

University of North Dakota
Department of Social Work
COURSE SYLLABUS SWK 431
(Qualitative Social Work Research)
Fall 2006

Time: 2-3:15 pm, T and TR, O'Kelly Rm 1

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I. Standard Syllabus Information

Course Description

SWK 431. Qualitative Social Work Research. 3 credits. Prerequisite: Admission to the BSSW program. Qualitative research methods for social work practice and evaluation of practice.

Relationship Between This and Other Courses

SWK 431 builds on content from SWK 255 regarding the social work profession and the role of research in social work. Content from SWK 255 related to social work values and ethics, social and economic justice, and diversity prepare the student to conduct ethical research.

In SWK 431, students learn about the unique role of the researcher in qualitative research, and gain knowledge and skills related to designing and implementing various methods in qualitative research. Students also learn how social and economic justice is affected by and reflected in the design and publication of qualitative research.

Communication skills, including observing others, performing oral presentations, working effectively in groups, and writing are practiced.

SWK 431 provides students with foundational knowledge and skills necessary to understand and undertake practice evaluation in practice courses, field placements, and in entry-level practice settings.

Course Objectives

At the conclusion of SWK 431, students will be able to:

Demonstrate the ability to think critically when critiquing and summarizing qualitative research and in the design of qualitative research.

Understand the application of the ethical mandates of NASW for social work research and the social worker's responsibility to institutional review boards.

Understand issues related to undertaking culturally sensitive research; understand the influence of diverse and under-represented populations on the development of various theoretical frameworks that guide qualitative research.

Understand the role of qualitative research in promoting social and economic justice and in providing a “voice” for oppressed populations.

This objective number applies to other courses and to field.

Use research to inform generalist practice.

Understand the interaction between theory and research.

This objective number applies to other courses and to field.

Demonstrate an understanding of approaches to qualitative research and the manner in which they inform entry-level social work practice and evaluation.

Demonstrate an ability to use communication skills appropriately in technical writing and oral presentations.

This objective number applies to field.

This objective number applies to field.

Classroom Policies

Important classroom policies are available in their entirety at web sites listed here.

Class Attendance and Participation

Students are expected to participate in all course learning opportunities.

Attendance is congruent with university policy. Students are expected to inform the professor when they will not be able to attend class. This professor will distribute a sign-in sheet for each class. Faculty will inform students of course expectations, including grading criteria, during the first week of class.

<http://www.und.edu/dept/registrar/catalogs/catalog/ugdept/more.htm>.

Non-Discrimination

There shall be no discrimination against persons because of race, religion, age, creed, color, sex, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, veteran's status or political belief or affiliation, and equal opportunity and access to facilities shall be available to all. See Code of Student Life web site: <http://sos.und.edu/csl>

Disability Statement

If you have emergency medical information to share with me, if you need special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, or if you need accommodations in this course because of a disability, please make an appointment with me. See office hours above. If you plan to request disability accommodations, you are expected to register with the Disability Support Services (DSS) office (190 McCannel Hall, 777-3425 v/tty). <http://www.und.edu/dept/dss/>

Grievance

Student grievances are pursued through the College of Education and Human Development Grievance Procedure: <http://www.und.edu/dept/ehd/policy.htm>

Scholastic Dishonesty

Students are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics and the Code of Student Life, including avoiding cheating, plagiarism, and collusion.

<http://www.und.edu/dept/csl/section-3.htm>

II. Course Outline

Required Text

Patton, M.Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods* (3rd Ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Assignments for the Course

For this course, you are required to complete an individual paper (Student to Student Interview), midterm and final exam, and a group research project resulting in an oral group presentation to the class and a written report on the group's methods and findings. Active participation is highly valued in the social work field and your active class participation constitutes 5% of your grade.

A brief description of assignments follows.

Assignment #1-Student to Student Qualitative Interview (emergent & reflective approach)

The students in this class are to form a dyad with another student in this class only. Each student is to take the role of the interviewer. The interviewer is to audio-record a 40 minute interview with the student interviewee on the specific topic of "why I chose to become a social worker". The interviewer is then to type the transcript of the entire 40 minute interview and answer the following (tentative) questions:

- 1-What were the themes that the interviewer found? (Provide at least five themes or categories.)
- 2-The interviewer needs to state what they think they mean by each category.
- 3-The interviewer needs to describe the process they took in order to arrive at each of the categories?
- 4-The interviewer needs to state what they believe are the implications for their findings.
- 5-The interviewer needs to state what they believe about their obtained results that could be empowering.
- 6-The interviewer needs to state what they believe about their obtained results that could be oppressive.

Assignment #2-Research Team Project & Presentation

After completion of Assignment #1 the student can begin Assignment #2. This is a hands-on, actual class project that consists of working collaboratively with fellow students in groups of four. Each group of four students are to combine their four interviews and code, analyze, and interpret data across the four interviews in order to answer the following (tentative) questions:

- 1-What were the themes that the interviewers found? (Provide at least five themes or categories.)
- 2-The interviewers needs to state what they think they mean by each category.
- 3-The interviewers needs to describe the process they took in order to arrive at each of meaningful categories?
- 4-The interviewers needs to state what they believe are the implications for their findings.
- 5-The interviewers needs to state what they believe about their obtained results that could be empowering.
- 6-The interviewers needs to state what they believe about their obtained results that could be oppressive.

During the last week of class, each group is to develop an oral group presentation in order to discuss method and findings to the class using PowerPoint software. Each group must also submit a written summary of their research process and findings.

Assignments	Points
7 class exercises (2 pt. each)	14
Midterm Exam (on 2/22)	21
Individual Research Projects (due 3/22)	20
Final Exam (on 5/8 at 3:15 pm)	30
Class Participation	05
Group Research Project & Presentations (due last week of class)	10
TOTAL	100

Course Evaluation and Grading

90-100	A
80-89	B
70-79	C
60-69	D
Below 60	F

III. Course Schedule

(Course schedule may vary slightly due to instructor concerns about student learning. Several in-class assignments will be announced by the professor during the semester in order to help the students master course content.)

Week: Class Dates (Class Time 9:00-9:50 AM)	Reading Assignment	Event/Assignment to Note
1: 1/9(First Class); 1/11	Introduction to course, review of the syllabus, course expectation; Patton-ch. 1-The Nature of Qualitative Inquiry; defining and recognizing qualitative research (lecturer Dr. Quinn)	Intermittent group assignments
2: 1/16; 1/18	Defining and recognizing qualitative research/comparing qualitative to quantitative/Mixed methods research-Patton-ch. 1 continued; & pp 249-257. Developing a strategy for qualitative research-Patton-ch. 2- Strategic Themes in Qualitative Inquiry (lecturer Dr. Quinn)	Intermittent group assignments
3: 1/23; 1/25	Developing a strategy for qualitative research-Patton-ch 2 (continued); Introduction to various qualitative methods (Interviewing, Observation, Focus Groups, Fieldwork/Ethnography, Historical research, Case Study) (lecturer Dr. Quinn)	Intermittent group assignments
4: 1/30; 2/1	Various types of qualitative sampling methods-Patton-ch 5-Designing Qualitative Studies pp. 227-246. Introduction to dealing with data-Patton-(lecturer Dr. Quinn)	Intermittent group assignments
5: 2/6; 2/8	Patton-ch-3-Variety in Qualitative Inquiry-theoretical orientations-ethnography; social construction & constructivism; phenomenology; heuristic inquiry; narrative analysis; ecological psychology; systems theory; complexity theory-nonlinear dynamics; grounded theory; critical theory (feminist inquiry & queer theory); pragmatism. (Dr. Bruno)	Intermittent group assignments

6: 2/13; 2/15	Dealing with the analysis of Data-handout from Dr. Quinn; Observational methods: variation of observation methods, overt vs. covert, what to observe and sources of data; (Dr. Quinn)	Intermittent group assignments
7: 2/20; 2/22	Observation methods, the observer, and what is observed (Dr. Quinn)	Exam #1-on Thursday, February 22nd
8: 2/27; 3/1	Patton-ch. 7-Qualitative Interviewing; inner perspectives; variations in qualitative interviewing; the informal conversational interview; the interview guide; the standardized open-ended interview; combined approaches; question options; the horns of a dichotomy; clarity of questions; why to take care of asking “why?”; rapport and neutrality-neutral questions; using illustrative examples in questions; role-playing and simulation questions; presupposition questions; prefatory statements & announcements; probes and follow-up questions; process feedback during the interview; support and recognition responses; maintaining control and enhancing the quality of responses (Dr. Bruno).	Intermittent group assignments
9: 3/6; 3/8	Patton-ch. 7-(continued) the one-shot questions; the final or closing question; beyond technique; mechanics of gathering interview data-recording the data; taking notes during interviews; after the interview; special applications and issues; focus group interviews; group interviews; cross-cultural interviewing; differing norms, values & language; beyond standard interviewing; ethical challenges in qualitative interviewing; informed consent & confidentiality; personal reflections on interviewing (Dr. Bruno)	Intermittent group assignments
SPRING BREAK NO CLASSES THIS WEEK		
10: 3/20; 3/22	Patton-ch 8-Qualitative Analysis & Interpretation; case studies; from data to case study; pattern, theme, & content analysis (inductive/deductive qualitative analyses; indigenous concepts & practices; sensitizing concepts; indigenous typologies; analyst-	Individual Interview due on 3/22; Intermittent group assignments

	constructed typologies) (Dr. Bruno)	
11: 3/27; 3/29	Patton-ch 8-(continued) interpreting findings (interpreting for meaning; comparisons, causes, consequences, and relationships); theory-based analysis approaches; special issues (reflexivity & voice; collaborative and participatory analyses; hermeneutic circle & interpretation; analyzing institutional documents. (Dr. Bruno)	Intermittent group assignments
12: 4/3; 4/5	Patton-ch 6-Fieldwork Strategies and Observation Methods; the value of direct observations; observation-based evaluation and applied research in a political world; variations in observational methods; variations in observational methods; variations in observer involvement-participant or onlooker or both? Insider and outsider perspectives-emic v. etic approaches; who conducts the inquiry? Solo & team v. participatory and collaborative approaches; overt v. covert observations; variations in duration of observations; variations in observational focus; dimensions along which fieldwork varies-an overview; what to observe-a sensitizing framework; sources of data-the setting, the human social env, historical perspectives, planned program; unplanned activities; language; nonverbal communication; documents; observing what does NOT happen; nested & layered case studies during fieldwork; observing oneself; doing fieldwork-the data-gathering process (Dr. Bruno)	Intermittent group assignments
13: 4/10; 4/12	Patton-ch 6 (continued) dimensions along which fieldwork varies-an overview; what to observe-a sensitizing framework; sources of data-the setting, the human social env, historical perspectives, planned program; unplanned activities; language; nonverbal communication; documents; observing what does NOT happen; nested & layered case studies during fieldwork; observing oneself; doing fieldwork-the data-gathering process; field notes (p. 302); procedurally speaking; observations, interviews, and documentation-bringing together multiple perspectives; the technology of fieldwork and observations;	Intermittent group assignments

	<p>stages of fieldwork (entry, routine, key informants, bringing fieldwork to a close); evaluation feedback; the observer and what is observed-unity & separation; personal experience of fieldwork; summary guidelines for fieldwork (Dr. Bruno)</p>	
14: 4/17; 4/19	<p>Patton-ch. 4-Particularly Appropriate Qualitative Applications; practical purposes and concrete questions; a focus on quality; quality assurance and program evaluation; evaluation applications outcomes evaluation, individualized outcomes, process studies, implementation evaluation, logic models and theories for action; comparing programs-focus on diversity; prevention evaluation; Evaluation models; goal-free evaluation; transaction models-responsive & illuminative evaluation; connoisseurship studies; utilization-focused evaluation; interactive & participatory applications; developmental applications (action research, action learning, reflective practice, and learning organizations); participatory research & evaluation-valuing & facilitating collaboration; supporting democratic dialogue; supporting democracy through process use-helping the citizenry weigh evidence and think evaluatively; special applications-the need for unobtrusive measures; state-of-the-art considerations—lack of proven quantitative instrumentation; legislative auditing and monitoring; summary—a vision of the utility of qualitative methods (Dr. Bruno)</p>	Intermittent group assignments
15: 4/24; 4/26	<p>Patton-ch. 9-Enhancing the Quality and Credibility of Qualitative Analysis; alternative criteria for judging quality; traditional scientific research criteria; social construction and constructivist criteria; artistic and evocative criteria; critical change criteria; evaluation standards & principles; mixed perspectives; rigor strategies; intergrity in analysis-generating and assessing rival conclusions; negative cases; triangulation; high quality lessons learned; the credibility of the researcher; considering investigator effects</p>	Intermittent group assignments

	varieties of reactivity; intellectual rigor; the paradigms of debate and credibility; beyond the numbers game; beyond objectivity and subjectivity—new concepts and new language; reflections on truth and utility as criteria of quality; from generalizations to extrapolations and transferability; credibility issue; reality is ambiguous (Dr. Bruno)	
16: 5/1; 5/3 (reading & review day 5/4)	Student presentations; assessments; review for final exam and (I hope meaningful) closure.	Group reports due on 5/3; Intermittent group assignments
FINAL'S WEEK		Final Exam- Tuesday, May 8 at 3:15pm

IV. Course Objectives, Tasks to Meet Objectives, and Method of Measurement

Course Objectives	Tasks to Meet Objectives	Method of Measurement
Demonstrate the ability to think critically when critiquing and summarizing qualitative research and in the design of qualitative research.	Assignments 1 & 2; Research Team-Interview Project;	Grades on Exams Grades on Assignments Observation/Grade for Course Participation
Understand the application of the ethical mandates of NASW for social work research and the social worker's responsibility to institutional review boards.	Lecture and in-class discussions: Patton, Chapters 5, 6, 7	Grade for Midterm
Understand issues related to undertaking culturally sensitive research; understand the influence of diverse and under-represented populations on the development of various theoretical frameworks that guide qualitative research.	Lectures and in-class discussions: Patton, Chapter 7	Grades on Exams Observation; Grade for Course Participation
Understand the role of qualitative research in promoting social and economic justice and in providing a "voice" for oppressed.	Lectures and in-class discussions: Patton, Chapter 4 Assignments 1 & 2	Grades on exams Grades for Assignments

This objective number applies to other courses and to field.		
Use research to inform generalist practice.	Lectures and in-class discussions: Patton, Chapters 4, 6, 9 Research Team Project	Grades on Exams Grades for Assignments
Understand the interaction between theory and research.	Lecture and in-class discussions: Assignment: Research Team Interview Project In-class exercises	Grades on Exams Grades for Assignments Observation; Grades for Course Participation
This objective number applies to other courses and to field.		
Critique research and use qualitative research to learn about entry level practice.	Lectures and in-class discussions: All class lectures Assignments 1 & 2; Assignment: Research Team Project In-class exercises	Grades on Exams Grades on Assignments Observation; Grades for Course Participation
Demonstrate an understanding of approaches to qualitative research and the manner in which they inform entry level social work practice and evaluation.	All written assignments and exams, in-class exercises and activities , and oral presentations from Research Teams	Grades on Exams Grades on Assignments Observation; Grades for Course Participation
This objective number applies to field.		
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V. Bibliography

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