

**COURSE TITLE:** SOCW 8323 (11168), Qualitative Research

**TIME/ SECTION/ ROOM:** Mondays, 1 pm – 4 pm (Room: 425)

**FACULTY:** McClain Sampson, M.S.S.W., Ph.D.

**OFFICE HOURS:** GCSW, 403

- **Mondays** 11 am – 1 pm;
- **By appointment on other days.** Please submit appointment requests via e-mail.

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### I. Course

#### A. Catalog Description

Qualitative Research methods, including theories, research designs, data collection methods, and analysis approaches. Emphasizes grounded theory, ethnography, participant-observation, and field research.

[http://www.uh.edu/grad\\_catalog/gsw/socw\\_courses.html](http://www.uh.edu/grad_catalog/gsw/socw_courses.html)

#### B. Purpose

Prepares students to use qualitative research methods including the use of appropriate theories, research designs, data collection methods, and analysis. Content includes use of grounded theory, ethnography, participation-observation and field research. Examples of qualitative research in social work and related fields are examined. <http://www.sw.uh.edu/academics/coursecurriculum.php>

### II. Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following competencies:

1. Provide the theoretical and methodological perspectives of qualitative research
2. Involvement in the application of qualitative methods
3. Provide the analytic skills to understand and appreciate qualitative research
4. Consider how qualitative research can be applied to social work research and public policy

### III. Course Content

The following topics in Qualitative Research Methods will be presented and discussed in class and relevant readings and assignments are required to prepare for and show the degree of knowledge and skills acquired. These include:

1. Introduction to Qualitative Research as a Field of inquiry; its features and the personal competencies to do it
2. Guiding Concepts for Qualitative Research
3. Ethics of Qualitative Research

4. Formulating a Research Question and Selecting Theoretical framework
5. Entering the Field – Data collection methods
6. Qualitative interviews
7. Focus Groups
8. Qualitative Content Analysis
9. Qualitative Software Demonstration - NVivo (if time permits and if needed)
10. Writing up
11. Journal reflections
12. Role of Qualitative Research in Social Science Research and Evaluation and its application for policy

#### **IV. Course Structure**

This fall 2016 semester course will consist of 15 class periods. The content will be delivered in seminar format, utilizing a variety of teaching and learning techniques including: lectures, in-class group discussions, group activities, case studies, handouts, and online activities via Blackboard.

#### **V. Textbooks**

##### **Required:**

Creswell, J.W. (2013) *Qualitative inquiry and research design choosing among five approaches*. (3<sup>rd</sup> ed). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Maxwell, J.A. (2004). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach* (Applied Social Research Methods) (2nd ed). SAGE Publications, Inc.

##### **Recommended if you want more specifics on methods:**

Josselson, R. (2013) *Interviewing for Qualitative Inquiry. A Relational Approach*. Guilford Press. New York, NY.

Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2008). *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.

Patton, M.Q. (2001). *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods. Sage publications*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition.

Spradley, J.P. *The Ethnographic Interview*.

Wertz, F.J., Charmaz, K., McMullen, L.M., Josselson, R., Anderson, R. and McSpadden, E. (2011). *Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis*. Guilford Press. New York, NY.

**Forthcoming is a list of Peer Reviewed articles that are required or recommended. Articles typically are used to demonstrate the use of a specific approach and type of analysis.**

**These will be shared in class and posted to Blackboard**

#### **VI. Course Requirements**

This class will be in seminar format and require us to all work collaboratively to build knowledge. Thus, students are expected to do the readings and assignments and come to class prepared to discuss them. Homework assignments will be skills based and incremental, culminating in a mini-proposal for a qualitative research study. You will be responsible for many outside of class, experiential activities such as completing a human subjects protections training, conducting field observations, taking field notes, obtaining confidential consent from your participants & conducting 2 semi-structured interviews. We will also do many experiential activities in class such as practice coding transcriptions and discussing articles and videos.

**VII. Evaluation and Grading**

**A. Grading Distribution:**

- 1) Observations/broad research question 5 points **Due Sept 12**
- 2) Concept map 10 points.
- 3) Conceptual framework and narrative. Narrative includes your theoretical underpinnings. 20 points.
- 4) Finalized research questions and interview questions 10 points.
- 5) Memos due with broad themes 10 points.
- 6) Abstract 15 points (200 words or less).
- 7) Mini-proposal 30 points (e.g., background, research questions, theoretical framework, and proposed approach). You will present your mini-proposal as though it were your proposal defense.

**Expectations and instructions for homework assignments will be explained in further detail in class discussion and written form.**

- B. Grading Scale:** Scores from each written assignment and the class participation grade will be converted according to the grading distribution indicated above. The scores will then be combined and final letter grades will be based on the following grading scale:

Letter Grade	Range	Letter Grade	Range
A	100-96	C+	79.9-76
A-	95.9-92	C	75.9-72
B+	91.9-88	C-	71.9-68
B	87.9-84	D	67.9-64
B-	83.9-80	F	Below 64%

**VIII. Policy on grades of “I” (Incomplete):**

Please refer to the UH Graduate and Professional Studies Bulletin for the university policy regarding a grade of Incomplete (I). Incompletes will be given only in accordance with this policy. Assignments are due at the beginning of the class session for which they are due, as indicated in the course outline below. Late assignments will be reduced by 5 points for each day they are late. Please plan accordingly so that you are able to complete and submit your assignments on time, and inform me ASAP should any problems arise. If an emergency prevents you from attending class on the day an assignment is due, you must notify me prior to the class so that appropriate arrangements may be planned. An **unexcused** absence will also result in a grade of zero (0) on any in-class assignments administered on the day of the absence.

**IX. Policy on academic dishonesty and plagiarism**

Although I do not expect to encounter academic dishonesty or plagiarism in this class, I

want to be very clear about my standards.

Students are expected to demonstrate and maintain a professional standard of writing in all courses, do one's own work, give credit for the ideas of others, and provide proper citation of source materials. Any student who plagiarizes any part of a paper or assignment or engages in any form of academic dishonesty will receive an "I" for the class with a recommendation that a grade of F be assigned, subsequent to a College hearing, in accordance with the University policy on academic dishonesty. Other actions may also be recommended and/or taken by the College to suspend or expel a student who engages in academic dishonesty.

All presentations, papers and written assignments must be fully and properly referenced using APA style format (or as approved by the instructor), with credit given to the authors whose ideas you have used. If you are using direct quotes from a specific author (or authors), you must set the quote in quotation marks or use an indented quotation form. For all direct quotes, you must include the page number(s) in your text or references. Any time that you use more than four or five consecutive words taken from another author, you must clearly indicate that this is a direct quotation. Please consult the current APA manual for further information.

Academic dishonesty includes using any other person's work and representing it as your own. This includes (but is not limited to) using graded papers from students who have previously taken this course as the basis for your work. It also includes, but is not limited to submitting the same paper to more than one class. It also includes securing another person to complete any required activities, assignments, quizzes, papers, or exams in an online course, or in any on-line environment. If you have any specific questions about plagiarism or academic dishonesty, please raise these questions in class or make an appointment to see the instructor. This statement is consistent with the University Policy on Academic Dishonesty that can be found in your UH Student Handbook.

**X. CONSULTATION**

This course will be delivered by Dr. Sampson. My office is located on the fourth floor of the GCSW. My office telephone number is (713) 743-6719. Scheduled office hours are indicated on page 1 and posted on my office door. If you need to meet with me at a time other than the allotted office hours, please schedule an appointment. My email is [mmsampson@UH.edu](mailto:mmsampson@UH.edu)

**XI. POLICY ON ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.**

The University of Houston System complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, pertaining to the provision of reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids for students with a disability. In accordance with Section 504 and ADA guidelines, each University within the System strives to provide reasonable academic adjustments/auxiliary aids to students who request and require them. If you believe that you have a disability requiring an academic adjustments/auxiliary aid, please contact the UH Center for Disabilities at 713-743-5400.

**XII. EXPECTATIONS FOR MAINTAINING A SAFE, RESPECTFUL LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR**

**Cellular Phones and Pagers:** Students are asked to turn off (or activate the vibrator mode on) cellular phones and pagers during class time. Disruptions of this nature compromise the academic process, and therefore will not be tolerated. If you have

extenuating circumstances that prevent you from honoring this classroom rule, please schedule a meeting with me as soon as possible to advise me of your situation.

**Classroom Behavior:** The **GOLDEN RULE** for expected behavior in the classroom is to ***be respectful of yourself and your colleagues***. By virtue of the nature of our profession, we will often engage in content and discussions in this course that elicit varied opinions, perspectives, and emotions. This will provide a well-rounded educational experience for all of us, if we practice and demonstrate the core values of social work. Social Work classes are a good training ground for professional conduct.

**Attendance:** Please be on time to class. If you are more than 20 minutes late it will be counted as an unexcused absence. More than two unexcused absences will be subject to a drop in one letter grade. Assignments are due at beginning of class period. Late assignments will be penalized with points lost.

### XIII. Course Schedule and Reading Assignments

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#### A FRAMEWORK FOR THINKING ABOUT QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

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**Class 1**      **Monday, August 22: Course Introduction**

- Course overview & logistics: Introductions, syllabus, assignments, Blackboard site
- Overview of Qualitative research theoretical underpinnings and basic approaches. We will discuss underlying philosophies of Qual, ethics, why it is useful and when, the importance of your questions
- Course Syllabus & Review Blackboard Site

**Homework:** complete Human Subjects training online either through UH ([http://www.research.uh.edu/Home/Division-of-Research/Compliance-and-Committees/Conflict-of-Interest/COI-Training-Requirement/COI\\_CITI\\_Training](http://www.research.uh.edu/Home/Division-of-Research/Compliance-and-Committees/Conflict-of-Interest/COI-Training-Requirement/COI_CITI_Training)) or NIH (<http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>). Print your certification of completion and bring to class as proof of completion.

**Fieldwork:** field observations and notes, formulate a broad research question. A “why” or “how” question.

**Required Readings for weeks 1 & 2:**

**Creswell 1& 2; Maxwell chapter 1**

**Recommended: Bowen. Lessons Learned (journal article on Bb)**

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#### GATHERING DATA

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**Class 2**      **Monday, August 29: Conceptualizing your research**

Lecture: Continue to discuss epistemology. Discuss the importance of theoretical orientation and concept mapping.

In class: discuss plans for observations and share your budding questions. Be prepared to discuss how your research question was informed.

Required Readings for week 2& 3:

Maxwell. C. 3: Conceptual Framework

Creswell: C. 3 Designing a Qualitative Study

Shaw: Ethics in Qualitative Research

**Class 3**      **Monday Sept. 5, Labor Day Holiday. NO CLASS**

**Class 4**      **Monday Sept. 12: Overarching approach- in depth or descriptive, capturing content, looking for themes**

Discuss the use of focus groups and appropriate analysis  
Discuss interviewing in Qual research

**Required Readings:**

Linhorst: A Review of the Use of Focus Groups in SW; Braun & Clark: Thematic Analysis (on Bb); Sandelowski: Whatever happened to Qualitative descriptive (on Bb).

**Recommended if you want more on Content Analysis**

Graneheim & Lundman: Qualitative content analysis in nursing research.....  
Hsieh & Shannon: Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis.

**Assignment Due:** Observation Notes & Broad research question (*this question will be refined as we move through the course*). This assignment is a brief (1 and ½ page maximum) written account of what you observed and a written broad research question. Be sure to write why you chose to observe what you did and write why and how you came about choosing your research question. **At this time you must also tell me what your research topic and proposed methods are so we can submit for class IRB approval.**

**Class 5      Monday, September 19: Approaches Often Used in Social Sciences**  
Narrative, Ethnographic, Phenomenology, Grounded Theory, CBPR, Content Analysis, Case study  
NOTE: WE WILL NOT HAVE TIME TO COVER ALL APPROACHES. I SUGGEST COVERING: descriptive (including content analysis), case study, grounded theory, ethnography, community based participatory research (CBPR)  
**Required reading:**  
Creswell: chapter 4 Five Qualitative Approaches to Inquiry; chapter 5 Five Different Qualitative Studies  
**IN CLASS DISCUSSION/TIPS FOR DOING CONCEPT MAPPING**

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**ORGANIZING AND INTERPRETING MEANING OF DATA**

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**Class 6      Monday, September 26: Approaches continued**  
In class activities: discuss the article/book chapter and approach. Focus on **ethnographic and narrative approach.**  
Video: Preschool across 3 cultures.  
Required reading: Narrative: Josselson on narrative (on Bb)  
Ethnographic interviewing techniques: Gallagher journal article (on Bb)  
Recommended for further examples:  
    Creswell: an ethnography, p.309  
    Creswell Narrative study, p. 251

**Class 7      Monday, October 3: Qualitative Approaches continued:** Focus on approaches of **phenomenology, grounded theory, CBPR**  
  
Required Readings: Starks: Choose your Method.  
In Readings folder: Beck 1993 Grounded Theory on PPD and Beck 2002 Phenomenology on PPD to help see differences in the 2 approaches  
Phenomenological: Creswell. p. A Phenomenological Study p. 265  
CBPR: Davison et al, "Family Centered Action Model" Obesity  
**FINAL CONCEPT MAP DUE with a narrative is due**

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**COLLECTING AND ANALYZING DATA**

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**Class 8      Monday, October 10: Finish discussion on CBPR if we are unfinished. The Art & Skill of Interviewing as a Method**

Lecture: brief ppt. of purpose of interviews and types of. Describe what difference between research questions and interview questions is.

Required Readings:

Kvale & Brinkmann: chapter 7: Conducting an Interview (box 7.1 is especially helpful)

Kvale & Brinkmann chapter 8: Interview Variations

**Homework**: come up with no more than 6 interview questions (you can craft these during the in class practice with your colleagues)

**Assignment Due: Written narrative on 3 potential conceptual/theoretical frameworks that might fit your research interest**

***YOU SHOULD BE FINALIZING A CONSENT FORM. MAKE SURE THE CONSENT FORM IS APPROVED BY DR. SAMPSON BEFORE USING. A TEMPLATE IS ON BB.***

**In class**: Practice in dyads with some questions you are thinking of asking and see what type of information you get.

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***You should be scheduling and conducting interviews around this time. Aim to have the interviews completed by Week 10 at latest so you have time to transcribe.***

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**Class 9 Monday October 17: The Importance of Good Research Questions**

Continue discussion on approaches from previous class

Discussion of finalizing your ideas/rough sketch research question (s) and corresponding approach

Required Readings: Maxwell: chapter 4 Research Questions

**Class 10 Monday, October 24: Data collection considerations**

Lecture: Sampling depends on research questions and approach. Revisit the importance of ethics in data collection.

**1-2 pm Guest speaker, Rebecca Mauldin, teaching about NVivo**

Required Reading:

Creswell chapter 7: Data Collection

**Assignment Due: Written Interview Questions and Finalized Research Questions**

**Class 11 October 31: What to do with the data?**

Discuss Memos and process

**Guest speaker: mixed methods (Barros and Cardoso)**

Required Readings: Creswell chapter 8: Data analysis. You may also want to refer to previous readings on descriptive analysis to know how to code and look for themes.

**BE PREPARED TO TALK ABOUT WHAT YOU HAVE HEARD IN YOUR INTERVIEWS. WE CAN HELP THINK THROUGH FINDINGS.**

Charmaz, chapter 4 How to do memo writing

**Optional Assignment Due: Abstract rough draft.** (Significance of problem, research question, methods, analysis, what findings might inform).

**Class 12 Monday, November 7: Standards of evaluation and validity in Qualitative**

Lecture on rigor and validity (week "12" ppt) 1 hour

***IF YOU HAVE TRANSCRIPTS YOU CAN BRING THEM IN FOR HELP WITH CODING.*** Practice coding, memos with my transcripts. 1 hour. ***I SUGGEST YOU TURN IN DRAFTS OF ABSTRACTS NOW.***

**Required Reading**

Maxwell chapter 6: Validity; chapter 7: Research proposals

**Suggested:**

Lietz & Zayas, "Evaluating Qualitative Research for Social Work Practitioners"  
Creswell chapter 10: Standards of evaluation and validity

**Assignment Due:** Memo and FINAL abstract due

**Class 13**      **Monday, November 14: Program Eval. Using Dr. Bell's article and powerpoint. 1 hour**

**Guest lecture, TBD**

Required readings:

Bell: Case Management

**Class 14**      **Monday, November 21: presentations of mini proposals**

**Class 15**      **Monday, November 28: presentations**

**Final proposal in writing due BY Tuesday December 8, 2015 5pm.**

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**\*\*\*The instructor reserves the right (and flexibility) to alter the Course Outline or schedule in order to better accommodate learning goals and time constraints. Student flexibility and tolerance for any necessary agenda shifts may be required.\*\*\***

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**XIV.      Bibliography (will be provided soon) this is working draft.**