



COURSE TITLE: SOCW 8323 (21468), Qualitative Research

TIME/ SECTION/ ROOM: Mondays, 1 pm – 4 pm (22280; Room: 425)

FACULTY: McClain Sampson, M.S.S.W., Ph.D.

OFFICE HOURS: GCSW, 403

- **Mondays** 11 am – 1 pm;
- **Tuesdays** 11 am – 12:30 pm, 4-5 pm
- **By appointment on other days.** Please submit appointment requests via e-mail.

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I. Course

A. Catalog Description

Qualitative Research methods, including theories, research designs, data collection methods, and analysis approaches. Emphasizes grounded theory, ethnography, participant-observation, and field research.

http://www.uh.edu/grad_catalog/gsw/socw_courses.html

B. Purpose

Prepares students to use qualitative research methods including the use of appropriate theories, research designs, data collection methods, and analysis. Content includes use of grounded theory, ethnography, participation-observation and field research. Examples of qualitative research in social work and related fields are examined.

<http://www.sw.uh.edu/academics/coursecurriculum.php>

II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Provide the theoretical and methodological perspectives of qualitative research
2. Involve the students in the application of qualitative methods
3. Provide the analytic skills to understand and appreciate qualitative research
4. Consider how qualitative research can be applied to social work research and public policy

III. Course Content

The following topics in Qualitative Research Methods will be presented and discussed in

class and relevant readings and assignments are required to prepare for and show the degree of knowledge and skills acquired. These include:

1. Introduction to Qualitative Research as a Field of inquiry; its features and the personal competencies to do it
2. Guiding Concepts for Qualitative Research
3. Ethics of Qualitative Research
4. Formulating a Research Question and Selecting Theoretical framework
5. Entering the Field – Data collection methods
6. Qualitative interviews
7. Focus Groups
8. Qualitative Content Analysis
9. Qualitative Software Demonstration - NVivo
10. Writing up
11. Journal reflections
12. Role of Qualitative Research in Social Science Research and Evaluation and its application for policy

IV. Course Structure

This fall 2012 semester course will consist of 14 class periods. The content will be delivered in seminar format, utilizing a variety of teaching and learning techniques including: lectures, in-class group discussions, group activities, case studies, handouts, and online activities via Blackboard.

V. Textbooks

Required:

Creswell, J.W. (2013) Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five approaches. (3rd ed). SAGE Publications, Inc.

All journals articles that are posted as required will be available on Blackboard

Recommended:

Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2008). InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing. (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Maxwell, J.A. (2004). Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach (Applied Social Research Methods) (2nd ed). SAGE Publications, Inc.

List of Peer Reviewed articles that are recommended as examples of utilizing different approaches:

VI Course Requirements

This class will be in seminar format and require us to all work collaboratively to build knowledge. Thus, students are expected to do the readings and assignments and come to class prepared to discuss them. Homework assignments will be skills based and incremental, culminating in a mini-proposal for a qualitative research study. You will be responsible for many outside OF class, experiential activities such as completing a human subjects protections training, conducting field observations, taking field notes, obtaining confidential consent from your participants & conducting 2 semi-structured interviews. We will also do many experiential

activities in class such as practice coding transcriptions and discussing articles and videos.

VII. Evaluation and Grading

A. Grading Distribution:

- 1) Observations/broad research question 10 points
- 2) Developing Specific research questions 10 points
- 3) Concept map 10 points
- 4) Theoretical framework and narrative 20 points
- 5) Interview questions 10 points
- 6) Transcriptions due with broad themes 10 points
- 7) Mini-proposal 30 points (e.g., background, research questions, theoretical framework, and proposed approach)

Expectations and instructions for homework assignments will be explained in further detail in class discussion and written form.

- B. Grading Scale:** Scores from each written assignment and the class participation grade will be converted according to the grading distribution indicated above. The scores will then be combined and final letter grades will be based on the following grading scale:

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	100-96	C+	79.9-76
A-	95.9-92	C	75.9-72
B+	91.9-88	C-	71.9-68
B	87.9-84	D	67.9-64
B-	83.9-80	F	Below 64%

VIII. Policy on grades of "I" (Incomplete):

Please refer to the UH Graduate and Professional Studies Bulletin for the university policy regarding a grade of Incomplete (I). Incompletes will be given only in accordance with this policy. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class session for which they are due, as indicated in the course outline below. Late assignments will be reduced by 5 points for each day they are late. Please plan accordingly so that you are able to complete and submit your assignments on time, and inform me ASAP should any problems arise. If an emergency prevents you from attending class on the day an assignment is due, you must notify me prior to the class so that appropriate arrangements may be planned. An **unexcused** absence will also result in a grade of zero (0) on any in-class assignments administered on the day of the absence.

IX. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism

Although I do not expect to encounter academic dishonesty or plagiarism in this class, I want to be very clear about my standards. Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the

College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty. All papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information. Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

X. CONSULTATION

This course will be delivered by Dr. Sampson. My office is located on the fourth floor of the GCSW. My office telephone number is (713) 743-6719. Scheduled office hours are indicated on page 1 and posted on my office door. If you need to meet with me at a time other than the allotted office hours, please schedule an appointment. My email is mmsampson@UH.edu

XI. POLICY ON ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

Whenever possible, and in accordance with 504/ADA guidelines, the University of Houston will attempt to provide reasonable academic accommodations to students who request and require them. For more information and/or assistance, please contact the Center for Students with Disabilities at 713-743-5400.

XII. EXPECTATIONS FOR MAINTAINING A SAFE, RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR

Cellular Phones and Pagers: Students are asked to turn off (or activate the vibrator mode on) cellular phones and pagers during class time. Disruptions of this nature compromise the academic process, and therefore will not be tolerated. If you have extenuating circumstances that prevent you from honoring this classroom rule, please schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible to advise me of your situation.

Classroom Behavior: The **GOLDEN RULE** for expected behavior in the classroom is to ***be respectful of yourself and your colleagues***. By virtue of the nature of our profession, we will often engage in content and discussions in this course that elicit varied opinions, perspectives, and emotions. This will provide a well-rounded educational experience for all of us, if we practice and demonstrate the core values of social work. Social Work classes are a good training ground for professional conduct.

XIII. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

A FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING ABOUT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Week 1 Monday, August 27: Course Introduction

- Course overview & logistics: Introductions, syllabus, assignments, Blackboard site
- Overview of Qualitative research theoretical underpinnings and basic approaches. We will discuss underlying philosophies of Qual, ethics, why it is useful and when, the importance of your questions
- Course Syllabus & Review Blackboard Site

Homework: complete Human Subjects training online either through UH (http://www.research.uh.edu/Home/Division-of-Research/Compliance-and-Committees/Conflict-of-Interest/COI-Training-Requirement/COI_CITI_Training) or NIH (<http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>). Print your certification of completion and bring to class as proof of completion.

Fieldwork: field observations and notes, formulate a broad research question. A “why” or “how” question.

Required Readings for weeks 1 & 2: Creswell 1 & 2

Maxwell chapter 1

Recommended: Bowen. Lessons Learned (journal article on Bb)

Week 2 Monday, September 3: Labor Day Holiday. No class.

GATHERING DATA

Week 3 Monday, September 10: Conceptualizing your research

Lecture: Continue to discuss epistemology. Discuss the importance of theoretical orientation and concept mapping.

In class: discuss your observations and share your broad research question. Be prepared to discuss how your research question was informed.

Required Readings:

Maxwell. C. 3: Conceptual Framework

Creswell: C. 3 Designing a Qualitative Study

Shaw: Ethics in Qual Research

Assignment Due: Observation Notes & Broad research question (*this question will be refined as we move through the course*)

Week 4 Monday Sept. 17 Overarching approach- in depth or descriptive, capturing content, looking for themes

Discuss the use of focus groups and appropriate analysis

Required Readings:

Braun & Clark: Thematic Analysis (on Bb); Sandelowski: Whatever happened to Qualitative descriptive (on Bb).

Week 5 Monday, September 24: Approaches Often Used in Social Sciences

Narrative, Ethnographic, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, Discourse

Required reading:

Creswell: chapter 4 Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquir; chapter 5 Five Different Qualitative Studies

Assignment Due: Concept Map & narrative on 3 potential theoretical frameworks that might fit your research interest

ORGANIZING AND INTERPRETING MEANING OF DATA

Week 6 **Monday, October 1: Approaches continued**
In class activities: discuss the article/book chapter and approach. Focus on ethnographic and narrative approach.
Video: Preschool across 3 cultures.
Required reading: Narrative: Thaden & Robinson journal article (on Bb)
Ethnographic interviewing techniques: Gallagher journal article (on Bb)
Recommended for further examples:
Creswell: an ethnography, p.309
Creswell Narrative study, p. 251

Week 7 **Monday, October 8: Qualitative Approaches continued:**
Focus on approaches of phenomenology, discourse, grounded theory
Video: I exist

Watch Video: I exist (and discuss how you would take phenom or narrative approach) or 1st person plural
Required Readings: Starks: Choose your Method.
Phenomenological: Creswell. p. A Phenomenological Study p. 265
Staller; Beck (on Bb in journal articles folder)

COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA

Week 8 **Monday October 15: The Importance of Good Research Questions**
Continue discussion on approaches from previous class
Discussion of finalizing your ideas/rough sketch research question (s) and corresponding approach
Required Readings: Maxwell: chapter 4 Research Questions

Week 9 **Monday, October 22: The Art & Skill of Interviewing as a Method**
Lecture: brief ppt. of purpose of interviews and types of. Describe what difference between research questions and interview questions is.
Required Readings:
Kvale & Brinkmann: chapter 7: Conducting an Interview (box 7.1 is especially helpful)
Kvale & Brinkmann chapter 8: Interview Variations
Homework: come up with no more than 6 interview questions
In class: Practice in dyads with some questions you are thinking of asking and see what type of information you get.
Assignment Due: Research questions finalized

Week 10 **Monday, October 29: Data collection considerations**
Lecture: Sampling depends on research questions and approach. Revisit the importance of ethics in data collection.
Guest speaker, community health nurse faculty and qualitative researcher
Required Reading:
Gallagher (Bb)
Creswell chapter 7: Data Collection

- Week 11** **November 5: What to do with the data?**
Lecture: Analysis approaches and how to know when you have achieved rigor?
In class activity- look at transcriptions, code and look for broad themes (most of class)
Required Readings: Creswell chapter 8: Data analysis. You may also want to refer to previous readings on descriptive analysis to know how to code and look for themes. WE WILL BE CODING AND LOOKING FOR THEMES IN CLASS SO PLEASE READ TO BE PREPARED ON HOW TO DO THIS.
- Week 12** **Monday, November 12: Standards of evaluation and validity in Qualitative**
Lecture on rigor and validity (fact checking, inter rater reliability)
Guest lecture: Dr. Bell, Qualitative researcher, school Social Work UT Austin
In class discussion: check in on projects and questions.
Required readings:
Bell: Case Management
Maxwell chapter 6: Validity; chapter 7: Research proposals
Creswell chapter 10: Standards of evaluation and validity
- Week 13** **Monday, November 19: presentations of mini proposals**
Week 14 **Monday, November 26: presentations of mini proposal**
Week 15 **Monday December 3—Lecture and Wrap up**

*****The instructor reserves the right (and flexibility) to alter the Course Outline or schedule in order to better accommodate learning goals and time constraints. Student flexibility and tolerance for any necessary agenda shifts may be required.*****

XIV. Bibliography (will be provided soon) this is working draft.