

Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary  
**CE830 | Methods of Qualitative Research (3.0 credits)**  
Term: Fall 2026

Modality: blended synchronous  
Fri 9:00a-4:00p, tentative synchronous meeting dates  
**9/11, 10/9, 11/6, 12/4 (updated as of Mar. 10, 2026)**  
**Course meets PCC requirement.**

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Appointment by email

**Course Information as of Mar. 10, 2026**

**Course Description**

This practical theology seminar presupposes that research (or “formalized curiosity,” *a la* Zora Neale Hurston) in concrete situations, settings, and contexts by Christian religious leaders is undertaken to gain better insight into the *habitus* and *habitat* that inscribe individual and communal religious affinity, experience, and practice within broader cultural-religious landscapes. Such understanding is gained to enhance practical wisdom and imagination for religious leadership and can generate new theological insight for the Church and its faithful witness and mission in the world. In this course, participants will examine theological and philosophical bases, goals, and methods of *qualitative* research that may be employed in a variety of situations and settings, drawing on literature from the fields of (inter)cultural studies, congregational studies, Christian religious education, practical theology, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and educational evaluation. The course will consider the epistemologies of differing approaches to research, read and evaluate the work of other researchers, practice and evaluate methods of data gathering, and write a proposal for a research project. For doctoral students, this course may provide an opportunity to explore a context and method leading to a dissertation research project.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

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Through this course, participants will gain knowledge and insights to do the following:

1. Identify the interdisciplinary and correlational nature of practical theology and qualitative research.
2. Define, differentiate, and critique various qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods of research and their appropriateness for practical theological research.
3. Articulate the philosophical, theological, and methodological assumptions that constitute the foundations of their own practical theological research projects.
4. Describe and analyze how social identity, location, and reflexivity of the researcher shape their research approaches.

5. Design a project proposal for an intended research topic, in which they articulate the following:
  - a. clear research question;
  - b. thick description of research setting, situation, and context;
  - c. data collection method;
  - d. ethical considerations for research with human subjects;
  - e. theological and biblical foundations.

## Course Texts

### All students

1. Court, Deborah. *Qualitative Research and Intercultural Understanding: Conducting Qualitative Research in Multicultural Settings*. New York, NY: Routledge, 2017.
2. Creswell, John W., and Cheryl N. Poth. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing Among Five Approaches*. 5<sup>th</sup> ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2024.
3. Moschella, Mary Clark. *Ethnography as a Pastoral Practice: An Introduction*. Second edition. The Pilgrim Press, 2024.
4. Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. Third edition. Zed Books, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350225282>.

### Additional texts for PhD students

5. Swinton, John and Harriet Mowatt. *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: SCM Press, 2016.
6. Vigen, Aana Marie, and Christian Scharen, eds. *Ethnography as Christian Theology and Ethics*. Fully revised 2nd edition. T&T Clark, 2025.
7. de Kock, Jos, and Mirella Klomp. *Doing Research in Practical Theology*. Taylor & Francis, 2025. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003222569>. (Open Access book)

### Choose one for book and methodology review (please consult with instructor if you'd like to consider a text beyond this list)

1. Ammerman, Nancy T., Jackson W. Carroll, Carl S. Dudley, and William McKinney, *Studying Congregations: A New Handbook*. Abingdon Press, 1998. ISBN: 0-687-00651-1. (\$20.61)
2. Baker, Dori Grinenko. *Girl/Friend Theology God-Talk with Young People*. 2nd ed. La Vergne: Pilgrim Press, 2023.
3. Chaves, Mark. *Congregations in America*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2004.
4. Chen, Carolyn, and Russell Jeung. *Sustaining Faith Traditions: Race, Ethnicity, and Religion among the Latino and Asian American Second Generation*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.
5. Crain, Margaret Ann and Jack L. Seymour. *Yearning for God: Reflections of Faithful Lives*. Nashville: Upper Room Books, 2003.

6. Emerson, Michael O, and Christian Smith. *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.
7. Frank, Thomas E. *The Soul of the Congregation*. Abingdon, 2000.
8. Hoge, Dean R., Benton Johnson, and Donald A. Luidens. *Vanishing Boundaries: The Religion of Mainline Protestant Baby Boomers*. 1st ed. Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994. The study is based on a nationwide selection of persons confirmed in Presbyterian churches who were between 33 and 42 years old in 1989.
9. Ingall, Carol K. *Down the Up Staircase: Tales of Teaching in Jewish Day Schools*. The Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 2006.
10. Jeung, Russell, Seanan S Fong, and Helen Jin Kim. *Family Sacrifices: The Worldviews and Ethics of Chinese Americans*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2019.
11. Josselson, Ruthellen. *Revising Herself: The Story of Women's Identity from College to Midlife*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1996.
12. Lawless, Elaine. *Holy Women, Wholly Women*. Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 1993.
13. Marti, Gerardo. *A Mosaic of Believers: Diversity and Innovation in a Multiethnic Church*. Indiana University Press, 2005.
14. Martinson, Roland D., David W. Anderson, and Paul Hill. *Coming of Age: Exploring the Identity and Spirituality of Younger Men*. Augsburg press, 2006.
15. McRoberts, Omar M. *Streets of Glory: Church and Community in a Black Urban Neighborhood*. University of Chicago, 2003.
16. Mingo, AnneMarie. *Have You Got Good Religion?: Black Women's Faith, Courage, and Moral Leadership in the Civil Rights Movement*. 1st ed. University of Illinois Press, 2024.
17. Patillo-McCoy, Mary. *Black Pickett Fences: Privilege and Peril Among the Black Middle Class*. University of Chicago Press, 1999.
18. Sadowski, Michael. *In a Queer Voice: Journeys of Resilience from Adolescence to Adulthood*. Temple University Press, 2013.
19. Thomas E. Frank, *The Soul of the Congregation*. Abingdon, 2000. ISBN: 0-687-08717-1. (\$14.72)
20. Thomas, Linda E. *Under the Canopy: Ritual Process and Spiritual Resilience in South Africa*. University of South Carolina, 1999.
21. Tribble, Jeffery L., Sr. *Transformative Pastoral Leadership in the Black Church*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
22. Wind, James P. and James Welborn Lewis, eds. *American Congregations*. Vol. 2: New Perspectives in the Study of Congregations. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994. ISBN: 0226901882 v. 2. (\$24.50)
23. Wright, Almeda M. *The Spiritual Lives of Young African Americans*. New York, NY, United States of America: Oxford University Press, 2017.
24. Wright, Dana E. *Active Learning: Social Justice Education and Participatory Action Research*. Routledge, 2015.

Online training for ethical research practices & data coding software:

- Northwestern University Institutional Review Board (IRB) resources: <https://irb.northwestern.edu/resources-guidance/>

- Protecting Human Research Participants (PHRP) resources: <https://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>
- NVivo data organizing software: <http://www.qsrinternational.com/nvivo/nvivo-products>
- HyperResearch tool for QR research: <http://www.researchware.com/>