



**COURSE TITLE:** SOCW 8323 (10774), Qualitative Research

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

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

**OFFICE HOURS:** GCSW, 403

- **Mondays** 11 am – 1 pm;
- **By appointment on other days.** Please submit appointment requests via e-mail.

**E-mail:** [mmsampson@UH.edu](mailto:mmsampson@UH.edu)

**Phone:** (713) 743-6719

**Fax:** (713) 743-8149

**Teaching Assistant:** Jessica Yu. [Jessicayu2010@gmail.com](mailto:Jessicayu2010@gmail.com)

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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](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. Involvement 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 (if time permits and if needed)
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 2017 semester course will consist of 15 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*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). SAGE Publications, Inc.

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

#### **Recommended if you want more specifics on methods:**

Josselson, R. (2013) *Interviewing for Qualitative Inquiry. A Relational Approach*. Guilford Press. New York, NY.

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

Patton, M.Q. (2001). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. Sage publications.

3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

Spradley, J.P. *The Ethnographic Interview*.

Wertz, F.J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L.M., Josselson, R., Anderson, R. and McSpadden, E. (2011). *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis*. Guilford Press. New York, NY.

**Forthcoming is a list of Peer Reviewed articles that are required or recommended. Articles typically are used to demonstrate the use of a specific approach and type of analysis.**

**These will be shared in class and posted to Blackboard**

## **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 5 points **Due Sept 10**
- 2) Concept map 10 points.
- 3) Conceptual framework and narrative. Narrative includes your theoretical underpinnings. 20 points.
- 4) Finalized research questions and interview questions 10 points.
- 5) Memos due with broad themes 10 points.
- 6) Abstract 15 points (200 words or less).
- 7) Mini-proposal 30 points (e.g., background, research questions, theoretical framework, and proposed approach). You will present your mini-proposal as though it were your proposal defense.

**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
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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):**

The grade of "I" (Incomplete) is a conditional and temporary grade given when students are either **(a)** passing a course or **(b)** still have a reasonable chance of passing in the judgment of the instructor but, for non-academic reasons beyond their control have not completed a relatively small part of all requirements. Students are responsible for informing the instructor immediately of the reasons for not submitting an assignment on time or not taking an examination. Students must contact the instructor of the course in which they receive an “I” grade to make arrangements to complete the course requirements. Students should be instructed not to re-register for the same course in a following semester in order to complete the incomplete requirements.

The grade of "I" must be changed by fulfillment of course requirements within one year of the date awarded or it will be changed automatically to an "F" (or to a "U" [Unsatisfactory] in S/U graded courses). The instructor may require a time period of less than one year to fulfill course requirements, and the grade may be changed by the instructor at any time to reflect work completed in the course. The grade of "I" may not be changed to a grade of **W**.

**Please note that if you have more than one UNEXCUSED absence your grade may be affected by deduction in participation.**

**IX. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism**

Please click the link below for the full explanation of the Academic Honesty policy and procedure

Policy: <http://www.uh.edu/provost/policies/honesty/documents-honesty/academic-honesty-policy.pdf>

Definitions:

“Academic dishonesty” means employing a method or technique or engaging in conduct in an academic endeavor that contravenes the standards of ethical integrity expected at the University of Houston or by a course instructor to fulfill any and all academic requirements. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to, the following:

*Plagiarism*

- a. Representing as one’s own work the work of another without acknowledging the source (plagiarism). Plagiarism includes copying verbatim text from the literature, whether printed or electronic, in all assignments including field.

*Cheating and Unauthorized Group Work*

- b. Openly cheating in an examination, as copying from another’s paper; c. Being able to view during an examination, quiz or any in-class assignment an electronic device that allows communication with another person, access to

- unauthorized material, access to the internet, or the ability to capture an image, unless expressly permitted by the instructor;
- d. Using and/or possessing “crib notes,” as unauthorized use of notes or the like to aid in answering questions during an examination;
  - e. Giving or receiving unauthorized aid during an examination, such as trading examinations, whispering answers, and passing notes, and using electronic devices to transmit or receive information;
  - f. Securing another to take a test in the student’s place. Both the student taking the test for another and the student registered in the course are at fault;

*Fabrication, Falsification, and Misrepresentation*

- g. Changing answers or grades on a test that has been returned to a student in an attempt to claim instructor error;
- h. Using another’s laboratory results as one’s own, whether with or without the permission of the owner;
- i. Falsifying results in laboratory experiments;
- j. Misrepresenting academic records or achievements as they pertain to course prerequisites or co-requisites for the purpose of enrolling or remaining in a course for which one is not eligible;
- k. Representing oneself as a person who has earned a degree without having earned that particular degree

*Stealing and Abuse of Academic Materials*

- l. Stealing, as theft of tests or grade books, from faculty offices or elsewhere, or knowingly using stolen tests or materials in satisfaction of exams, papers, or other assignments; this includes the removal of items posted for use by the students;
- m. Mutilating or stealing library materials; misshelving materials with the intent to reduce accessibility to other students;

*Complicity in Academic Dishonesty*

- n. Failing to report to the instructor or departmental hearing officer an incident which the student believes to be a violation of the academic honesty policy;

*Academic Misconduct*

- o. Any other conduct which a reasonable person in the same or similar circumstances would recognize as dishonest or improper in an academic setting.

**Process:**

Students shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty to the instructor of record involved or to the appropriate authority if the alleged act is not associated with a specific class within 5 class days of the incident. Faculty or instructor of record shall have the responsibility of reporting incidents of alleged academic dishonesty through their college hearing officer within 5 class days of the incident. The faculty should include the recommended sanction in the report. The college hearing officer will notify the student of the report and recommended sanction. The student can accept the sanction and waive a hearing or request a college hearing. A hearing shall be set within 10 days and would be consist of two

faculty and three students chosen by the hearing officer.

## **X. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments**

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### **A FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING ABOUT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

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#### **Class 1      Monday, August 20: 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](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)**

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### **GATHERING DATA**

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**Class 2      Monday, Aug. 27 TBD. Topics covered: How to observe, come up with good research questions and approach.**

**Class 3      Sept. 3 Labor Day Holiday, NO CLASS**

#### **Class 4      Monday Sept. 10. Conceptualizing your research**

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

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

Recommended Readings to be discussed today:

Shaw: Ethics in Qualitative Research

**Assignment Due: Observation Notes & Broad research question** (*this question will be refined as we move through the course*). This assignment is a brief (1 and ½ page maximum) written account of what you observed and a written broad research question.

Be sure to write why you chose to observe what you did and write why and how you came about choosing your research question. **At this time you must also tell me what your research topic and proposed methods are so we can submit for class IRB approval.**

**Class 5      Monday, September 17    Overarching approach- in depth or descriptive, capturing content, looking for themes**

Discuss the use of focus groups and appropriate analysis

Discuss interviewing in Qual research

**Required Readings to be discussed today:**

Maxwell. C. 3: Conceptual Framework

Creswell: C. 3 Designing a Qualitative Study

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**ORGANIZING AND INTERPRETING MEANING OF DATA**

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**Class 6      Sept 24: Approaches Often Used in Social Sciences**

Narrative, Ethnographic, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, CBPR,

Content Analysis, Case study

NOTE: WE WILL NOT HAVE TIME TO COVER ALL APPROACHES. I

SUGGEST COVERING: descriptive (including content analysis), case

study, grounded theory, ethnography, community based participatory

research (CBPR)

**Required reading to be discussed today:**

**Creswell: chapter 4 Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry;**

**Recommended if you want more on specific approaches:**

**Focus groups:** Linhorst: A Review of the Use of Focus Groups in SW;

Sandelowski: Whatever happened to Qualitative descriptive (on Bb).

**Content Analysis:** Graneheim & Lundman: Qualitative content analysis in

nursing research; Hsieh & Shannon: Three Approaches to Qualitative

Content Analysis.

**Narrative:** Josselson on narrative (on Bb); **Creswell Narrative study, p. 251**

**Ethnographic:** Creswell: an ethnography, p.309; Ethnographic interviewing techniques: Gallagher journal article (on Bb)

**IN CLASS DISCUSSION/TIPS FOR DOING CONCEPT MAPPING.**

**Class 7      Monday, October 1: Qualitative Approaches continued:**

Focus on approaches of **phenomenology, grounded theory, CBPR**

**Required Readings: Starks: Choose your Method.**

**In Readings folder:** Beck 1993 Grounded Theory on PPD and Beck 2002 Phenomenology on PPD *to help see differences in the 2 approaches*

**Phenomenological:** Creswell. p. A Phenomenological Study p. 265

**CBPR:** Davison et al, "Family Centered Action Model" Obesity OR

**FINAL CONCEPT MAP DUE with a narrative is due**

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### COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA

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**Class 8**                      **Monday, October 8: Finish discussion on CBPR and introduce photovoice as method. The Art & Skill of Interviewing as a Method**

**Photovoice:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4zAdktMUNg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ICTVdvcUoU>

Lecture: brief ppt. of purpose of interviews and types of. Describe what difference between research questions and interview questions is.

**Required Readings this class is based on and may be discussed:**

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 (you can craft these during the in class practice with your colleagues)

**Assignment Due: Written narrative on 3 potential conceptual/theoretical frameworks that might fit your research interest**

***YOU SHOULD BE FINALIZING A CONSENT FORM. MAKE SURE THE CONSENT FORM IS APPROVED BY DR. SAMPSON BEFORE USING. A TEMPLATE IS ON BB.***

**In class:** Practice in dyads with some questions you are thinking of asking and see what type of information you get.

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***You should be scheduling and conducting interviews around this time. Aim to have the interviews completed by Week 10 at latest so you have time to transcribe.***

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**Class 9**                      **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 this class is based on and may be discussed:**

Maxwell: chapter 4 Research Questions (refer back to concept maps. In class we may work on fleshing out the difference between research question and interview questions)



**Class 10 Monday, October 22: Data collection considerations**  
Lecture: Sampling depends on research questions and approach. Revisit the importance of ethics in data collection. Ppt: Data collection and Analysis (this class and next)  
**1-2 pm Possible Guest speaker, teaching about NVivo**  
**Required Reading this class is based on and may be discussed:**  
Creswell chapter 7: Data Collection. Maxwell chapter 5: Methods Posted to BB

**Assignment Due: Written Interview Questions and Finalized Research Questions**

***2017 ADDED: photovoice as method. Readings required is Wang, also showing video***

**Class 11 October 29: What to do with the data?**  
Discuss Memos and process  
**Possible Guest speaker: mixed methods**  
**Required Readings this class is based on and may be discussed:**  
Creswell : Mixed Methods (post on BB under peer review articles) You may also want to refer to previous readings on descriptive analysis to know how to code and look for themes.  
**BE PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD IN YOUR INTERVIEWS. WE CAN HELP THINK THROUGH FINDINGS.**  
Charmaz, chapter 4 How to do memo writing  
**Optional Assignment Due: Abstract rough draft.** (Significance of problem, research question, methods, analysis, what findings might inform). Keep this under 300 words.

**Class 12 Monday, November 5: Standards of evaluation and validity in Qualitative**  
Lecture on rigor and validity (week "12" ppt) 1 hour  
***IF YOU HAVE TRANSCRIPTS YOU CAN BRING THEM IN FOR HELP WITH CODING.*** Practice coding, memos with my transcripts. 1 hour. ***I SUGGEST YOU TURN IN DRAFTS OF ABSTRACTS NOW.***  
**Required Reading this class is based on and may be discussed**  
Maxwell chapter 6: Validity; chapter 7: Research proposals  
**Suggested:**  
Lietz & Zayas, "Evaluating Qualitative Research for Social Work Practitioners"  
Creswell chapter 10: Standards of evaluation and validity

**Assignment Due:** Memo

**Class 13 Monday, November 12: Program Evaluation possible. To be determined. and FINAL abstract due**  
**Guest lecture , TBD**  
Required readings:

**Class 14 Monday, November 19:** presentations of mini proposals

**Class 15 Monday, November 26 presentations and last day of class  
Final proposal in writing due BY Tuesday December 6, 2017 5pm.**

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**\*\*\*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.\*\*\***

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**XI. Bibliography available on request as needed since readings change each semester.**

**XII. POLICY ON ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.** The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact the UH Center for Disabilities at 713-743-5400.

**XIII. Counseling and Psychological Services**

Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) can help students who are having difficulties managing stress, adjusting to college, or feeling sad and hopeless. You can reach CAPS ([www.uh.edu/caps](http://www.uh.edu/caps)) by calling 713-743-5454 during and after business hours for routine appointments or if you or someone you know is in crisis. Also, there is no appointment necessary for the "Let's Talk" program, which is a drop-in consultation service at convenient locations and hours around campus. [http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets\\_talk.html](http://www.uh.edu/caps/outreach/lets_talk.html).

**XIV. 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](mailto:mmsampson@UH.edu)

**XV. 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.

**Attendance:** Please be on time to class. If you are more than 20 minutes late it will be counted as an unexcused absence. More than two unexcused absences will be subject to a drop in one letter grade. Assignments are due at beginning of class period. Late assignments will be penalized with points lost.