HPS 607: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS IN PUBLIC HEALTH
SPRING 2021

TIME: Friday 9 – 11:50

LOCATION: Live Online: Zoom link for class: https://arizona.zoom.us/j/86837281031
Password: 607

INSTRUCTOR: Priscilla Magrath, PhD
Office: Drachman Hall A210
Office Hours: By appointment
E-mail: pmagrath@email.arizona.edu

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: Qualitative Research Methods in Public Health introduces students to theory in qualitative research and to qualitative methods and their practical application in public health research. It will explore selected qualitative theoretical and methodological approaches; discuss qualitative research design, research ethics, indigenous methodologies, and intellectual property rights, and offer students the opportunity to practice techniques for qualitative data collection, management, and analysis.

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This is a skills based class designed to prepare students for independent research. Research skills to be developed include: observational and interviewing skills, sampling, research design, selecting appropriate methods for particular objectives and populations, ethical issues, IRB, data analysis using MAXQDA software and presentation. Classic and more recent social theory relevant to understanding observed/reported behaviors will be discussed. We will explore human behaviors through observations and interviews. Students work in groups of 4 to design and implement a qualitative research project during the semester.

COURSE PREREQUISITE: You have to be a graduate student enrolled in the MEZCOPH in order to be enrolled in this course. Upon approval, graduate students from other departments / colleges may be admitted to this course.

REQUIRED TEXTS: There is one required text book for this course:


ISBN-10: 1473997119

REQUIRED READINGS: All reading materials other than the text book will be provided on Desire to Learn (D2L) under “Content”. Students enrolled in the class will have automatic access to d2l which can be accessed by going to http://d2l.arizona.edu/index.asp.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES: Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

1) Assess selected qualitative research methods, their theoretical basis, pros and cons, and their application in public health.
2) Design qualitative studies and instruments, such as structured observations, interviews and focus group question guides.

3) Conduct qualitative data collection, management, and analysis.

4) Design qualitative research proposals.

5) Prepare a Human Subjects Research and Institutional Review Board (IRB) application.

6) Understand qualitative research ethics

**COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:** The following CORE MPH/Section competencies will be addressed during this course.

(http://www.publichealth.arizona.edu/academics/masters)

1. Analytical Skills:
   - Understanding basic research designs used in public health
   - Evaluate the integrity and comparability of data & identify gaps in data sources
   - Make relevant references from data
   - Understand how the data illuminates ethical, political, scientific, economic, and overall public health issues

2. Communicating Skills:
   - Interpreting and presenting accurately and effectively demographic, statistical, and scientific information for professional and lay audiences by adapting and translating public health concepts to individuals and communities
   - Using all types of media to communicate important public health information

3. Policy Development/Program Planning Skills:
   - Assess and interpret information to develop relevant policy options
   - Develop mechanisms to monitor and evaluate programs

4. Cultural Skills:
   - Developing and adapting approaches to public health problems that take into account cultural differences
   - Interacting competently, respectfully, and professionally with persons from different backgrounds

5. Basic Public Health Science Skills:
   - Understanding research methods in all basic public health sciences

**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

Course requirements include active participation and completion of all assignments. During the semester we will implement a qualitative research project as a team. Assignments will involve practicing various qualitative data collection and analysis techniques individually and/or in teams, then presenting results in class for discussion and to receive feedback from peers. Individual or group products from these assignments will then be submitted on D2L. Separate instruction sheets and rubrics will be provided for each assignment in D2L.

**Skills development (1000 points)**
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>% of Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Group Research Design</td>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Observation Report</td>
<td>Feb 19</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Group Interview Questionnaire</td>
<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>100</td>
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<td>4 Interview Report</td>
<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Class Presentations on Readings</td>
<td>Various</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>6 Identification of themes</td>
<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 Coded Interviews</td>
<td>Apr 9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 Group Class Presentation on Research Project</td>
<td>Apr 23</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>9 Final Essay</td>
<td>May 7</td>
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GRADING/STUDENT EVALUATION: 1000 Total Points. Grading points are based on the following percentages:

A = 90-100% — B = 80-89% — C = 70-79% — D = 60-69% — E = 59% or less

Relation between grades and points earned

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Points</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90 – 100 %</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80 - 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79%</td>
<td>700 – 799</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60 – 69%</td>
<td>600 – 699</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>0 – 59%</td>
<td>500 – 599</td>
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NOTE: All assignments are to be submitted via d2l dropbox under Assignments Tab by midnight of the due date. Late assignments will be subjected to a 5 point deduction for each 24 hour period after the due date.

Assignment Instructions

**Assignment 1: Observation Exercise (100 points)**

**Assignment**: Observe a location for 15-20 minutes. Write a 3 page description based on your observation/participation. Post your description to the D2L Discussion by 11:59 pm on Thursday February 13 so that we can discuss it in class 5.

**Goals**

(i): to learn to notice things. In this exercise the focus is on social interactions.

(ii) to learn to distinguish observation and interpretation. When recording your observation, you need to: (a) describe exactly what you saw (think about reliability – would someone else see the same? And validity – does it represent what is actually there). (b) Add your interpretation/analysis of what you saw.

**Assignment**: Take notes either during or immediately after the observation, whatever feels most comfortable. Based on your notes, write up a 3 page summary including both description and interpretation ready to present to the class.

**Rationale for doing observations**: Many things will not emerge from an interview because (i) people think it is obvious so they don’t mention it; (ii) people are themselves unaware of their
own embodied habitual behavior; (iii) people think it’s unrelated to your topic. The aim is to notice and record everything because you don’t know at first what is going to be important. This contrasts with a survey where you’ve already decided what’s important and cut off the possibility of new questions. The idea is to record everything systematically, using all of your senses. Later you will select what you think is important. Then you will analyze the data you collected.

**Steps in doing an observation**
This is an individual assignment. At least 2 people should do the same observation (same site and time) so that you can compare what you “see.” Try to be discreet. Present yourself as a participant, not just an observer.

1. **Select a site that is appropriate for your research project. (10 points)**
Identify a suitable time to do your observation that will optimize your chances of observing what you aim to observe. This is not necessarily the busiest time – too much information is hard to process but you do want to observe some social interaction.

2. **Map your setting (10 points)**
Note the time of day, day of the week and date (you might want to compare with observations at other times). Start by drawing a map of your setting and writing a description. Estimate the size of the site, include any furniture, signs, posters, or other objects you can see. Are there any windows? Where are they? Describe how things related to your research topic are located and arranged. Are they obvious? Hidden? Next to what other objects? Is there something about the placing or arrangement that invites a person to interact with the items? If so, what is it? Or are they intentionally placed such that it would involve quite an effort to use them?

3. **Describe the atmosphere using all of your sense (10 points)**
What can you hear, smell, see, touch, taste? What kind of mood does this combination of sensations evoke? Excitement? Relaxation? Boredom? Does the atmosphere encourage delay or haste? Does it feel spacious or cramped? How do you know? What is it about the space or the people that brings you to this conclusion?

4. **Describe the people and how they interact within the scene (30)**
   (i) What are people wearing? What does this indicate to you about who they are? How do they demonstrate their social identity and social status?
   (ii) How are they interacting with other people both verbally and non-verbally? How close do they get? Do they touch each other? When do they make eye contact or look away? What are the most significant gestures, expressions, stances, ways of holding the body, gazes.
   (iii) How do they talk to each other? Do they use a specialized language, slang or jargon? How do they indicate their social relationship as strangers, friends, acquaintances or those in a professional relationship? Are there things about this setting that make certain ways of interacting more or less acceptable? In relation to plastics:
      (i) Is using items related to your research topic in this setting optional? Encouraged? Discouraged? Obligatory? Would it be embarrassing not to? How is this information about socially appropriate behavior conveyed? What happens if someone doesn’t behave in the expected manner?
      (ii) did you notice anyone sharing items? Does sharing/not sharing reflect the social relationship or also what is acceptable in this setting?
      (iii) are there other behaviors that you noticed that are acceptable or unacceptable in this setting?
5. **Interpretation/Analysis (20)**
   The goal is to try to learn how you see things. What do you treat as important? Why? Does it relate to a theory or to your project topic? Does it relate to your experiences or personality? Try to identify relations of power: gender, social class, professional hierarchies and roles. How can you tell what the social position of the individuals is? What are the signs? Dress, language, body language, posture, deference. Are some people staff or faculty while others are students? How can you tell?

6. **Personal reflections on the Exercise (20)**

**Rubric for Observation Assignment**
1. Site selection (20)
2. Map (descriptive or visual) (20)
3. Atmosphere (20)
4. Social interactions (60)
5. Your Interpretation (40)
6. Your personal reflections on the exercise (40)

**Assignment 3: Interview (100 points)**
1. Carry out one interview based on the questionnaire you designed:
   (i) If the individual agrees, audio-record the interview.
   (ii) Take notes either during the interview or immediately after. Include direct quotes if possible. Use the standard format for notes.

   After the interview:
   (i) write a report of the interview based on your notes. Include direct quotes.
   (ii) do a full transcription of the audio-recording – include a key
   (iii) compare the report you wrote before transcribing and the transcription – how much did the transcription add?

   Post your report and transcription to the D2L Discussion post by 11:59 pm Friday March 13 11:59 pm 2020.

2. **Steps in doing your interviews:**
1. Find someone to interview who is interested to talk about your research topic.
2. Ask their permission and schedule the time and place for the interview. Make sure that you will have time to work on the interview notes immediately after the interview, before you forget the details;
3. Before the interview get written consent, either using the IRB consent form (Group 3: plastic straws research) or using your own consent form.
4. Carry out the interview, audio-recording and notes.
5. Write your report
3. Format for Report

(i) Date:
(ii) Time of day:
(iii) Location:
(iv) Name of interviewee (or number or pseudonym)
(v) Name of interviewer (your name)
(vi) Duration of interview:
(vii) Atmosphere or description of setting (All introductory info: 10 points)
(viii) Summary from your notes written during or after the interview – include key points as you remembered them – include both what was said and observations on setting and behaviors (20 points)
(ix) 2 page transcription from audio-recording including transcription key (30 points)
(x) Reflection – review your experience of (i) recruiting someone to interview (ii) conducting the interview, (iii) taking notes (iv) doing the transcription – what did you learn? What were the challenges? (20 points)
(xi) What was the difference between the content of the transcription and the content of the notes? (10 points)
(xii) What would you do differently next time? (10 points)

Total: 100 points.

Assignment 6: Identifying Themes (100 points)
Due: Friday March 26 11:59 pm
100 points
Goal 1: to practice identifying themes
Goal 2: to see how you tend to identify themes – what stands out to you? Why?

Method:
Step 1: Select a paragraph from your interview transcript that looks interesting to you. Identify where this is in your transcript (page reference and/or time stamp) (10 points)
Step 2: Identify what you think are the important themes (30 points)
Step 3: for each theme that you identified, which technique for identifying themes does this fit? (30 points)
Step 4: write a one paragraph reflection on how you identified themes. What do you “see” in the data? What assumptions do you bring to your data? What might you want to follow-up on if you had the chance? Something you don’t quite understand? (30 points)

Assignment 9. Final Essay (200 points)
The purpose of this assignment is to document what you have learned about qualitative research methods. Please answer the following questions drawing on your experience of practicing these methods, readings and class discussions. You are expected to write about half a page (250 words) for your answer to each question.

1. Your friend is considering using observations for their dissertation research. What advice would you have for them? Please use examples from your experience doing observations for the plastic straws research and/or readings to back up your advice.

2. You plan to use in-depth interviews for your dissertation research. Briefly describe your research topic (real or imagined). What challenges might you face in planning and conducting
interviews? Include discussion of potential misunderstanding or miscommunication. Explain why these issues might arise and how you would address these issues?

3. You have been hired to conduct a Needs Assessment in Maternal and Child Health in (a country of your choice). You are expected to conduct focus groups as part of the assessment, as well as interviews. Explain what role focus groups would play, their strengths and weaknesses.

4. Your friend is confused about the difference between Discourse Analysis and Narrative Analysis. Provide a clear explanation of the differences between these approaches.

This assignment is worth 200 points. Points will be divided equally among the questions (50 points each).

COURSE POLICIES

CLASS ATTENDANCE/PARTICIPATION: All students are required to attend each, entire class. This is an interactive graduate seminar and active participation of every student is expected. Most weeks two students will be doing class presentations on the readings and developing discussion questions. It is important to read the material in advance and give it some careful thought, so that you come to class prepared to discuss information and opinions. Absences due to urgent matters, scheduling conflicts or emergencies need to be excused prior to the absence if at all possible, or within 7 days of the class missed. One unexcused absence is permitted. Each additional, unexcused absence will be noted and will affect your grade. Students are responsible for the materials and activities covered during the class missed. The UA’s policy concerning class attendance, participation, and administrative drops is available at: http://catalog.arizona.edu/policy/class-attendance-participation-and-administrative-drop. The UA policy regarding absences for any sincerely held religious belief, observance or practice will be accommodated where reasonable, http://policy.arizona.edu/human-resources/religious-accommodation-policy. Absences pre-approved by the UA Dean of Students (or Dean Designee) will be honored, http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/

COMMUNICATIONS: You are responsible for reading emails sent to your UA account from your professor and for reading the announcements that are placed on the course web site. Information about readings, news events, your grades, assignments and other course related topics will be communicated to you with these electronic methods. Please set notifications in D2L so that you will receive a text message or email whenever an Announcement is posted on the D2L course site. The official policy can be found at: http://www.registrar.arizona.edu/emailpolicy.htm.

ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS: At the University of Arizona, we strive to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please contact the Disability Resource Center (520-621-3268, https://drc.arizona.edu) to establish reasonable accommodations.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: All UA students are responsible for upholding the University of Arizona Code of Academic Integrity, available through the office of the Dean of Students and online: The official policy found at http://deanofstudents.arizona.edu/codeofacademicintegrity.

CLASSROOM BEHAVIOR: Students are expected to be familiar with the UA Policy on Disruptive Behavior in an Instructional Setting found at http://policy.arizona.edu/disruptive-behavior-instructional and the Policy on Threatening Behavior by Students found at http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/disruptive-behavior-instructional-setting.

THREATENING BEHAVIOR POLICY: The UA Threatening Behavior by Students Policy prohibits threats of physical harm to any member of the University community, including to one’s self, http://policy.arizona.edu/education-and-student-affairs/threatening-behavior-students.

UA Smoking and Tobacco Policy: The purpose of this Policy is to establish the University of Arizona’s (University) commitment to protect the health of University faculty, staff, students, and visitors on its campuses and in its vehicles. The official policy can be found at: http://policy.arizona.edu/ethics-and-conduct/smoking-and-tobacco-policy

University Course Policies: https://academicaffairs.arizona.edu/syllabus-policies

Syllabus Changes: Information contained in the course syllabus, other than the grade and absence policies, may be subject to change with reasonable advance notice, as deemed appropriate.
### COURSE SCHEDULE
**CPH 607: Qualitative Research Methods in Public Health**  
**Spring 2021**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Key Reading</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Jan 15</td>
<td>Introductions and syllabus What is Qualitative Research Semester research project outline</td>
<td>Ch 1 + 2 Green and Thorogood&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Jan 22</td>
<td>Ethical issues and IRB Discussion</td>
<td>APHA code of ethics Morse</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Jan 29</td>
<td>Validity and Sampling in Qualitative Research: how many interviews are enough?</td>
<td>Morse Guest How many interviews are enough?</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Feb 5</td>
<td>Observing Human Behavior 1</td>
<td>Bourdieu readings</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Feb 12</td>
<td>Observing Human Behavior 2</td>
<td>Riggins Power of Things Neal Theory of Habit.</td>
<td>Observation 1</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Feb 19</td>
<td>Participatory approaches discussion</td>
<td>Israel, Stoeker, Marent, Cornwall</td>
<td>Observation 2</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Feb 26</td>
<td>Interviews: Discussion</td>
<td>Ch 5 Green &amp; Thorogood, Flicker, Mandersen</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Mar 5</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussion</td>
<td>Mack Focus Groups</td>
<td>Questionnaires</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Mar 12</td>
<td>Analysis 1: Identifying Themes Discussion and Power Point presentation + MAXQDA intro</td>
<td>Ryan and Bernard Techniques to identify themes</td>
<td>Interview</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Mar 19</td>
<td>Analysis 2: Code Book MAXQDA practical in class</td>
<td>MAXQDA guides/videos Ch 10 Green and Thorogood</td>
<td>Themes</td>
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<td>Mar 26</td>
<td>Analysis 3: Coding MAXQDA practical in class</td>
<td>Ryan Measuring the Typicality of Text</td>
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<td>Apr 3</td>
<td>Reading Day – No Class</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<td>Analysis 4: Inter-coder agreement MAXQDA</td>
<td>Ch 11 G&amp;Thorogood</td>
<td>Coded Interview</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Apr 16</td>
<td>Analysis 5: Retrieve segments</td>
<td>Ch 12 Green and Thorogood</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>Apr 23</td>
<td>Qualitative Analysis</td>
<td>Ch 11 Green + Thorogood</td>
<td>Class Presentations</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Apr 30</td>
<td>Mixed Methods discussion</td>
<td>Onwuegbuzie</td>
<td>Final paper due May 7</td>
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<sup>1</sup> Additional readings and assignments will be provided throughout the semester.