

ENG 6812: Research Methods for Texts and Technology  
Section 0V60, Class # 81158, 3 credit hours  
Fall 2023

Professor: Melody Bowdon, Ph.D.  
Office hours: Tuesdays 2-4 p.m. and by appointment  
Class meetings Wednesdays, 6 to 7:50 p.m. via Zoom

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This course is offered through the College of Arts and Humanities. Any concerns should be brought to the attention of the faculty member. If resolution cannot occur with the faculty member, contact Dr. Anastasia Salter, Program Director, at [anastasia.salter@ucf.edu](mailto:anastasia.salter@ucf.edu).

**Catalog Course Description:** Prepares students to design, conduct, and critique empirical research in textual technologies, broadly conceived.

**Prerequisite:** Acceptance into the Texts and Technologies program, graduate standing, or C.I.

### Course Materials

- Bhattacharya, Kakali. *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*. Routledge, 2017. (Downloadable from UCF Libraries: <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9781315231747/fundamentals-qualitative-research-kakali-bhattacharya>)
- Burdick, Anne, et al. *Digital Humanities*. The MIT Press, 2012. (Downloadable from UCF Libraries.)
- Vogt, W. Paul, et al. *Selecting the Right Analyses for Your Data: Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods*. Illustrated edition, The Guilford Press, 2014. (Available via UCF Libraries for online reading; you can download with limitations.)
- Vogt, W. Paul, et al. *When to Use What Research Design*. Illustrated edition, The Guilford Press, 2012. (Available via UCF Libraries for online reading; you can download with limitations.)
- Various book excerpts, articles, and web readings available as pdfs or links on our WebCourses site in accordance with Fair Use Doctrine; do not distribute for use outside of course/study.

### Section-Specific Course Description

This class is a core requirement of UCF's Texts and Technologies PhD program. In it students will explore key established and emerging research methods in the digital humanities and beyond, including quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. Each student will read books and articles, complete web-based tutorials, produce weekly short written assignments, make a presentation on a research methodology, lead a class discussion, and propose and write a research project portfolio including a literature review/research summary, annotated bibliography, and methods description on a research topic of their choice.

### Course Objectives

In this course, students will have the opportunity to:

- Identify and create compelling research questions appropriate for our interdisciplinary field
- Deeply engage a wide range of inquiry methods and hone skills in reading, interpreting, and applying existing data and knowledge
- Enhance strategies for critically evaluating and effectively formulating academic arguments
- Gain experience in locating, assessing, and documenting academically valuable sources

- Formulate or strengthen a set of clear standards for conducting ethical research
- Demonstrate professionalism and intellectual engagement by participating actively in class discussions, which will foster a dynamic learning community

### **Contacting Me**

I am available through WebCourses email Monday through Friday; I'll check in by 2 p.m. each day and will endeavor to answer all course emails within 24 hours during the work week. If you have an urgent question, you can email me at my university address, [mbowdon@ucf.edu](mailto:mbowdon@ucf.edu) and possibly get a faster response. When you email, please follow professional standards: provide a clear subject line (including our course name) and an appropriate greeting, and close with your full name. I will typically respond to your e-mail within 24 hours during the work week.

My office hours for this course will take place from 2 to 4 p.m. on Tuesdays. I will be available to meet with you in person in my office in TCH or via Zoom. If you would like to meet with me and this schedule does not work with yours, please email me to schedule a mutually convenient alternative.

### **Course Policies**

We all face challenges that can occasionally make it difficult to accomplish our goals. The policies below describe my general expectations for all students. You are in this class because you are accomplished and capable. Your success in this course matters, but not more than your mental or physical health. If you face one-time or ongoing barriers to success as defined below, reach out to me as early as possible to discuss options for accommodation to minimize impacts on your learning experience and grade. I will address these concerns in an equitable manner in keeping with UCF policy.

Some of the policies below include a requirement of documentation, but some emergency circumstances may be difficult to document. Please reach out to me if you find yourself in this situation; we can work together to address your concerns.

### *Grading and Deadlines*

- A grade of "I" (Incomplete) may be assigned when a student is unable to complete a course due to extenuating circumstances and when all requirements can be completed in a short time following the end of the term. I will assign an incomplete in this class **only** in exceptional circumstances supported by documentation.
- This course moves quickly, making it critical that you stay on track throughout the semester. Generally speaking, **I do not accept late assignments for credit**. Any changes in deadline must be negotiated in advance unless they are due to documented emergencies (medical, in most cases).
- This course syllabus and our class calendar are **subject to change** if unanticipated circumstances arise. If a change is needed, we will negotiate the details together, and I will post a revised syllabus on our WebCourses site.

### *Online Learning Expectations*

This course includes reduced seat time, which means that in addition to participating in our Zoom session each week you will also participate actively in online learning, typically in the form of discussion posts.

### *Ethical Behavior*

- I expect to have a positive and intellectually engaging class environment where students feel free to express their viewpoints and to have their experiences and perspectives respected and honored. It is my responsibility as a faculty member to ensure that outcome. I pledge to do so to the best of my ability and ask that students assist me with this effort by holding each other and me to high standards and alerting me to any circumstances that require my intervention.
- This course will address a variety of complex issues, including in relation to professional ethics. You are not required to *believe* or *accept* any position that we discuss. You are expected, however, to have an open mind and to critically examine and respectfully discuss relevant arguments, ideas, and evidence.
- All UCF students are expected to familiarize themselves with and follow the university's Rules of Conduct (see <https://scai.sdes.ucf.edu/student-rules-of-conduct/>). Please pay particular attention to Section 4, which prohibits harmful behaviors such as bullying, threatening, intimidation, discriminatory harassment, and invasion of privacy. I will **not** tolerate these behaviors in or adjacent to our course.
- As reflected in the [UCF creed](#), integrity and scholarship are core values that should guide our conduct and decisions as members of the UCF community and in this course. Plagiarism (representing someone else's work as your own) and cheating are serious academic offenses that contradict these values. Penalties can include a failing grade in an assignment or in the course, or suspension or expulsion from the university. See [5.015StudentAcademicBehavioralStandardsFINALSept21.pdf \(ucf.edu\)](#) for full details of the UCF policy regarding the academic misconduct review process.
- Special Note about Artificial Intelligence: This class may provide opportunities for you to make use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in some specific ways. In fact, AI is central to the contemporary research landscape, so we will discuss it together, but it will not be an acceptable research method in our course. You are permitted to use AI only in the manner and means described in the assignments and/or approved by the professor. Any attempt to represent AI output inappropriately as your own work will be treated as plagiarism. Please see this link for information about citing AI generated content in MLA: <https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/>

### *Support When You're Struggling: UCF Cares*

Please visit [UCFCares.com](https://ucfcares.com) if you are seeking resources and support, or if you are worried about a friend or classmate. Free services and information are included for a variety of student concerns, including but not limited to alcohol use, bias incidents, mental health concerns, and financial challenges. You can also e-mail [ucfcares@ucf.edu](mailto:ucfcares@ucf.edu) with questions or for additional assistance. You can reach a UCF Cares staff member between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. by calling 407-823-5607. If you are in immediate distress or believe someone is in danger, please call Counseling and Psychological Services to speak directly with a counselor 24/7 at 407-823-2811, or call 911.

### *Accommodation of Disabilities*

UCF is committed to providing access and inclusion for all persons with disabilities, and we consider the diversity of our students and other community members to be a strength that is critical to the university's educational mission. If there are aspects of the design, instruction, and/or your experience within this course that result in barriers to your participation or accurate assessment of your achievement, please notify me as soon as possible and/or contact Student Accessibility Services, Ferrell Commons 185, phone 407-823-2371, TTY/TDD only phone 407-823-2116. If you need assistance

accessing any resources or course materials, I am happy to help you. You may contact SAS without notifying me if you wish; you may also speak with me without contacting SAS at all.

#### *Title IX*

Title IX is a federal regulation that prohibits sex discrimination, including sexual misconduct, sexual violence, sexual harassment, and retaliation. If you or someone you know has been harassed or assaulted, you can find resources available to support the victim, including confidential resources and information concerning reporting options at <https://letsbeclear.ucf.edu> and <http://cares.sdes.ucf.edu/>.

#### *Deployed Active Duty Military Students*

Students who are deployed active duty military and/or National Guard personnel and require accommodation should contact their instructors as soon as possible after the semester begins and/or after they receive notification of deployment to make related arrangements.

### **Academic Details**

#### *Class Assignments*

Below are brief overviews of our class assignments. Additional details and expectations will be provided within WebCourses.

#### *Weekly Reading Responses*

Responses to readings and discussions should be 200-250 words long and should not simply summarize but demonstrate a deeper engagement with specific ideas in the readings or conversations, focusing on key passages or elements, relating them to your views or experiences, discussing them through examples, and/or evaluating their arguments. Because responses should facilitate discussion, you can reply to another person's post as your response; unless they are replies, responses should have specific subject lines. Use shorter paragraphs as well as lists and headings where appropriate. A reply to a classmate's post should be substantive rather than something like "I agree/disagree" or "I found this interesting." Only ten of these posts will count toward your grade.

#### *CITI Training and Reflection*

One broad category of research we will explore in this course includes human subjects, and is governed by a critical set of rules and regulations. As part of this class you will complete short web-based courses offered by CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative). UCF covers the costs of the training. You will also write a short reflection on your experience with the training and the ideas and questions it raises.

#### *Leading a Class Discussion*

Each student will take a leadership role in our class discussion of featured research method. Responsibilities will include developing questions in advance for the group's consideration and generally encouraging engagement in the discussion. For some topics, more than one discussion leader may be assigned.

#### *Research Methodology Presentation*

At some point in the semester you will make a short presentation on a research method or approach. It will last around 15 minutes and will include a handout for the class with key elements highlighted.

### Project Mini Proposal

Around the middle of the semester you will submit a short (~500 word) document describing the topic you plan to focus on for your literature review/research summary, annotated bibliography, and methods description.

### Research Project

Early in the semester you will choose a research topic to explore for your major project. Ideally, this will be a subject that you might want to pursue in your dissertation. Over the course of the term you will collect 10-12 sources related to that topic and will write a literature review or research summary describing their content and how they relate to a research question you have devised. You will also include short descriptions of key aspects of each of these sources in an annotated bibliography and write an overview of your planned research methods, including research questions.

### Reflection on Research Ethics

At the end of the semester you will submit a short (~500 word) reflection on what you have learned about research ethics this semester. This does not need to be a formal paper; it can include a series of bullet lists or quotations, a narrative about how one or more readings or assignments shaped your views, etc. The purpose for this assignment is to leave the course with a clear set of standards for your work moving forward.

### *Grading Standards for Written Work*

This is a graduate-level class with appropriately high standards. No one is perfect, but please carefully **proofread** every assignment before you submit it. I will grade according to how well your work meets the assignment and course requirements and how well it addresses its rhetorical situations. After receiving grades, carefully read all of my comments and wait at least a day before asking questions.

- A work (90-100) demonstrates thoughtful engagement with the assignment and excels in all major aspects of it.
- B work (80-89) meets all assignment requirements and is good in most or all aspects of the assignment, even excelling in some.
- C (70-79) work adequately meets most major assignment requirements.
- D (60-69) work fails to meet multiple assignment requirements.
- F (below 60) work fails to meet all assignment requirements or is not submitted.

### ***Class Participation:***

To receive a high participation grade, you will need to participate actively in online class discussion, be a good team member, and engage actively in peer review.

### *Grade Distribution*

Assignment	Due Date	Percentage of Grade
Weekly Reading Responses	Throughout the semester (10 graded)	30
CITI Training and Reflection	October 5	5
Leading a Class Discussion	Throughout the semester	10
Research Method Presentation	Throughout the semester	15
Research Topic Mini Proposal	October 19	5
Research Project	November 30	30
Research Ethics Reflection	December 7	5

## Course Schedule

- Read and respond = post 200-250 word response in the appropriate WebCourses discussion area. Responses are due by 10 p.m. on Friday unless otherwise noted.
- Post=respond to prompt posted in WebCourses discussion.
- DH=*Digital Humanities*
- FQR: *Fundamentals of Qualitative Research*
- SRAYD=Selecting the Right Analyses for Your Data
- WTUWRD=*When to Use What Research Design*

Week	Date	Topic	Events/Deadlines	Homework Activities and Assignments
1	8/23	Course Introduction	Optional Office Hours	Online by Sunday, 8/27 at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post introduction</li> <li>• Create a <a href="#">Zotero</a> account or create a new collection within your existing one and email your user name to <a href="mailto:mbowdon@ucf.edu">mbowdon@ucf.edu</a> (enhancement activity)</li> <li>• Sign up to lead a weekly discussion AND sign up for your research method presentation</li> </ul>
2	8/30	Introduction to Qualitative Research	Optional Office Hours	Online by Friday 9/1 at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to FQR Chapters 1 and 2</li> <li>• Read and respond to DH Section 1</li> </ul>
3	9/6	Frameworks for Qualitative Research	Optional Office Hours	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to FQR Chapters 3 and 4</li> <li>• Read and respond to DH Section 2</li> </ul>
4	9/13	Qualitative Research Methods	Optional Office Hours	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to FQR Chapters 5 and 6</li> <li>• Read and respond to DH Section 3</li> </ul>
5	9/20	Presenting Qualitative Research Findings	Optional Office Hours	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to FQR Chapters 7 and 8</li> <li>• Read and respond to DH Section 4</li> </ul>
6	9/27	Survey Research	Optional Office Hours	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to SRAFYD Chapter 1</li> <li>• Read and respond to WTUWRD Chapters 1, 7 and 13</li> </ul>
7	10/4	Interview Research	Optional Office Hours CITI Training is Due	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to SRAFYD Chapter 2</li> <li>• Read and respond to WTUWRD Chapters 2, 8, and 14</li> </ul>
8	10/11	Experimental Designs	Optional Office Hours	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to SRAFYD Chapter 3</li> <li>• Read and respond to WTUWRD Chapters 3, 9, and 15</li> </ul>

9	10/18	Naturalistic and Participant Observational Designs	Optional Office Hours Research Topic Mini Proposal Due	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to SRAFYD Chapter 4</li> <li>• Read and respond to WTUWRD Chapters 4, 10, and 16</li> <li>• Submit Research Topic Mini Proposal</li> </ul>
10	10/25	Archival Research Designs	Optional Office Hours	Online by Thursday at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to SRAFYD Chapter 5</li> <li>• Read and respond to WTUWRD Chapters 5, 11, and 17</li> </ul>
11	11/1	Combined Research Designs	Optional Office Hours	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read and respond to SRAFYD Chapter 11</li> <li>• Read and respond to WTUWRD Chapters 6, 12, and 18</li> </ul>
12	11/8	Data Feminism	Optional Office Hours	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: Read and Respond to <i>Data Feminism</i> (chapters 1-4)
13	11/15	Data Feminism	Optional Office Hours	Online by Thursday at 10 p.m.: Read and Respond to <i>Data Feminism</i> (chapters 5-conclusion)
14	11/22		<b>Thanksgiving</b>	
15	11/29	Putting Together Research Projects	Optional Office Hours Research Project Due	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: Submit Research Project
16	TBA	Final Exam Week	Research Presentations and Ethics Reflections Due	Online by Friday at 10 p.m.: Submit Research Presentations and Ethics Reflections