

COURSE SYLLABUS TEMPLATE

INTRODUCTION TO COURSE AND INSTRUCTOR

Semester: SPRING 2020	Program/Department California State University, Fresno
Course Name: Qualitative Research	Instructor Name:
Units: Three (3)	Office Location:
Time:	E-Mail:
Location:	Telephone:
Website:	Office Hours:

Course description: Foundation course on social work research and evaluation using qualitative methods that prepare students for the master's project/thesis. Covers the nature of inquiry, scientific method, ethics, topic section, research approaches, methods of observation and data collection, and data analysis and presentation. *It is usually expected that students will spend approximately 2 hours of study time outside of class for every one hour in class. Since this is a 3-unit class, you should expect to study an average of 9 hours outside of class each week.*

Prerequisites for the course: SWRK 260

Required COURSE Materials

Required Textbook:

Creswell, J. W. & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Required Journal Articles and Additional Reading will be posted on Canvas.

Course Specifics

Summary/outline of the course: Social Work 261 is a course that emphasizes qualitative research methodologies that assist in exploring natural environments, human relationships and social phenomena found in field and practice settings. It is designed to introduce students to the basic ethics, concepts, procedures, benefits, and limitations of qualitative social work research and evaluation. Students will acquire knowledge about qualitative research through lecture, discussion, review of research literature and collection and analyses of qualitative data.

Course goals:

1. To prepare students for identifying and formulating topics for study using the qualitative method that will add to their knowledge about social work practice, policy and social service delivery. (EPAS 4)
2. To prepare students for the utilization of theoretical, conceptual, and empirical literature in formulating and justifying their social work research and evaluation activities and to utilize appropriate qualitative approaches for conducting research and evaluation in various practice settings. (EPAS 4, 9)
3. To prepare students for developing and implementing a methodology which would include a specific strategy, unit of study, data collection and analysis for the purposes of social work research and evaluation in a scholarly way with regard to form and content. (EPAS 4)
4. To prepare students for conducting ethical, legal and culturally-sensitive research and evaluation. (EPAS 4, 9)

Student Learning Outcomes:

1. Discern appropriate application of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.
2. Demonstrate appropriate use of inductive and deductive processes in addressing a qualitative research question.
3. Use existing theory or conceptualization to identify and define a researchable topic for conducting a qualitative study.
4. Use library resources and the Internet to find empirical studies that incorporate the qualitative approach in social work research and evaluation.
5. Conduct a critical review and examination of current literature that informs topics or issues studied.

6. Articulate the distinct features of various methods of qualitative research including case study, ethnographic, grounded theory, narrative and phenomenological research approaches and the assumptions that support them.
7. Describe the strengths and weakness of different qualitative methods including case study, ethnographic, grounded theory, narrative, and phenomenological research approaches.
8. Establish a feedback loop with appropriate entities that insure for trustworthiness and authenticity of the data.
9. Articulate the characteristics of the relationship between the researcher and research subjects in qualitative approaches.
10. Conduct qualitative data collection techniques in naturalistic settings.
11. Code, analyze and interpret qualitative data.
12. Conduct culturally competent research and sensitivity to issues of social and economic justice, diversity, and the empowerment of disenfranchised populations.
13. Conduct ethical research, including informed consent and protection of human subjects, using a qualitative approach.

Course requirements/assignments:

Institutional Review Board (IRB) Human Subjects Training

Social sciences research generally includes obtaining data through the use of human subjects. The major goals of the IRB are to minimize the risk to human subjects (beneficence); ensure all subjects consent and are fully informed about the research and any risks (autonomy); and promote equity in human subjects' research (justice). Before initiating data collection, all human subjects research must be approved by the department's Human Subjects Committee. This includes, but is not limited to, recruitment for all research conducted at California State University, Fresno.

The expectation in this course is that each student will complete the online training and certification process if s/he has not done so already in the previous research class. To take the online Human Subjects Protection training, log on at: <http://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/humansubjects/training-modules/index.html>

Qualitative Approach Paper

Write a 2-3-page 12-point font, double spaced paper about the 5 approaches to qualitative research. Briefly describe each approach and then finally select one for your potential study. Your discussion should focus on the strengths and limitations of the selected approach and how it may inform your research question, the study design, and the interview guide. APA formatting using the 6th Edition is expected.

Article Critique

Write a 3 to 4-page, 12-point font, double-spaced paper examining how the qualitative tradition and method is used in a contemporary study. The page limit does not include the title page and appendix. APA formatting using the 6th Edition is expected. Select one article from the Articles Module on Canvas. Organize your critique by using the concept of each of the questions to create a short heading/subheading and answer the following questions about the article:

1. Describe the problem that was investigated.
 - What is the research question? What is the value of this research question?
2. Critique the literature review.
 - Was the literature review (background) in sufficient detail to give you enough information for the report that followed? What sources of information did the authors use as part of their literature review? How could the literature review be improved?
3. Describe the study sample.
 - Who was involved in the study, and how were they selected? To whom could this knowledge be generalized? In what ways might the sampling process have been improved?
4. Briefly describe the tools inquiry used in the study.
 - Do you feel this was an appropriate choice? If yes, why? If not, why and what could be done to increase the appropriateness?
5. Identify the paradigm/ lens/ used and any potential bias the researcher(s) brought to the study.
 - What assumptions define this approach to knowledge?
6. Reflect on the study conclusions and recommendations.
 - What were the major conclusions and recommendations reached in the report? How do these relate to the initial research question? Do you believe the conclusions were supported based upon the information presented in the article? How do the authors propose to use the findings to advocate/implement change?
7. Describe the study's risks and benefits.
 - What were the risks and benefits associated with this research project? How were the risks minimized and benefits maximized? What, if any, additional ethical concerns did you have regarding this study? Who benefited from the study? What power dynamics are illustrated in the study?
8. Describe the study's strengths and weaknesses.

- What do you see as the strengths and weaknesses of this study? What did you learn that could be used in the future? To what degree do the author(s) critically examine the social context as part of the research process? How do you see the research contributing to or impeding progress toward social justice?

Criteria for evaluation of assignment:

1. Clarity of writing/presentation
2. Quality of analysis of article in relation to method under examination
3. Adherence to page limits.

Interview Guide & Data Collection Assignment

(5-7 pages, NOT including title page and appendix)

This is an Interview Assignment designed to advance and strengthen your proficiency in using interviews as data. The goal of this exercise is to conduct a 30-minute interview of a family member or friend. Create an interview guide to be used in an individual interview. The interview will be semi-structured following the guide you create. The length of the guide depends upon the qualitative approach selected, the research question, and the purpose of the interview. The guide should demonstrate that the intended research question can be answered through the interviews. Remember to review class materials relevant to interviewing in preparation before meeting with your subject/participant posted on Canvas. If any references are used remember to cite them using APA 6th edition formatting.

Writing Guidelines for Interview Paper:

1. Title Page (in APA format)
2. Body of Paper (in APA format), which includes the following:
 - Introduction to the interview
 - Purpose of the interview
 - Why you chose this person and subject
 - Background of this interviewee
 - Relevant historical notes, or background information
 - List of questions (usually in the appendix of the paper)
 - Description of the interview process
3. Interview – Tell the story...
4. Conclusion:
 - Lessons learned
 - Reactions/Impressions

5. Transcription of the Interview (placed in the appendix)

SWRK 261 PROJECT PLAN ASSIGNMENT (COMMON ASSIGNMENT)

Final Project Proposal Assignment. The aim of this assignment is to construct a solid narrative framework for a project or thesis research plan. In this task, you should demonstrate knowledge of how to conceptualize the totality of a research study in the discipline of social work. Examples of research plans could include an evaluation of a program, intervention or agency. Plans could also consider diverse aspects of a practice issue. Page limit: 10-12 pages, not including title page, references or appendices. A minimum of 5 references should be used. APA formatting using the 6th Edition is expected.

The aim of this assignment is to construct a solid narrative framework for a project or thesis research plan. In this task, you should demonstrate knowledge of how to conceptualize the totality of a research study in the discipline of social work. Examples of research plans could include an evaluation of a program, intervention or agency. Plans could also consider diverse aspects of a practice issue.

Main elements:

1. Introduction

- Describe the significance of the practice issue. For example, suppose your topic is “barriers to housing among emancipated foster youth”, you will describe how this issue affects this population on a micro, mezzo or macro level, and why?
- Describe the possible implications for practice at the level you have specified.
- Ensure that your topic is narrow and focused on a component of the larger topic that interests you.
- Provide a concise and guiding purpose statement.

2. Rationale for Study

- Explain the most relevant literature on your topic with a formal Literature Review.
- Explain the importance of the study (some overlap with the prior section, but present new information, especially narrowing it down to your central research question).
- Present your central research question.
- Provide your sub-questions (remember these questions are different from interview questions).

3. Methods

- Which qualitative method is best for responding to your research question?
- Justify the use of this method for the practice level you have identified.
- Explain what your sampling strategies will be and why these are going to be used (what sampling technique, how many people, where your people are coming from).

- Assess the level of difficulty in carrying-out the method.
4. Plan for data analyses
- Explain the types of data that you will gather and produce with your method.
 - Describe the tools you will use to analyze the data (e.g. coding, bracketing, memos, etc.).
 - Explain why you have chosen this approach to analysis.
 - Assess the level of difficulty in carrying-out the analysis.
5. Potential findings
- Discuss what you may find in terms of responding to your research question.
 - Describe will likely be significant for the practice arena you have identified in this proposal.
 - Describe what will not get answered by your data and analysis (limitations to your study).

Grading:

Assignment and Examination Schedule

Due Date	Assignment	Points/Percent
ALL	Attendance and Participation	50
02/24	Article Critique Assignment	50
03/09	Qualitative Approach Paper Assignment	50
03/30	Interview Guide & Data Collection Assignment	100
05/13	Project Proposal (Common Assignment)	200
	Introduction/Problem Statement (25)	
	Rationale for Study (75)	
	Methods (75)	
	Plan for Data Analysis (15)	

	Potential Findings (10)	
	Total	450

Final grades will be based on accumulated points from each assignment. Grades will be based on the following point spread:

405-450	A
360-404	B
315-359	C
270-314	D
<269	F

Class Participation and Attendance:

Students are expected to come prepared to discuss and apply that week's readings in small and large group discussions and class activities throughout the semester. Students will be allowed two (2) absences during the semester without it affecting the grade earned in this area. Students will lose two (2) points for each class missed after the two allowed absences. The student is responsible for notifying the instructor regarding an absence.

Course Policies & Safety Issues

Late work and make-up work policy: An assignment or exam may be made up only if absence is due to extenuating circumstances and at the instructor's discretion. The student is responsible for notifying the instructor regarding an absence and making arrangements to turn in the assignment within an agreed amount of time.

Use of electronic devices (cell phones, tablets, etc.) To minimize class disruptions, please turn off these devices during class. If you are required to be "on call" please advise the instructor at the beginning of the class and sit near the exit. Further, all devices should be put on silent. Please advise the instructor if you want to use your laptop or tablet during class, or if you want to record the lecture. Using electronic devices to read non-course related material is not allowed.

Email: You are expected to check your university email regularly or redirect email to the regular mailbox that you use. The instructor responds to all program/course related student email. Therefore, if a student does not receive a reply, it means that the instructor may not have received the email and/or it got filtered as possible spam. If a student does not receive a

response, contact the instructor by phone to resolve the issue. Students should always put Social Work 261 on the subject line or your risk the email not being opened.

Plagiarism Detection: The campus subscribes to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service, through Canvas. You will need to submit written assignments to Turnitin. Student work will be used for plagiarism detection and for no other purpose. The student may indicate in writing to the instructor that he/she refuses to participate in the plagiarism detection process, in which case the instructor can use other electronic means to verify the originality of their work. **Turnitin Originality Reports WILL be available for your viewing.**

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Students with Disabilities: Upon identifying themselves to the instructor and the university, students with disabilities will receive reasonable accommodation for learning and evaluation. For more information, contact Services to Students with Disabilities in the Henry Madden Library, Room 1202 (278-2811).

The following University polices can be found at:

- [Adding and Dropping Classes](#)
- [Cheating and Plagiarism](#)
- [Computers](#)
- [Copyright Policy](#)
- [Disruptive Classroom Behavior](#)
- [Honor Code](#)
- [Students with Disabilities](#)
- [Title IX](#)

UNIVERSITY SERVICES

The following University services can be found at:

- [Associated Students, Inc.](#)
- [Dream Success Center](#)
- [Learning Center Information](#)
- [Student Health and Counseling Center](#)
- [Writing Center](#)

THIS SYLLABUS AND SCHEDULE ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE IN THE EVENT OF EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

**Tentative Course Schedule
Spring 2020**

	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
	Mon., Jan 20	HOLIDAY – Martin Luther King Jr. Day	
1	Wed., Jan 22	Introductions Discussion of Syllabus, Assignments, Research Activities	
2	Mon., Jan 27	Philosophical Assumptions and Interpretive Frameworks What is qualitative research?	Creswell & Poth Ch 2
3	Wed., Jan 29	Designing a Qualitative Study	Creswell & Poth Ch 3 Lietz, C. A., & Zayas, L. E. (2010). Evaluating qualitative research for social work practitioners. <i>Advances in Social Work</i> , 11, 188–202. DOI: https://doi.org/10.18060/589
4	Mon., Feb 3	5 Approaches to Qualitative Research 5 Different Qualitative Studies Phenomenology	Creswell & Poth Ch 4-5 Appendix C
5	Wed., Feb 5	5 Approaches to Qualitative Research Ethnography	Creswell & Poth Ch 4-5 Appendix E
6	Mon., Feb 10	5 Approaches to Qualitative Research Narrative	Creswell & Poth Ch 4-5 Appendix B
7	Wed., Feb 12	5 Approaches to Qualitative Research Grounded Theory	Creswell & Poth Ch 4-5 Appendix D
	Mon., Feb 17	HOLIDAY – President’s Day	
8	Wed., Feb 19	5 Approaches to Qualitative Research Case Study	Creswell & Poth Ch 4-5 Appendix F
9	Mon., Feb 24	Introducing and Focusing the Study: Developing Problem and Purpose Statements	Creswell & Poth Ch 6 Article Critique Due
10	Wed., Feb 26	Out of Class Assignment: Introducing and Focusing the Study: Developing Research Questions	Creswell & Poth Ch 6
11	Mon., March 2	Reviewing Research Questions How to Write a Project Proposal	

12	Wed., March 4	How to Write a Literature Review	
13	Mon., March 9	Data Collection: Developing Qualitative Interview Questions	Qualitative Approach Paper Due
14	Wed., March 11	Qualitative sampling and recruitment How to Conduct a Qualitative Interview	Creswell & Poth Ch 7
15	Mon., March 16	Interview planning Interview reactions	
16	Wed., March 18	Out of Class Assignment: Consent & IRB Process, Informed Consent	
17	Mon., March 23	Qualitative data analysis, part I	Creswell & Poth Ch 8
18	Wed., March 25	Qualitative data analysis, part II	Creswell & Poth Ch 9
19	Mon., March 30	Qualitative data analysis, part III	Creswell & Poth Ch 10 Interview Guide & Data Collection Assignment Due
20	Wed., April 1	How to design and conduct a focus group	
	Mon., April 6	Spring Break	
	Wed., April 8	Spring Break	
21	Mon., April 13	Qualitative Program evaluation	
22	Wed., April 15	Qualitative Program evaluation	
23	Mon., April 20	Indigenous Research	
24	Wed., April 22	Out of Class Assignment:	Review Project Proposal
25	Mon., April 27	Participatory Action Research	
26	Wed., April 29	Participatory program evaluation	
27	Mon., May 4	Consultation	
28	Wed., May 6	Last Day of Instruction	
Finals week			
Final Exam Preparation & Faculty Consultation Days:			Thursday and Friday May 7 – 8
Final Semester Examinations			Monday – Thursday May 11 – 14
Final Exam in this course: Final Project Proposal Due			Wed, May 13 5:45-7:45 pm

The course schedule is subject to change in the event of extenuating circumstances.