

**Brock University**  
**Faculty of Applied Health Sciences**  
**AHSC 5P17 Sec 2; Lab 2**  
**Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**Instructor:** Mary Breunig

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**Office Hours:** Wednesday Noon-3 or  
by appointment

**Class Time:** Thursday 2:00 – 5:00 PM

**Class Location:** TH 255

**Lab:** Wednesday 8 – 9 am (when scheduled)

**Course Description:** Examines and applies a variety of qualitative data analysis techniques applicable in a variety of qualitative approaches, including the use of computer software programs in qualitative data analysis. Emphasis is placed on the interpretation and implications of empirical qualitative research in the field.

This seminar-style course explores different forms of qualitative research strategies and provides an examination of a variety of data analysis techniques applicable in a variety of qualitative approaches, including critiques of these strategies and techniques. Topics will a) introduce foundational knowledges (i.e. readings and assessments); b) encourage relevant discussions (i.e. critical dialogue and small group teaching); and c) include meaningful praxes (i.e. fieldwork) relevant to theoretical and methodological foundations, analytical strategies and application methods, and epistemology. This course is specifically designed for students in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences who intend to use qualitative methodology in their thesis research.

**Course Objectives:** The objectives of this course are two fold; first, to provide you with an understanding of the logic and foundation of qualitative research or the *why* of qualitative research; second to provide you with an opportunity to develop the necessary skills for applying qualitative techniques of investigation to research or the *how* of qualitative research. Upon successful completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Design a qualitative research study.
- Understand the role of the researcher in qualitative inquiry.
- Understand the role and significance of the theoretical foundations of qualitative inquiry.
- Adopt a critical and reflexive approach toward methodology.
- Employ a range of techniques to collect qualitative data (e.g., interview, observation, etc).
- Analyze and interpret qualitative data with an appreciation for the complexity of the process and the implications of interpretation of meaning.
- Understand the issues associated with the assessment of trustworthiness and quality.
- Appreciate the complexity of the writing-up of data post-analysis and the issues and challenges associated with representation of findings.

**Course Materials:** Course Packet – available in the bookstore with occasional readings posted on sakai, outside my door or on reserve (in the library) – see below or course packet table of contents for more information.

**Course Format and Expectations:** It is my hope that we will all fully participate and engage in working to attain the purposes and objectives of this seminar course and to optimize our learning with and from one another. The course format will consist of a diversity of teaching methods (e.g. small group discussion, lecturettes, experiential activities) and a diversity of assessments (e.g. student-led teaching, fieldwork, and writing) in an effort to teach (and assess) toward all of your various learning styles. This is a reading and activity intensive course and one that is likely to place significant demands on your time. Please plan accordingly.

Because we will be engaged in each others' lives both physically and emotionally there are a number of key qualities that I will encourage you to bring to class. These include:

- listening with your ears, heart, mind – full embodied attention
- avoiding BAD behaviours – blocking, anti-inclusive, or dominating
- an open heart and mind – to see separate truths in different arguments/positions...to understand that peoples' "realities" are partial, contextual, and situated
- ownership – speaking for yourself, out of your own experiences
- generosity – to attempt to avoid competitiveness and to encourage others... to attempt to conduct yourself in such a way that you bring out the best in others
- compassion, kindness, and understanding

Additional course expectations:

- a willingness to learn from peers
- attend all classes and avoid lateness
- agree to check your Brock Badger account and Sakai at least twice a week
- complete all assigned readings and assignments in preparation for active engagement
- willingness to share insights from professional and personal experiences
- an openness to challenging ourselves as learners and educators and a willingness to take risks and to experiment with various ideas and pedagogical approaches
- agree to not use personal stereos in class and in seminars and to turn off cellular telephones (or for parents and others encountering potentially urgent situations, turn off the ringer, and answer calls after quietly leaving the classroom)

Course Intentions:

- to promote a sense of wonder and excitement about qualitative research and about teaching and learning generally in an effort to stimulate student interest in lifelong research and learning
- to develop a learning environment that is safe, nurturing, and rigorous
- to promote the acquisition of specific knowledges, skills, and dispositions in regard to qualitative research as outlined in the course objectives above
- to further develop students' critical thinking, reading, and writing skills
- to be fair and consistent
- to attempt to bring my values and beliefs about teaching and learning into congruence with my teaching praxis and to actively demonstrate that

**Course Assessment:*****1. "I Am" Letter******Due Date: September 15<sup>th</sup>******5%***

The intent of the "I Am" letter assignment is to provide me with some information about you: your interests; your learning styles; your past experiences; what has brought you here, etc. **You will receive 5 points if you complete this assignment and hand it in by the beginning of class Eastern Time (CBC time – don't be late!) on Thursday, September 15th. If you are late in handing in the assignment but still attend class, you will receive half points (2.5). If you fail to complete the assignment by September 15th or do not attend class that day, you will miss the opportunity to receive any points for this assignment.**

Please provide brief responses to the queries listed below. You may hand write (if you think I will be able to read it) or type your assignment. You do not need to be concerned about proofreading your work and you do not need to worry about spelling or grammar mistakes. You can be creative with this assignment if you so choose but do not need to be (i.e. letter style, illustrations, etc). The purpose of this assignment is for me to get to know you each better and adjust the course to meet your needs. You can decide how much or how little you wish to share.

- who are you (see first week reading - Jensen)?
- work and experiences related to the field of applied health sciences.
  - where did you earn your undergraduate degree and in what discipline?
- why a graduate degree? why now? why qualitative? who is your supervisor?
- "things" that you are looking forward to and/or worried about in the upcoming year (or two)
- "things" that you would like me to know about you/your learning style
- "things" that you expect from a professor
- "things" that you wish that a professor would avoid
- initial reflections on the syllabus: manageable, fair, interesting, or not ???
- what is one word that you would use to describe yourself
- what is one word that others might use to describe you (your first opportunity to collect data for this course : ) ) !
- anything else that you would like to share about yourself or that you want me to know

***2. Readings Responses, General Participation & Fieldwork Assignments******(Ongoing)******30%***

The success of this seminar-style course requires your active and informed participation. I believe that your learning and our individual and collective engagement with the course

materials and each other will be optimized if each of us arrives at seminar informed by the daily readings (with a written reading response to hand in (see below) and with discussion questions prepared in advance of class). Seminars are likely to be more educative, dynamic, creative, stimulating, student-directed, and thought-provoking if we all agree to this. It is assumed that your high degree of preparation for each class will find expression in the form of thoughtful and critical verbal contributions to class discussions.

Your **weekly reading response** (9 @ 2 points each totaling 18) is to be handed in at each seminar and should include the following:

- a short summary of each of the daily readings and a response to one of the following critical queries (consider the higher level thinking as outlined in Bloom's taxonomy in your responses):
  - what in the readings connects with your own experience or other theory related to this topic?
  - what did you learn from the reading that you can directly apply to your own research/experiences?
  - what may be missing from the reading or what critique do you have of the author or the information?
  -

Each response will receive a √-, √ or √+ based on the criteria outlined in the rubric below. Written feedback will also be provided.

√-	√	√+
either incomplete or "less than" succinct summary (1 - 1 ½ page length)	summary could be more complete and/or succinct (1 - 1 ½ page length)	fully and succinctly summarizes daily readings (1 - 1 ½ page length)
lower levels of Bloom's thinking/writing	mid-level Bloom's thinking/writing	incorporates higher level thinking/writing (Bloom's)
lacking original insight and/or integration with personal experiences	somewhat original insights and/or attempt at integration	highly original insights and/or excellent integration of insights with personal experiences
writing quality (grammar and spelling, etc) was below average	average quality of writing and/or flows less well (ideas are less well connected)	high quality of writing (well-edited for grammar and spelling) and flows well

Additionally, a portion of this mark will consist of completed **fieldwork** experiences (4 in total @ 3 points each totaling 12). Fieldwork includes:

- **Fieldwork A: Focus Group Session with Supervisors (must attend class that day and participate to receive credit).**

- **Fieldwork B: Observational Report.** Select a public site in which to conduct an observation – a place where you can spend 20 minutes, without interacting with others. Conduct a field observation and write up a field note report of 2-3 pages in length. Write both descriptive and reflective notes. In terms of descriptive notes, record details/data about the physical setting, particular events, and activities. Reflective notes should focus on your own experiences, hunches, learnings, a discussion of your “conceptual baggage”, and the process of discovery. Be prepared to share your findings and any preliminary analysis in seminar. (Due date: November 3<sup>rd</sup>).
- **Fieldwork C: Attend a Proposal Defense** and complete a write up of your experience (submit signed confirmation – see last page of this syllabus). Conduct a 360 degree observation/evaluation of your experience that includes an examination of the thesis itself, the presentation (i.e. length, style, content, etc), student responses to committee queries, committee and supervisor questions and anything (and all!) that is noteworthy. The observation and write up of the experience (2-3 pages) must be completed no later than November 24<sup>th</sup>
- **Fieldwork D: Data Analysis of Focus Group Sessions.** (Due date: November 10<sup>th</sup>).

### ***3a. Book Review of a Methods Text***

***Due Date: November 17<sup>th</sup>***

***20%***

Select an advanced-undergraduate or graduate-level *specialized* instructional book/textbook about a particular **research method or research-related issue** that interests you. Your selected text should not be an introductory or “generalist” textbook. A specialized book is one that has a specific and clear focus on a particular methodology OR method of data collection OR specific approach to analysis. This assignment is intended to help familiarize you with a research approach that can inform your own research. I would recommend you seek your supervisor’s assistance with text selection as a result. Complete a book review and post it to Sakai on or before November 17<sup>th</sup>. In this way, we can all benefit from your review. See below for assignment and assessment details. *You must submit your proposed book idea to me via email with details of the topic, author, publisher, and the book’s abstract for my approval by September 28<sup>th</sup>.*

#### ***Guidelines for Book Reviews***

*Adapted from The Journal of Experiential Education*

Completed book reviews should follow the format outlined below:

**Length:** approximately 2000 words

**Format:** See the following page for *Format of Book Review Heading* and *Example of Book Review Heading*

**Style:** APA 6<sup>th</sup> Edition

**Content and Tone:** *The following are guidelines for requisite content, but you should not feel limited by them if there are additional topics to be addressed:*

- Use clear, conversational language, and engage the reader with the first line.
- Try to mention the name of the author and book title in the first paragraph
- Is it a new title or an update?
- Provide a clear description of the book's genre, content and intended audience in the beginning of the review.
- What do you like about the book? (Be specific...tone, flow, structure, content, pictures, graphs, charts, references, writing style, etc.)
- What don't you like about the book?
- Is the book unique to the field?
- What critiques do you have and/or what shortcomings exist (if any)?
- Consider including select quotes or paraphrases that provide specific examples of the above.
- Include research about the author and incorporate relevant information about her/his background into the review.
- Support your conclusions with outside references as necessary
- Follow APA 6<sup>th</sup> edition and focus on writing that is free of spelling and grammar errors

Read a number of book reviews before beginning your own writing. This will help you gain a sense of how to complete this assignment.

**Sample Format for Book Review Heading**

**BOOK REVIEW**

Title of your review and your name and title (if you have one), **Bold, 14 pt.**

(Title and Reviewed By - centred)

**Book Title (Bold, 14 pt., Centered)**

Book reference listing (12 pt., Justified left); Include number of pages and ISBN number

Text of the book review manuscript. Submit double-spaced, 2000 words, Times New Roman, 12 pt.

A short bio of the reviewer at end of manuscript. Example bio:

Steven Simpson is associate professor of Recreation Management at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse and a former editor of the *Journal of Experiential Education*. He can be reached at 136 Wittich Hall, UW-La Crosse, La Crosse, WI 54601 USA or simpson.stev@uwlax.edu.

OR

***3b. Manuscript Review*** ***Due Date: November 17<sup>th</sup>*** ***20%***

By *September 28th*, you will need to identify a journal for which you would like to serve as a reviewer, communicate to the journal editor that this is a class assignment and communicate that you will need to be assigned a manuscript at his/her earliest convenience. Talk with your supervisor about this assignment. Many of them are either journal editors themselves or have close connections with them and can likely help with facilitating this process. You can communicate to the editor that you will be under the mentorship of the course instructor throughout the review process (and your master's supervisor, if he or she agrees). You will be assessed based on the guidelines specific to that Journal. You must submit a hard copy of the journal's guidelines to me with the completed review by no later than November 17<sup>th</sup>.

***4. Qualitative Research Approach Presentation and Discussion*** ***10%***



- connects concepts to (and expands upon) course material
- well-referenced information
- builds upon and increases understanding of the chosen methodology
- provides supplemental materials in class (if appropriate)

**5. Research Proposal Draft Due on October 13(10%) Final Due on December 15(25%)= 35%**

Write a detailed research proposal for a project that you could carry out for your thesis research OR propose a research project on a larger scale that you would like to see carried out at some time. Your proposal should be 15-20 pages, excluding any instruments for data collection (e.g. an interview guide) and a list of works cited.

The focus of this proposal will be methodological. Therefore, it is not meant to represent the first draft of your MA proposal. However, there is an opportunity to get a good start on the methodological and method issues related to your research interest. Early in the term you should identify a general topic area of interest. To get started, review key pieces of literature on areas of interest (What has already been written? What questions have been addressed? What conclusions have been made?) to uncover a question that a) has not been considered or b) not been adequately answered or c) focuses on a different theoretical perspective or d) requires a qualitative methodological approach. This troll through the literature will help you develop the rationale for why your proposed research should be undertaken and what contribution it will make (e.g., filling a gap in knowledge). Provide a brief but sufficient background to make a case for conducting your research. Formulate a clear and concise purpose statement and 1-4 research questions that will guide the study. Identify the theoretical approach or approaches that will inform your research. Outline the methodology—describing the paradigm and selected research approach. Outline the methods you propose to use. What exactly will you do—what data will you collect? How will you collect it? Who do you hope will be the participants and how will you recruit them (if appropriate)? What research procedures will you use? What pitfalls do you need to avoid and how will you avoid them? What methods will you use to analyze your data? Outline the ethical issues that you will have to consider, paying particular attention to Brock University's Research Ethics Board guidelines. What techniques will you employ to consider trustworthiness, quality or authenticity of your research? Describe your role as the researcher. Identify the limitations of your study. Remember to explain the logic and reasoning behind each decision you make in designing your proposal and use course readings and other references to support these decisions and conclusions. A draft of this proposal is due on Thursday, October 13<sup>th</sup> at which time it will undergo a structured "in seminar" self and peer review equaling 10% of your final mark for this project.

In addition to the above, consider the following when completing the write up of the draft proposal. We will co-create a rubric for me to use when marking the final based on these first drafts and the outcomes and feedback on October 13<sup>th</sup>. Similar to every day that this course meets, this seminar will be an important one to attend (!).

Background (~ 2 - 4 pages)

A brief consideration and explanation of the conceptual/theoretical context of your study.

Similar to grant writing, this section should be written in a manner that is jargon free - such that someone who may not be familiar with the theoretical/conceptual arguments might be able to follow the logic of the arguments. This section should clearly articulate the issue (or problem) you propose to research and conclude with a clear purpose statement and research questions.

The Research Process (~ 11 - 13 pages)

This section should follow Crotty's suggestion that research proposals should answer two critical questions: 1. what methodology and methods will be used; and 2. how are these choices justified. Therefore considerations of methods, methodology, theoretical perspective, and epistemology should be the focus of this assignment. Assignment sections (subheadings) should include specific details (with outside reference to support your decisions/conclusions) about the following: methodology; site/participant selection; data collection procedures (including any questionnaires or other instruments included as appendices); data analysis approach and procedures; ethical considerations; and limitations.

Format

Overall written presentation including style, punctuation, spelling, grammar, and APA format, including congruity and accuracy with/in text references and the reference list.

**Academic Misconduct and Late Assignment Policy:**

Students are referred to the section on "Academic Misconduct" in the 2010/2011 Brock University Graduate Calendar for information regarding academic dishonesty.

<http://www.brocku.ca/webcal/2010/graduate/acad.html#sec63>

This information will be reviewed with students during the first two weeks of class.

All assignments are due at 2:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the due dates indicated in the course outline. Any late assignment will be assessed a 10% reduction per day late. Late assignments must be turned in directly to the instructor during her office hours or by a confirmed appointment only (please email the instructor at [mary.breunig@brocku.ca](mailto:mary.breunig@brocku.ca) to schedule an appointment). In the event of a medical emergency, you must complete the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences (FAHS) medical form for consideration of late or missed assignments or exams to be granted. In the event of a death in the immediate family and/or a "valid" medical emergency, you must notify the professor via email (including the submission of the FAHS medical form) within 48 hours of any missed assignment deadline for consideration to be granted.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic</b>  <b>(Weekly Seminar Readings and Topics in Bold)</b>	<b>Readings</b>	<b>Assignments</b>
Thursday Sept. 8	* why research when I can intuit?	Syllabus	<b>Purchase Course Packet</b>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* “forming activities”</li> <li>* course syllabus</li> <li>* co-establish guidelines and expectations</li> <li>* (re?)consider due dates</li> <li>* inquiring</li> </ul>	<p>Patton – Top Ten Pieces of Advice</p> <p>Richardson &amp; St. Pierre – Writing: A Method of Inquiry</p> <p>Greene – Teaching: The question of personal reality</p> <p>Jensen – Who Am I?</p>	
Thursday Sept. 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* foundations of qualitative inquiry</li> <li>* paradigms, theoretical perspectives, the “posts” epistemologies &amp; methodologies</li> </ul>	<p>Guba, Egon, &amp; Lincoln – Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions and Emerging Confluences</p> <p>Patton – Chapter 3</p> <p>Cresswell – Chapter 2</p> <p>Willis – Chapter 2</p>	<p><b>“I am” letter due (5%)</b></p> <p><b>Reading Response (2)</b></p>
Thursday Sept. 22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* design considerations</li> <li>* ethics (APA, integrity, REB, and publishing)</li> <li>*trustworthiness &amp; my (economics professor) brother</li> </ul>	<p>Patton – Chapters 5 &amp; 9</p> <p>Cresswell – Chapter 3</p> <p>Jensen – Walking on Water</p> <p>Zeller &amp; Farmer – Catchy, clever titles are not acceptable: Style, APA, and qualitative reporting</p> <p>Goldstein – Ethical dilemmas in designing collaborative research: Lessons learned the hard way</p>	<p><b>Reading Response (2)</b></p>
Thursday Sept. 28	<p>Pairs facilitation –</p> <p>What’s in a Research Proposal?</p> <p>Theoretical Frameworks</p>	<p><a href="http://www.meaning.ca/archives/archive/art_how_to_write_P_Wong.htm">http://www.meaning.ca/archives/archive/art_how_to_write_P_Wong.htm</a></p> <p>Use and misuse of language</p> <p>Flemons – Writing between the lines: Composition in the social sciences</p> <p>Anfara &amp; Mertz – Theoretical Frameworks in Qualitative Research</p> <p>Radhakrishna, Yoder, &amp; Ewing – Strategies for linking theoretical frameworks and research types</p>	<p><b>Reading Response (2)</b></p> <p><b>Submit an “email of intent” that includes the requisite information relevant to assignment 3a or 3b</b></p>
Thursday Oct. 6	<p>Pairs facilitation –</p> <p>Writing a Methods Chapter</p> <p>Using Relevant Research Literature to Support Your Methods</p>	<p>Gay &amp; Airasian – pp. 512-514</p> <p>Berg – Chapter 12</p>	<p><b>Reading Response (2)</b></p>
Thursday	<p>Pairs facilitation –</p>	<p>Jensen – The Most Important Writing</p>	<p><b>Draft of Methods</b></p>

Oct. 13	Peer Critique – Is that a wolf?: (further)developing critical literacy	Exercise,	<b>assignment due</b> <b>Self-critique (5%)</b> <b>Peer-critique (5%)</b>  (no reading response due)
Thursday Oct. 20	Pairs facilitation –  Data Collection  Fieldwork and Observation  <b>Interviewing and Focus Groups in Action (a conversation with the supervisors)</b>	Berg – Chapters 4 & 5  Fontana & Frey – The Interview: From Neutral Stance to Political Involvement  Patton –Chapter 6  Kvale & Brinkman – Chapter 4	<b>Reading Response (2)</b>  <b>Fieldwork A (3)</b>
Thursday Oct. 27	Pairs facilitation –  Unobtrusive Data	Berg, Chapter 8  Loizos – Video, Film, and Photographs as Research Documents  Feldman, Bell, & Berger – Gaining Access: A Practical and Theoretical Guide to Qualitative Research	<b>Reading Response (2)</b>
Thursday Nov. 3	Pairs facilitation x two groups		<b>Reading Response (2)</b>  <b>Fieldwork B Due (3)</b>
Thursday Nov. 10	Pairs facilitation –  Analyzing data – beyond coding and thematically grouping  <b>Coding: From “old school” to “new school”</b>	Patton, Chapter 8  Miles & Huberman – Qualitative Data Analysis: An Expanded Sourcebook (pp. 50-90)	<b>Reading Response (2)</b>  <b>Fieldwork C Due (3)</b>
Thursday Nov. 17	Other Considerations and methodologies	Cole – aboriginalizing methodology: considering the canoe  Saks – Viewpoints: should novels count as dissertations in education?	<b>Reading Response (2)</b>  <b>Assignment 3a or 3b Due (20%)</b>
Thursday Nov. 24	Reflexivity	Lather – Getting Lost: Feminist Efforts Toward a Double(d) Science  Pillow – Confession, catharsis, or cure? Rethinking the uses of reflexivity as	<b>Reading Response (2)</b>  <b>Fieldwork D Due (3)</b>

	Closing & Celebration	methodological power in qualitative research  Heshusius – Freeing ourselves from objectivity: Managing subjectivity or turning toward a participatory mode of consciousness?	
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**Final Research Proposal Due @ noon on December 15<sup>th</sup> (25%)**

As you will note, I have opted for a course packet rather than one (or two or three) textbooks for this course. I hope that you find these multiple sources useful and relevant to your (varied) fields of study and your diverse qualitative research praxes. While I have included select chapters from a variety of sources, I would encourage you to seek out the full text if and when one particular reading resonates more with your specific discipline/area of research than the others. I have also included reference to what I hope will be several helpful sources relevant to writing your literature review as well as a list of qualitative research journals.

A few tips on conducting literature reviews can be found at:

<http://olinuris.library.cornell.edu/ref/research/skill26.htm>

<http://pages.cpsc.ucalgary.ca/~saul/wiki/pmwiki.php/Chapter1/HowToWriteALiteratureReview>

<http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/specific-types-of-writing/literature-review>

Becker, H. S. (2007). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Hart, C. (1999). *Doing a literature review: Releasing the social science research imagination*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Selected Qualitative Journals**

International Journal of Qualitative Methods  
International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education  
International Journal of Social Research  
Methodology  
Journal of Contemporary Ethnography  
Qualitative Health Research  
Qualitative Inquiry  
Qualitative Research

Qualitative Sociology  
Studies in Symbolic Interaction  
Symbolic Interactionism  
Journal of Qualitative Research in Sports Studies  
Forum: Qualitative Social Research  
<<http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqseng.htm>>

**I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people for their contributions to this syllabus and this course's content: Maureen Connolly, Nancy Francis, Constance Russell (Lakehead University), Colleen Hood, Erin Sharpe, and Lisa Kikulis and Cathy Van Ingen in particular.**

**Dear Thesis Chair,**

**Please sign the following form to confirm that \_\_\_\_\_  
(insert your name here)**

**Attended the thesis defence of \_\_\_\_\_  
(insert student's name here)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(insert defence date and thesis title here)**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**(Chair signature)**