PLAN 604
Qualitative Methods in Planning
Spring _____

Instructor:
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Course Description

This course provides classroom instruction and practical skills training in qualitative research methods for studying social issues and problems of concern to planners along with qualitative methods that can be used in planning practice. It provides a general introduction to qualitative research methods and distinguishes various approaches and techniques to the collection and analysis of data. Students will learn to critique the advantages and limitations of different types of qualitative research methods and approaches as they apply to different types of research problems in terms of design, technique, analysis and interpretation. This course is designed as a qualitative methods course to prepare students for professional practice, such as program evaluation, as well as thesis and dissertation research. Doctoral students will be required to write a dissertation proposal for the course assignment. Master’s students will be required to complete a thesis research design or a qualitative research project. For those interested in a service learning group project, please see the instructor at the start of the course.

Course Objectives

1. Gain an overview of qualitative research methods, including various approaches and techniques applicable to planning, evaluation, and related types of research.

2. Understand the qualitative research process, including problem definition, research design, instrument development, data collection, data analysis and interpretation, and the write-up of findings.

3. Know and be able to use a variety of qualitative data collection methods such as observations, interviews, focus groups as well as various analytical strategies.

4. Develop a critical perspective about qualitative research in order to recognize methodological strengths and weaknesses as well as appropriate and inappropriate uses of various methods and approaches.

5. Be able to design a qualitative study and write up a methodology section as part of a research project.

6. Gain a general overview of ethical issues related to qualitative research.
Course Requirements

1. Class attendance is required. Please notify the instructor ahead of time if you cannot attend.

2. Students are expected to read carefully all assigned readings and come to class prepared to critically discuss them.

3. Class participation includes attendance at class meetings, participation in discussion, and demonstration of ability to apply knowledge from readings to client project work.

4. Homework and in-class exercises through which you will learn the fundamentals of qualitative data analysis.

5. Each student will prepare a qualitative study or doctoral dissertation proposal.

6. Each student will complete the Human Studies online training required for research involving human subjects at: https://www.citiprogram.org (Create an account and take the “Social & Behavioral Research—Basic/Refresher” training module; save and turn in your CITI certificate of completion)

Grading:
Attendance, preparedness and participation: 10%
Assignments: 30%
Research Project or doctoral dissertation proposal: 60%

Textbooks:
Schedule of Topics and Readings:
The assignments are for students working on the client project. Doctoral students and Master’s degree students planning to write a thesis (vs. capstone paper) will have a similar timeline but based on the development of your research proposal.

Week 1. Introduction and Course Overview
Review course syllabus
Introductions and fields of interest
Radiolab episode: Yellow Rain
Presentation and Handouts on Client Project: Kathryn Xian, Executive Director, Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery

Week 2. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday

Week 3. What is qualitative research? How do we use qualitative research in planning?
Creswell, Chapter 3 (pp. 35-50)
Patton, Chapter 2 (pp. 37-74)
Presentation: The Truce

Assignment Due: Defining the Scope of Inquiry
1. Please write a 2 to 3-page double-spaced summary of the background, purpose, and scope of a research project based on what you think you will be doing your dissertation, thesis, or capstone project on. This is an exercise in explaining your topic in a concise and organized way. The background should illustrate the importance and nature of the problem. The purpose should explain what you aim to accomplish in doing this research and the value or significance of the research you are proposing. And the scope should delimit your study so that you clarify the "who, what, when, where, and (generally) how" of the study.
2. Complete the UH Human Subjects training and email me a copy of your CITI certificate of completion when you. Online training site is: http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php
If you have questions, see http://www.hawaii.edu/irb/html/training_online.php

Week 4. Philosophical & Theoretical Orientations and Qualitative Inquiry
Creswell, Chapter 2 (pp. 1-32) OR Patton, Chapter 3 (pp. 75-137)
Creswell, Chapters 4-5 (pp. 53-100)
Creswell, Appendix B, C, D, E or F (choose the one that most suits your research)

Assignment:
1) Collect background information for your research project (historical background and/or background of the specific problem). Find articles that will help you hone in on a research question or that is as specifically related to the questions currently spinning in your head. Create a preliminary list of bibliographic references to class and begin reading up on your topic.
2) Based on a quick scan of the literature and based upon the readings for this week, explain in two pages what methodological approach you think would be best for your research project and why? There are no right or wrong answers, as you will discover. The
point is to be able to weigh the pros and cons of the various approaches to your topic, your philosophical beliefs, and your strengths/preferences.

**Week 5. Bounding the Inquiry and Framing Research Questions**
Creswell, Chapter 6 (pp. 101-116)
Patton, Chapter 5 (pp. 209-258)

Assignment:
1. Begin collecting background literature. Choose 10-12 of the most relevant articles and begin reading them to get an idea of how others have attempted to answer the question you have posed. You don’t have to read them word-for-word, but see generally how they have posed the research questions and how they designed their study of a question similar to yours. This is important so that you don’t reinvent the wheel and so that you can build off the existing knowledge to sharpen your own question.
2. Write a first draft of your problem statement and research questions. Make sure there is one overarching question, which is your main question. And then you may have more specific questions that help you get to the main question so list and explain those as well.
3. Identify and describe the various types of information you need to collect in order to answer your question(s).

**Week 6. President’s Day Holiday**

**Week 7. Data Collection I: Interviews**
Patton, Chapter 7 (pp. 339-428)

Assignment:
1. Complete your review/readings of the 10-12 most relevant academic journal articles (more if you like).
2. Based on this review of articles, refine your research question(s) and turn in a second draft.
3. Draft a detailed outline of your research design. Look at the examples in Cresswell for guidance. This should include all of your survey questions, interview questions, observation outlines, or other guides you will be using for qualitative data gathering.

**Week 8. Data Collection II: Fieldwork Strategies**
Patton, Chapter 6 (pp. 259-338)

Assignment (for those working on proposals, do a trial run of your data gathering protocols):
1. Arrange/conduct the surveys/interviews with your respondents (or trial respondents).
2. Do some of background research on the internet on that person and his or her accomplishments if available or known. Read any biographical background information they may provide.
Week 9. Data Collection III: (to be determined based on students’ interests/projects)

Assignment:
1. Continue to conduct your surveys/interviews.
2. Write a one-page single spaced reflection on the experience and what you learned from doing it that you may not have expected or that you found valuable to share in class.

Week 10. Data Analysis: Overview
Creswell, Part of Chapter 8 (pp. 147-163)
Patton, Part of Chapter 8 (pp. 431-446)

Assignment:
1. Transcribe or compile your data.
2. Write a 1-2 page summary of your initial, off-the-top-of-your-head “impressions” and “insights.”

Week 11. Data Analysis: Exploring and Describing
Miles & Huberman, Chapter 5 (pp. 90-142)
Patton, Part of Chapter 8 (pp. 452-161)

Assignment:
1. Draft a 2-page single spaced description of the approach you will take to your data analysis and any data analysis methods you will be using for your study.
2. Finish transcribing or compile your data.

Week 12. Data Analysis: Explaining and Predicting
Miles & Huberman, Chapter 6 (pp. 143-171)
Patton, Part of Chapter 8 (pp. 477-500)

Assignment:
1. Refine the data collection and data analysis section of your proposal if needed.
2. Draft a short paper explaining your findings.

Week 13. Writing Up Qualitative Findings in Research and Planning Reports
Creswell, Chapter 9 (pp. 177-200)
Patton, Part of Chapter 8 (pp. 502-515)

Assignment:
1. Complete a first draft of your proposal or paper and schedule a meeting with the instructor to review it.
**Week 14. Standards of Validation and Evaluation**  
Patton, Chapter 9 (pp. 541-589)

Optional readings:  
Miles & Huberman, Chapter 10 (pp. 245-287)  
Creswell, Chapter 10 (pp. 201-222)

Assignment:  
1. 1st revision of your proposal/paper draft

**Week 15. Ethical Issues in the Use of Qualitative Research in Planning**  
Miles & Huberman, Chapter 11 (pp. 288-297) and “Advice” section on page 310

Assignment:  
1. 2nd revision of your proposal/paper draft

**Week 16. Student Presentations and Peer Feedback**

**FINAL RESEARCH PAPER OR CAPSTONE/THESIS/DISSERTATION PROPOSAL DUE**  
by 5:00 pm, MONDAY of finals week  
(First day of finals)
Additional resources:


