Instructor Information

- Sonia Ospina
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- Office Address: Puck Building, Rm 3075
- Office Hours: Thursdays 4:00-5:30 pm or by appointment.

Course Information

- Class Meeting Times: Fridays, 1:30-3:30 pm
- Class Location: BOBS Room: 836

Course Prerequisites

- Doctoral Research Seminar: Research Methods (or equivalent, approved by instructor).

Course Description

This course offers a hands-on opportunity for doctoral and advanced masters students to experience the practice of qualitative research. We will address the nature of qualitative research in the administrative and policy sciences, with ample opportunities to discuss the implications of the choices made in designing, implementing and reporting the findings of a “mock” project which we will determine in class, with your input. The course will require a considerable investment of time, with intensive reading and writing, recurrent team discussions based on assignments, and individual fieldwork (with journal writing before, during and after site visits).

Course and Learning Objectives

Having appreciated the complexities and opportunities associated with doing rigorous and credible qualitative research, at the end of the course, students will:

1. Recognize the uniqueness and distinctiveness of qualitative research in public management and policy areas, particularly in contrast to the positivist and neo-positivist research cultures.
2. Distinguish qualitative methodological approaches –from interpretive to positivist– as well as traditions of qualitative inquiry–ethnography, case study, narrative inquiry, phenomenology, grounded theory, action research, etc –and appreciate their benefits and limitations for research in public service.

3. Discuss competently selected problems and issues associated with theory, design, methodology, reporting and publication of qualitative research in public service (while concentrating primarily on interview projects embedded within a given tradition).

4. Advance and deepen skills in managing selected design, data collection, analysis and writing strategies of qualitative research, via exercises and some field experience.

5. Become acquainted with published research articles modeling theoretical, methodological and empirical decisions in the qualitative study of public problems and issues in public service.

**Required texts** (be sure to get the latest editions)


**Recommended texts**: (highly recommended if you plan to do qualitative research in the future, and will be on reserve – we may read pieces)


**Basic qualitative textbooks**:


**Advanced discussions about the qualitative craft**:


Please find additional required readings from selected sources in the schedule of assignments. Students should be prepared to put a fairly large amount of time doing the readings and exercises associated with them.
Course Requirements

Students will apply readings and written assignments to a “mock” research project chosen within a constrained set of options, from topics proposed by course participants. We will spend class time debriefing on the experience of “doing” research. Forming groups to work on 3-4 projects will ensure ample room for discussion and collective reflection – inside and outside of the classroom – of the decisions made along the way. Class time will be spent reviewing challenges and issues as the projects advance, and connecting these to the readings.

Students are responsible for doing some fieldwork outside of class time. They should attend to scheduling fieldwork early on to ensure that each student does a minimum of two interviews and two field observations, to be used for class exercises and assignments. Students will keep individual journals with field notes and personal reflections of the mock project as it develops over time, writing analytical memos as needed (samples of these will be included in the final portfolio).

Students will be expected to complete a series of 10 short assignments and 3 long assignments throughout the course. The assignments are opportunities to practice skills of design, collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting. Experience doing these will ground class discussions. (Assignments are described in more detail under the “Schedule of Classes”).

Even though pairs or teams of students will implement the mock project, each student will present an individual final Portfolio with materials based on the work for the mock project. It will include some group products but also some independent writing from each student, including some journal entries and interview and observation memos developed over time per instructions in the syllabus.

Summary of Assignments, Credit and Associated Learning Objectives

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<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Credit</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<td>2. Research proposal</td>
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<td>3. Portfolio</td>
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<td>• Progress report</td>
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<td>• Journal entries</td>
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Short Assignments

- Please see instructions for the assignments under Course Outline and Schedule of Assignments below.
Researcher ID memo

- Follow instructions on page 34 (EXERCISE 2.1) in Maxwell (see discussion and examples on pages 34-38 and 46-47). The memo should address questions 1 and 2 posed in the exercise (but feel free to be creative in their exposition). Memo should not be longer than 3 pages.

Research Proposal

- Please see instructions under Course Outline and Schedule of Assignments below (Class 6).
- See Grading Criteria for Research Proposals in NYU Classes (Resources tab)

Portfolio

- See instructions in NYU Classes (Resources tab)

No late assignments will be accepted for grading, unless agreed upon in advance. Please see end of syllabus for information on how letter grades are assigned.

Absenteeism, punctuality, and in-class conduct

You are expected to attend all classes, and arrive on time. missing more than two sessions will have a negative impact on your grade unless previously discussed with the professor. The same applies to repeated lateness or early departure. Missing more than three sessions is grounds for course failure. Systematic tardiness, disruptive behavior (including unrelated side conversations, use of cell phone or computer for information withdrawal that is not related to class) is unacceptable and will also negatively impact your grade.

Academic Integrity. I expect strict adherence to University guidelines for academic integrity. You are responsible to know these guidelines and to understand what constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism is very likely to result in a failing grade for the course. All students enrolled in this class are required to read and abide by Wagner’s Academic Code. All Wagner students have already read and signed the Wagner Academic Oath.

Henry and Lucy Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at NYU: Academic accommodations are available for students with disabilities. Please visit the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities (CSD) website and click the “Get Started” button. You can also call or email CSD (212-998-4980 or mosescsd@nyu.edu) for information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are strongly advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance.

NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays: NYU’s Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays states that members of any religious group may, without penalty, absent themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Please notify me in advance of religious holidays that might coincide with exams to schedule mutually acceptable alternatives.
COURSE OVERVIEW

I. INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE RESEARCH
1. Introduction: The nature of qualitative research - January 31
2. Research designs and multiple traditions of qualitative inquiry- February 7
3. Choosing topics, exploring questions (and closing the intro) – February 14

II. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN
4. Designing the study: frameworks, questions, problems, goals - February 21
5. Bounding the territory: cases, sites, sampling and other issues- February 28
   * Researcher identity memo due on Tuesday March 3
6. Preparing for the field: methods; relationships; fieldwork; the ethics of qualitative research – March 6
   * Research proposal due Tuesday, March 10
7. The art and craft of interviewing – March 13

March 16-22 Spring Recess – [If possible, go to the field]

III. INTERLUDE: FROM THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE TO THE RESEARCH CRAFT
Note: we will leave 20 minutes of classes 8 and 9 to trouble shoot and discuss your fieldwork preparation and experience
8. Multiple modes of inquiry: linking worldviews, paradigms, theoretical perspectives and methodological tools - March 27
9. Applications and illustrations – April 3

IV. IN THE FIELD AND BEYOND: ACCESSING AND INTERPRETING DATA
Note: field notes and interview transcripts needed for assignments on week 10
10. Data Collection/Analysis (1): Documenting and describing - April 10
11. Collection/Analysis (2): Explaining and theorizing - April 17

V. MAKING SENSE: FINDING MEANING, WRITING AND SHARING INSIGHTS
12. Drawing and verifying conclusions; standards of quality - April 24
13. Developing a credible story: theorizing & constructing credible arguments – May 1
14. Sharing the findings: in conversation with the literature AND Conclusions: the craft of qualitative research – May 8 (Will propose that class meets until 4 pm)
   * Portfolios and progress reports due on Friday May 15
I. THE NATURE OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Week 1 (January 31): Introduction – The nature of qualitative research

Goals:
• Gain a holistic understanding of the qualitative research process and the nature of qualitative data
• Develop mutual expectations for the course
• Conduct an inventory of participant experiences with qualitative research and potential ideas for mock projects

Reading assignment:
• Choose one of the two following articles, read and be prepared to describe in to those who did not read it:
• Please find READING GUIDE in NYUClasses, Week 1

Assignment (1):
(Individual) Please complete the following exercise BEFORE our first class (Friday, Jan 31): Go to a restaurant or coffee shop of your choice and purchase something to eat. For 30 minutes (please time them) do a systematic observation of what is going on. You should take notes during this observation. Consider the following questions: What is going on? How is it going on? What does the researcher feel about this observation?

After leaving the site, sit down in a quite place, read your notes, complete them and write a few questions that come to mind about “being in the field”. Please bring to class the notes and questions to share with the group (I will collect them too).

Week 2 (February 7): Research designs and multiple traditions of qualitative inquiry

Goals:
• Distinguish the various qualitative research traditions and their differences
• Become familiar with research design variations per different approaches to qualitative
research
• Discuss mock project and form teams

Reading assignment:
• Creswell, J. 2013. Chapters 4 and 5 (69-128)
  • Because Creswell does not include Action Research in his traditions, the following two REQUIRED readings complement Creswell’s reading:
• Miles, Huberman & Saldaña: Pages 8-10 (Genres… & Analytic Methods…) and 10-14 (The Nature…& Our View…)

Recommended:

Assignment (2):
(Individual) a) In bullet form, indicate which two approaches from the readings appealed to you most and why (include Action Research as an alternative approach, per Ospina & Anderson description); react briefly to the examples for those approaches provided in Creswell’s Chapter 5 and appendix, (and consider Burns as an example for action research): did they work for you? b) for the approach that appeals the most to you, do a search in google scholar and find a contemporary article that uses that particular approach explicitly; report on the outcome of trying to find the defining features of that approach in the study (please no more than two pages for this entire assignment, and less is better!)

Week 3 (February 14): Choosing topics, exploring questions (team work and other follow-up conceptual issues ref. the nature of qualitative research)

Goals:
• Deepen understanding of the nature of QR, its differences from quantitative approaches, its multiple traditions and research design concepts
• Locate qualitative research methods in the context of the public administration field
• Practice developing research topic and initiating team projects

Reading assignment:
• Maxwell, Chapters 1 and 2
• Miles, Huberman & Saldaña: Pages 18-20 (Introduction and Tight versus…)
In preparation for our discussion of the mock project: Meet with your partner(s) and discuss more in depth the mock project you would like to conduct. No need to be concerned yet about specific approach to inquiry, unless you already have selected one. Discuss and get a general agreement on: what is your topic and your tentative research question? Why do you think it is important? Be prepared to share in class. You may want to jot these ideas down but I will not be collecting them (until next week).

Hint: in the context of this course, to ensure efficiency in your learning process, choose a topic in which at least one of you (and even better, all) has some familiarity with the literature, rather than one where you would have to start from scratch.

II. QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN

Week 4 (February 17): Designing the study: frameworks, questions, problems, goals

Goals:
- Practice framing research questions and developing theoretical frameworks as a function of study goals and purposes

Reading assignment:
- Maxwell, Chapters 3 and Ch 4
- Miles, Huberman & Saldaña: Pages 20-28 (Building a Conceptual.. & Formulating Research…)
- Booth et al, Chapters 3 and 4

Recommended:

Assignment (3):
(Team) As a team, write and bring to class a tentative research question and a tentative flow diagram (graph) of your conceptual framework. Frame the question using the format proposed by Booth et al on pages 48 and 61 (48 gives you the basic structure, 61 a further elaboration of the same format for academic applied research projects). For the flow diagram
specify the critical elements of a preliminary conceptual framework to address the question, as proposed by Maxwell in Ch 3 (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña will also help but use Maxwell’s format). Attach a short list of references that provide insights into your proposed question (i.e. start reading about the topic).

NOTE: This week seems deceivingly light in readings. Please make sure you leave time to process and do the assignments. They require lots of thinking.

Week 5 (February 28): Bounding the territory: cases, sites, sampling and other issues

Goals:
• Develop an understand different conceptual meanings of “the case”
• Practice “bounding” the research study: making decisions about case and site selection, units of analysis, and sampling

Reading assignment:
• Miles, Huberman & Saldaña: Pages 28-37 (Defining…and Sampling…)

Recommended:

Assignment (4):
(Team) Re-frame your research question and flow diagram based on your early incursions into your literature review to ground your project. Further clarify your unit of analysis and, using the new question, construct a matrix specifying tentatively your sampling frame (see hand-out from Marshal and Rossman to be distributed in class). Please turn in the new question, flow diagram and sampling frame.

Researcher identity memo due on Tuesday March 3

Week 6 (March 6): Preparing for the field: methods; relationships; fieldwork; the ethics of qualitative research
[please note that there are team and individual assignments due this week].
NOTE: By this time you must be getting ready to enter the field, have started to make contacts and develop relationships, as well as learning all you can about the context of your site and case. By week 7 you should be in the field starting to access data by way of interviews, formal documents, and if possible, observations.

Goals:
- Develop an understanding of data collection instruments and techniques (the mechanics of fieldwork, interviewing and questionnaires, the management of tools, equipment, field notes, data, etc).
- Develop an understanding of the relational dimensions of qualitative data collection
- Explore ethical issues in qualitative research and gain sensitivity toward vulnerable populations

Reading assignment:
- Maxwell, Chapter 5
- Miles, Huberman & Saldana: Pages 37-42 (Instrumentation); 45(bottom)-52 (Management issues…) and 55-68 (Ethical Issues in Analysis)
- See box (next page) Quinn Patton’s Chapter 6 (critical for your fieldwork, but won’t discuss in class).

Recommended:

Assignment (5): (Team) Using the next iteration of your research question and conceptual framework, follow instructions for Exercise 5.2 in Maxwell, (p. 119-120) to develop a Questions and Methods Matrix (see example on pages 117-19). (Please include the next iteration of your research question and conceptual framework so I can understand the Matrix)

Assignment (6): (Individual) Go to the web page of NYU’s Review Committee on Research with Human Subjects, and review the first five chapters of the tutorial, doing the mini tests at the end of each. DO NOT DO THE FULL TEST AND DO NOT SEND A TEST TO THE COMMITTEE. Look for model letters of informed consent and think about how they could apply to your mock
ATTENTION: Research proposal is due on Tuesday, March 10th - As you work on your research proposal you will find helpful reading Maxwell: Ch 6, 7 and one of the two Appendixes. In Ch 6, Maxwell discusses issues of validity. We will come back to issues of quality (including validity) in a future class, but in order to consider some of these issues in your proposal, it is good to anticipate that discussion at this point. Ch 7 and the Appendixes should be very helpful, as they address directly issues associated with writing a research proposal and two possible examples of one. See grading criteria in separate document in NYUClasses.

Start thinking about questions for your interview protocol. The Question and Methods Matrix will help a lot. You do not need to have the full interview protocol for the research proposal but you must discuss the broad categories within which you will locate the specific questions.

Looking ahead: Getting an early overview of what you will be doing when you enter the field will help you view the work of the next weeks in a more realistic light. Doing qualitative research is an iterative process, but teaching qualitative research can only happen in a linear fashion. In that spirit, consider starting to work on the following readings, which will be helpful as you enter the field.

Required: Chapter 6 of Quinn Patton (on reserve) will be very helpful for your fieldwork preparation and actual activities: Fieldwork strategies and observation methods (pp. 259-332).

Recommended:

If you have no experience doing qualitative research I recommend Ely et al. (1991). Chapter 3: “Doing”. In Ely et al (ed). Doing Qualitative Research: Circles within Circles. New York: The Falmer Press, pp. 41-105. [If you cannot read the entire piece, skim and read more carefully pages 69-80 on logs].
Week 7 (March 13): The art and craft of interviewing

Goals:
- Develop (or deepen) your sensibility around interviewing, understood as “a conversational encounter”
- Consider the different types of interviews (and targets) that can be used during qualitative research
- Practice writing questions and asking questions in the context of interviewing

Reading assignment:
- Quinn Patton, Chapter 7: Qualitative interviewing (pp. 339-427)

Recommended:

If you have not done interviews, I strongly recommend that you complement your readings with these very simple but powerful “brief” on Interviewing:

Assignment (7):
(Team) Interview protocol draft.
March 14-22 Spring Recess – No class on March 20

[If possible, go to the field; also there is a lot of reading for the next class, you might want to start doing it during the break]

REMINDER: YOU WILL NEED INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS AND/OR NOTES BY WEEK 10. This means you must plan to do your observations and interviews during the next two weeks (if you have not already started)! AS WE MOVE FORWARD WE WILL LEAVE 20 MINUTES OF CLASSES IN WEEKS 8 AND 9 TO TROUBLE SHOOT AND DISCUSS YOUR DATA COLLECTION EXPERIENCE, AS WELL AS TO EXPLORE THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE DISCUSSIONS DURING THE INTERLUDE.

III. INTERLUDE: FROM THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE TO THE RESEARCH CRAFT

Week 8 (March 27): Multiple modes of inquiry: linking worldviews, paradigms, theoretical perspectives and methodological tools

NOTE: The next two classes represent a parenthesis from the discussion of the knots and bolts of doing qualitative research. We will engage in a conversation already introduced briefly by several readings earlier in the course. While we do this, you will continue to work outside class preparing for and doing fieldwork. You should begin to gather documents about your site(s) and case(s). It is a good time to remember that you should be journaling, especially about ethical issues and the experience of entering the field.

Goals:
- Explore and become conversant on the philosophical debates about scientific inquiry
- Distinguish the philosophical assumptions behind different approaches to research and the implications for research design and implementation
- Explore your own positioning within these debates

Reading assignment:
  - “Mapping the Terrain” (Introduction, pp.xix-xxvii only) AND
  - “Exploring the Competing Basis for Legitimacy” (Chapter 1, pp. 1-4 and then jump to 12-32).
• **READ ONLY** pp. xiii-xxi
  
  • Note: There is a new 2014 edition, but we are using the older for this reading


  • Miles, Huberman & Saldaña: Pages 6 (bottom)-7 (our Orientation); (Chapter 2, pp 25-43) AND “Starting from Meaning: Contextuality and its implications”(Chapter 3, pp. 44-53).

**Recommended:**


**Week 9 (April 3): Applications and illustrations**

**Goals:**

  • Practice making logical connections between paradigms, theories, methods and research practices

  • Apply philosophy of science concepts to the problem of the split between qualitative and quantitative approaches to research, and between philosophical paradigms

**Reading assignment:**

    - Read Chapter 8, pp. 130-139

    - READ pp. 162-169 (mid page) AND 174-177


**Recommended:**

• Burton-Jones A., E. McLean & E. Monod. 2014. Theoretical perspectives in IS research: from variance and process to conceptual latitude and conceptual fit. European Journal of Information Systems. 00:1-16 - Of particular interest are pp. 1-8 and 12-13

Assignment (8):
(Individual) After having taken the training on software programs for qualitative research with Data Services (NYU Libraries and ITS – see instructions of Week 6 of this syllabus), please write a short memo (no more than one page) describing your key learning and observations about the use of this type of software. Which program did you like best, why, and how helpful do you think it will be for this course? If you decide not to use it, still explain why not, and how helpful is the knowledge for future reference.

IV. IN THE FIELD AND BEYOND: ACCESSING AND INTERPRETING DATA

ATTENTION: the readings from weeks 10 through 14 seem deceivingly short: we will read lots from Miles, Huberman & Saldaña, which is dense and requires much time to process. Please make sure you leave sufficient time to do them.

Week 10 (April 6): Data Collection/Analysis (1): Documenting and describing

Goals:
• Understand and practice the early steps of analysis: documentation; codes and coding; exploring and describing; the role of memos, analytic texts and visual displays

Reading assignment:
  o Chapter 8, ONLY 452-467.
• Miles, Huberman & Saldaña: Read Chapters 4 and 5 carefully. Then scan Chapters 6-8 (read the introduction and the introduction to each section and choose a few specific methods to study, searching for what you think can be helpful for your own project – see assignment for more details on criteria to choose).
• Choose 1:

Assignment (9):
(Team) Develop a tentative coding scheme of your project and use the transcripts of your interviews to apply and refine it (Chapter 4). Write a memo of what you learned from doing this exercise, which includes a matrix or a network display (Chapter 5) that helps you either
document (Ch 6), describe (Ch 7) or order (Ch 8) your data around an important dimension emerging from the coding for future analytical work. Include as an appendix of the memo the original coding scheme with brief definitions of the codes and the next iteration produced by the analysis. Be prepared to discuss how your coding evolved as well as to share your display.

Week 11 (April 17): Collection/Analysis (2): Explaining and theorizing

Goals:
- Develop an understanding of and practice causal analysis and explanation

Reading assignment:
- Miles, Huberman & Saldaña: Chapter 9 (see instructions for group assignment before reading, and read selectively if needed)
- Choose 1:

Recommended:
- Miles, Huberman & Saldaña: Chapter 10

Assignment (10):
(Team) Create either an explanatory effects matrix or a case dynamic matrix (pages 228-234 in MH&S), or a (within case) causal network (pp. 236-247); which ever you choose to create, write an analytical memo that makes a claim inferred from your data as presented in the matrix or network. Bring copies of the display for all.

Week 12 (April 24): Drawing and verifying conclusions; standards of quality

Goals:
• Develop an understanding of and practice of tactics to draw and verify conclusions
• Developing an understanding of quality criteria for qualitative research; practice applying these criteria to evaluate good qualitative research

Reading assignment:
• Miles, Huberman & Saldaña: Chapter 11. Concentrate on last two sections (Standards for…and Analytic documentation – pp. 310-21), but see assignment for other sections.

Choose 1:

Recommended:
• Reichertz, J. (2014) "Induction, Deduction, Abduction." In The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis . Access Date: March 24, 2019. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781446282243.n9

Assignment (11):
(Team) After skimming sections on Tactics in MHS Chapter 11, choose ONE tactic from either of the two sections (Tactics for generating meaning or Tactics for testing or confirming findings) to discuss in class. In addition, write a bulleted memo identifying the key standards that guarantee good quality of your project and explain why you chose those and how you have tried to attain them. Be prepared to discuss.

Week 13 (April 27): Developing a credible story: theorizing & constructing credible arguments

Goals:
• Understand the challenges of writing and reporting research findings
• Identify approaches to writing in public service and applied fields
Reading assignment:
- Choose 1:

Recommended:
- MH&S, Chapter 12

Week 14 (May 8): Sharing the findings: in conversation with the literature

Goals:
- Continue to gain exposure to ways of presenting findings and identifying ways to connect to broader field conversations
- Explore insights about own approaches and preferences in qualitative research
- Give closure to the course

Reading assignment:
- Choose 1:
  - Instead of reading a new article, please use the article you chose to do the assignment in Class 2, please re-read it and see individual assignment below.

Assignment (12):
(Individual): Go back to the original article you googled for the assignment in Class 2. Please bring copies of the abstract for all other class members so we have it with us while discussing it. Jot down a few bullets around the following questions (to be collected), and be prepared to discuss in class:

1) What is your overall evaluation of the quality of this article, after the past 13 classes? What’s primarily missing, and what works well? How did you read it differently and why?

2) Using the criteria discussed by Ospina et al., to what extent does the article work as a
model piece of qualitative research (or not-if too much is missing). You can choose to focus on particular criteria, of course.

Recommended readings:

ATTENTION: Portfolios (including team progress reports) due on Friday May 15

- End of Schedule of Assignments -

Explanation of Letter Grades and Criteria

Letter grades for the entire course will be assigned as follows:

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Student grades will be assigned according to the following criteria:

- (A) Excellent: Exceptional work for a graduate student. Work at this level is unusually thorough, well-reasoned, creative, methodologically sophisticated, and well written. Work is of exceptional, professional quality.
- (A-) Very good: Very strong work for a graduate student. Work at this level shows signs of creativity, is thorough and well-reasoned, indicates strong understanding of appropriate methodological or analytical approaches, and meets professional standards.
- (B+) Good: Sound work for a graduate student; well-reasoned and thorough, methodologically sound. This is the graduate student grade that indicates the student has fully accomplished the basic objectives of the course.
- (B) Adequate: Competent work for a graduate student even though some weaknesses are evident. Demonstrates competency in the key course objectives but shows some indication that
understanding of some important issues is less than complete. Methodological or analytical approaches used are adequate but student has not been thorough or has shown other weaknesses or limitations.

- **(B-) Borderline:** Weak work for a graduate student; meets the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Understanding of salient issues is somewhat incomplete. Methodological or analytical work performed in the course is minimally adequate. Overall performance, if consistent in graduate courses, would not suffice to sustain graduate status in “good standing.”

- **(C/-/+ Deficient:** Inadequate work for a graduate student; does not meet the minimal expectations for a graduate student in the course. Work is inadequately developed or flawed by numerous errors and misunderstanding of important issues. Methodological or analytical work performed is weak and fails to demonstrate knowledge or technical competence expected of graduate students.

- **(F) Fail:** Work fails to meet even minimal expectations for course credit for a graduate student. Performance has been consistently weak in methodology and understanding, with serious limits in many areas. Weaknesses or limits are pervasive.