

## **USG ALG Grant**

### **Final Report**

**Spring 2025**

#### **General Information**

Date: 04.20.2025

Institution Name: Georgia Southern University

Participant Name: Nalanda Roy (PI) & Lauren McMillan & April Schueths (Co-PI)

Total Number of Students Affected During Project: 33 students (Spring 2025)

Cost of Materials Replaced: Total is \$8976.33

Estimated Textbook Cost Savings Per Year: \$90.67

Are you going to continue using the book after Spring 2025? No

#### **Narrative:**

A. Describe the key outcomes, whether positive, negative, or interesting, of your project.

The use of no-cost materials in the department, as well as for other departments that use the POLS 7436 02F Qualitative Research Design course, has been highly beneficial in reducing student expenses while maintaining academic rigor and accessibility. We have shared our experiences and findings at regional or national conferences and through information sessions with faculty within the department and across campus. Materials developed in this project are publicly accessible on a Libguide for anyone to customize. Our hope is to encourage other faculty members to use any materials from the course to adapt to their own needs and begin using no-cost and/or OER resources for their students. POLS 7436 02F Qualitative Research Design course is offered by the Master of Arts in Social Science (MASS) program, which is the first program of its kind in the University System of Georgia. The Master of Arts in Social Science is interdisciplinary in nature and open for individuals who want to take advantage of the resources within several disciplines to study a problem or simply to strengthen their training in applied or public service occupations. Students enrolled in the program will work closely with the program director to customize a program of study that combines theory, methods, and content from their area of emphasis – either in Anthropology, Political Science, or Sociology.

The integration of no-cost and Open Educational Resources (OER) in this course addresses a critical gap. Currently, no commercial textbook sufficiently captures the dynamic and evolving methodological issues in the social sciences. Traditional textbooks often become outdated soon after publication. By leveraging a LibGuide that includes both no-cost (library-subscribed) and OER materials, the instructor can curate up-to-date content that reflects current global and academic developments. This approach ensures that students engage with the most relevant

information and are better equipped to participate in timely, meaningful research and scholarship. Given that the course spans multiple disciplines, its impact is far-reaching. Moreover, the use of these resources eliminates the financial burden of expensive textbooks, which frequently lose relevance in a short period.

Inclusive and inexpensive access to the course materials for all the students will increase student success at the university level by helping in retention, progression, and graduation. It will also help faculty focus more on instruction and provide an inclusive teaching and learning environment for students. Furthermore, the creation of the Libguide provides free access to all students. The Libguide links to open web resources as well as materials available through the Libraries databases, thus requiring no additional expense to students. The impact of the project collectively at all levels proves beneficial and promotes diversity, equity, and inclusive excellence, which are strategic pillars and core values at Georgia Southern University. When the course materials are costly this puts an undue burden on the students who are already struggling with the heavy cost of higher education. Eliminating the cost for the student makes it easier for them to meet the requirements necessary for graduation. Even if students rent books, the cost is significant. If the student is struggling to afford school this puts a further financial burden on them. Other students will either spend time finding a less expensive version or an older version of the book that is missing relevant materials and even lacking in current information. The transformation of this course will allow the creation of timely, interesting, and relevant materials as well as interactive exercises. An important part of the transformation is the development of a process and procedure to ensure that materials can be updated each semester.

B. Describe lessons learned, including any things you would do differently the next time.

#### Quotes:

Provide three quotes from students evaluating their experience with the platform.

The course content is good for me because I like the fact that you posted enough (OER) stuff to understand the material for this course. It has helped me so far.

She provided great material, format, and assignments for this class. I would recommend her to my peers as well.

It was the perfect balance of making sure I knew the information and gave me the freedom to find my own passions in each topic while not being overwhelmed with the amount of work to do.

#### Quantitative and Qualitative Measures:

##### C. Uniform Measurements Questions

The following are uniform questions asked to all participants. Please answer these to the best of your knowledge.

##### **Student Opinion of Materials**

**Was the overall student opinion about the materials used in this course positive, neutral, or negative?**

Total number of students affected in this project: 40

- Positive: 98 % of \_\_\_\_\_ number of respondents
- Neutral: 2 % of \_\_\_\_\_ number of respondents
- Negative: 0 % of \_\_\_\_\_ number of respondents

### **Student Learning Outcomes and Grades**

Was the overall comparative impact on student performance in terms of learning outcomes and grades in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?

Student outcomes should be described in detail in Section 3b.

Choose One:

- X Positive: Higher performance outcomes measured over previous semester(s)
- \_\_\_\_ Neutral: Same performance outcomes over previous semester(s)
- \_\_\_\_ Negative: Lower performance outcomes over previous semester(s)

### **Student Drop/Fail/Withdraw (DFW) Rates**

Was the overall comparative impact on Drop/Fail/Withdraw (DFW) rates in the semester(s) of implementation over previous semesters positive, neutral, or negative?

Depending on what you and your institution can measure, this may also be known as a drop/failure rate or a withdraw/failure rate, or even a Grade D/F/Withdraw Rate.

0% of students affected, dropped/failed/withdrew from the course in the final semester of implementation.

Choose One:

- X Positive: This is a lower percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
- \_\_\_\_ Neutral: This is the same percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)
- \_\_\_\_ Negative: This is a higher percentage of students with D/F/W than previous semester(s)

### **Quantitative Measures**

- Track use of the Library guide through analytics in Springshare.

- Student responses to pre/post-test measuring progress against Learning Outcomes based on responses to an anonymous, ungraded quiz given at the beginning and at the end of the semester.
- Questions included will be tied to learning outcomes and affordable materials used for the class.
- The difference between the two tests will demonstrate an increase in student knowledge based on the use of no-cost and OER materials.
- Student rating of course and access of materials on a 5-point scale at the end of the semester.

### **Qualitative Measures**

- Problems reported by students in accessing materials.
- Maintain problem logs to track problems encountered by students in accessing the materials.
- Focus on comments provided in the students exit survey, and these comments will be used to determine the assessment of the materials in relation to the course.

To measure students' willingness to use the textbook and their perceptions of no-cost textbooks, we will ask students:

- How satisfied are you with the current textbook?
- How frequently do you use the textbook?
- Which course material do you prefer: a no-cost Library guide or a traditional textbook?
- Do students prefer the free virtual textbook and supplementary materials over a hard copy purchased?
- How much do you typically spend on texts each semester?
- Rate the overall quality of the no-cost materials used in this course.
- How likely are you to register for a future course with online texts like those used in this course?

### **Measures Narrative:**

This project was carved out following the Backward design framework, where three stages were identified and followed while planning and designing the course. These three stages associated with the backward design process led to its intended outcomes. First, the PI identified desired results, followed by determining acceptable evidence, and finally, planned learning experiences and instruction. The decision to use this framework was made because there is the opportunity for the PI to constantly investigate what changes are needed to meet the desired course outcomes and therefore transform the course accordingly.

### **Future Instruction Plans:**

Team members have created a detailed course map, which includes module names and contents, readings, and activities and assessments, multimedia materials, animation videos, etc., which will be included in this project. So far, the MASS course contains fifteen modules, covering a wide

range of research methodology topics and case studies. We plan to systematically review each module and update learning materials. We will add more multimedia material (e.g., YouTube videos, Ted talks, documentaries, feature films, etc.), update and expand coverage to keep the currency and width of the material and revise and re-design module-based activities/assignments. Textbook chapter reading will be replaced with more videos, multimedia learning materials and the instructor will revise and redesign course activities/assignments to better reflect recent developments and expand coverage of learning material.

#### Future Scholarship Plans:

The project details were discussed and shared with faculty members and experts who attended professional meetings in Behavioral and Social Sciences Learning and Teaching conferences, AI related conferences as well as research methods conference, etc. For example, the *Teaching & Learning with AI* conference attended by the (PI) was designed for instructors, higher education professionals, librarians, researchers, and policymakers who are interested in exploring the potential of AI across the higher education landscape. Discussions were based on how to use these tools to shape the future of teaching and learning across college campuses.

The materials will be made available in the library guide, which can be accessed by faculty who will be teaching this course in the future. The library guide will serve as the living and breathing guide, which will be updated/edited by the library liaison from time to time and be helpful for faculty who will teach from quantitative perspectives. In the future, the team will meet regularly to discuss what's working, share new resources, and make updates so the course stays current with the latest methods in qualitative research.

One of the PI attended the Interdisciplinary Symposium on *Qualitative Methodologies: Expanding Possibilities for Qualitative Research Across Disciplines*, and the key learnings from the conference included important ethical considerations in using artificial intelligence (AI) within qualitative research. A session highlighting a new course "AI for Qualitative Research," emphasized using free, open-source resources such as Python, a powerful programming language that complements NVivo, a qualitative data analysis software available at no cost to students through Georgia Southern's Technology Resources. Python makes qualitative research easier by helping with automatic coding, analyzing text, creating visuals, and using advanced AI tools; it's a secure and reliable option supporting strong research methods, especially compared to other free AI tools. The symposium also introduced innovative qualitative research methods for conducting and teaching qualitative research. One particularly valuable session, "Coding Visual Data: Ethical, Rigorous, and Creative Approaches in Qualitative Research," provided practical techniques that are ethically sound and creatively engaging. These methods will enhance our ability to deliver rich, interactive course materials that stimulate student learning and engagement. Sessions led by editors and authors of the 2025 edited volume, "Expanding Approaches to Thematic Analysis: Creative Engagements with Qualitative Data" emphasized innovative analytical techniques in qualitative research. The authors supported the use of their materials at no cost, promoting the availability of

their book via OERs which aligns with our grant's objective of providing students with accessible, no-cost materials.

Another session focused on helping graduate students obtain funding for their research provided strategies for securing grants, reducing the cost for graduate students, and enabling them to dedicate more time to their qualitative research instead of needing to work. The conference also allowed connections with other researchers to share teaching resources; this kind of collaboration supports open learning and fits our grant's goal of lowering costs by using shared, accessible resources. The team has made some helpful updates to the course to build on what was learned at the symposium. We will also add clear instructions and short video tutorials to show students how to use and access Python and NVivo. These tools are free for students and can help them organize and analyze qualitative data. New assignments have been added that give students practice using visual data coding techniques learned at the conference; these activities give students real-world experience working with qualitative data. The book *Expanding Approaches to Thematic Analysis: Creative Engagements with Qualitative Data* is available as a free eBook through the Georgia Southern Library. Because students can access it at no cost, it has been added as an optional reading to the course's OER resources list. All these steps support the goals of our grant by lowering student costs, improving access to quality materials, and keeping our teaching innovative and up to date.

Dr. Schueths also peer-reviewed Dr. Nalanda Roy's Qualitative Research Design course (POLS 7436), which had already integrated resources developed through the Affordable Learning Georgia grant. The review showed that these materials effectively supported the course's goals and demonstrated the impact of using no-cost, high-quality resources in practice. Dr. Roy used free, high-quality materials in her course, which helped create an interactive and student-focused learning experience. Her creative teaching style, including a semi-flipped classroom, clear learning goals, and real-world assignments, showed how OERs can improve student learning and keep students more engaged. Using a "fluid syllabus" further illustrates how responsive and adaptable teaching approaches can effectively meet diverse student needs.

#### Peer-Reviewed Book Chapters Publications:

Roy, Nalanda, and McMillan, Lauren. "Integrating Research into Coursework: Creating Opportunities for Students' Success," In *Open Educational Resources for and as Assessment*, Utah State University Press, 2025. This is an open access edited book. (in production)

## Pre-Test Survey Results

<p>(OER) Open Educational Resources are (the course materials, modules, videos, assignments, documentaries, Ted Talks, and any other materials) that are available to you at no cost. These resources provide course learning support in place of a purchased textbook.</p> <p><b>Have you taken a course at Georgia Southern University that uses/used OER instead of a textbook or textbooks?</b></p>		
How frequently do you use the textbook?	Do you typically purchase course materials assigned for your courses?	
No	Sometimes	Yes
No	Always	Sometimes
No	Sometimes	Yes
No	Never	Yes
No	Always	Yes
Yes	Often	Yes
Yes	Rarely	Yes
Yes	Often	Yes
No	Sometimes	Yes
No	Sometimes	Yes
Yes	Often	Yes
How do you currently shop for course materials?	How much out-of-pocket expense (costs not covered by financial aid) did your course materials (textbooks, handbooks, guides, course packets, and other print and digital	What, if any, measures have you taken to reduce your required textbook costs?

learning materials) cost you each semester?		
Amazon	700	Rent
Amazon	100-200	Looking for online pdf files
Amazon, School Book store, other sites	unsure	buying used or co-sharing a book
University Bookstore & Amazon	\$0	Renting when possible or finding a PDF online.
Amazon, Chegg, used books at the University Bookstore	200-300	seeking used books, sharing with classmates, and finding downloadable pdfs
online resources-- book sellers	\$150 - \$200	search for used books
GSU Library and/or Amazon Kindle	Roughly \$200	N/A
Online	About \$150	Buy used
Online	This is my first semester of grad school.	I always look for used and discount options.
online	500	used books
University Store or Amazon	\$300	none

### **Report on Professional Development: Conference on Higher Education Pedagogy**

This conference, at Virginia Tech, highlighted pedagogy in higher education. Attending this conference provided an opportunity to engage with faculty on best practices for teaching and learning from a pedagogical perspective (<https://chep.teaching.vt.edu/>). The most valuable presentations related to reaching students where they are and providing a variety of instructional delivery methods. Additionally, techniques for encouraging students to be reflective about their learning were shared in many of the conference sessions and have immediate and practical applications in the classroom, both in the in-person and virtual environments.

By attending this conference, it is apparent the Libguide developed for the course to replace textbook materials is an effective way to engage students with course information, expanding on


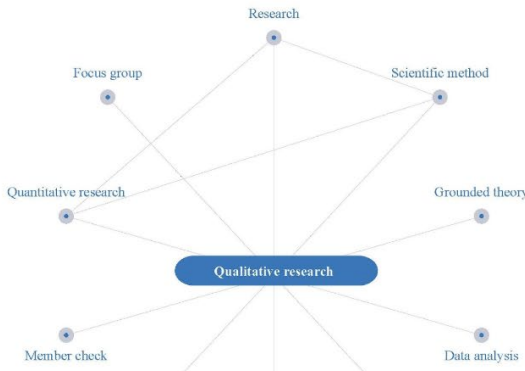



the traditional textbook, and creating a dynamic means of interaction. Additionally, the *Empowering Learners, Shaping the Future: Cultivating Metaliteracy Across the Curriculum* workshop presentation introduced attendees to the concept of metaliteracy, which is also supported by this grant and the use of diverse resources and access to materials.

## Screenshots from the Libguide: POLS 7436 - Qualitative Research Design - Roy












### POLS 7436 - Qualitative Research Design - Roy: News & Updates

News & Updates	Supplemental Documentaries/Films	Required Reading	Required Films	Recommended Reading
Supplemental Resources (Articles & Books)	Article Critiques	Websites	APA Formatting	Chicago/Turabian
				Survey
<p><b>Dr. Nalanda Roy</b></p>  <p>Professor UH 217 912.344.3608 nroy@georgiasouthern.edu</p>	<p><a href="#">link to original</a></p> 	<p><b>Lane Library</b></p>  <p>Lauren McMillan she/her</p>		

News & Updates	Supplemental Documentaries/Films		Required Reading	Required Films	Recommended Reading	
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Some of the links on this page require a password to access. The password can be found in your syllabus, from Dr. Roy. Or, contact your library liaison, Lauren McMillan: [lmcmillan@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:lmcmillan@georgiasouthern.edu)

Required Reading	Required Readings, continued
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Creswell, Chapter 4: Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry</li> <li> Hatch, Chapter 3: Collecting Qualitative Data</li> <li> Fram, The Constant Comparative Analysis Method Outside of Grounded Theory</li> <li> Creswell &amp; Poth, Chapter 1: Qualitative Inquiry &amp; Research Design</li> <li> Zeeman, An Introduction to a Postmodern Approach to Educational Research: Discourse Analysis</li> <li> Creswell, Chapter 2: Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Frameworks</li> <li> Maxwell, Chapter 7: Research Proposals</li> <li> Maxwell, Chapter 6: Validity</li> </ul>	<p>Developing a Codebook:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Codebook Development for Team-Based Qualitative Analysis</li> </ul> <p>How to Review Qualitative Research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big-Ten" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research</li> </ul> <p>Reflexivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Becoming a Qualitative Researcher: The Value of Reflexivity</li> </ul> <p>Thematic Analysis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Braun &amp; Clarke: Using thematic analysis in psychology</li> <li> Braun &amp; Clarke, Chapters 1-3: Successfully Getting Started in Qualitative Research</li> </ul>

News & Updates	Supplemental Documentaries/Films	Required Reading	Required Films	Recommended Reading		
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Documentary: Born Rich	Qualitative Research
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Born Rich (via Tubi) 2003 · 1 hr 8 min TV-PG Documentary Shot by the Johnson &amp; Johnson pharmaceutical heir, this doc examines the personal lives of wealthy young people born into fortune.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Overview of Qualitative Research Methods</li> <li>Telling a Complete Story with Qualitative and Mixed Methods Research - Dr. John W. Creswell</li> <li>Demonstration of Qualitative Research - With mistakes</li> <li>Demonstration of Qualitative Research - How it should be done</li> <li>Deductive and Inductive Approaches to Qualitative Coding</li> <li>The Monkey Business Illusion - to teach observation</li> </ul>
Philosophical Assumptions	Literature Reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Wheel of Research Choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to Write a Literature Review (article)</li> <li>Literature Reviews: An Overview for Graduate Students</li> <li>Synthesis for Literature Reviews</li> </ul>
Thematic Analysis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thematic Analysis: Webinar: Thematic Analysis: in conversation with Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke</li> </ul>	

Supplemental Resources (Articles & Books)	Article Critiques	Websites	APA Formatting	Chicago/Turabian	Survey
<b>Books</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview Research in Political Science</li> <li>• Introduction to Political Science Research Methods</li> <li>• Politics, Power, and Purpose: An Orientation to Political Science</li> <li>• The Politics and Ethics of Representation in Qualitative Research: Addressing Moments of Discomfort</li> <li>• Qualitative Methodologies in Organization Studies: Volume I: Theories and New Approaches</li> <li>• Rocking Qualitative Social Science : An Irreverent Guide to Rigorous Research</li> </ul>	<p>The infographic features a central purple circle labeled "QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS". Six lines radiate from this circle to six numbered, color-coded boxes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1 ETHNOGRAPHIC RESEARCH</b> (Purple): Observes how people act</li> <li><b>2 CASE STUDY</b> (Blue): Takes an in-depth view of a specific thing: an individual, family, scenario, etc.</li> <li><b>3 GROUNDED THEORY</b> (Light Blue): Sees where the data leads and the questions and theories that emerge from the data</li> <li><b>4 PHENOMENOLOGICAL METHOD</b> (Yellow): Briefly elaborate on what you want to discuss.</li> <li><b>5 NARRATIVE METHOD</b> (Green): Formed over time using observation and notes; follows a narrative story-like form</li> <li><b>6 HISTORICAL METHOD</b> (Red): Uses historical data to inform the present and future</li> </ul>				
<b>Articles</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Analyzing Qualitative Data for Evaluation (CDC)</li> <li>• Case Study Methodology of Qualitative</li> </ul>					

## Post-Test Survey Results

Which course material would you prefer in the future: a no-cost Libguide or a traditional textbook?



Rate the overall quality of the no-cost materials used in this course



In your academic career has the cost of required textbooks caused you to (check all that apply):



Q5 - Based on the OER available in this course, how would you rate your freedom of thinking has been nurtured:



After using OER, how much out-of-pocket expense (costs not covered by financial aid) did your course materials (textbooks, handbooks, guides, course packets, and other print and digital learning materials) would you like to spend each semester?

6. After using OER, how much out-of-pocket expense (costs not covered by financial aid) did your course materials (textbooks, handbooks, guides, course packets, and other print and digital learning materials) would you like to spend each semester?

0

\$0

\$100

\$50

No more than 200

"After using OER, how much out-of-pocket expense did your course materials would you like to spend each semester?"? This makes no sense.

150

none

150

How would you describe your overall course schedule?

How would you describe your overall course schedule?

Good

This is my first semester in grad school, so still figuring that out.

My course schedule is well balanced which allows room for my work-life balance.

Acceptable

My course schedule this semester was heavy.

Well-paced and relaxed, allowed me to focus on other more intensive-courses

I think it is laid out fairly well.

Well laid out and timing is manageable.

I have very much liked this class