

▶▶ JSGS 851 – Qualitative Methods

University of Saskatchewan Campus	
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Office Hours:	By appointment
Office Location:	Education Building
Term:	Spring/Summer 2011
Room:	Education, room 1022
Date and Time:	See schedule below

CALENDAR DESCRIPTION

This course provides students with the opportunity to learn and practice inquiry processes for conducting qualitative research. Students will examine the following topics: issues in qualitative data (ontology, epistemology, methodology and method), collection of qualitative data (e.g., interviewing, ethnography, focus groups, case studies), analysis of data, and combining qualitative and quantitative data.

COURSE CONTENT AND APPROACH

To understand how qualitative research varies from quantitative research.

To develop a working knowledge and understanding of the qualitative research process.

To develop an awareness of the skills necessary to conduct qualitative research.

To identify and to develop skills necessary to be an 'intelligent consumer' of qualitative research

Students are expected to attend all classes, read assigned readings, complete all assignments on time, and be prepared to engage in scholarly discussion in class.

This course is offered in four Friday/Saturday seminars. The following offers a *proposed* overview and sequence of course content.

Seminar One: The Foundations of Research and the Qualitative Tradition

This seminar will examine the following:

- The processes of inquiry
- Ontology and epistemology of paradigms
- Characteristics of the qualitative research paradigm
- Evidence and "standards" of qualitative research
- The applications of qualitative methods
- Identification of delimitations, limitations and assumptions
- The qualitative and quantitative debate

Assigned Readings: Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of the Ritchie and Lewis text.

Additional readings will be provided in class.

Seminar Two: Structuring the Research Process, Sampling, and Data Generation

Dates: May 27th and May 28th

This seminar will examine the following:

- Designing and refining the purpose statement and research question
- The literature review and conceptual framework
- Identifying data sources and the types of sampling
- Data generation: instrumentation preparation and fieldwork
- A review of two qualitative research approaches: interviews and focus groups
- Mixed methodology - "blending traditions"

Assigned Readings: Chapters 4, 5, and 6 of the Ritchie and Lewis text.

Additional readings will be provided in class.

Seminar Three: Data Analysis, Interpreting, Presenting and Reporting Qualitative Research

Dates: June 10th and 11th

This seminar will examine the following:

Traditions and approaches of qualitative data analysis

Managing and analyzing data

Codes, categories and themes

The concept of data triangulation

The pitfalls in data analysis

Assigned Readings: Chapters 7, 8, and 9 of the Ritchie and Lewis text.

Seminar Four: Ethics/Site Relations and Research Quality and Rigor

Dates: June 24th and 25th

This seminar will examine the following:

- An overview of the historical concern for ethical research
- Overview of ethical considerations
- University of Saskatchewan's ethical research standards
- Bias
- The nature of trustworthiness / validity
- Reliability "data fit" and generalizability

**** NOTE: Group presentations will occur at this seminar.**

Assigned Readings: Chapters 10 and 11 of the Ritchie and Lewis text.

Additional readings will be provided in class.

REQUIRED READINGS

Ritchie, J., & Lewis, J. (2009 or earlier edition). *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

ii) Additional Readings These will be assigned by the instructor.

iii) Research Journals

Course members are expected to become familiar with refereed research journals.

iv) Supplementary Reading (optional) Other qualitative methods text you may wish to explore:

Cresswell, J. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Cresswell, J. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kirby, S., Greeves, L., & Reid, C. (2006). *Experience, research, social Changes: Methods beyond the mainstream*. Peterborough, ON: Broadview.

Maxwell, J.A. (2005) *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*, 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Robson, C. (2002). *Real world research*. Malden, MA: Blackwell.

Yin, R. (2009). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

EVALUATION

There are four evaluative components for this course:

Component #1. Article Reviews from Referred Journals (30%)

Due: June 11th

Details regarding the article review activity are offered on Page 3 of this handout.

Component #2. Research Proposal (40%)

Due: June 25th

Reflect upon some current public administration or public policy area of interest to you and prepare a plan (proposal) to investigate the area of interest. The plan will clearly identify the purpose, significance, specific research questions, study participants and the selection process, as well as the plan for collecting and analyzing data. The plan would discuss how you would ensure trustworthiness/validity. Finally, the proposal would identify particular ethical issues and how you would respond to the issues.

Length: Ten pages of text (Maximum) NOT including the cover page, a table of contents and reference list.

Component #3. Seminar Presentation/Discussion Leadership (25%)

Due: June 24th

Course members will be placed in small groups and assigned a particular topic related to qualitative methods and asked to offer a 30 - 45 minute presentation to course members on the topic. AFTER the presentation, presenters will lead a 20 minute discussion among small groups based on FOUR questions, worthy of discussion and debate, relevant to the presentation topic. Presenters are to provide the instructor with a two slides per page PowerPoint handout. Evaluation will be based on instructor, peer and self evaluation (15%, 5%, and 5% respectively).

Component #4. Reflective Journal (5%)

Due: June 25th

The purpose of the journal is to provide you the opportunity to reflect on your learning in class - what you have learned from course readings, class discussions and in-class presentations. The expectation would be a journal of four to six double spaced pages in length.

Written Assignment Formatting

Written assignments are to have a one inch margin on all sides. Headings must adhere to APA standards. Text is to be double spaced in 12 point Times font. All written assignments are to be in a well-constructed grammatically correct paragraph format that adheres to the latest edition of APA formatting.

Article Review Format

Purposes

The first purpose of the assignment is to promote familiarity with different forms of published qualitative research. The second purpose of this assignment is to promote a review of qualitative research rather than advocacy/opinion literature. A third purpose is to become familiar with refereed journal research. The fourth purpose is to provide you with experience in writing a succinct and accurate synthesis and evaluation of a research article.

Article Source and Topic

Students are to select TWO refereed journal articles that employ different forms of qualitative methods (interview, focus group, etc.). .

Cover Page and Reference Page

Each article review will have a cover page that has a title you determined, along with your name, the course title, and the date submitted. Each article review will have a reference page in APA format.

The Article Review will consist of two components:

Component #1: Content Synthesis (MAXIMUM THREE pages in length per article)

The synthesis/review of the article will indicate the following:

- Problem/Issue
- Importance/Significance
- Research Question(s)
- Sample and sample selection process
- Data Collection Methods
- Data Analysis Method
- Limitations/Delimitations/Assumptions
- Trustworthiness/Validity Considerations
- Ethical Issues
- Findings and Implications for Practitioners and Future Research

Component #2: Reflective Assessment (MAXIMUM TWO pages in length per article)

This portion of the review presents your assessment/critique of the study based upon other research you are familiar with and provides a rationale for your assessment/critique.

Due: June 11th

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

If you are a student who is registered with the Office of Disability Services for Students (DSS), you may apply for unique services or arrangements to complete the requirements for this course. Normally, these services will be provided through the DSS office. If you have not yet registered with that office, please do so as quickly as possible.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND CONDUCT

This course will conform to the academic requirements and standards for graduate courses, including the rules of Student Appeals in Academic Matters: (http://www.usask.ca/university_council/reports/12-06-99.shtml) and Academic Honesty: (<http://www.usask.ca/honesty/>).

Ensuring that you understand and follow the principles of academic integrity and conduct as laid out in the University of Regina's Graduate Calendar and the University of Saskatchewan's Guidelines for Academic Conduct is vital to your success in graduate school. Ensuring that your work is your own and reflects both your own ideas and those of others incorporated in your work is important: ensuring that you acknowledge the ideas, words, and phrases of others that you use is a vital part of the scholarly endeavour. If you have any questions at all about academic integrity in general or about specific issues, contact your course instructor and to discuss your questions.