COM 803-12: Hermeneutics and Communication

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Omega Graduate School

Date September 3, 2024

Professor

Dr. James Strecker

Select One (1) Core Essential Element from the Syllabus Outline:

1. Create a 350-word original discussion paper (with cited sources) during the week

of the residency. Be prepared to discuss and engage with other students during

the live sessions. Post this document in DIAL.

1. Professor will check for quality of content and word-count requirements.

Interpretive methods in social research are like wearing x-ray glasses to peek into the hidden layers of human behavior and social shenanigans. While the science-y types count beans, interpretive methods dive into the juicy stuff - the messy, emotional rollercoaster of how people see and feel about their world. Reality? It's like a funky art project, shaped by how we all interpret and mingle in our bubble.  
Researchers using interpretive methods ditch the lab coats for heart-to-hearts, getting cozy with participants to hear all about their thoughts, emotions, and adventures. No stone is left unturned - from deep chats to blending in with the crowd and decoding texts, these methods squeeze out rich, qualitative data that spill the tea on the meanings and motivations behind social happenings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).  
The superpower of interpretive methods? They beam a spotlight on the intricate dance of social life, acknowledging that we each sport our unique set of cultural, social, and personal lenses. By taking a dive into the personal side of human stories, interpretive research shines a light on the messy, contradictory bits that make up our social maze. Imagine a study on office diversity - this approach would unveil the secret sauce of how peeps from all walks of life juggle race, gender, and identity, offering a backstage pass that stats alone can't score (Schwandt, 2000).  
But hey, interpretive methods have their critics too! Some smarty pants argue that all this focus on feelings and context can muddy the waters of generalizability and objectivity, leaving us scratching our heads when trying to apply findings to different scenes (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). And let's not forget, the researcher's own spin on things can sneak in, adding a sprinkle of bias to the mix, as their own background and views can color how they see and tell the story of the participants' lives. Despite these hiccups, interpretive methods are like a trusty Swiss army knife in the world of social research, a key to unlocking the rich, colorful tapestry of human existence in a way that cold, hard stats just can't match.

WORKS CITED

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2018). The SAGE handbook of qualitative research (5th ed.). *SAGE Publications*.

Schwandt, T. A. (2000). Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics, and social constructionism. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 189-213.

Guba, E. G., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. *Handbook of qualitative research*, 105-117.