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


*Supplemental:*


**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**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 1</th>
<th>The nature of qualitative inquiry</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 17</td>
<td>Definitions and history</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Patton, Chapters 1, pp. 1-37; &amp; Chapter 2, pp. 45-74</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 2</th>
<th>Theoretical orientations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Patton, Chapter 3, pp. 85-99</td>
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</tbody>
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Qualitative designs and data collection

**Week 3**  
**January 31**

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


**Week 4**  
**February 7**

Readings: Patton, Chapter 7

Erikson, K. *Everything in its path*

Week 5
February 14

**Ethnography and participant observation**

Readings:

Patton, Chapter 6


Week 6
February 21

**Case Studies and Organizational Analyses**


**Week 7**  
**February 28**  
**Focus groups as qualitative research**

Readings:  


**Assignment due: Ethnographic observation**

**Week 8**  
**March 7**  
**Data analysis and interpretation**  
Content and thematic analysis

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


**March 14**  
**SPRING BREAK**

**Week 9**  
**March 21**  
**Computer applications**  
Overview of qualitative software

Readings:  
Http://www.atlasti.com
Assignment due: Thematic analysis

**Week 10**

**Data analysis**

March 28  
Data triangulation; credibility & transferability

Readings:  
Patton, Chapter 9


**Week 11**

**Theory building**

April 4

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

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


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:


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
Report writing and presentation of findings

April 18
Readings:


Week 14 & 15
Research presentations

April 25 & May 1
Re-read:
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; 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.