

**RUTGERS, THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK**

Course Outline

Qualitative Research Methods

16:910:637

Course description

This course provides an examination of the methods of collecting, analyzing, presenting, and applying qualitative data. The course covers the history and evolution of qualitative research methods; theoretical orientations; data collection methods including ethnography, participant observation, in-depth interviewing, focus groups, archival analysis, and secondary analysis; methods of data analysis; and research applications including theory development and program design and evaluation.

Course objectives

1. To review the history and evolution of qualitative methods as they have been applied in disciplines including anthropology, sociology, education, public policy, and social work.
2. To understand the variety of theoretical orientations that have influenced the development of qualitative methods.
3. To examine qualitative data collection methods including in-depth interviewing, ethnography and participant observation, focus groups, organizational analysis, narrative analysis, and archival analysis.
4. To understand the methodological procedures applied in qualitative research including research design, sampling, development of interview guides and semi-structured questionnaires, and the recording of observations.
5. To understand the mixed model approach that combines both quantitative and qualitative methods.
6. To review the computer software applications available for qualitative data analysis.
7. To understand the techniques of qualitative data analysis.
8. To understand the ethical and human subjects issues involved in qualitative research.
9. To understand the application of qualitative research findings in areas including theory and knowledge development, program evaluation, and policy and program development.

Required texts

Patton, Michael Quinn. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods, 4th edition*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Erikson, Kai I. (1976). *Everything in its path*. NY: Simon and Schuster.

Supplemental:

*Edin, K. & Shaefer, H. L. (2015). *\$2.00 a Day: Living on Almost Nothing in America*. NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

*Edin, K., & Lein, L. (1997). *Making ends meet: How single mothers survive welfare and low-wage work*. NY: Russell Sage Foundation.

Course requirements

Assignments and grading

It is important that readings be completed on a weekly basis in order to have informed class discussions. Class participation and attendance are expected.

Students are required to design and implement a qualitative research study involving in-depth interviews with at least 8 respondents. All students should be prepared to discuss their projects in class in week 14 or 15.

Other assignments will include an ethnographic observation, and a thematic analysis of a qualitative transcript.

WEEKLY TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1

January 17

The nature of qualitative inquiry

Definitions and history

Readings:

Patton, Chapters 1, pp. 1-37; & Chapter 2, pp. 45-74

Geertz, C. (1973). *The Interpretation of cultures*. NY: Basic Books.
Chapter 1, Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture, pp. 3-32.

Week 2

January 24

Theoretical orientations

Readings:

Patton, Chapter 3, pp. 85-99

* Nagy Hess-Biber, S. & Leavy, P. (Eds.). (2004) *Approaches to*

qualitative research: A reader on theory and practice. NY: Oxford University Press.

* Antonio, R. J. (July 2000). After postmodernism: Reactionary tribalism. *American Journal of Sociology*, 106(1), 40-87.

Week 3

January 31

Qualitative designs and data collection

Readings:

Patton, Chapters 4, pp. 169-186; [and note subheadings in remaining chapter pages] & 5

Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). *Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapters 2 & 3.

+edenhall, R., Edin, K., Crowley, S., Sykes, J., Tach, L., Kriz, K., & Kling, J. (September, 2012). The role of Earned Income Tax Credit in the budgets of low-income householders. *Social Service Review*, 86(3), 367-400.

Goldman, L. & Foldy, E.G. (2015). The space before action: The role of peer discussion groups in frontline service provision. *Social Service Review*, 89(1): 166-202.

* Creswell, J. & Plano Clark, V. (2007). *Mixed methods research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

*Smith, S. S., & Moore, M.R. (July 2000). Intra-racial diversity and relations among African Americans: Closeness among Black students at a predominantly white university. *American Journal of Sociology*, 106(1), 40-87.

Week 4

February 7

In-depth interviewing

Readings:

Patton, Chapter 7

Erikson, K. *Everything in its path*

*Kissane, R. J. (March 2011). "We call it the badlands": How social-spatial geographies influence social service use. *Social Service Review*, 84(1), 3-28.

Week 5
February 14

Ethnography and participant observation

Readings:

Patton, Chapter 6

Sharkey, P. (2015). Book review: *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. By Alice Goffman. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. In *Social Service Review*, 89(2), 407-412.

Wacquant, Loic. (May 2002). Scrutinizing the street: Poverty morality, and the pitfalls of urban ethnography. *American Journal of Sociology*, 107(6), 1486-1532.

Burnette, C. (2015). Historical oppression and intimate partner violence by indigenous women in the United States: Understanding connections. *Social Service Review*, 89(3), 531-563.

*Dei, H., (2013). Social inequality in a bonded community: Community ties and village resistance in a Chinese township. *Social Service Review*, 87 (2), 269-291.

*Clifford, J., & Marcus, G. (1986). *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

*Dunier, M. (1992). *Slim's table*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

*Liebow, E. (1967). *Tally's corner*. Boston: Little Brown.

Week 6
February 21

Case Studies and Organizational Analyses

Garrow, E., & Hasenfeld, Y. (2016). When professional power fails: A power relations perspective. *Social Service Review*, 90 (3), 371-402.

Longhoffer, J., Floersch, J., & Hoy, J. (2013). *Qualitative methods for practice research*. Chapter 3, Institutional ethnography, pp. 83-124. NY: Oxford University Press.

Clark, S. Gioia, D., Ketchen, D., Jr., ; Thomas, J. (September 2010). [Transitional identity as a facilitator of organizational identity change during a merger](#). *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 55 (3), 397-438.

Wernick, L. (June, 2012). Leveraging privilege: Organizing young people with wealth to support social justice. *Social Service Review*, 86(2), 323-345.

*O'Mahoney, S. & Bechky, B. (September 2008). Boundary organizations: Enabling collaboration among unexpected allies. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 53(3), 422-459.

Week 7
February 28

Focus groups as qualitative research

Readings: Morgan, D. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Feinstein, R., & Pollack, H. (2016). "We Don't Have a Plan. We Should Be Working on a Plan.": Obstacles to caregiver transition planning for individuals with Fragile X Syndrome. *Social Service Review*, 90(3), 464-514.

*Makhoul, J. (January 2009). Understanding youth: Using qualitative methods to verify quantitative community indicators. *Health Promotion Practice*, 10(1), 128-234.

Assignment due: Ethnographic observation

Week 8
March 7

Data analysis and interpretation

Content and thematic analysis

Readings: Patton, Chapter 8, pp. 520-586

Berg, B., & Lune, H. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. Boston: Pearson. Chapter 11, An introduction to content analysis.

Gould-Wirth, A., (2016). Workplace Experiences and Unemployment Insurance Claims: How Personal Relationships and the Structure of Work Shape Access to Public Benefits. *Social Service Review*, 90(2): 305-352.

* Manning, P.K., & Cullum-Swan, B. (1998). Narrative, content, and semiotic analysis. In N. Denzin & Y. Lincoln (Eds). *Collecting and interpreting qualitative materials*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. P. 246-274.

March 14

SPRING BREAK

Week 9
March 21
Readings:

Computer applications
Overview of qualitative software

[Http://www.atlasti.com](http://www.atlasti.com)

Assignment due: Thematic analysis

Week 10

March 28

Data analysis

Data triangulation; credibility & transferability

Readings:

Patton, Chapter 9

Barush, A., Gingeri, C., & George, M. (March 2011). Rigor in qualitative research: A review of strategies used in published articles. *Social Work Research*, 35(1), 11-19.

Lietz, C., Langer, C., Furman, R. (December 2006). Establishing trustworthiness in qualitative research in social work. *Qualitative Social Work*, 5(4), pp. 441-458.

Shenton, A. (2004). Strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative research projects. *Education for Information*, 22, 63-75.

Week 11

April 4

Theory building

Patton, pages 587-595 (“Grounded Theory”).

Robert Wood Johnson Qualitative Research Guidelines Project;
<http://www.qualres.org/HomeGrou-3589.html>

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory method: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. [Qualitative Sociology](#), 13, 3-21.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). [The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research](#). Chicago: Aldine.

Strauss, A. & Corbin, J. (1994). "Grounded Theory Methodology." In NK Denzin & YS Lincoln (Eds.) [Handbook of Qualitative Research](#) (pp. 217-285). Thousand Oaks, Sage Publications.

*Drisko, J. (2001). How do clinical social workers evaluate practice? *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 71(3), 419-439.

Erikson, K. *Everything in its path*. Re-read last two chapters.

Week 12

Conducting Qualitative Secondary Analysis (QSA) / Systematic Reviews in Qualitative Research

April 11

Readings:

Heaton, J. (2008). Secondary analysis of qualitative data: Overview. *Historical Social Research*, 33(3), 33-45.

Byrd, M. (2016). "“Negro Harry’s School”": A monument to equal rights to education, *Social Service Review*, 90(3), 434-463.

Barros, R., Samitca, S., & Teixeira, A. (2016). Older persons’ experiences and perspectives of receiving social care: a systematic review of the qualitative literature. *Health and Social Care in the Community*, 24 (1), 1-11.

Aguiee, R., & Bolton, K. (2013). Why do they do it? A qualitative interpretive meta-synthesis of crisis volunteers’ motivations. *Social Work Research*, 37(4), 327-338.

Publicly available data archives:

ICPSR: <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR>

The Murray Archive: <http://www.murray.harvard.edu/frontpage>

Economic and Social Data Service Qualidata:

<http://www.esds.ac.uk/qualidata/introduction.asp>

Week 13

April 18

Readings:

Report writing and presentation of findings

Berg, B., & Lune, H. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social Sciences*, 9th edition. Boston: Pearson. Chapter 12, Writing research papers.

Padgett, D., (2008). *Qualitative research methods in social work research*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. Chapter 9.

Charmaz, K. & Mitchell, R.G. Jr. (1997). The myth of silent authorship: Self, substance, and style in ethnographic writing. In *Reflexivity and voice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Week 14 & 15

April 25 & May 1

Research presentations

Re-read:

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. NY: Basic Books. Chapter 1, Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture, pp. 3-32.

FINAL PROJECTS DUE

I. Disability Accommodation

Any student who believes that s/he may need an accommodation in this class due to a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services, Kreeger Learning Center, 151 College Avenue; dfoffice@rci.rutgers.edu<<mailto:dfoffice@rci.rutgers.edu>>; 732-932-2847. Students must have a letter of accommodation from the Office of Disability Services in order to receive accommodations. Students who attend the Newark or Camden campuses should contact the main University Disabilities Office in New Brunswick to register and to be connected directly with the liaison offices on those respective campuses.