

# **Graduate Seminar: Advanced Qualitative Methods** **(990501)**

**Fall Semester 2021**

**Instructor:**

Dr. Mandi Larsen

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Office Hours (Virtual or In-Person): Mondays, 2:00-4:00pm

**Course Times and Location:**

October 4<sup>th</sup> – December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Mondays, 9:45am-12:30pm  
Krupp E College-Seminar Room

**Official Course Description:**

This course provides an overview of qualitative research methodology and methods, and it will provide students with hand-on knowledge of techniques they may want to apply in their own research. The social sciences have come into existence as a distinct field of scientific inquiry at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Since then, the qualitative/quantitative distinction has become a productive methodological divide. In this course, students will be introduced to the assumptions underlying qualitative research, issues of design and sampling, methods for data collection and analysis, and criteria for evaluation. Special attention will be paid to data collection and data analysis.

**Intended Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this seminar, students should gain:

- familiarity with qualitative empirical research, its most important assumptions and basic concepts;
- knowledge of five major approaches in qualitative research (narrative, phenomenological, grounded theory, case studies, and ethnographic) as well as several data collection and data analysis techniques;

- an ability to select a suitable research design and methodology depending on the research question and to conduct an empirical qualitative research project; and
- an ability to evaluate qualitative research and reflect upon quality criteria.

### Course Organization:

We will meet on a weekly basis, and our sessions will be a mix of input from the instructor, active application of the learning material, and occasional field work sessions where you collect your own data in the field. Please see the session plan below for more details:

| Sessions | Date and Time                                  | Type    | Location                     | Topic and Literature   |
|----------|--|---------|------------------------------|--|
| 1/2      | Monday, Oct 4 <sup>th</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm  | Seminar | Krupp E College-Seminar Room | <p>Introduction to qualitative research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Characteristics</li> <li>• When to use it</li> <li>• Features of a good study</li> </ul> <p>Philosophical assumptions and interpretive frameworks</p> <p><i>Suggested Reading:</i><br/>Creswell &amp; Poth, Ch. 2 &amp; Ch. 3 (pp. 41-48 only)</p> |
| 3/4      | Monday, Oct 11 <sup>th</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm | Seminar | Krupp E College-Seminar Room | <p>Designing a qualitative study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The process</li> <li>• Ethical issues</li> <li>• The structure of a research plan/proposal</li> </ul> <p><i>Suggested Reading:</i><br/>Creswell &amp; Poth Ch. 3 (pp. 49-62 only)</p>   |
| 5/6      | Monday, Oct 18 <sup>th</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm | Seminar | Krupp E College-Seminar Room | <p>Five qualitative approaches to inquiry:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Narrative research</li> <li>• Phenomenological research</li> <li>• Grounded theory research</li> <li>• Ethnographic research</li> <li>• Case study research</li> </ul> <p><i>Suggested Reading:</i><br/>Creswell &amp; Poth Ch. 4</p>            |

|   |  |         |                              |  |
|---|--|---------|------------------------------|--|
| 7/8   | Monday, Oct 25 <sup>th</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm | Seminar | Krupp E College-Seminar Room | <p>Introducing and focusing the study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The research problem</li> <li>• The purpose statement</li> <li>• The research questions</li> </ul> <p><i>Suggested Reading:</i><br/>Creswell &amp; Poth Ch. 6</p>            |
| 9/10  | Monday, Nov 1 <sup>st</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm  | Seminar | Krupp E College-Seminar Room | <p>Data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The site or individual</li> <li>• Access and rapport</li> <li>• Purposeful sampling strategy</li> <li>• Forms of data</li> </ul> <p><i>Suggested Reading:</i><br/>Creswell &amp; Poth Ch. 7</p> |
| <b><u>For 6 CP and 9 CP: Research Design Plan - Due Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon)</u></b> |  |         |                              |  |
| 11/12   | Monday, Nov 8 <sup>th</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm  | Seminar | Krupp E College-Seminar Room | <p>Data collection -- Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording procedures</li> <li>• Field issues</li> <li>• Data storage and security</li> </ul> <p><i>Suggested Reading:</i><br/>Creswell &amp; Poth Ch. 7</p>                     |
| 13/14   | Monday, Nov 15 <sup>th</sup>                   | Field   | Field work                   | No class: Conduct observations   |
| 15/16   | Monday, Nov 22 <sup>nd</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm | Seminar | Krupp E College-Seminar Room | <p>Data collection -- Interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recording procedures</li> <li>• Field issues</li> <li>• Data storage and security</li> </ul> <p><i>Suggested Reading:</i><br/>Creswell &amp; Poth Ch. 7</p>                       |
| 17/18   | Monday, Nov 29 <sup>th</sup>                   | Field   | Field work                   | No class: Conduct interviews   |
| 19/20   | Monday, Dec 6 <sup>th</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm  | Seminar | Krupp E College-Seminar Room | <p>Data analysis and representation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three analysis strategies</li> <li>• The data analysis spiral</li> <li>• Analysis within approaches to inquiry</li> </ul>  |

|  |  |         |                                  |   |
|--|--|---------|----------------------------------|---|
|  |  |         |                                  | <i>Suggested Reading:</i><br>Creswell & Poth Ch. 8  |
| <b><u>For 9 CP only:</u> Observation Research Report - Due Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon)</b>                    |  |         |                                  |   |
| 21/22  | Monday, Dec 13 <sup>th</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm | Seminar | Krupp E College-<br>Seminar Room | Writing a qualitative study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reflexivity and representations</li> <li>• Overall and embedded writing strategies</li> </ul> <i>Suggested Reading:</i><br>Creswell & Poth Ch. 9  |
| 23/24  | Monday, Dec 20 <sup>th</sup><br>9:45am-12:30pm | Seminar | Krupp E College-<br>Seminar Room | Standards of validation and evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perspectives on validation</li> <li>• Validation strategies</li> <li>• Reliability perspectives</li> <li>• Evaluation criteria within approaches to inquiry</li> </ul> <i>Suggested Reading:</i><br>Creswell & Poth Ch. 10 |
| <b><u>For 9 CP only:</u> Interview Research Report - Due Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon)</b>                       |  |         |                                  |   |
| <b><u>For 6 CP only:</u> Observation <u>or</u> Interview Research Report - Due Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon)</b> |  |         |                                  |   |

### **Assessment for the 9 CP Version:**

The assessment in this version of the course consists of three components: (1) Research Design Plan (25% of grade); (2) an Observation Research Report (25% of grade); and (3) an Interview Research Report (50% of grade).

### **Assessment for the 6 CP Version:**

The assessment in this version of the course consists of two components: (1) Research Design Plan (50% of grade); and (2) either the Observation Research Report or the Interview Research Report (50% of grade).

## Graded Components:

### *Research Design Plan*

- **Aim:** To demonstrate what you have learned about qualitative research design by applying it to a research topic of your own choosing. If you plan on conducting a qualitative study for your thesis, you may wish to use this as preparation for that work.
- **Format:** You will work individually to develop a research design plan (about 1,500 words). The exact content will vary according to the paradigm or interpretive perspective you choose to apply, but will generally be expected to include a problem statement, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the selected approach, and data collection plans.
- **Submit:** A written document via Turnitin in Word or PDF form.
- **Due: Friday, November 5<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon)**
  - Extensions will only be given in cases of prior notification of illness or personal emergency according to MAIR policies.
  - If you need an extension that does not fit the above criteria, you may choose to submit up to 12 hours after this deadline, but please be aware that there will be 10% deducted from the grade.

### *Observation Research Report*

- **Aim:** To demonstrate your ability to collect data via observations and to report on the data collected.
- **Format:** You will work individually to write up your report about the observations you completed (about 1,500 words). This should include a brief introduction, a description of activities, interpretation and analysis, as well as a conclusion.
- **Submit:** A written document via Turnitin in Word or PDF form.
- **Due: For 9 CP – Friday, December 10<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon) / For 6 CP – Friday, January 14<sup>th</sup> at 12:00pm (noon)**
  - Extensions will only be given in cases of prior notification of illness or personal emergency according to MAIR policies.
  - If you need an extension that does not fit the above criteria, you may choose to submit up to 12 hours after this deadline, but please be aware that there will be 10% deducted from the grade.

### *Interview Research Report*

- **Aim:** To demonstrate your ability to conduct an interview and briefly analyze the results.
- **Format:** You will work individually to write up your report about your interviews (about 2,500 words for the 9 CP Version of the course / about 1,500 words for the 6 CP Version of the course). This should include an introduction, description of methods, analysis and interpretation, and conclusion.

- Submit: A written document via Turnitin in Word or PDF form.
- Due: Friday, January 14th at 12:00pm (noon)
  - Extensions will only be given in cases of prior notification of illness or personal emergency according to MAIR policies.
  - If you need an extension that does not fit the above criteria, you may choose to submit up to 12 hours after this deadline, but please be aware that there will be 10% deducted from the grade.

### **How to Do Well in the Course:**

This course covers a lot of information in a relatively short time, with the goal of allowing you to gain practical skills related to advanced qualitative methods. A variety of materials, resources, and learning formats will be offered to help you make the most of the course. It is expected that you take an active role in your learning by critically thinking about the tasks to be done, and participating in class discussions. In order to practice these skills related to the course, you will often have the opportunity to work together in groups for various exercises.

### **Course Materials:**

The course is organized primarily using MS Teams. You will find all materials, including the syllabus, slides, suggested reading, and exercises organized according to session channels. All relevant announcements and information will be shared via Teams.

This course does not have required readings, but there are suggested readings for lecture sessions which are recommended for your benefit and understanding. Please refer to the session plan for exact information. The suggested readings will be posted to their respective sessions on Teams. The readings come from the following book, which is also on reserve at the Jacobs University library:

Creswell, J.W. & Poth, C.N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

### **Course Equipment and Software:**

Please make sure you have a laptop with MS Teams installed. The Research Design Plan and the Research Reports must be submitted via Turnitin, a software that checks for possible plagiarism. You are responsible for registering for the Turnitin classroom and ensuring that Turnitin is set-up and functioning properly. You can set up an account at [turnitin.com](https://turnitin.com) and enroll in our classroom using the following information: Class ID: 31283921 / Enrollment Key: MAIRQUAL

### **Course Communication:**

You are always welcome to send me an email or a chat message via Teams if you have any questions, and I will do my best to answer in a timely manner (Monday through Friday, during normal working hours). But please consider the following questions before doing so:

- Have you included your name and which course you have a question about?
- Have you been specific about the question you are asking?
- Have you double-checked to make sure that the answer to your question is not on the syllabus or Teams?