

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
SCHOOL OF HEALTH STUDIES
HS 3811G INTRODUCTION TO QUALITATIVE HEALTH RESEARCH
WINTER 2021

Instructor: Dr. Carla Silva
Office: Arthur and Sonia Labatt Health Sciences Building (HSB), Room 345
Email: csilva42@uwo.ca
Date/Time: **Tuesday 2.30- 4.30 (synchronous session online)**
TA: Rhys Desmond
Email: rdesmond@uwo.ca
Office Hours: 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 different phases of the research process, whilst reflecting on your learning. While engaging with important academic sources, you will be experimenting with different methods of data collection and analysis, in an atmosphere of collaboration with your fellow peers and instructors. This 'hands-on' approach to qualitative research methods will enable you to develop more confidently your own research projects, both in academic and non-academic contexts. This course is especially important for students who aim to pursue graduate training. A committed engagement with the proposed academic readings and weekly tasks is expected and essential for your success.

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.

This title is not available in the library. Western bookstore has informed me that this title will be available for you in physical copies and digital copies (<https://bookstore.uwo.ca/product/cebebookid9690219>). This will be the only purchase necessary for the course.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

In this course, you will develop an introductory understanding of research qualitative methodologies adequate to health contexts and you will apply that understanding in the development of practical research tasks. These objectives align with university and program level aims regarding the attainment of

a Western education, which includes the acquisition of new **knowledge** and **literacy skills** regarding the **professional conduct** of scholarly research, **communication** between peers and other class stakeholders and understanding health, physical activity and exercise through an interdisciplinary lens. Developing **critical** and **creative thinking**, as well as writing skills are additional objectives that shape the design of the evaluation approaches adopted within this class.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

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

1. Identify, describe and apply 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 and apply ethical requirements;
6. Evaluate your learning journey, identifying strengths and weaknesses and defining actions for improvement.

TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

The following table offers a tentative thematic/ activity map for our weekly teaching and learning units. Note that this plan will be updated weekly with more detailed information and may change. Be aware that effective engagement with the course activities requires between 6 - 10 hours weekly (including your own study time). This number really depends on being able to set up a study environment free of distractions and interruptions. **Make sure you schedule these hours in your personal calendars.** All synchronous sessions, office hours and other meetings will be held in MS Teams.

Week #	Date	Topics
Part I. Qualitative Ways of Knowing and Doing		
1, 2	Jan 11-18	<i>Why does qualitative research matter?</i> Introduction to the course. Presentations and Groups' Formation. Qualitative Ways of Knowing. Research traditions and theory. <i>What do we want to know?</i> Defining research questions. Research Rationale and Design <i>What about Ethics?</i> Developing the participant information sheet and the informed consent form. <i>Quiz 1 and Quiz 2</i>
Part 2. Mapping the field: reading, appraising, and integrating qualitative research		
3	Jan 25	<i>What do we already know?</i> Undertaking a literature search.

		Reading critically. Organizing information from academic literature. Developing a literature review. <i>Quiz 3</i>
Part 3. Methods: Techniques of Data Collection and Analysis		
4	Feb 1	<i>Going to primary sources. What can participants say to help me answer my question?</i> Designing, preparing, conducting, and recording individual interviews. <i>Quiz 4</i>
5	Feb 8	<i>Is the information different, if collected from groups? Do I need to prepare this differently from an individual interview?</i> Designing, conducting, and recording group interviews. <i>Quiz 5</i>
Feb 12 -21 Reading Week		
6	Feb 22	Conducting individual and group interviews. Transcribing. Submit Reflective Research Report (individual).
7	Mar 1	<i>What is already out there?</i> Using secondary sources. <i>Quiz 6</i>
8	Mar 8	<i>I have my data. What now? Answering research questions.</i> Techniques of Qualitative Data Analysis. <i>Quiz 7</i>
Part 4. Telling the 'story' of my research		
9	Mar 15	<i>Telling the 'story' of my research.</i> Representing, reporting, 'writing up' research. <i>Quiz 8</i>
10	Mar 22	Working individually on the final research presentation. Peer and instructor's support.
11	Mar 29	<i>Communicating my research journey to others...</i> Research symposium (30 th March)

EVALUATION:

	Submission date (OWL)	%
1. Research tasks (groups of 4)	Jan 22, 29; Feb 5, 12, 26 (3% each)	15

2. Quizzes (8)	Jan 12, 19, 26; Feb 2, 9; March 2, 9, 16	20 (8x2.5)
4. Reflective research report (individual)	Feb 22	15
5. Final Research Presentation (individual)	Mar 30	35
6. Self and Peer- evaluation	Feb 12 Mar 26	7.5 7.5

Below you find a general description of each method of assessment. Detailed guides for each assignment will be delivered in a timely fashion throughout the course.

Note that your evaluation does NOT include tests or exams, so weekly engagement is extremely important and assessed through quizzes and team tasks.

All assignments must be submitted by the end of the submission date (11.55 pm) using the assignment tool on OWL.

1. Research tasks (group). Throughout the course, you will be required to develop and submit five research tasks. These tasks support the development of a 'mock' research project you will develop in teams (randomly assigned). These are also an integral part of each week's lesson. Each is marked weekly for 3%. All group members are required to work on each task.
2. Quizzes. Eight quick quizzes (10-15 min.) will assess your understanding of core readings, key concepts, and specific terminology addressed in the weekly lessons. Each is worth 2.5% of your final grade. These will take place at the end of the synchronous session.
3. Reflective Research report. You will reflect upon your learning journey, documenting difficulties and doubts, milestones, new understandings and insights in the form a reflective research report.
4. Research project presentation (individual). Drawing upon the research tasks developed in group, you will present the team's research project, your analysis of the data collected, and final conclusions.
5. Self and peer-evaluation. Twice in the term (before reading week and end of the term), you will be required to reflect on yours and your peers' performance and grade yourself and the students in your team according to criteria agreed at the start of the term (this will require filling in a quick survey type form).

Note on plagiarism: 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.

GENERAL COURSE NOTES:

Participation: In the School of Health Studies, each course instructor sets expectations for attendance and participation that are specific to the course, teaching objectives, and learning outcomes. Participation in this online course means active engagement with the proposed weekly lesson tasks, including the collaborative development of research tasks. The specific expectations for each teaching unit/week will be communicated weekly.

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>.

Communication: Communicating clearly and regularly with your peers and the instructional team has never been more important. This is one of the reasons why we are using Microsoft Teams, so that you feel part of a community connected by similar goals and needs. The opportunities for communication are multiple (see table below). During the first few weeks of the term, you will learn when and how to use each of the tools mentioned below. Their use will quickly become second nature as we move along in the term. Remember that individual office hour meetings can be booked using Sign-up on OWL. Expect messages to be answered within 24 hours, expect during weekends.

	Private (to a person or a group)	Whole Class
Peers	Posts on the appropriate Teams’ channel (groups) Private chat on Teams’ for individuals	Posts on the General Teams channel OneNote books and other documents shared on Teams
Instructional Team	Private chat on Teams	Posts on the General Teams channel (Instructors will also use the OWL announcements tool)

Netiquette: Many components of this course will involve online interactions. To ensure the best experience for both you and your classmates, please honor the following rules of etiquette:

- “arrive” to synchronous sessions on time

- use your computer and/or laptop if possible (as opposed to a cell phone or tablet)
- ensure that you are in a private location to protect the confidentiality of participants if a class discussion deals with sensitive or personal material
- to minimize background noise, mute your microphone for the entire class until you are invited to speak, unless directed otherwise
- [For sessions with more than 30 students] to guarantee optimum bandwidth and web quality, please turn off your video camera for the entire class unless you are invited to speak
- be prepared to turn your video camera off at instructor's request, if internet connection becomes unstable
- unless invited by your instructor, do **not** share your screen in the meeting

The course instructor will act as moderator for the class and will deal with any questions. To participate please consider the following:

- if you wish to speak, use the "raise hand" function and wait for the instructor to acknowledge you before beginning your comment or question
- unmute your microphone and turn on your video camera before speaking
- self-identify when speaking
- mute your mic and turn off your video camera after speaking (unless directed otherwise)

General considerations of "netiquette":

- keep in mind the different cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students in the course
- be courteous toward the instructor, your colleagues, and authors whose work you are discussing
- be respectful of the diversity of viewpoints that you will encounter in the class and in your readings. the exchange of diverse ideas and opinions is part of the scholarly environment.
- be professional and scholarly in all online postings. Cite other's ideas appropriately (i.e in discussion boards when you re commenting on another student's idea).

Note that disruptive behavior of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of [Zoom-bombing](#) a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

Only participants using their UWO credentials will be permitted to access the online sessions.

Synchronous sessions: Most sessions for this course will be recorded. The data captured during these recordings may include your image, voice recordings, chat logs and personal identifiers (name displayed on the screen). The recordings will be used for educational purposes related to this course, including evaluations. The recordings may be disclosed to other individuals under special circumstances. Please contact the instructor if you have any concerns related to session recordings. Participants in this course are not permitted to record the sessions, except where recording is an approved accommodation, or the participant has the prior written permission of the instructor. You will always be informed in the invitation for the session if this is being recorded.

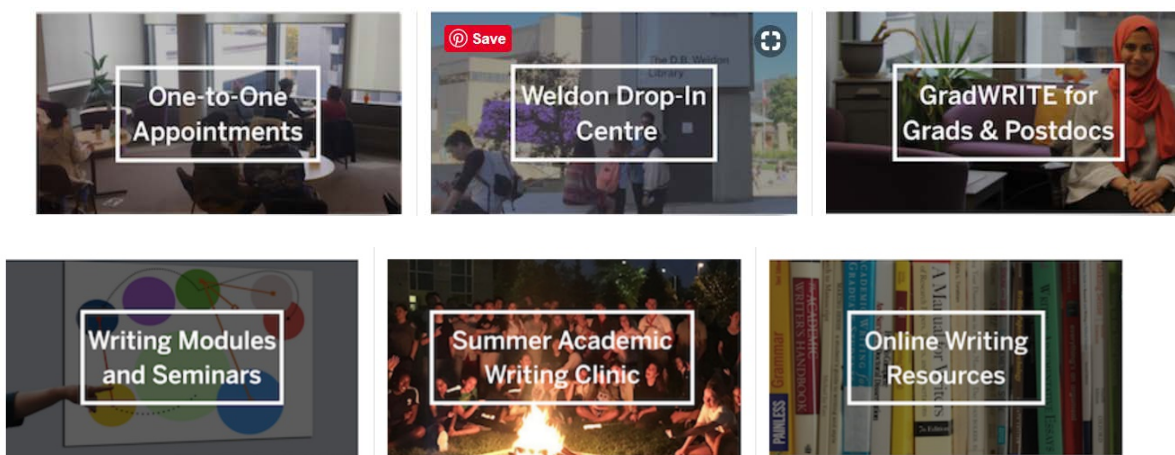
Use of Recording Devices and Course Content Course: Instructors own and retain the intellectual property rights of their teaching materials. These rights extend to materials used in online settings and digital learning management systems like OWL and MS Teams. Students do not have the right to make audio or video recordings of lectures, take pictures of lecture material, or distribute any course content for any reason inclusive of nefarious purposes (e.g., for sale or to cheat on exams). It is the decision of the instructor as to how and when teaching materials can be shared or used. Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of pre-recorded lectures or other course materials. Nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.

Troubleshooting:

Technical/ software/hardware: “I am having technical issues with my computer and I am not sure what the problem is...” you can create a help request in [FHS IT Support](#) or if the issue relates more to online learning software (OWL, Teams or other) go to [FHS Online Learning Support \(Students\)](#). If you have lost internet connection use the data on your phone to do this or to work as a hotspot for your other device.

Adaptation to the online teaching and learning environment: “I am having trouble adapting to this online learning environment. I need some guidance regarding study strategies...” explore the resources offered by Western Student Experience in [tips for conquering online courses](#); [Resources To Support Online Learning for Undergraduates & Graduates](#). If you prefer short videos, check [Study Tips to Succeed as an Online Student](#), or one created by a student for students [Online Learning Tips for Students!](#) Select a few important tips to start with and incorporate more as the term progresses.

Help with Writing Skills: “I will need to write some papers this term and would benefit from improving my writing skills” or “I would like some helpful feedback on writing quality...” you can contact the [Writing support Centre online](#). They offer (these images are not hyperlinks):



Illness: “One of my main assignments is due in two days and I feel really ill...” you can action an academic consideration to be granted some accommodation. You do that in [Request for Academic Consideration](#).

Academics: “I would benefit from some advice regarding my **academic experience, engagement and success...**”, you can explore the resources available on [Academic Support and Engagement](#) or contact the [HS counselling staff](#).

General course notes:

Student Code of Conduct: You are expected to comply with the [Code of Student Conduct](#) at all times 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 and the Microsoft Teams’ hub 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 these spaces regularly.

Grades: 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.

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 fulfill 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.

Religious Accommodation

Students should consult the University’s list of recognized religious holidays, and should give reasonable notice in writing, prior to the holiday, to the Instructor and an Academic Counsellor if their course requirements will be affected by a religious observance. Additional information is given in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

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. Ombud’s 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 online and 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