



Course title:	Qualitative Methodologies for Socially Just Inquiry
Course #/term:	670, Winter 2021
Time and place:	Monday 2pm-5pm, Online
Credit hours:	3
Prerequisites:	Foundation Essentials Required
Instructor:	Katie Schultz
Pronouns:	She/Her/Hers
Contact info:	Email: katieasc@umich.edu Please include SW670 in email subject line
Office hours:	Tuesdays 12-2pm and Friday 4-5pm; Please schedule meeting times using this link: Schultz Office Hours

In the spirit of healing and health, I acknowledge and honor that the University of Michigan, resides on the traditional territories of the Niswi Ishkodewan Anishinaabeg: The Three Fires People who are the Ojibwe, Odawa, and Potawatomi along with their neighbors the Seneca, Delaware, Shawnee and Wyandot nations.

1. Course Statement

a. Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to the process of qualitative inquiry with a particular focus on engaging in anti-oppressive, socially just, culturally sensitive, and decolonizing research activities. It will introduce students to the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative inquiry as well as expose them to basic issues in designing and implementing qualitative research projects. Students enrolled in the Evaluation and Research Pathway must complete two required foundational courses before completing their specialized electives in methodologies and methods. This course is the qualitative research foundational requirement.

b. Course Objectives

1. Understand how epistemological assumptions—implicit and explicit—undergird all research endeavors and the relationships among epistemology, theory, methodology, and methods in designing anti-oppressive research projects (EPAS 1)
2. Distinguish between a broad range of qualitative methodologies (EPAS 9)
3. Demonstrate skills in creating soundly designed qualitative projects (EPAS 7, 9)

4. Understand the iterative nature of qualitative inquiry (EPAS 9)
5. Demonstrate the ability to collect empirical evidence ('talk'/interviews, observations, and documents or artifacts) through hands-on activities (EPAS 4, 9)
6. Demonstrate the ability to utilize a variety of analysis techniques through hands-on activities (EPAS 9)
7. Demonstrate an ability to responsibly represent and disseminate study results through hands-on activities (EPAS 4, 9)
8. Demonstrate a critical ability to evaluate published qualitative studies (EPAS 4, 9)

c. Course Design

Students will be exposed to contemporary epistemological debates (ways of knowing). They will critically engage with anti-oppressive research frameworks while also being exposed to an array of qualitative methodologies (ways of investigating). Examples might include the following: ethnography, auto-ethnography, case study, narrative analysis, critical discourse analysis, grounded theory, oral/life history, focus groups, phenomenology, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism, participatory and community-engaged methods, photovoice, or arts-based methods. Course topics include critical examination of the epistemological and methodological underpinnings of qualitative approaches to inquiry; the positionality and role of the researcher; ethical and political issues unique to qualitative inquiry; challenges of representation (interpreting, sharing, and writing up results) as well as assessing the quality of published studies. Student will practice framing research questions, collecting non-numeric empirical evidence (through interviews, observation, and document or artifact acquisition), analyzing empirical evidence, and representing results. Throughout the term, special emphasis will be placed on meaning-making, situated knowledge, stand-point, and power relationships in knowledge creation and practice evaluation.

d. Intensive focus on PODS

This course integrates PODS content and skills with a special emphasis on the identification of theories, practice and/or policies that promote social justice, illuminate injustices and are consistent with scientific and professional knowledge. Through the use of a variety of instructional methods, this course will support students developing a vision of social justice, learn to recognize and reduce mechanisms that support oppression and injustice, work toward social justice processes, apply intersectionality and intercultural frameworks and strengthen critical consciousness, self-knowledge and self-awareness to facilitate PODS learning.

This course integrates PODS content and skills by emphasizing tensions among anti-oppressive, decolonizing, and Euro-centric research approaches. Students will be encouraged to investigate their own embodied sources of knowledge and critically assess how it informs their worldview. They will investigate how power and privilege are related to the research endeavor and the researcher's positionality relative to participants and communities. Students will be encouraged to critically interrogate and deconstruct mechanisms embedded in research

processes that reproduce Euro-centric frameworks and will engage with skill-building activities designed to promote socially just and anti-oppressive knowledge development.

2. Class Requirements

a. Text and class materials

There is no required book for the course. Assigned readings and other materials will be posted on Canvas under Modules → Week #. Please let me know if any materials are inaccessible (e.g., articles are not compatible with a screen reader or videos do not include closed captions).

b. Class schedule

PLEASE NOTE: This syllabus is a working document. Changes to the schedule, materials, or course will be announced via Canvas. Be sure that you **have Canvas Announcements enabled** (Account → Notifications → Announcement).

Week 1: 1/25

Topics: Introductions to the course and each other

Week 2: 2/1

Topics: Methodologies vs. Methods
Epistemologies & Qualitative Inquiry
Theoretical Frameworks & Approaches
Due: Engagement Part I (Plan)

Week 3: 2/8

Topics: Positionality & Reflexivity
Memo-Writing
Guest Speaker: Nina Jackson Levin – [Scholar Profile](#)

Week 4: 2/15

Topics: Community-engaged Research & Critical Ethnography
Guest Speaker: Dr. Lisa Wexler – [Faculty Profile](#)
Due: Reflexivity Memo – Situating Self

Week 5: 2/22

Topics: Reliability, Validity & Rigor in Qualitative Research
Drawing Conclusions in Qualitative Research

Week 6: 3/1

Topics: Sampling
Data Collection: Interviews & Surveys

Week 7: 3/8

Topics: Data Analysis: Introduction to Coding

Week 8: 3/15

Topics: Thematic Data Analysis
Guest Speaker: Dr. Danae Dotolo – [Faculty Profile](#)

Week 9: 3/22

Topics: Other Types of Data & Critical Discourse Analysis
Guest Speaker: Dr. Heather Storer – [Faculty Profile](#)

Week 10: 3/29

Topics: Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis, & Grounded Theory

Week 11: 4/5

Topics: Data Presentation & Publications
Due: Qualitative Interviews

Week 12: 4/12

Topics: Qualitative Data in Mixed Methods Research
Guest Speaker: Dr. Dana Prince – [Faculty Profile](#)
Due: Engagement Part II (Self-Assessment)

Week 13: 4/19

Topics: Review & Recap
Due: Memo Portfolio

c. Assignments

Assignments should be submitted via Canvas before the start of class on their due date unless otherwise specified.

Assignment	Percent	Due
Engagement	20	Week 2 & Week 12 (Ongoing)
Reflexivity Memo	15	Week 4
Qualitative Interviews	35	Week 11

Final Portfolio	30	Ongoing & Week 13
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Engagement: Includes engaging with the content during class and on Canvas, completing discussions, assignments, ungraded quizzes, etc. In addition to attending class, you are expected to arrive having reviewed assigned materials and be prepared to actively participate in the learning process. There will be a series of ungraded activities, discussion prompts, and in class group work to help you take in the content; these will be factored into the engagement grade. You will also outline personal goals for engagement in the course and assess yourself on those at the end of the semester.

Reflexivity Memo – Situating Self: You will be asked to write a reflexive statement considering how your own autobiography and social positions link to your scholarly interests and affect how you approach research. Your memo can be submitted in a variety of formats – essay, zine, illustrated, video, etc. This will be submitted as a standalone assignment as well as included in your memo portfolio at the end of the semester.

Qualitative Interviews – Data Collection: Working in groups, you will be asked to draft a research question and interview guide related to a topic of interest to you as MSW students at UMich. Splitting into pairs, partners among the group will conduct brief recorded interviews. Interviews will be analyzed using first round coding methods. You will be asked to submit the research question, interview guide, coded transcripts, and a reflexive memo on the process.

Final Portfolio: Research is fundamentally a writing endeavor. You will be asked to respond to guided prompts as well as “memo” about your learning – what you are learning and questions you have about the qualitative research process – throughout the semester. These memos are intended to engage you in a process of learning through writing. At the end of the semester you will turn in a portfolio of memos and a short paper summarizing what you have learned in this course about qualitative research.

d. Attendance

If you need to miss class, please contact me in advance *at least 24 hours before an expected absence, or within 24 hours of an unexpected absence/emergency*. Routine tardiness that disrupts the class will be considered in your class engagement grade. Note: If you are absent from class, you are still responsible for any assignments due that day. Please review the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) found in the MSW Student Guide.

e. Grading

Letter grades are assigned to point totals according to the following scale:

100 = A+	87-89 = B+	77-79 = C+
94-99 = A	83-86 = B	73-76 = C
90-93 = A-	80-82 = B-	70-72 = C-

Late Assignment Policy: Please communicate with me as soon as possible if you anticipate problems with a due date. Unless this is due to an unexpected event/emergency, requests for an extension on an assignment must be made at least 48 hours in advance. Without advance arrangements, assignments turned in after the due date/time will receive a 3% deduction from for each day past due and not accepted after one week.

I will do my best to assess and provide feedback on your work. If you believe you have been graded inaccurately or unfairly on an assignment, please submit the mistake you believe has been made and the alternate grade you suggest. Challenges to a grade must be in writing, specific, and based on substantive arguments (or mathematical errors). I reserve the right to re-grade the work. This may result in a higher or lower grade and that grade will be final.

See also: [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#); [Student Grievance Process](#); and [Grades for Special Circumstances](#) in the MSW Student Guide.

f. Class Recording and Course Materials

Course content may be audio/video recorded and made available to other students in this course. As part of your participation, you may be recorded. If you do not wish to be recorded, please contact me to discuss alternative arrangements. Students may not record or distribute class activity without written permission from me, except as part of accommodations for students with disabilities. If you have an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings, please share that with me in advance of any recording. Recordings may only be used for your private use. Additional information on class recordings can be found here: [Recording and Privacy Concerns FAQ](#)

g. COVID-19 Statement

For the safety of all students, faculty, and staff on campus, it is important for each of us to be mindful of safety measures that have been put in place for our protection. By returning to campus, you have acknowledged your responsibility for protecting the collective health of our community. Your participation in this course on an in-person/hybrid basis is conditional upon your adherence to all safety measures mandated by the state of Michigan and the University, including maintaining physical distancing of six feet from others, and properly wearing a face covering in class. Other applicable safety measures may be described in the [Wolverine Culture of Care](#) and the [University's Face Covering Policy for COVID-19](#). Your ability to participate in this course in-person/hybrid may be impacted by failure to comply with campus safety measures. Individuals seeking to request an accommodation related to the face covering requirement under the Americans with Disabilities Act should contact the [Office for Institutional Equity](#). If you are unable or unwilling to adhere to these safety measures while in a face-to-face class setting, you will be required to participate on a remote basis. I also encourage you to review the [Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#) and the [COVID-related Addendum to the Statement of Student Rights and Responsibilities](#).

h. Health-Related Class Absences

Please evaluate your own health status regularly and refrain from attending class and coming to campus if you are ill. You are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention for treatment. School of Social Work students who miss class due to illness of any kind will be given opportunities to access course materials online or provided with alternative learning opportunities. Please notify me by email about your absence as soon as practical, so that I can make accommodations. Please note that documentation (a doctor's note) for medical excuses is not required.

Mental health and well-being

If you or someone you know is in need of support, services are available.

- [Counseling and Psychological Services \(CAPS\)](#) located at the Tappan Street Auxiliary Building on 609 Tappan Street across from the Ross Business School; (734) 764-8312
- We have an embedded CAPS Counselor at SSW, Alejandro Rojas, LMSW, who is dedicated to supporting the well-being of social work students and the SSW community. All services are free and confidential. Email aroja@umich.edu to set up a consultation.
- [University Health Service \(UHS\)](#) at (734) 764-8320
- [Additional campus health and wellness resources](#)

The Office of Student Services' Health and Wellness Program provides supportive services to MSW students which promote wellness, self-care and maintenance of a healthy academic and mental health balance, as well as to increase disability awareness. Contact the Health and Wellness Program at ssw.wellness@umich.edu

Accommodations for students with disabilities

If you are in need of any accommodations, please let me know at your earliest convenience. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such. Please present the appropriate paperwork at least two weeks prior to the need for the accommodation (test, project, etc.).

For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact:

Services for Students with Disabilities
G-664 Haven Hall
505 South State St.
Phone: (734) 763-3000
Email: ssdoffice@umich.edu

Writing skills and expectations

Strong writing and communication skills are essential to your academic success and professional career. The School has a Writing/Study Skills Coordinator, Betsy Williams, who can

help with writing, presentations, and other tasks. For resources on writing, references (including APA style), study tips, or to set up an appointment with Betsy, visit ssw.umich.edu/writing-help.

Other UM resources include the [English Language Institute](#) and the [Sweetland Writing Center](#). Sweetland offers one-to-one, online writing assistance at any stage of writing. You can get help with understanding assignments, generating ideas, developing arguments, organizing and structuring, using evidence and sources, and clarifying your expression.

Unless noted, all assignments should utilize APA formatting. Review the [MLibrary APA Citation Guide](#) as needed. The [Purdue Owl website](#) is very helpful resource for assistance with APA formatting.

Academic integrity and plagiarism

Do not plagiarize. Information on academic integrity policies can be found in the [MSW Student Guide](#). Test your knowledge on plagiarism [here](#).

Additional School and University policies, information and resources are available here: <https://ssw.umich.edu/standard-policies-information-resources> and include, among others:

- Safety and emergency preparedness
- Religious/spiritual observances
- Military deployment
- Teaching evaluations
- Proper use of names and pronouns, how to change those in Wolverine Access, and a map of gender inclusive bathrooms

Inclusive Language

The words we use can make the difference between positive connections or creating distance in our personal and professional lives. Particularly in writing, impact is more important than intent. Increasing the inclusiveness of our language means striving to understand the ways that language often unconsciously makes assumptions about people and unintentionally reinforces dominant norms and inequitable systems. Please pay close attention to your language when speaking about cultural communities that you do not identify with. In doing so, please do your very best to:

- Respect and use contemporary and relevant language around social identities;
- Use language that recognizes varying abilities and is not ableist;
- Use language inclusive of diverse global contexts; and
- Provide developmental and educational support of others who may be unfamiliar with inclusive language practices.

It is expected that we all commit to using the correct name and pronouns of each other and our guests. Names and pronouns may change over time. Should someone accidentally use the wrong

name or pronoun, acknowledge the mistake, apologize, and move on with the correct version. Example: “As he was saying. I’m sorry; I meant to say, as they were saying, that was a very interesting article.”

I invite you to bring it to my attention if I use language about a social identity or community that is harmful, dated, disrespectful, or otherwise problematic.