



<b>Course title:</b>	Qualitative Methodologies for Socially Just Inquiry
<b>Course #/term:</b>	SW 670 – Fall 2021
<b>Time and place:</b>	Synchronous: Wednesday 9am-11am, Asynchronous: on your own
<b>Credit hours:</b>	3
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	N/A
<b>Instructor:</b>	Leonardo Kattari, MSW
<b>Pronouns:</b>	[he/him or they/them]
<b>Contact info:</b>	<b>Email:</b> lkattari@umich.edu You may expect a response within 48 hours
<b>Office:</b>	N/A
<b>Office hours:</b>	Following class or by appointment

## 1. Course Statement

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### a. Course Description

This course is designed as an introduction to the process of qualitative inquiry with a particular focus on the challenges of 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 select from one of two required foundational courses before completing their specialized electives in methodologies and methods. This course will meet that foundational requirement

### b. Course Objectives and Competencies

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

1. Understand how epistemological assumptions—implicit and explicit—undergird all research endeavors (EPAS 1)
2. Understand the relationships among epistemology, theory, methodology, and methods (EPAS 1)
3. Develop critical awareness of the competing ontological, epistemological and methodological tensions in designing anti-oppressive research projects (EPAS 1)
4. Distinguish between a broad range of qualitative methodologies (EPAS 9)
5. Demonstrate skills in creating soundly designed qualitative projects (EPAS 7, 9)
6. Understand the iterative nature of qualitative inquiry (EPAS 9)

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

**c. Course Design**

The class will be very hands-on and will also utilize innovative resources in teaching content, including videos, podcasts, and guest lectures (live or recorded). Skills will be learned, practiced, and applied in class-based and project-based experiences.

Students will be exposed to contemporary epistemological debates (ways of knowing). They will critically engage with anti-oppressive and decolonizing research frameworks while also being exposed to an array of qualitative methodologies (ways of investigating). Examples might include some of 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, arts-based methods. Course topics include critical examination of the ontological (nature of reality), 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.

Additionally, this course is an advanced level course with adult learners. Thus, the expectation is that students take charge of their own learning, their own participation and their support for the learning of their colleagues in the classroom. The class will consist of a combination of mini-lectures, guest lectures and direct application of skills in small groups as well as in assignments. Students must come prepared to fully engage in order to get the most out of this class. Additionally, this class does not approach education from the “banking” perspective. Everyone in the classroom has expertise and experience to offer into the learning space. Thus, students will be asked to bring and share examples and root the larger theories of change in their own background and experience.

*Synchronous class:* Each week we will have synchronous (live) class lecture ranging from 90-120 minutes. However, to optimize our time together, acknowledge our (limited) attention spans, and to follow online teaching best practices, I will strive to keep our lectures closer to

90 minutes immediately followed by time to apply to lecture topics to skills application, followed by time to work in groups on upcoming assignments.

*Asynchronous class:* In addition to our limited synchronous time together, you are expected to engage in our course content via our discussion board and other course assignments each week. I highly encourage you to keep pace with the asynchronous materials (including group work) and engage immediately after class as if we are still going for the full four hours. This will keep you on track.

#### **d. Course Relationship to P.O.D.S.**

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 world view. 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 mechanism 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.

#### **e. Anti-Oppression Statement**

As a community, we encourage each other to critically examine issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. These issues; therefore, are integrated into each classroom experience. As a result, there will be class discussions that may be difficult or challenging. In order to have the most supportive environment possible, we must all commit ourselves to fostering an inclusive, anti-oppressive space in which each person takes responsibility for their own language, actions and interactions. It is important that we listen to each other about how our words and actions are affecting one another and the learning environment. We share the task of negotiating the dual priorities of authentic free speech and active regard for one another, being open to diverse perspectives and ideas. We recognize that microaggressions happen; however, overt slurs in relation to race, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion/world view, immigration status, size, nationality,

dis/ability, marital status, political affiliation, or any other identities, will be addressed directly. Throughout the course, we will negotiate other guidelines about class discussions.

## 2. Class Requirements

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### a. Text and class materials

**There is no assigned textbook for this course.** All assigned readings, assignment information, presentation slides, podcasts, lecture recordings and other course materials can be found on the course Canvas site at <https://canvas.umich.edu>. To fully engage in the course topic and become a competent and skilled social work practitioner, it is expected that students will complete all required course materials the week they are assigned. Course content will be delivered in a variety of formats, including book chapters, articles, content summaries, audio and video through the Canvas learning management system.

### b. Class schedule (subject to change)

Session	Topics Covered	Asynchronous Work	Readings Prior to Session (Available on Canvas)
1: 9/1	- Introduction to course	Introduction Discussion Post	- Syllabus
2: 9/8	- Methodologies v. Methods - Epistemologies & Qualitative Inquiry - Theoretical Frameworks & Approaches	<b>DUE: Engagement Plan</b>	- Gilgun, 2006 - Grant & Giddings, 2002 - Staller, 2012
3: 9/15	- Positionality & Reflexivity - Memo-Writing	Memo: Epistemologies & Paradigms	- Berger, 2015 - Padgett, 2017 - Agee, 2009 - Jackson Levin, 2020
4: 9/22	- Community-Engaged Research - Critical Ethnography	Memo: Approaches	- Spencer, 2015 - Branom, 2012 - Isreal, 2008 - Weinronk et al., 2017
5: 9/29	- Reliability, Validity, & Rigor - Drawing Conclusions	<b>DUE: Reflexivity Memo - Situating Self</b>	- Padgett, 2017 - Roulston, 2015 - Tong et al., 2007 - CASP Qualitative Check List, 2018
6: 10/6	- Sampling - Data Collection:	Action Teams: Draft a research question	- Padgett, 2017 - DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree. 2006

	Interviews & Surveys		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Malterud et al., 2016</li> <li>- Schultz et al., 2018</li> </ul>
7: 10/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data Analysis: Intro to Coding</li> </ul>	Action Teams: Finalize research question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Videos: Data Analysis &amp; Coding</li> <li>- Taylor-Powell &amp; Renner, 2003</li> <li>- Mihas, 2020</li> <li>- Saldana, 2001</li> </ul>
8: 10/20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data Analysis: Thematic</li> </ul>	Memo: Open Coding Example	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Braun &amp; Clark, 2006</li> <li>- Clark &amp; Braun, 2017</li> <li>- Attride-Stirling, 2001</li> <li>- Nowell et al., 2017</li> </ul>
9: 10/27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Other Types of Data &amp; Critical Discourse Analysis</li> </ul>	Action Teams: Qualitative Data Collection Assignment Part 1  Memo: Data Collection Reflection 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- LeGreco &amp; Tracy, 2009</li> <li>- Wiley et al., 2020</li> </ul>
10: 11/3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Phenomenology, Discourse Analysis, &amp; Grounded Theory</li> </ul>	Action Teams: Qualitative Data Collection Assignment Part 2  Memo: Data Collection Reflection 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Starks &amp; Trinidad, 2007</li> <li>- Guest et al., 2012</li> <li>- Hermanowicz, 2002</li> <li>- Birks et al., 2008</li> </ul>
11: 11/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Data Presentation &amp; Publications</li> </ul>	Action Teams: Data Analysis  Memo: Interpreting & Presenting Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Gilgun, 2015</li> <li>- Sandelowski, 1998</li> </ul>
12: 11/17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mixed Methods Research</li> </ul>	<b>DUE: QUAL DATA COLLECTION</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Chaumba, 2013</li> <li>- Creswell Video</li> <li>- Hesse-Biber, 2010</li> </ul>
11/24	Harvest Holiday Recess		
13:12/1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review &amp; Recap</li> </ul>	<b>DUE: Engagement Self-Assessment</b>	
14: 12/8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Work Day</li> </ul>	<b>DUE: Final Portfolio &amp; Memo</b>	

c. Assignments

**Submission of assignments**

Course assignments are due on the date specified in the course syllabus and on Canvas. Occasionally, unforeseen circumstances arise (e.g., illness, personal or family emergency) which may make it difficult for a student to complete the assignment by its designated due date time. Should this happen, it is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor. At the instructor's discretion, a student's request for an extension of an assignment past its due

date may be granted, usually for no longer than one week past the due date. *The instructor reserves the right to deduct points for late assignments.* University policies related to persons with disability (i.e. temporary or permanent accommodations), bereavement, and religious observations supersede this policy (see MSW Handbook).

Assignment	Due date	Points (100 total)
Engagement	9/8 & 12/1 (Ongoing)	20
Reflexivity Memo	9/29	15
Qualitative Interviews/Data Collection	11/17	35
Final Portfolio	Ongoing & 12/8	30

**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, podcast, 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 and class participation

This online course has no formal attendance policy for our synchronous time together (Wednesdays at 9am EST) recognizing there is a multitude of challenges for many students to show up in this capacity each week. Each synchronous class lecture will be recorded and posted on Canvas within 24 hours of the class session. Students who do not attend the live session are still expected to watch the lecture and complete any corresponding materials or in-class assignments. All assignments are expected to be completed within the due date timeframe.

Participation is broadly defined and includes synchronous class time as well as engaging in asynchronous content - including showing up on time/posting/submitting assignments on time and returning from breaks on time/responding to questions or comments in a timely manner. Participation also includes asking questions, applying course concepts to questions about your own experiences, contributing to the learning of others, providing accurate and respectful feedback to others, identifying any unique learning needs or problems to the professor, and utilizing office hours/email communication when necessary to ask for clarification or assistance in fulfilling course expectations and assignments. Class contributions should focus on relevant course concepts and professional practice experiences. Monopolizing space or contributing off topic is not considered participation.

For more information, please see the [Policy on Class Attendance](#) found in the MSW Student Guide.

#### e. Grading

It is important to keep in mind that ***you are not your grade!*** Students come to graduate school with a wide range of academic experiences and preparedness. Thinking and writing about complex issues and abstract concepts can be very challenging for many students. If you are satisfied with the level of effort you have invested in the course, and you earn a grade of B or better, I hope you will feel very good about your performance.

##### **Excellent Work**

Excellent work is work that is above course expectations. Grades in the 94 to 100 range constitute an A which translates to a 4.0. Grades in the 91 to 93 range constitutes an A minus which translates to a 3.7. Students display excellent work (***beyond course expectations***) in several ways: evidence that additional readings, beyond what is assigned, have been completed and integrated into written or in class presentations/participation; superior written work; evidence of critical thinking; demonstration of advanced practice skills applied to practice; and creativity and innovation in conceptual as well as practice-related thinking are frequently seen in the student's work.

##### **Good Work**

Good work is work that meets course expectations. Grades in the 88 to 90 range constitute a B plus which translates to a 3.3. Grades in the 84 to 87 range constitute a B which translate to a 3.0. Grades in the 81 to 83 range constitute a B minus which translates to a 2.7. Students display good work in several ways: basic mastery of course material is evident in written or in class presentations/participation; solid development of practice skills fitting with concentration-year expertise is evident; and creativity and innovation are noted but to a lesser degree and less frequently than that in the “excellent” category.

**Work Minimally Meets Course Expectations**

Marginal work is work that meets minimal course expectations. Grades in the 78 to 80 range constitutes a C plus which translates to a 2.3. Grades in the 74 to 77 range constitute a C which translates to a 2.0. Grades in the 71 to 73 range constitute a C minus which translates to a 1.7. Students display marginal work in several ways: through evidence that course readings have not been covered, as observed in written or in class presentations/participation; conceptual confusion and difficulty with critical thinking are evident in written and verbal work; and through work that lacks an integration of theory and practice.

**Failing Work**

Grades in the 0 to 70 range constitute an F which translates to a 0.0 Student demonstrates poor or unacceptable work during the course in several ways: inadequate understanding of course content, poor quality written work, plagiarism, and poor or unethical demonstration of practice skills.

Assessment Classification	Range	Grade	Grade Point
Excellent Work (above course expectations)	94-100	A	4.0
	91-93	A -	3.7
Good Work (meets course expectations)	88-90	B+	3.3
	84-87	B	3.0
	81-83	B-	2.7
Poor Work (meets minimal course expectations)	78-80	C +	2.3
	74-77	C	2.0
	71-73	C -	1.7
Failing Work	70-0	F	0.0

More information on MSW Student Guide policies on [Grades in Academic Courses and in Field Instruction](#) as well as [Student Grievance procedures](#) and the [policy for grading in special circumstances](#). Here are some resources around [testing and grading from CRLT](#).

**Fall Semester Note:** This semester will continue to pose many challenges to our physical and emotional wellbeing. We are still living through a pandemic and have a rapidly shifting political environment. Considering the stress and distress these factors will contribute to our daily lives throughout the semester, I encourage you to think about your capacity and strive for trying your



best and not for perfection. Please communicate often with your instructor with any barriers or issues that come up throughout the semester so we can collaboratively support your success in this course.

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### **Academic Integrity and Plagiarism**

You are expected to adhere to the NASW Code of Ethics, UM's Academic and Professional Standards of Performance, the criteria for student evaluation and review found in the MSW Handbook, and the University rules concerning academic misconduct, found in the University's Honor Code.

The University's definition of Academic Misconduct includes, but is not limited to:

- Plagiarism, including any representation of another's work or ideas as one's own in academic and educational submissions.
- Cheating, including any actual or attempted use of resources prohibited by the instructor(s) or those that a reasonable person would consider inappropriate under the circumstances for academic submissions, and/or any actual or attempted effort to assist another student in cheating.
- Double submission, including any submission of an academic work for more than one course without expressed permission.
- Fabrication, including any falsification or creation of data, research or resources to support academic submissions.

**Grade Contestation:** We strongly discourage grade grubbing of any kind regarding your papers. Grade grubbing is defined as begging, pleading, arguing, bribing, crying, or in any way asking for a higher grade. Instead, we encourage you to discuss why you lost points and what you can do to improve for the future. If, however, you feel strongly that you have a valid dispute about a grade on an assignment, you should submit a statement in writing explaining the mistake you think has been made and what alternate grade you suggest. Make an appointment with your professor to discuss the grade in person. Note that re-reading an assignment submission can result in either a lower or a higher grade and that this grade will be final.

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you need an accommodation for a disability please let me know as soon as possible. Many aspects of this course, the assignments, the in-class activities, and teaching methods can be modified to facilitate your participation and progress throughout the semester. I will make every effort to use the resources available to us, such as the services for Students with Disabilities, the Adaptive Technology Computing Site, and the like. If you chose to disclose your disability, I will (to the extent permitted by law) treat that information as private and confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 7633000 or go to <http://www.umich.edu/~sswd/> Note: I am committed to moving towards universal design for learning (UDL). If you have suggestions for how I can improve our classroom space, activities, and/or assignments to be more accessible now or in the future, please do not hesitate to let me know!

**Health and Wellness Services:** Health and wellness encompasses situations or circumstances that may impede your success within the program. The Office of Student Services offers

health and wellness services that are directed to the MSW student body. Feel free to contact Health and Wellness Advocates Lauren Davis (laurdavi@umich.edu) or Nyshourn Price-Reed (ndp@umich.edu), 734-936 0961, regarding any health, mental health or wellness issue. This could include need for advocacy and referral to University or community resources, financial resources or counseling. Also contact Health and Wellness using ssw.wellness@umich.edu. The MSW student Guide to Health and Wellness can be found at [http://www.ssw.umich.edu/current/Health\\_Wellness\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.ssw.umich.edu/current/Health_Wellness_Guide.pdf) 16

**Dependent Care Resources:** For students with child or parenting/elder care responsibilities, feel free to consult the Students with Children website (<http://www.studentswithchildren.umich.edu>). This site is dedicated to the needs of students at UM who juggle parenting/elder care, study, and work. Resources include child care, financial assistance, social support, housing, and health care information. The website was created by the former Committee on Student Parent Issues (COSPI). For additional information on work/life support please also visit the Work/Life Resource Center site (<http://www.hr.umich.edu/worklife/>) and the UM Child Care gateway (<http://www.hr.umich.edu/childcare/>).

**Religious Observances:** Please notify me if religious observances conflict with class attendance, community participation or due dates for assignments so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

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

## **Other Policies**

### **Class Recording and Course Materials**

Audio and video recording of in-class lectures and discussions is prohibited without the advance written permission of the instructor. Students with an approved accommodation from the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities permitting the recording of class meetings must present documentation to the instructor in advance of any recording being done. The instructor reserves the right to disallow recording for a portion of any class time where privacy is a special concern. If the instructor chooses to record a class, they will decide which classes, if any, are recorded, what portion of each class is recorded, and whether a recording is made available on the course management website. On days when classes are recorded, students will be notified a recording is occurring. Class recordings and course materials may not be reproduced, sold, published or distributed to others, in whole or in part, without the written consent of the instructor.

### **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.

### **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.

### **Inclusivity Policy**

Social and economic justice is one of the key themes of social work practice, research, and education. As a social work community, we must encourage each other to critically examine issues related to power, privilege, and oppression. As a result, there will be class discussions, activities, or assignments that may be difficult or challenging. In order to have the most supportive environment possible, we must all commit ourselves to fostering an inclusive, anti-oppressive space in which each person takes responsibility for their own language, actions and interactions. It is important that we actively *listen* to each other about how our words and actions are affecting one another and the learning environment, knowing the impact is more important than intent. It can be difficult to navigate the dual priorities of supporting authentic free speech, and holding active regard for one another being open to diverse perspectives and ideas. I recognize that microaggressions happen (by all of us, to all of us); however, overt slurs in relation to race, sex, age, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, religion/world view, immigration status, size, nationality, dis/ability status, marital status, political affiliation, or any other identities, will be addressed directly. Throughout the course, we will negotiate other guidelines about class discussions. Please bring your best selves to our classroom space.

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