested.

Title IX

Ball State University is committed to providing a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual harassment—including sexual assault, dating violence, domestic violence, or stalking, please know that you are not alone. The University offers support services and resources. For more information or to report an incident, please visit bsu.edu/titleix or contact the Title IX Coordinator at 765-285-1545 or at titleix@bsu.edu

As your instructor, I am a mandatory reporter under the Title IX policy and required to report any information I receive about possible sexual harassment. This includes information shared in class discussions, assignments, or private conversations.

What happens after I report? The Title IX Coordinator will email the person who experienced sexual harassment (complainant) and invite them to schedule a meeting. If the complainant chooses to meet with the Title IX Coordinator,

- Title IX Coordinator will offer supportive measures (e.g., counseling, extensions on deadlines, course-related adjustments, changes to work or class schedules, and/or referrals to campus offices), review the policy, and discuss options to move forward.
- If a complaint is filed by the complainant or the University, an investigation will begin following University policy.

University Grade Appeal Policy

If you believe you received a final course grade that does not reflect your performance due to fairness or a procedural issue, you have the right to file an appeal within 5 school days after final grades are posted by the Office of the Registrar. Review the [University Grade Appeal Policy and Process.](#)]

Student Academic Ethics Policy

Honesty, trust, and personal responsibility are fundamental attributes of the university community. Academic dishonesty and other forms of academic misconduct threaten the foundation of an institution dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge and will not be tolerated. To maintain its credibility and reputation, and to equitably assign evaluations of scholastic and creative performance, Ball State University is committed to maintaining a climate that upholds and values the highest standards of academic integrity. Visit the VPAA's [academic integrity website](#) (Students tab) for resources on understanding academic integrity, citing sources properly, and avoiding inadvertent academic dishonesty. To learn about BSU's academic integrity expectations and students' rights, please read the University [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

Academic integrity violations include giving or receiving an unfair academic advantage (cheating), presenting someone else's ideas or work as your own (plagiarism), and falsifying academic records. Unless otherwise indicated, you must work independently by yourself. Check with me if you are unsure whether something constitutes academic dishonesty. Examples of academic integrity violations include but are not limited to:

- Using resources not authorized by the faculty member (including devices, AI tools, hidden notes, and open books)
- Using commercial study websites to find answers to graded assignments (Chegg, Course Hero, StudyPool, OneClass, etc.).
- Without the instructor's written permission, giving away, buying, or selling graded assignments class notes, exams, study guides, or other course materials to other students or to third-party vendors (Course Hero, Chegg, 24HourAnswers, etc.).
- Working with another person on any assignment other than authorized group projects.
- Sharing or allowing others to access your files, whether done with permission or not.

- Reusing your own work from another semester, course, or section.
- Sharing answers with others during exams (passing notes, texting, whispering, gesturing)
- Discussing exam questions and answers with students who have not taken the exam.
- Soliciting others to complete work for you.

Generative AI Statement

Faculty are encouraged to engage in dialogue with their students about the use of AI and academic integrity. For AI information, tools, resources, and courses, see [AI Initiatives at BSU.](#)]

Some Use of Generative AI Permitted Under Some Circumstances or With Explicit Permission

During this class, we may use ChatGPT or other generative AI applications. You will be informed as to when, where, and how these tools are permitted to be used, along with guidance for attribution. However, you must cite any AI-generated material that informed your work. Using an AI tool to generate content without proper attribution constitutes a violation of Ball State University's [Student Academic Ethics Policy](#).

Student Support Services

The Learning Center

The Learning Center offers free Tutoring and Academic Coaching for many courses at Ball State. Students can make appointments for online (Zoom) or in-person (NQ 350) appointments. To make an appointment, visit myballstate.bsu.edu and click on "Navigate" in the Academic Tools section, or just go directly to bsu.navigate.eab.com.

Testing accommodations for students with disabilities are available for students who have received the appropriate documentation from Disability Services. Tests may be administered in the Learning Center.

Supplemental Instruction is available in select courses. If you have an SI leader for your course, that person will provide students with information the first week of school regarding weekly study sessions. For more information about Learning Center programming, visit bsu.edu/learningcenter or call 765-285-1006. Follow us on Instagram: [BallStateLC](#).

The Writing Center

All writers improve with practice and feedback, so as a student in this course, you are encouraged to use the Writing Center (in Robert Bell 295 during weekdays, Bracken Library First Floor West in the evenings, or online during any of our regularly scheduled hours) to get additional feedback on your writing.

The Writing Center offers free planning, feedback, and accountability sessions (in person and online) to all students composing essays, reports, reflections, research projects, web content, lesson plans, slideshows, poster presentations, resumes, and other digital or print texts. To schedule a free appointment to discuss your writing, go to [bsu.edu/writingcenter](https://www.bsu.edu/writingcenter). Online and in-person appointments are available; however, plan ahead because appointments book quickly!

The Basic Needs Hub

If you are having difficulty affording enough food, do not have a safe and reliable place to sleep, and/or experiencing an emergency or crisis, help is available through the [Basic Needs Hub](#). The Basic Needs Hub has information, resources, and provides individualized support to students. To talk with a supportive staff member about your experience, receive one on one assistance, or learn more about resources, you can submit a [Basic Needs Assistance Form](#).

The Counseling Center

The Ball State University Counseling Center offers free and confidential services to all students. The Counseling Center is located in Lucina Hall, Room 320. To schedule an appointment, you can contact us at 765-285-1736. Ball State also offers a 24/7 Crisis Line, which can be reached at 765-285-HOPE (4673). The Crisis Line is a mental health resource for those who are struggling with any mental health concerns, including thoughts of self-harm and/or suicide.

At the Ball State Counseling Center, we see students for a variety of reasons, some of which include homesickness, relationship concerns, anxiety, and depression. At your first appointment, you will work with a therapist to create a plan that will connect you with resources that best fit your needs. We assist students with getting connected to therapy at our Center as well as connecting students to self-help resources, other on-campus resources, and community-based resources. All Ball State students also have access to several on-demand, self-help resources through a variety of different platforms. All of these resources, including a direct link to our website, can be found [here](#).

The Speaking Center

The [Speaking Center](#) is a free resource available to all members of the BSU community wanting to improve their public speaking abilities. We offer personalized coaching designed to help you become a more confident and effective speaker. Our trained coaches provide constructive feedback and support throughout the entire speech preparation process, whether you are in the early stages of brainstorming ideas and organizing your thoughts, or you need to practice your delivery and refine your message.

The Center is in the David Letterman Communication and Media Building, room 302. To schedule an appointment, please access us through your Navigate app or use this [direct link](#) to sign up for a time. Appointments are available both in person and on Zoom. Appointments are

available in person, on Zoom, and in virtual reality (VR) for those interested in practicing in an immersive speaking environment.