

**HBEH 753**  
**Qualitative Research Methods**

**Class Time:** Tuesday/Thursday, 12:30-1:45pm  
**Class Location:** McGavran-Greenberg 2306

**Instructor:** Suzanne Maman  
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**Instructor office hours:** Tuesday 2:00-3:15pm, 331 Rosenau

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**Course Description:** This course is designed to introduce students to qualitative research methods. The course will use a combination of didactic, interactive and applied techniques to teach knowledge and skills relevant to qualitative research. The course is an introductory course by design. For some students, this course may be their only exposure to qualitative research methods, while other students may use this course as a foundation for additional courses that provide more detailed knowledge of a particular qualitative methodology or more training in qualitative data analysis.

Through the course, students will be expected to conduct their own qualitative study. Students will work individually to collect data through in-depth interviews. Students work in small groups to analyze the data, and present the results of the analysis. Students will submit their interview guides and interview transcripts for evaluation. Students will also learn the basic steps of qualitative data analysis. Students will submit their codebooks, and an analytical product for evaluation. In addition students will be evaluated on their final presentation, and on their in-class participation.

**Course Goals:** By the end of the course students will develop skills in how to formulate appropriate qualitative research questions, collect qualitative data using interviews and focus group discussions, and analyze qualitative data. Students will be exposed to different styles of presenting qualitative research results, and will consider different ways in which qualitative data is used in practice. The course has objectives related to both qualitative data collection as well as qualitative data analysis and writing.

### Course Objectives:

Through the focus on Qualitative Research Data Collection Techniques students will develop the following skills:

1. Identify and formulate appropriate qualitative research questions and interview questions.
2. Utilize different types of probes to gather more insightful qualitative data through individual interviews and focus group discussions.
3. Apply active listening skills in interviews and focus group discussions to engage in the data collection, express interest in the information, and encourage participants to provide more in-depth information.
4. Develop focus group discussion moderation skills to manage a dialogue within a group, encourage participation by all members, and discourage domination by select group members.
5. Understand how observational data can be used to inform public health programs.

Through the focus on Qualitative Data Analysis and Presentation students will be able to:

1. Describe the basic steps in qualitative data analysis.
2. Develop deductive and inductive codes.
3. Apply codes to qualitative data.
4. Distinguish between a summary and an interpretation of qualitative data.
5. Understand how qualitative data analysis software programs function, and have a basic understanding of how to operate Dedoose.
6. Develop an interpretive understanding of data collected.
7. Review different styles of presenting qualitative research findings.
8. Present interpretive analysis of data collected.

### Course Requirements and Evaluation

#	Assignments	Proportion of grade	Due Date	Group or Individual
1	Research questions & interview guide	15%	Draft due Jan. 22 Final due January 28	Group
	CITI training certificate due	-	January 28	Individual
2	In-depth interview transcript	15%	February 12	Individual
3	Self-critique and transcription of second interview	15%	March 3	Individual
4	Codebook	20%	March 11	Group
5	Analytical product	-	April 5	Group
6	In-class presentations	25%	April 14- 21	Group
	Class participation and group member assessment	10%	Ongoing Assessed at end	Individual

**Description of Assignments:** The following information summarizes the assignments for class. More specific details on each assignment and the grading criteria for each assignment are posted on Sakai under the specific assignment.

**Grades:** Students will receive detailed feedback on each assignment together with a grading rubric that explains the final grade for the assignment. The rubrics include letter grading with pluses and minuses (ex. P+, H-) to give students a nuanced understanding of their performance in the class. However final grades for the course will be recorded as H/P/L. The feedback and grading rubric will be returned via Sakai for students to review when grading is complete for the assignment.

**Focus of class project:** The student evaluations for this course are built around an applied research project for the class. Students should work in groups of 5-6 for these projects. Students are allowed to choose their own topic for the projects. All projects will require students to conduct interviews with other students outside of the class. When choosing your topic, think carefully about who you would recruit and how much difficulty you may have recruiting the sample. Each student is responsible for conducting two in-depth interviews.

**Choosing your topic for the project:** Each group will select a topic of interest to them for their class project. All topics must be vetted with the teaching team prior to submitting the research questions and interview guide for the topic. The topic should be one that groups can explore with students on campus, and should be conceptual enough to lead to rich data for analysis. The teaching team will help students determine whether topics are likely to lead to interesting data for analysis. Here are a few examples of topics that have been selected by groups in past year:

- Experiences of military veterans who are students at UNC.
- Impact of experiencing the death of a parent during adolescence.
- Social and academic experiences of Latino/a students at UNC.
- Impact of insomnia on student' social and academic life.
- Resilience among first generation college students.
- Experiences of migraines.
- Work-life balance among students with children.
- Experiences of undocumented students on campus.

## ASSIGNMENTS:

**Assignment 1: Research questions and interview guide:** Students will work in their groups of 5-6 persons for this assignment. As a group, students will develop 3-4 primary research questions to explore through their qualitative data collection. Within each primary research question, they should identify the specific interview questions to be included on the guide they will use for the interviews. The interview guide will be designed for a 45-minute interview. The group will submit the research questions and the interview guide for evaluation. This assignment is worth 15% of the total grade.

**Assignment 2: In-depth interview transcript:** Students will be required to submit a full transcript of their first interview for evaluation. The interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed. This assignment is worth 15% of the final grade.

**Assignment 3: Reflection and self-critique of second interview/focus group transcript:** Students will be required to conduct, record and fully transcribe a second interview for analysis. Instead of a second individual interview, students may work in pairs to conduct one focus group discussion. For this assignment students are required to submit a 2-3 page (single-spaced) reflection and self-critique of their second interview or focus group discussion. Students will submit the transcript of the interview or focus group and the reflection/self-critique; this is worth 15% of the final grade.

**Assignment 4: Codebook:** Each group should develop a codebook for their data that includes both topical and interpretive codes. These codebooks will be used to code data that the group collected for their project. Prior to submitting the codebook, groups will be required to meet with a member of the teaching team to discuss their draft codebooks. Codebooks are worth 20% of the total grade.

**Assignment 5: Analytical product:** Groups are required to submit an analytical product. This could include a matrix that the group has created to help summarize the data across cases, reflective memos that group has written to help them in the interpretation process, or any other analytical product that shows the teaching team they are reflecting on their data and trying to interpret the themes that they have uncovered. These products will not be graded, but they do offer an opportunity for groups to get feedback from the teaching team on their analysis process.

**Assignment 6: Final presentation:** Students will combine all of the data that their group has collected from the in-depth interviews and focus group discussions. The data will be analyzed and presented in the form of an in-class presentation. The presentation should include a very brief description of methods, but should focus primarily on the results and discussion of the results. Each group will have 30 minutes to present their work in class. These presentations are worth 25% of the total grade.

**Submitting Assignments:** Please submit all class assignments electronically through the Assignment Content Area in Sakai by 11:59pm on the day that they are due. When submitting the assignments, please name the assignments according to the

assignment number and your last name, for example “Assignment 2.Maman” for individual assignments or “Assignment 1. Group 1” for group assignments. Points will be deducted for assignments that are submitted late.

**Honor Code:** The Honor Code is in effect in this class and all others at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. We treat Honor Code violations seriously and urge all students to become familiar with its terms set out at this URL (<http://instrument.unc.edu>). If you have questions, it is your responsibility to ask us about the Code’s application. All papers and projects submitted as part of this course must be submitted with a statement that you have complied with the requirements of the Honor Code in all aspects of the work.

An Honor System Tutorial is available on Sakai:  
<http://studentconduct.unc.edu/students/honor-system-module>

UNC Libraries provides an excellent tutorial on plagiarism:  
<http://www.lib.unc.edu/plagiarism/>

The Writing Center also provides a good handout on plagiarism:  
<http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/plagiarism/>

**Policy on Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you have a disability that could impact your participation in the course, please notify me if you wish to have special accommodations in instructional, and/or assignment format, etc. Please contact the University’s Disability office to request the paperwork necessary for approved accommodations.

**In-class participation:** Students are expected to attend class regularly. We will be taking attendance at each class. If students are not able to make it to class please send an email to Sarah or Abigail explaining your absence. It is expected that students will read all assigned readings prior to class. Students are encouraged to share their prior experiences with qualitative data collection during class. We have designed the class to include a combination of large group presentations/discussions, and small group discussions and breakout sessions. The slides for class will be available on Sakai in advance of the classes.

**Use of laptops or other electronic devices:** Many instructors do not permit laptops or other electronic devices in the classroom, unless you have a specific documented learning disability. I will permit the use of *laptops and tablets only* and all uses are restricted to class related work. Please do not visit social media pages or other nonacademic pages during class. Please turn off all cell phones and other devices that would disrupt the learning environment of the classroom. If we find that you are using your laptop or tablet for anything other than class-related work, we will ask you not to bring it to class. Laptops and tablets should be closed during class discussions and other activities that do not require them.

**Course Text:** There is no required text for the course. All readings have been posted on Sakai or are available through e-reserves.

**Course software:** All students will use Dedoose, a qualitative software package for the analysis of the data from their group project, available at <http://www.dedoose.com/>. The individual cost to the student will be \$10.95 per month of use. More information on the software, how to download it, and how to use it for analysis will be presented in class.

**Sakai:** The syllabus, slides for class, and other course material are posted on the Sakai site. To access the class site go to <http://sakai.unc.edu> and log in with your Onyen and password. Once you are on the site, click on the Courses tab. You should see a link to HBHE 753.

**Health Sciences Library E-reserves:** Some of the readings are available through the Health Sciences Library electronic reserves. To access these readings use your onyen and password to login through the following link :  
<https://ares.lib.unc.edu/ares/ares.dll?SessionID=Q092848280T&Action=10&Form=60&Value=10121101>

**CITI Training requirement:** All students in the course are required to have completed CITI Human Subjects Training. Information on completing the training can be found at the CITI website: <http://www.citiprogram.org/default.asp?language=english>. Please complete the training by January 28<sup>th</sup>. Once you have completed the training (or if you have completed it in the past) please email a copy of the certificate to Sarah for our records.

## CLASSES:

- January 12 Introduction to the course  
Introduce the teaching team. Review the syllabus, discuss the assignments, and the evaluation. We will talk about the structure of the course. We will spend time talking about the assignments, and how to select a topic for your group project. We will leave time in class for students to finalize their groups and brainstorm ideas for topics.
- January 14: An introduction to qualitative research methods  
We will review the basic principles of qualitative research methods. We will compare qualitative and quantitative methods on these key principles and characteristics.
- Assigned Readings:*
- Ulin: Chapter Two: The Language and Logic of Qualitative Research. Available on HSL E-reserves
- January 19 Developing qualitative research questions  
For the first half of this class will meet in the classroom and we will discuss the type of research questions that are appropriate to explore qualitatively. For the second half of class, we will meet with groups individually to discuss class project ideas and draft research questions. We will schedule 10-15 minute meetings with each group to discuss their ideas.
- Assigned Readings:*
- Joseph Maxwell. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Sage Publications. Chapter 4: “Research Questions: What do you want to understand?” Available on HSL E-reserves
  - James Spradley. *The Ethnographic Interview*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers. Chapter 4: “Asking Descriptive Questions.” Available on HSL E-reserves
- January 21 More practice developing qualitative research and interview questions  
We will review different types of interview questions for qualitative studies. Students will have an opportunity to practice developing qualitative research questions for mock studies. We will review and critique research questions and interview questions developed by the students. Students will have an opportunity to work within their groups to further develop the research questions and interview questions for their project.

- January 26 Qualitative research sampling:  
 For the first 45 minutes of class, groups will meet individually with teaching team members to discuss their draft research questions and interview questions. For the second half of class, we will discuss sampling strategies for qualitative research studies. We will also discuss strategies to build rapport with participants. All students should have completed the CITI training and sent the completion certificate to Sarah by this date.
- Assigned Readings:*
- Ulin: Chapter 3: Designing the Study (pp. 41-60). Available on HSL E-reserves
- January 28 Qualitative data collection: Probing as a key qualitative research skill  
 Probing is a key qualitative data collection skills. Students will be introduced to different types of probes and we will talk about the purpose of probing in qualitative interviews. We will review an interview transcript in class and identify probes and missed opportunities for probes in the transcript.
- Assigned Readings:*
- Russell Bernard. *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. Chapter 10: Unstructured and Semi-structured interviewing. Available on HSL E-reserves
- February 2 Active listening as a key qualitative research skill  
 Active listening is another key qualitative research skills. We will talk about what active listening is and how to build skills in be a better listener in qualitative data collection. We will do some mock interviews and offer students the opportunity to video tape their interviews for review in the next class.
- Assigned Readings:* None
- February 4 Skill development  
 WE will review video-taped interviews to identify strengths and challenges in the different pairs. We will conduct additional mock interviews and role-plays in class to further develop data collection skills.
- Assigned Readings:* None
- February 9 Managing data and enhancing data quality  
 This class is designed to provide students with guidance on how to manage qualitative data from audiotaping to transcribing. We will provide suggestions for transcription notations that students can use in their own transcripts. We will also talk about criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research.
- Assigned reading:*



- Ulin: Chapter 6: Qualitative Data Analysis (pages 159-169). Available on HSL E-reserves
- Ulin: Chapter Five: Logistics in the Field (pp. 125-127). Available on HSL E-reserves
- MacLean, L.; Meyer, M.; Estable, A. (2004). Improving Accuracy of Transcripts in Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 14 (1): 113-123. PDF available on Sakai.

February 11 Planning and facilitating a focus group discussion

On this day we will discuss when it is appropriate to use focus groups, and different skills necessary to moderate focus group discussions. In the second half of class we will break into groups and conduct mock focus groups with the opportunity to debrief afterwards.

*Assigned Readings:*

- Ulin: Chapter 4: Collecting Qualitative Data (pp. 89-95)
- Appendix 6: Topic Guides for Focus Group Discussions on Reproductive Health. Available on HSL E-reserves
- Ulin: Appendix 8: Common Errors in Moderating Focus Groups

For students who plan to conduct FGD, I have other resources if you are interested. Available on HSL E-reserves

February 16 Observational methods

We will talk about the use of observational methods in qualitative research. We will review the difference between semi-structured and structured observations. We will also talk about how observational data are used in analysis. Students will have the opportunity to apply observational methods to video-taped sessions from a real observational study.

*Assigned Readings:*

- Ulin: Chapter 4: Collecting Qualitative Data: The Science and the Art (pp.72 -81). Available on HSL E-reserves
- Hirsch JS, Meneses S, Thompson B, Negroni M, Pelcastre B, del Rio C. 2007. The inevitability of infidelity: sexual reputation, social geographies, and marital HIV risk in rural Mexico. *American Journal of Public Health*, 97(6):986-96. PDF available on Sakai.

February 18 Qualitative data analysis: An overview of the process

What are the goals of analysis with qualitative data? What are the most common steps involved in qualitative data analysis? How long does qualitative data analysis take? What is data triangulation?

*Assigned Readings:*

- Ulin: Chapter 6: Qualitative Data Analysis (pp. 139-174). Available on HSL E-reserves
- Sandelowski, M. 1995. Qualitative analysis: What it is and how to begin. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 18(4): 371-375. Available on Sakai.
- Starks, H., Trinidad, S.B. 2007. Choose your Method: A Comparison of Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis and Grounded Theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 17(10): 1372-1380. PDF available on Sakai.
- Sandelowski, M. (1995). Qualitative analysis: What is it and how to begin. *Research in Nursing and Health*, 18(4): 371-375. PDF available on Sakai.

February 23 GROUP WORK DAY

This day is scheduled to give groups a chance to meet with teaching team after they have received feedback on their first interviews to talk about changes to their interview guide for second round of interviews.

*Assigned readings:* None

February 25: Qualitative data analysis: Using qualitative data analysis software

Abigail will provide more instruction to students on Dedoose, a computer software package for qualitative data management and analysis. She will talk about some of the strengths and limitations of using a software package to help with data analysis. The class will provide students with an overview of the basic functions of the software. Please bring your computer with Dedoose to class.

*Assigned Reading:*

- Weitzman, E. 2000. Chapter 30: Software and Qualitative Research. In: *Handbook of Qualitative Research, Second Edition*. Denzin, NK and Lincoln, YS (editors). Sage Publications. Thousand Oaks, CA. (pp. 780-782). HSL E-reserves

March 1 Reading your data and memoing

In this class we will focus on how to read qualitative data literally, interpretively and reflexively. We will talk about strategies for memoing as you are reading to keep track of your thoughts. We will see examples of memos in class and students will have an opportunity to think about how to use memos in the analysis of their own data.

*Assigned Readings:*

- Soldana, J. 2009. The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers. Chapter 2: Writing Analytic Memos. Sage Publications. Available on HSL E-reserves

March 3<sup>rd</sup> Qualitative data analysis: Coding and identifying emerging themes  
 What is an inductive and a deductive code? What is a theme? How do you identify themes? What role does coding play in helping you to identify themes? How do you code data? Who should code data? What do you do with coded data?

*Assigned Readings:*

- Ulin: Chapter 6: Qualitative Data Analysis (pp. 146-150). Available on HSL E-reserves
- Bernard, H.R. & Ryan, G.W. (2010). Analyzing Qualitative Data: Systematic Approaches. Chapter 4: Codebooks and Coding. Available on HSL E-reserves

March 8 Developing topical and interpretive codes  
 For the first half of class we will spend time in class talking about developing topical and interpretive codes. We will review example codebooks. Groups will have time in class to work on draft codebooks.

March 10: GROUP WORK DAY  
 This day is designed for students to work on their codebooks with their group. The teaching team will be available to consult with groups as needed as they finalize their codebooks.

## SPRING BREAK

March 22 Using matrices and other strategies to organize data  
 We will use the first half of class to do more skill building in Dedoose. In the second half of class we will discuss how to use matrices and other strategies to organize and make meaning of data. Please bring your computer with Dedoose to class.

*Assigned Reading:*

- Miles, M. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). An Expanded Sourcebook: Qualitative Data Analysis, Second Edition. Chapter 9: Matrix Displays: Some Rules of Thumb. Available on HSL E-reserves

March 24 Moving from summary to interpretation

In this class we will focus on the difference between summary and interpretation of your data. We will go over two examples of data analysis that moved from summary to interpretation.

March 29

### Styles of presenting qualitative research results

In this class we will discuss different approaches to presenting qualitative research findings by reviewing and critiquing papers that use different approaches. Papers are available on Sakai. Groups will be assigned to review, present and critique different papers:

- Using illustrative quotes:
  - Wood, K.; Maforah, F.; Jewkes, R. 1998. "He force me to love him" Putting violence on the adolescent sexual health agendas. *Social Science and Medicine*, 47(2): 233-242. PDF available on Sakai
  - Davey, S.; Dziurawieck, S.; O'Brian-Malone, A. 2006. Men's Voices: Postnatal depression from the perspective of male partners. *Qualitative Health Research*, 16(2): 206-220. PDF available on Sakai.
- Case studies
  - Kamat, V. 2006. 'I thought it was only ordinary fever!' cultural knowledge and the micropolitics of therapy seeking for childhood febrile illness in Tanzania. *Social Science and Medicine*, 62: 2945-2959. PDF available on Sakai.
  - Speraw, S. (2009) "Talk to Me I'm Human": The Story of a Girl, Her Personhood, and the Failures of Health Care. *Qualitative Health Research*, 732-743. PDF on Sakai.
- Visual displays and other strategies for presenting data
  - Mordoch, E.; Hall, W. (2008) Children's Perceptions of Living With a Parent With a Mental Illness: Finding the Rhythm and Maintaining the Frame. *Qualitative Health Research*, 1127-1144. PDF on Sakai.
  - Skeath, P., Norris, S., Katheria, V., White, J., Baker, K., Handel, D., ... & Berger, A. (2013). The nature of life-transforming changes among cancer survivors. *Qualitative health research*, 23(9), 1155-1167. PDF on Sakai.
- Quantifying qualitative data:
  - Li, Y. (2013). Understanding Health Constraints Among Rural-to-Urban Migrants in China. *Qualitative health research*, 23(11), 1459-1469. PDF on Sakai.
  - Meyer, S., Murray, L. K., Puffer, E. S., Larsen, J., & Bolton, P. (2013). The nature and impact of chronic stressors on refugee children in Ban Mai Nai Soi camp,

Thailand. *Global public health*, 8(9), 1027-1047. PDF on Sakai.

March 31

GROUP WORK DAY

This class is designed to let groups work together on their analysis. We will schedule 20-30 minute meetings for each group to talk with a member of the teaching team about their analysis process to insure that groups are making progress towards the development of their analytical product.

April 5

Training and supervision

Many students will be responsible for training and supervising field staff to conduct qualitative research. We will review different training manuals, talk about effective training exercises and how to structure ongoing opportunities for training. We will also talk about principles and strategies for effective supervision of qualitative data collection. We will use case studies from real research projects to talk about how to handle difficult field research situations.

*Assigned Reading:*

- Ulin: Chapter 5: Logistics in the Field (pp. 115-125). Available on HSL E-reserves
- Appendix 7: Sample Interviewer Training Program Agenda  
LeCompte, M.D. and J.J. Schensul (1999). *The Ethnographer's Toolkit: Designing and conducting ethnographic research*.  
Chapter 8: Who should do ethnographic investigation? Walnut Creek: Altamira Press: 161-181. Available on HSL E-reserves

April 7

Examples of how qualitative research is used in practice

This class will provide students with examples of how qualitative research is used in the formative and evaluation phase of programs. A panel of HB alumni will present examples of how they have used qualitative research methods in their post-MPH work life.

April 12

Mixed methods research

Using qualitative and quantitative research together. This class will focus on how to combine qualitative and quantitative research. Marta Mulawa, PhD student in HB, will present her mixed methods dissertation research on intimate partner violence in Tanzania.

*Assigned Reading:*

- Steckler, A.; McLeroy, K.R.; Goodman, R.M.; Bird, S.T.; McCormick, L. 1992. Toward Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: An Introduction. *Health Education Quarterly*, 19(1): 1-8. Available on HSL E-reserves
- Classen, S, Lopez, EDS, Winter, S, Awadzi, KD, Ferree, N, Garvan. CW, 2007 Population-based health promotion perspective for older

driver safety: Conceptual framework to intervention plan. *Clinical Intervention in Aging*, 2(4): 677-693. Available on HSL E-reserves

- April 14      Student presentations  
In groups students will present the findings from their qualitative data analysis. Each group will have 30 minutes to present. The groups should briefly present their methods, and then use the bulk of their time to present and discuss their results.
- April 19      Student presentations  
This is the second day of in-class presentations. Each group should limit their presentations to 30 minutes.
- April 21      Student Presentations  
This is the third and last day of student presentations. The remaining groups will present their methods, results and discussion.
- April 26      Wrap up and student evaluations  
This class will be used to talk about any final thoughts related to the course. Students will complete the course evaluation. Please bring your computers to class.