

HS 3811G INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE HEALTH RESEARCH

WINTER 2020

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Office Hours: Tuesday 5.30-6.30

Date/Time: Tuesday 2.30-5.30

TA: TBA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

In this course, you will learn the core principles and practices of qualitative research in health, sport and exercise through actively engaging in the development of a small research project of interest to you and reflecting on the process. While engaging with important academic sources, you will be experimenting with different methods of data collection and analysis, in an atmosphere of true collaboration with your fellow peers and instructors. This 'hands-on' approach to qualitative research methodology will enable you to develop more confidently your own research projects, both in an academic and non-academic contexts. This course is especially important for students who would like to pursue graduate training. A committed engagement with the proposed academic readings and weekly tasks as well as active participation in all sessions is expected.

Prerequisites: Health Sciences 2801A/B or equivalent

Antirequisites: Psychology 3860F/G, Sociology 3307F/G

Note regarding prerequisite checking: Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

COMPULSORY READINGS:

Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2018). *Qualitative methods for health research*. London: Sage.

Supplemental materials:

Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2013). *Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product*. London and New York: Routledge.

Any additional readings will be posted on OWL.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

To develop an introductory understanding of research qualitative methodologies and to be able to apply that understanding in the development of a small-scale research project.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the core characteristics and principles of qualitative research;
2. Explain key concepts related to ontology, epistemology and research traditions in qualitative research;
3. Describe, plan and apply diverse methods of collecting qualitative data;
4. Describe and apply methods of qualitative data analysis;
5. Identify ethical concerns in all phases of qualitative research;
6. Appraise your learning journey, identifying strengths and weaknesses to delineate actions for improvement.

COURSE MATERIALS:

Additional course materials will be posted each week on the OWL course site.

Tentative course schedule:

Week #	Date	Topic
Part I. Qualitative Ways of Knowing and Doing		
1	Jan 7	<i>What I like to know? Defining my research question.</i> Qualitative Ways of Knowing Research traditions and theory What about Ethics?
Part 2. Mapping the field: the importance of a good literature review		
2	Jan 14	<i>Finding out past answers to my question. What do others have to say?</i> Mapping the field: the importance of a good literature review. Literature review workshop. (To be confirmed)
Part II. Methods: Techniques of Data Collection and Analysis		
3	Jan 21	<i>Going to primary sources. What can others say to help me answer my question?</i> Designing, preparing, Conducting and Recording Interviews.
4	Jan 28	<i>Is the information different, if collected from groups? Do I need to prepare this differently from an individual interview?</i> Designing, preparing, Conducting and Recording focus-groups.
5	Feb 4	<i>How do I go from what others say to answer my question?</i> Techniques of data analysis. Start analyzing collected research data.
6	Feb 11	<i>What does the world around tells me that helps me answer my question?</i> Ethnographic research Designing, preparing conducting and recording observations.
Feb 17 Reading week		
7	Feb 25	<i>What is already out there?</i> Data Collection and Analysis III – Sampling and Analyzing secondary data: media and Internet research
8	March 3	<i>Is not all about words. Can I collect data through images?</i> Visual research methods.
9	March 10	<i>Answering my question by making sense of the research data.</i> Techniques of Qualitative Data Analysis.
Part 4. Telling the story of my research		
10	March 17	<i>Telling the story of my research.</i> Representing, reporting, 'writing up' research.

11	March 24	<i>Working with others to improve my project...</i> Preparing final assignments. Peer and instructors' support and feedback.
12	March 31	<i>Communicating my journey to others...</i> Student research symposium. Course plenary.

This is a tentative schedule for our weekly topics and lectures. Note that this schedule may change. An up-to-date lecture schedule will be provided timely on OWL; it is the student's responsibility to be aware of changes made.

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EVALUATION:

	Submission date (OWL)	%
1. Participation	See below	30%
2. Research reflective report	3 rd February	25%
3. Final research reflective report	4 th April	45%

All the assignments are to be submitted as a Word file through the assignment tool in OWL, by the end of the submission date (11.00 pm).

1. Participation. All the sessions in the course require not only your attendance, but also your active participation. Excellent participation entails timely engagement with the requested readings and tasks. See below for a breakdown of the percentage assigned for participation.

Week	Attendance/ participation	Task submission %	Task submission date
1.			
2.	1%	1%	Jan. 6
3.	1%	1%	Jan.13
4.	1%	1%	Jan. 20
5.	1%	1%	Jan. 27
6.	1%	1%	Feb. 3
7.	1%	1%	Feb. 10
8.	1%	1%	Feb. 24
9.	1%	1%	March 2
10.	1%	1%	March 9
11.	1%	1%	March 16
12.	5%	5%	March 23
total	15%	15%	March 30

The 1% mark for attendance/ participation is granted for positive contribution in each session. *In case of (justified) non-attendance, a student can submit an individual task to be granted 1%. This opportunity*

can be used only twice. In case of non-justified attendance, this opportunity is not available. Be aware that in each lab, you will be receiving guidance and working towards your assignments.

In session 12, each student will present, in small groups, their own research/reflection to fellow students, preceded by the submission of a presentation plan. Further details will be timely provided.

2. *Reflective Research report.* During the course, you will develop a small research project by undertaking specific tasks in and out of class every week. These will be organized and presented in the form of a research report. Alongside this work, you will also reflect upon your only learning journey, documenting difficulties and doubts, milestones, new understandings and insights. The requirement length for this assignment is between **1400 and 1600 words**. Submit your research reflective report as one Word file through the assignment tool in OWL **no later than 11.00 pm on 2020.02.03**. A guide for this assignment will be timely available on OWL.
3. *Final reflective research report.* Expanding your first submission, and taking into account the feedback provided by the instructors and peers, you will be required to present the full version of your research reflective report. The requirement length for this assignment is **between 2600 and 2800 words**. Submit your research reflective report as one Word file through the assignment tool in OWL **no later than 11.00 pm on 2020.04.04**.

Formatting: The word count for all assignments exclude the references and title page, if included. Documents should be double-spaced and formatted using a font size no smaller than 12 points. Referencing must follow the APA guidelines.

Note: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>).

Late policy: All assignments are due on the date and at the time indicated. Late assignments will be penalized at a rate of **1% for each hour** after the deadline. No assignments will be accepted more than four days late.

Attendance: In the School of Health Studies, each course instructor sets specific expectations for attendance and participation that are specific to the course, teaching objectives, and learning outcomes.

Regular attendance is expected and essential for all courses, but particularly those that include participation grades in their evaluation schemes. Participation means not only attendance, but active engagement in the class, including (for example) contribution to small and large group discussions, a demonstrated effort to prepare for class by completing assigned readings before class, and following the instructor's guidelines for use of electronic devices during class time. Students who miss classes, or parts of classes, are responsible for the material they have missed. Instructors are not obliged to review the contents of missed lectures.

GENERAL COURSE NOTES:

Student Code of Conduct: You are expected to comply with the Code of Student Conduct at all times within the classroom, and when dealing with members of the instructional team. The purpose of this Code is to define the

general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed, and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit <http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>.

Course Website

The OWL website will function as the privileged space for communication between all participants in this course. Important resources, dates and announcements will be posted regularly, so please check this space weekly.

Communication with Faculty Instructor

Please use the OWL mail system to communicate with your faculty instructor on issues related to this course or to book a meeting outside of the office hours. These will be answered these twice/ week, so do not expect an immediate reply.

Grade Adjustments

Final grades in this course will be taken to the closest integer (i.e., I will “round off” decimals). I will not, under any circumstances, “bump up” your grade (i.e., to facilitate professional school applications etc.). This includes grades that end in a “9”. The mark attained is the mark you achieved and the mark assigned; there is no rounding to the next grade level, or ‘giving away’ of marks. Please do not ask me to do this for you; the response will be “please review the course outline where this is presented”.

Electronic devices

During Lectures and Tutorials: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.

Academic consideration

The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet their academic responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances, including short-term illness or injury. Reasonable academic consideration is a cooperative process between the University, the student, and academic staff. All participants in the process must act in good faith, and fulfil their respective obligations, if it is to succeed.

Students who experience an extenuating circumstance (illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstance) sufficiently significant as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements, may submit a request for academic consideration through the following routes:

- (i) *Submitting a Self-Reported Absence form, provided that the conditions for submission are met;*
- (ii) *For medical absences, submitting a Student Medical Certificate (SMC) signed by a licensed medical or mental health practitioner, in order to be eligible for Academic Consideration; or*
- (iii) *For non-medical absences, submitting appropriate documentation (e.g., obituary, police report, accident report, court order, etc.) to Academic Counselling in their Faculty of registration, in order to be eligible for academic consideration.*

Students seeking academic consideration:

- Are advised to consider carefully the implications of postponing tests or midterm exams or delaying handing in work;
- Are encouraged to make appropriate decisions, based on their specific circumstances, recognizing that minor ailments (e.g., upset stomach) or upsets (e.g., argument with a friend) are not normally an appropriate basis for a self-reported absence;
- Must communicate with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by either the self-reported absence or SMC, or immediately upon their return following a documented absence;
- Are advised that all necessary documentation, forms, etc. are to be submitted to academic counselling within two business days after the date specified for resuming responsibilities.

Students who experience an unexpected illness or injury or an extenuating circumstance (48 hours or less) that is sufficiently severe as to temporarily render them unable to meet academic requirements (e.g., attending lectures or labs, writing tests or midterm exams, completing and submitting assignments, participating in presentations) should self-declare using the online Self-Reported Absence portal. This option should be used in situations where the student expects to resume academic responsibilities within 48 hours or less. The following conditions are in place for self-reporting of medical or extenuating circumstances:

- a. Students will be allowed a maximum of two self-reported absences between September and April, and one self-reported absence between May and August;
- b. The duration of the excused absence will be for a maximum of 48 hours from the time the Self-Reported Absence form is completed through the online portal, or from 8:30am the following morning if the form is submitted after 4:30pm;
- c. The duration of the excused absence will terminate prior to the end of the 48-hour period, should the student undertake significant academic responsibilities (e.g., write a test, submit a paper) during that time;
- d. The duration of an excused absence will terminate at 8:30am on the day following the last day of classes each semester, regardless of how many days of absence have elapsed;
- e. Self-reported absences will not be allowed for scheduled final examinations; for midterm examinations scheduled during the December examination period; or for final lab examinations (i.e., “bellringers”);
- f. Self-reporting may not be used for assessments (e.g., midterm exams, tests, reports, presentations, or essays) worth more than 30% of any given course;

Students must be in touch with their instructors no later than 24 hours after the end of the period covered by the Self-Reported Absence form, to clarify how they will be expected to fulfill the academic expectations they may have missed.

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Support Services

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:

1. Student Development Centre -- <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>
2. Student Health -- <http://www.shs.uwo.ca/student/studenthealthservices.html>

3. Registrar's Office -- <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca/>
4. Ombuds Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

Health and Wellness:

As part of a successful undergraduate experience at Western, we encourage you to make your health and wellness a priority. Western provides several on-campus health-related services to help you achieve optimum health and engage in healthy living while pursuing your degree. For example, to support physical activity, all students receive membership in Western's Campus Recreation Centre as part of their registration fees. Numerous cultural events are offered throughout the year. Please check out the Faculty of Music web page (<http://www.music.uwo.ca/>), or the McIntosh Gallery (<http://www.mcintoshgallery.ca/>). Further information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>.

If you are in emotional or mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western <http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help. To help you learn more about mental health, Western has developed an interactive mental health learning module, found here: https://uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/education/module.html.

Grading Policy

The university-wide descriptor of the meaning of letter grades, as approved by Senate:

A+	90-100	One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level
A	80-89	Superior work that is clearly above average
B	70-79	Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory
C	60-69	Competent work, meeting requirements
D	50-59	Fair work, minimally acceptable.
F	below 50	Fail

It is expected that the grades for this course will fall between 74 and 78. In the event that the course average falls outside this range, a constant may be added (or subtracted) from each student's grade, by the instructor, to bring the class average in line with school policy.