

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO  
JANE ADDAMS COLLEGE OF SOCIAL WORK

Spring 2014  
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### Social Work 596: Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research

**DESCRIPTION:** 3 credits. This course introduces students to the theoretical foundations and methods for qualitative research in social work. The class is designed to support learners with skills to approach the inquiry process from a critical perspective. Students will be encouraged to consider issues of power, privilege, and oppression and how they matter in research approaches and implementation. Qualitative methods for understanding cultural issues and the empowerment of marginalized populations will be emphasized. This class will cover the assumptions underlying qualitative methods and multiple paradigmatic perspectives. The course will also focus on exemplars of qualitative studies related to exploring race, gender and social justice. Class sessions will address research design, ethical issues in qualitative research, participant recruitment, data collection and preliminary analysis, and strategies to increase trustworthiness and authenticity, as well as researcher subjectivity and reflexivity. Students will gain experience in applying qualitative methods in social work by practicing specific methods of observation and interviewing and by developing a final proposal for a qualitative research project.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

At the completion of the course, participants will be able to:

1. Understand the connections between epistemology, research question, qualitative method, and methods for data analysis.
2. Consider the kinds of social work research questions appropriately answered by qualitative research methods.
3. Be knowledgeable about the major methods for collecting empirical material including text, discourse, observation, participant observation, open-ended survey, structured and unstructured interviews, focus groups, audio-taping, and the use of field notes.
4. Demonstrate data collection skills using at least two methods of qualitative data collection.
5. Understand the uses of qualitative research to gain understanding of the experiences of oppressed and marginalized groups.
6. Consider relevant ethical issues in the design and implementation of qualitative research.
7. Prepare a qualitative research design and outline methods for a qualitative study to examine a question of interest.
8. Apply methods of qualitative data collection and preliminary analysis.
9. Understand both manual and computerized strategies of data analysis.
10. Implement strategies to enhance quality and rigor.

## ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

All work submitted in this course must be your own, and it must be produced specifically for this course. (If you wish to incorporate some of your prior work into a course assignment, you must have my *prior* approval.) All sources used in your work (ideas, quotes, paraphrases, etc.) must be properly acknowledged and documented. Violations of academic honesty will be taken seriously. Consequences may include failure in the course and suspension from your academic program. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the academic honesty and integrity guidelines found in the current JACSW student handbook.

## TEXTS.

Hennick, M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2011). *Qualitative research methods*. Los Angeles: SAGE.

Okta, J. S. (2012). *Grounded theory*. New York: Oxford University Press.

## One of the following exemplars:

*Breaking Women, Enduring Violence, White Lies, Street Woman, Every time I feel the Spirit, Sexed Work, Making it crazy, Tell Them Who I am, Grassroots Warriors.*

Additional required readings on Blackboard site by session.

## Instructional Methods

Course activities will include lectures, class discussion, guest speakers and discussion. Assignments are opportunities for skill development and assessment.

## Assignments and Grading

There are four graded assignments in this course. A hand-out will be distributed on the first session explaining each of these assignments in more detail.

Requirement	% of grade	Due Date
1.Seminar participation	10	Every session
2. Critical book review and discussion	10	Jan. 30, Feb. 6, Feb. 13
3. Observation experience and summary paper	25	March 6, HC, in class
4. Interview experience and summary paper	25	April 10, HC, in class
5. Final research proposal	30	April 25, 11p.m., SafeAssignBB

## Seminar participation

Collaborative discussion is the essence of this course seminar and the heart of the learning process. All students are expected to attend each class session and actively participate in all assigned “learning activity” and exercises. Students are expected to have read all materials prior to class and come prepared with “talking points” and questions. If you must miss class for a good reason, please inform me in advance and plan to post a response to the assigned reading on Blackboard. “A” level outcome: no more than one class missed; active participation in class session reflecting engagement with material(s).

**Book Review paper and class discussion.** One of the best ways to understand qualitative research is to read books that use them. Articles are also useful but page limits prevent a full

explanation of methods. See hand-out for fuller explanation and guidelines. Complete review and discuss book with class members. "A" level outcome: thoughtful and well written completion of review, strong presentation of review with facilitated class discussion.

**Observation experience and summary paper.** Conduct a two to three-hour observation; write detailed field notes and 5 page summary paper (hand-out will be provided). "A" level outcomes: Complete observation and write-up, field notes support summary, mid-range analysis (what you make of it). "A" level outcome: on-time and well written summary w logical flow and solid description (not yet perfect or analytical but clear indication of solid work).

**Interview experience and summary paper.** Conduct an interview with known individual on a phenomenon of interest; provide interview guide, brief transcript and 8 to 10 page summary paper (see Assignments hand-out). "A" level outcomes: Complete all specified elements, well-constructed questions and relevant probes, conduct interview, construct write-up; transcript supports at least one "finding."

**Final paper: Research proposal** Building from the completed data collection exercises (if possible but not necessary), develop a full research proposal of no more than 25 pages (Out-line provided). "A" level outcomes: Completion of all sections, thoughtful, doable, well-written, solid and pragmatic use of sources.

### **Grading criteria**

Grades for the course will be based on the following criteria with specific outcomes specified for each assignment. An "A" is earned when all requirements are met (i.e., addressing the issues and questions thoroughly and with evidence of appropriately comprehensive research well presented and written (logic, format, and style) and organized; with evidence of solid conceptualization, critical analysis and/or interpretation).

A "B" is earned when all requirements of the assignment have been met, including those related to clarity of presentation (logic, writing style, and format) but the depth of conceptualization, writing and presentation lacks focus or is not well supported. Late assignments may also be graded down (Message: TALK to ME if you are running into problems).

### **STUDENTS NEEDING ACCOMMODATIONS FOR DISABILITIES**

1. Go to the UIC Office of Disability Services to obtain confidential verification of the disability and a statement of accommodations recommended by that office.
2. Show the UIC Office of Disability Services accommodation letter to the instructor of the class for which the student requests accommodation before or at start of class.

**TOPICAL OUTLINE** All reading listed is required unless specified.

### **Session 1 (1/16) Introduction to qualitative research methods**

*Themes: Overview of the course, process, outcomes  
Foundations and relevance of qualitative research in social work  
Paradigms and definitions*

Arnd-Caddigan, M., & Pozzuto, R. (2006). Truth in our time. *Qualitative Social Work*, 5(4), 423-440.)

Denzin, N. K. (2002). Social work in the seventh moment. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(1), 23-38.

Hartman, A. (1990). Many ways of knowing. *Social Work*, 35(1), 3-5.

### **Suggested: Subscribe to Qualitative listserve:**

<http://listserv.uga.edu/cgi-bin/wa?SUBED1=qualrs-l&A=1> (I find the digest option best for getting good pointers without clogging up my e-mail; what you will quickly see is a wide variety of questions, responses, resources; you will also use this link to leave list)

**Learning activity for Session 2**—after reading Chapter 3 (Hennink et al. (2011), questions, complete exercises #1 & #2 (p. 59) and be prepared to discuss your work (please understand that there is no perfect questions, the point is that you begin assuming a “qualitative head” to considering how you might discover, explore, etc.).

### **Session 2 (1/23) Ways of looking at the world: Epistemological Issues**

*Themes: Critical ethnography, feminisms, critical theory, critical race theory, cultural studies, and queer theory.*

Fook, J. (2003). Critical social work: The current issues. *Qualitative social work*, 2(2), 123-130.

Gilgun, J. F., & Abrams, L. S. (2002). The nature and usefulness of qualitative social work research. *Qualitative social work*, 1(1), 39-55.

Hennink et al. Chapter 2, *The nature of qualitative research* & Chapter 3, *The Design Cycle*.

**Class-work**—Discuss your *preliminary qualitative question and your theory scaffolding*.

**Learning Activity:** For session 3: use Google scholar or Academic Premier, locate 1 article using one of the following methodological approaches: ethnography, grounded theory, case study analysis, narrative or phenomenological approach, and constructivist **IN YOUR AREA OF INTEREST**; bring 1 copy of each citation/abstract to class (I'll make copies to share with everyone in the class). Be ready to say something about what you learned from the article/methodology and consider the ethics of the study.

### **Session 3 (1/30): Researcher as instrument--ETHICS**

*Themes—Reflexivity, Subjectivity, Bias, Trustworthiness  
Research regulations for protection of human subjects in qualitative research*

**Share and discuss the articles that you found on different study methods.**

Finlay, L. (2002). “Outing” the researcher: The provenance, process, and practice of reflexivity. *Qualitative health research*, 12 (4), pp. 531-546. (E-Res)

Hennink et al. Chapter 4-*Ethical issues in qualitative research*. Spend time on the following site: <http://tiger.uic.edu/depts/ovcr/research/protocolreview/irb/index.shtml> getting familiar with documents.

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, catharsis or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as methodological power in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), 175-196.

Riessman, C. K. (2005). Exporting ethics: A narrative about narrative research in South India. *Health: An interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness & Medicine*, 9(4), 473-490.

**CLASS-WORK: Critical book Discussions X 2**

**Learning Activity**—Complete exercises on p. 106 (including Plan B) on recruitment and be prepared to discuss at next class.

#### **Session 4 (2/6): Design, Sampling, & Data**

Themes: *Recruitment Sampling/Strategies*

*Interacting with(in) the field and negotiating access*

**Discuss recruitment of participants/respondents (exercise p. 106).**

Coyne, I. T. (1997). Sampling in qualitative research: Purposeful and theoretical sampling: Merging or clear boundaries? *Journal of advanced nursing*, 26(3), 623-630. (E-Res)

Hennink et al. Chapter 5-*Participant Recruitment*

National Institute of Health-Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research (2001).

*Qualitative Methods in health research: Opportunities and considerations in application and review*. Retrieve from: <http://obssr.od.nih.gov/pdf/Qualitative.PDF>

**CLASS-WORK: Critical book Discussions X 3**

#### **Session 5 (2/13): Data Collection methods**

Themes—*Observation in qualitative inquiry*

Hennink et al., Chapter 8-*Observation*

Muñoz-Laboy, M., Hirsch, J. S., & Quispe-Lazaro, A. (2009). Loneliness as a sexual risk factor for male Mexican migrant workers. *American Journal of Public Health*, 99, 802-810.

**CLASS-WORK: Critical book Discussions X 3**

#### **Session 6 (2/20): Data collection methods**

Themes—*Ethnographies and narrative inquiry*

*In-depth interviews*

Griffith, L. (2010). Motherhood, ethnicity and experience: A narrative analysis of the debates concerning culture in the provision of health services for Bangladeshi mothers in East London. *Anthropology & Medicine*, 17(3), 289-299.

Hennink et al., Chapter 6-*In-Depth Interviews*

Recommended

Metz, J. L. (2008). An inter-view on motherhood: Racial politics and motherhood in late capitalist sport. *Cultural studies/Critical Methodologies*, 8(2), 248-275.

**Guest Speaker: Robert Aspholm, Doctoral Candidate, JACSW**

#### **Session 7 (2/27): More on strategies: Participatory and emancipatory inquiry**

Themes—*Collaborative knowledge production*

Agency for Healthcare research & quality. (2004). Community based participatory research: Assessing the evidence. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Number 99. Retrieve from: <http://www.ahrq.gov/clinic/epcsums/cbprsum.htm>

Brewster, S., & Hereth, J. (2013). Chain Reaction: A youth-driven, multimedia storytelling project promoting alternatives to calling the police. *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, 29(2), 26-34.

Fine, M., Torre, M.E., (2006). *Intimate details: Participatory action research in prison*. *Action Research*, 4(3), 253-269.

Wahab, S. (2003). Creating knowledge collaboratively with female sex workers: Insights from a qualitative, feminist and participatory study. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 9(4), 625-642.

Guest speaker: Jane Hereth, M.S.W., Clinical Research Coordinator, LifeSkills Study, Fenway Institute, Children's Hospital of Chicago

### **Session 8 (3/6): Methods of data collection**

*Themes* :Observations Field methods

Historical case analysis (i.e. *Tice & Daniels*)

Fine, G. (1993). Ten lies of ethnography: Moral dilemmas of field research. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 22(3), 267-294.

Floersch, J., Longhofer, J., & Suskewicz (2014). The use of ethnography in social work research. *Qualitative Social Work*, 13(1), 3-7.

Haight, W., Kayama, M., & Korang-Okrah, R. Ethnography in social work practice and policy. *Qualitative Social Work*, 13(1), 127-143.

**CLASSWORK:** Discuss observation process/paper-what worked? What did you learn?

### **Session 9 (3/13): Methods of data collection**

*Themes—Interviews and Focus groups*

Dettlaff, A. J., & Rycraft, J. R. (2008). Deconstructing disproportionality: Views from multiple community stakeholders. *Child Welfare*, 87(2), 37-58.

Hennink et al. Chapter 6-*In-Depth Interviews*, and Chapter 7-*Focus group Discussions*.

McCoyd, J. L. M., Kerson, T. S. (2006). Conducting intensive interviews using email: A serendipitous comparative opportunity. *Qualitative social work*, 5(3), 389-406.

#### Recommended

O'Brien, P. (2001). "Just like baking a cake": Women describe the necessary Ingredients of successful reentry after incarceration. *Families in Society*, 82(3), 287-295. (E-Res)

**CLASSWORK—developing interview questions**

### **Session 10 (3/20): Data Analysis**

*Themes—Authority, Representation, Interpretation  
Empowerment & Social Justice*

Anderson, K. & Danis, F. (2006). Adult daughters of battered women: Resistance and resilience in the face of danger. *Affilia*: 21(4), 95-113.

Okta, J. (2012). *Grounded Theory*, Chapter 3 & Chapter 4 (pp. 52-102).

Poindexter, C. C. (2002). Meaning from methods: Re-presenting narratives of an HIV-affected caregiver. *Qualitative Social Work*, 1(1), 59-78.

### **3/27-NO CLASS-Enjoy Spring break!**

#### **Session 11 (4/3): Methods of analysis**

*Themes—content analysis, template approaches, interpretive analysis, Semiotic analysis, action-oriented analysis, constructionist*

Drisko, J. W. (2000). *Five key approaches to qualitative data analysis*. Northampton, MA: Smith College School for Social Work (HO from author).

Duggleby, W. (2005). What about focus group interaction data? *Qualitative health research*, 15(6), 832- 840.

Poindexter, C. C. (2003). The ubiquity of ambiguity in research interviewing. *Qualitative Social Work*, 2(4), 383-409.

Williamson, T., Long, A. F. (2005). Qualitative data analysis using data displays. *Nurse researcher*, 12(3), 7-19.

### **CLASS-WORK—Manual Coding Exercise**

#### **Session 12 (4/10): Methods of Analysis**

*Themes—Coding--Manual and computerized approaches*

Hennink et al. Chapter 9, *Data preparation and developing codes*, and Chapter 10, *Textual data Analysis*

Hutchinson, A. M. (2005). Analyzing audio-recorded data: Using computer software applications. *Nurse Researcher*, 12(3), 20-31.

Lewis, R. (2004). NVivo 2.0 and ATLAS.ti 5.0: A Comparative Review of Two Popular Qualitative Data-Analysis Programs. *Field Methods*, 16(4), 439-464.

### **CLASS-WORK: demonstration of atlas.ti software.**

#### **Session 13 (4/17): Quality and rigor in qualitative research**

Anastas, J. W. (2004). Quality in qualitative evaluation: Issues and possible answers. *Research on social work practice*, 14(1), 57-65.

Morse, J. M. (2003). A review committee's guide for evaluating qualitative proposals. *Qualitative Health Research*, 13(6), 833-851.

Oktay, J. (2012). *Grounded Theory*, Chapters 5 & 6 (pp. 103-248).

### **CLASSWORK: Discuss interview process/paper. What did you learn?**

#### **Session 14 (4/24): Reporting findings**

*Themes: Rigor, relevance and trustworthiness.*

Drisko, J. W. (2005). Writing up qualitative research. *Families in Society*, 86(4), 589-593.

Drisko, J. W. (1997). Strengthening qualitative studies and reports: Standards to promote academic integrity. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 33(1), 185-197

Hennink et al., Chapter 11, *Writing qualitative research* (268-293).

**CLASS-WORK: Proposal Questions**

**Session 15 (5/1): Mixed Methods and Qualitative evaluation**

Themes: *Review and evaluation of the course*

*Mixed methods research*

Bronstein, L. R., & Kovacs, P. J. (2013). Writing a mixed methods report in social work research. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 23(3), 354-360.

Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. *Educational Researcher*, 33(7), pp. 14-26.

**CLASS-WORK: Brief oral presentations of research proposal.**