University of Illinois at Chicago
Department of Educational Psychology

Fall 2021 Course Syllabus

Applied Qualitative Research Methods
EPSY 594: Special Topics in Educational Psychology
Asynchronous online course: https://uic.blackboard.com

Instructor Information

Instructor
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The best way to contact me is by email or posting a message to the course Blackboard site. My goal is to respond within 24 hours, Monday through Friday. During busy weeks, it may take me 48 hours to respond. Please send or post a follow up message if you don't receive a reply from me.

Office Hours
I schedule office hours as a space for us to get to know each other, discuss course material and assignments, provide and receive feedback, and discuss your interests and goals. I am available by appointment to meet via Zoom or by phone.

Course Overview

Description
This course introduces key concepts and methods of 'qualitative research', an umbrella term that refers to a family of research traditions, methodologies, and methods. The course focuses on the practical application of qualitative methods in applied research and evaluation settings in formal, informal, workplace, and community-based educational contexts. The course will provide a conceptual overview of the characteristics, uses, and ethical considerations associated with qualitative methods of inquiry in applied contexts. Students will also gain practical, hands-on experience carrying out qualitative research by planning and conducting observations and interviews and analyzing the resulting data.

Course Structure
This is an asynchronous online class that includes weekly readings, recorded lectures, and discussions that you will complete on your own schedule each week. The Blackboard course site https://uic.blackboard.com is the starting point for all course components. Each week of class will begin on Tuesday.

Prerequisites
There are no prerequisites for this course.

Syllabus
The syllabus is intended to be a dynamic document that can be adjusted as the semester unfolds.

Learning Objectives

After completing this course, students will be able to:
- Articulate key characteristics of qualitative research methods and how these methods differ from other approaches to inquiry;
- Describe the uses of qualitative inquiry in applied research and evaluation settings and the ethical considerations associated with qualitative inquiry;
- Gather qualitative data by planning and conducting observations and interviews;
- Conduct basic thematic analysis of observation and interview data;
- Discuss the strategies and arguments associated with maximizing and assessing quality of qualitative inquiry in applied contexts; and
- Outline considerations related to representation and reporting findings of qualitative inquiry in applied contexts.

Course Materials

Textbooks
Glesne, C. (2016). *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction* (5th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.

Other Readings
Journal articles and book chapters are posted on the Blackboard course site.

Lectures
Lectures will be recorded and posted on the Blackboard course site.

Software and Equipment
You will need the following software and/or equipment for your data collection and analysis activities this semester.

- **Recording**. You will need access to software or a digital audio recorder that allows you to record and replay your interviews. You can use Zoom, a cell phone app, a computer app, or a handheld digital recorder for this purpose. Be sure your software or recorder can record and store 1.5 to 2 hours of audio data. If using Zoom to record your interviews, be sure **not** to record video, as our informed consent process does not cover video recording. You need to adjust your video recording settings prior to beginning your session.

- **Transcription**. You will transcribe your recorded interviews. I recommend using an automated transcription service to produce a rough transcript for you to review and correct. Zoom includes an automated transcription feature powered by Otter.ai, which you need to turn before you

start the session. Another option is a web-based service that enables you to upload an audio file and receive an automated transcript. These services include Temi, Otter.ai, and Sonix; some offer a free trial. A third option is using word processing software or transcription software such as InqScribe or Express Scribe to manually transcribe your recordings.

- **Analysis**. We will use ATLAS.ti to support the analysis of your interview and observation data. UIC provides free remote access, and you will receive training in using the software.

Course Requirements

Graded Assignments
As part of this course, you will complete a course project, provide and receive peer feedback about project components, and participate in class discussions. Each requirement is briefly described below, and full instructions and rubrics are posted on Blackboard. You will assess your own participation in the peer feedback activities and class discussions.

Course Project
You will complete a mini qualitative research project over the course of the semester. You will conduct 2 observations (45-60 minutes each) and 2 interviews (45-60 minutes each) and analyze the resulting data. Given the ongoing public health situation, observations and interviews can be conducted in person or virtually.

The first three parts of the project have been organized to address human subjects protections. The instructions on Blackboard outline the implications for your grade if those steps are not completed. Please note that approval by UIC's Institutional Review Board (IRB) is not required when data are collected for class purposes. Without IRB approval, you are not allowed to use the data for publication or presenting at a conference.

>*Part 1. Human subjects protection training* (5 points)
>Online training about research ethics and protecting human subjects when conducting social, behavioral, and/or educational research. You will submit certificates indicating that you have satisfactorily completed this training.

>*Part 2. Data collection plan* (10 points)
>An overview of the observations and interviews you plan to conduct this semester. You will be authorized to conduct observations for the course project after your plan is approved.

>*Part 3. Interview guide* (15 points)
>The document you will use to conduct interviews with two different adults, including the main questions and follow up questions you plan to ask and the scripts you will use to begin the interview, obtain informed consent, and conclude the interview. You will be authorized to conduct interviews for the course project after your interview guide is approved. I will provide an informed consent letter that you will share with your interview participants.
>*Part 4. Data and analytic memos* (30 points)
>A compilation of the data you have gathered and your analysis of those data:

- Observation field notes (2): Detailed written records of your observation sessions, including a description of the setting, activities, and interactions you observed as well as your reflections and preliminary analysis.
- Interview transcripts (2): Complete transcriptions of your interviews, accompanied by your reflections on the process of conducting the interview.
- Analytic memos (2): Memos that share the findings you have drawn from your data, your thinking about your analysis, analytic challenges you have experienced, questions that have emerged, and possible next steps.

Part 5. Reflection paper (20 points)
Your reflections on your data collection and analysis activities, your positionality as a qualitative researcher, the peer feedback you provided and received this semester, what you have learned about qualitative research methods, and what you have learned about how you might employ these methods in applied research and evaluation settings.

Peer Feedback Activities
You will participate in a small group that will have a dedicated space to discuss your data collection and analysis activities over the course of the semester and request, receive, and provide peer feedback. I encourage you to also ask questions, share ideas, and solve problems together.

At three points during the semester, groups will provide and receive structured peer feedback. These peer feedback activities are timed to provide formative input and help you learn from others' work, with the aim of strengthening the next step in your data collection or analysis process and your final course project.

Observation fieldnote (15 points)
You will share your fieldnote from your first observation for peer feedback and provide feedback on other students' fieldnotes.

Interview transcript (15 points)
You will share the transcript of your first interview for peer feedback and provide feedback on other students' transcripts.

Analytic memo (15 points)
You will share an analytic memo that shares your thinking about your analysis of your observation fieldnotes for peer feedback and provide feedback on other students' analytic memos.

Class Discussions
We will use the Blackboard discussion board to support interaction among the full class throughout the semester. In addition to weekly discussion forums for comments and questions, we will engage in 7 structured class discussions. You will participate in a *Getting Started Discussion* (5 points) and at least 4 of our 6 *Topical Discussions* (5 points each, 20 points total).

Due Dates

Assignment	Due Date	Points
Project Part 1. Human subjects protection training	9/5	5
Project Part 2. Data collection plan	9/13	10
Peer Feedback: Observation fieldnote	10/11	15
Project Part 3. Interview guide	10/11	15
Peer Feedback: Interview transcript	11/8	15
Peer Feedback: Analytic memo	11/15	15
Project Part 4. Data and analytic memos	12/3	30
Project Part 5. Reflection paper	12/3	20
Class Discussions • Getting started discussion • Topical discussions	 8/30 Varies	 5 20
		150

Late Submissions
The course schedule is designed to provide structure and scaffolding for completing the course requirements, providing and receiving timely peer feedback, and maximizing your learning throughout the semester. I have specified deadlines for your graded assignments, and those assignments are due via Blackboard on the specified date. If you are unable to submit an assignment by the due date/time, contact me at least one day in advance to let me know that the assignment is likely to be late and negotiate an extension. There is no penalty to your grade for submitting assignments after the due dates; however, I encourage you to meet the deadlines whenever possible to maximize your learning and participation in the class community. You must submit all assignments by 11:59 pm on 12/2 in order for me to include the points for those assignments when calculating your final grade.

Letter Grade Assignment
Your final grade in this course will be based on the number of points you earn out of the total number of points possible. It is not based on your rank relative to other students, and grades are assigned without limits on the proportion of each letter grade given in the course. Course grades will be assigned as follows:

Letter Grade	Percentage
A	90 - 100%
B	80 - 89%
C	70 - 79%
D	60 - 69%
F	0 - 59%

Learning Environment

It is my goal that participating in this class is a welcoming and inclusive experience for all students; that students' learning needs are addressed both in and out of class; and that the diversity of identities, experiences, backgrounds, and beliefs students bring to this course are welcomed as resources and strengths. If you encounter or anticipate aspects of the instruction or design of this course that present barriers to your participation, accurate assessment, or achievement, please contact me at your earliest opportunity.

Community Agreements

- We will use a set of community agreements as our ground rules for engaging in class discussions. Our aim is to ensure that all members of the class feel safe, valued, and respected. I have adapted these community agreements from the University of Michigan Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (2021), as well as Brookfield & Preskill (2005) and Stavredes (2011). I invite you to suggest additions or changes to these agreements, and I will add our updated agreements to this section of the syllabus.

    o **Participation**. Engage in the discussions to bring your voice into the space, explore ideas, and contribute your perspectives so others can learn from you. Comment to share your ideas, not to debate or persuade. It's OK to ask questions and share the limitations of your knowledge and opinions.
    o **Welcome**. Help others feel welcome to participate and safe to express their ideas and opinions. Recognize that others' participation creates a richer and more meaningful learning experience for all. Take time to express appreciation to others for their thoughtful comments and insights.
    o **Listening**. Take time to read and understand others' experiences and opinions. Remember to circle back and revisit others' discussion posts and comments after you initially contribute. Build on what others have offered, emphasizing responding as much as initiating.
    o **Respect**. Speak with care, understanding that your words have effects on others. If you learn that something you've shared was experienced as disrespectful or marginalizing, listen carefully and try to understand that perspective. Learn how you can do better in the future.
    o **Assumptions**. Understand that others will come to the discussions with different experiences and positionality that you do. Be careful about assumptions and generalizations you make based only on your own experience. Be open to hearing and learning from perspectives. Avoid assumptions about any member of the class or generalizations about social groups. Do not ask individuals to speak for their (perceived) social group.
    o **Mutuality**. Be concerned about your own learning, as well as others' learning. Remember that your peers' learning is partly dependent upon your engagement. Take discussions and small group work seriously.
    o **Mistakes**. Understand that we are bound to make mistakes in this space as we engage with new ideas and learn new skills. Strive to see your mistakes and others' mistakes as valuable elements of the learning process.

- o **Openness**. Be open to changing your perspectives based on what you learn from others. Try to explore new ideas and possibilities. Think critically about the factors that have shaped your perspectives. Seriously consider viewpoints that differ from your current thinking.
- o **Deepening**. Look for opportunities to add depth and subtlety to the conversation. Identify and share themes and overriding issues, drawing on course materials, your reflections, and your personal experiences.

Students Feedback

Please let me know if there are ways I can improve the effectiveness or experience of the course for you personally or for other students. Your suggestions are encouraged and appreciated. To share feedback, I invite you to schedule a meeting with me and/or provide anonymous comments through the mid-course feedback survey or end-of-course student evaluation survey.

Disability Accommodations

UIC is committed to full inclusion and participation of people with disabilities in all aspects of university life. If you face or anticipate disability-related barriers while at UIC, please connect with the Disability Resource Center (DRC) at drc.uic.edu, via email at drc@uic.edu, or call (312) 413-2183 to create a plan for reasonable accommodations. In order to receive accommodations, you will need to disclose the disability to the DRC, complete an interactive registration process with the DRC, and provide me with a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Upon receipt of an LOA, I will gladly work with you and the DRC to implement approved accommodations.

Academic Integrity

UIC is an academic community committed to providing an environment in which research, learning, and scholarship can flourish and in which all endeavors are guided by academic and professional integrity. In this community, all members including faculty, administrators, staff, and students alike share the responsibility to uphold the highest standards of academic honesty and quality of academic work so that such a collegial and productive environment exists. As a student and member of the UIC community, you are expected to adhere to the Community Standards of integrity, accountability, and respect in all of your academic endeavors. Please review the UIC Student Disciplinary Policy for additional information about the process by which instances of academic misconduct are handled towards the goal of developing responsible student behavior.

Resources

Technical Support

If you have technical problems with the course Blackboard site, please contact the Learning Technology Solutions help desk at lts@uic.edu, 312-413-0003, or https://accc.uic.edu/support/. You can learn more about using Blackboard here: https://help.blackboard.com/Filter/Student/College_or_University

Campus Resources

UIC provides a variety of resources to support students' academic success—such as the University Library, Writing Center, and Cultural Centers—and students' personal wellbeing, such as the Counseling Center, Campus Advocacy Network (assistance related to sexual assault and domestic or dating

violence), and Pop-Up Pantry (free food for students facing hardship). You can also find links to these resources on Blackboard, and a comprehensive list of resources is available here: https://today.uic.edu/resources/current-student-resources.

Course Schedule and UIC Deadlines

Religious Holidays
I will make every effort to avoid due dates that fall on religious holidays. If you wish to observe your religious holidays, please notify me by the tenth day of the semester of the date when you will be absent unless the religious holiday is observed on or before the tenth day of the semester. In such cases, please notify me at least five days in advance of the date when you will be absent. I will make every reasonable effort to honor your request and not penalize you for missing class activities. If an assignment is due during your absence, you will be given an assignment equivalent to the one completed by those students in attendance. Students may appeal through campus grievance procedures for religious accommodations.

Drop Deadline
Graduate students may drop courses via my.UIC.edu through the end of the 2nd week of classes for fall and spring semesters. Graduate degree-seeking students and non-degree students assigned to a program can drop classes during weeks 3 through 10 in the fall and spring semesters with approval of the Director of Graduate Studies of their degree program. The UIC Academic Calendar outlines deadlines and information about cancelling tuition and fees and receiving a W (Withdrawn) grade on your academic record.

Incompletes
UIC provides the option of requesting a grade of Incomplete for a course when a student is unable to complete the required work by the grading deadline for reasons that are beyond your control. If a situation arises that prevents you from submitting all assignments by 11:59 pm on 12/2, you need to email me prior to that deadline to request a grade of Incomplete. We will negotiate a schedule for completing the outstanding work, and I will then submit an "I" as your final grade in this course. Once you submit the remaining assignments, I will replace the "I" with your final letter grade. An "I" must be removed by the end of one calendar year after the term in which it was received. An "I" that is not replaced by a letter grade by the deadline will remain on your record as an "I", with no credit earned. You can find additional information on the UIC Graduate College website.

Schedule

Week Begins on Tue	Topics and Readings	Assignments Due on Mon (Exceptions are noted)

Week 1
8/24
	Characteristics and uses of qualitative research in applied settings
	    Text: Chapter 1
	    Posted on Blackboard:
	• Merriam (2009), pp. 21-38
	• Page (2000)
	
	Example of characteristics and uses of qualitative research:
	• Jarrett & Coba-Rodriguez (2018)
		Discussion: Getting started due 8/30

Week 2
8/31
	The role of the researcher: Ethics, relationships, and positionality
	    Text: Chapters 5, 6
	    Posted on Blackboard:
	• Merriam et al. (2001)
	• Peshkin (1988)
	• Reyes (2020)
	
	Example of reflexive analysis:
	• Flores (2016)
		Project Part 1. Human subjects training due **Sun** 9/5
		
		Discussion: Role of the qualitative researcher **Sun** 9/5

Week 3
9/7
	Planning applied qualitative research: Questions, design, and sampling
	    Text: Chapter 2
	    Posted on Blackboard:
	• Hatch (2002), pp. 41-54
	• Maxwell (2013), pp. 87-104
	• Small (2009)
	
	Note: If you plan to gather data virtually, also read:
	• Roberts, Pavlakis, & Richards (2021)
		Project Part 2. Data collection plan due 9/13

Week 4 9/14	Gathering qualitative data: Observations, Part 1 Posted on Blackboard: • Angrosino (2007) • Patton (2015), pp. 329-344, 358-374	Discussion: Observation practice due 9/20
Week 5 9/21	Gathering qualitative data: Observations, Part 2 Posted on Blackboard: • Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw (2011), pp. 45-87 • Wolfinger (2002)	

Week 6 9/28	Gathering qualitative data: Interviewing, Part 1 Text: Chapter 4 Posted on Blackboard: • Rubin & Rubin (2012), pp. 115-138 • Small & Cook (2021)	Discussion: Listening to an interview due 10/4
Week 7 10/5	Gathering qualitative data: Interviewing, Part 2 • Seidman (2013), pp. 81-96 • Weiss (1994), pp. 61-120	Project Part 3. Interview guide due 10/11 Peer feedback: Observation fieldnotes due 10/11
Week 8 10/12	Thematic analysis of qualitative data, Part 1 Text: Chapter 7 • Braun & Clarke (2006) • Ryan & Bernard (2003) *Example of inductive coding:* Griffith, Hurd, & Hussain (2019) *Example of deductive and inductive coding:* Colvin, White, Akiva, & Wardrip (2020)	
Week 9 10/19	Thematic analysis of qualitative data, Part 2: Using ATLAS.ti software	Discussion: Coding qualitative data due 10/25
Week 10 10/26	Thematic analysis of qualitative data, Part **3** Posted on Blackboard: • Miles, Huberman & Saldaña (2014), pp. 69-104 • Saldaña (2016), pp. 1-42	
Week 11 11/2	No new topic	Peer feedback: Interview transcript due 11/8
Week 12 11/9	Maximizing and assessing the quality of applied qualitative research Posted on Blackboard: *Note: These readings should be read in chronological order as they build on one another.* • Lincoln & Guba (1985), pp. 289-331 • Creswell & Miller (2000) • Tracy (2010)	Peer feedback: Analytic memo due 11/15 Discussion: Quality of qualitative inquiry due 11/15

Week 13 11/16	Representing and reporting findings in applied contexts
	    Text: Chapter 8
	    Posted on Blackboard:
	    • Evergreen (2019), pp. 207-255
	    • Krumer-Nevo & Sidi (2012)
		Discussion: Reporting findings 11/22

Week 14 11/23	No class activities	

Week 15 11/30	Mixing qualitative and quantitative methods
	    Posted on Blackboard:
	    • Creswell, Slope, Plano Clark, & Green (2006)
	    • Greene (2007), pp. 17-30
	
	Example of mixed methods study:
	    • Hall & Ryan (2011)
	
	Course wrap-up
		Project Part 4. Data and analytic memos due **Fri** 12/3
		
		Project Part 5. Reflection paper due **Fri** 12/3