

## Applied Qualitative Research Methods (3 credits)

**\*Syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor or as a result of university or local conditions. Masks are required in the Taylor Avenue Building and in the classroom.**

### Class includes:

- ✓ Videos, slides, and readings to review before class meetings.
- ✓ In-person interactive classes and activities.
- ✓ Discussion board based on readings and assignments.

### Key points:

1. Qualitative methods is an interactive class that weaves in discussions from the literature and from students' experiences and interests. Building a learning community is a core component.
2. Class sessions build on the readings/recorded content and presumes you completed the assigned work before class.
3. Due to the current COVID environment, we may need to make adjustments to our planned approach. Masking is required in the classroom and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Taylor Avenue Building.
4. Class will not be routinely recorded or available online. You can miss up to 2 classes with any penalty to your grade.
5. There is no fall break and we do have class the Tuesday before Thanksgiving.
6. This bears repeating: There is no fall break on the medical campus. You will be expected in class even if the Danforth campus is on break.

### *A Note to Students,*

*1) I expect your attendance at classes – this promotes the best conversations and mutual learning. It's okay to miss up to 2 classes without it affecting your grade. I expect an email notification in advance if you know you will not be at class, if at all possible. This helps me anticipate and plan learning activities.*

*2) Each assignment is aimed at learning the building blocks of qualitative research. They aren't meant to get to "perfect" (or you wouldn't be taking this class). When don't think you have it "right" on an assignment, write about what you are struggling with and we will discuss the issues.*

*3) I aim for a safe class environment where it is ok to say when things don't make sense, pause for reflection, or dig deeper into a challenge. The differing experiences in the class make for a great learning opportunity.*

*It seems like the environment is changing week to week and there is a lot to deal with. We will shift as necessary to keep us going and learning during the semester.*

AJ - 8.15.2022

## APPLIED QUALITATIVE METHODS -- FALL 2022

**Dates:** 8/29/22 – 12/14/2022

**Day/Time:** Tuesday afternoons (1- 4 pm, plus expected pre-work)

**Location:** Taylor Avenue Building (Med Campus), 2<sup>nd</sup> floor, Doll & Hill Room

**Instructor:** Aimee S. James, PhD, MPH, Professor, Public Health Science

Taylor Avenue Building, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, South Suite 210S (in office part-time in fall 2022). Office hours are immediately after class or by appointment.

### **Intended audience:**

Students interested in learning qualitative and mixed methods research. Students with some exposure or experience can advance their skills. *Having qualitative research experience or a planned qualitative research project is not required.*

### **Course Description:**

This course is focused on application and learning the methodology. You will learn applications of qualitative methods to clinical and health related research, focusing on practical skills while laying the foundation for understanding why we do what we do in qualitative research. The course addresses descriptive research, methods to develop or refine survey measures, formative and impact evaluation, implementation science, and mixed methods (quantitative and qualitative together). The culminating project is qualitative research proposal; assignments through the semester build up to this. You may integrate the activities with your research interests but a pre-identified project is not required.

Class-time includes interactive learning to reinforce lessons and work through common challenges encountered in qualitative research. Coming to class prepared and engaged is critical to maximizing your learning experience. Review any slides, readings, or pre-recordings before class so we can use that “live” time more effectively and dive deeper into the methods.

### **Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:**

All science is influenced by assumptions and pre-conceptions, and influenced by the view point of the researcher. Reflexivity and acknowledging our pre-conceptions and biases as researchers is foundational for rigorous science. Sometimes, there is no “right” answer about which method to use or which questions to ask – we simply aim to do our best. My aim is to cultivate a learning environment that is inclusive and respectful of multiple and sometimes contrasting experiences and viewpoints. This is a group effort and requires all of us to contribute.

I have intentionally reviewed (and continues to review) readings and other course materials to ensure we include a range of cultural, racial, ethnic, sexual, gender, economic, and ability identities - not just in who is affected by the research but also in who is conducting and reporting the research. My goal is to be inclusive of many voices and viewpoints, while acknowledging that we all have our own biases or blind spots. This is an ongoing process of learning and reflection, and I welcome and strongly encourage feedback on how together we can improve the course materials, perspectives, and experiences of all learners to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion.

### **Readings:**

**Text Book:** Tolley, Ulin, et al. *Qualitative Methods in Public Health: A Field Guide for Applied Research*. Published Wiley. (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition). **Optional supplemental text:** Bernard, R. *Research Methods in Anthropology*. This is a comprehensive text and is an excellent resource – good for citing in grants too.

**Other readings:** Each week we will use relevant articles to discuss how qualitative research works in practice. Readings will be distributed about one week in advance of class in Canvas and you are expected to arrive in class prepared to discuss them. You may also be asked to find a relevant article and come prepared to present it. Reading the current qualitative literature will help you learn the standards and practices of qualitative research in your area of interest.

**Learning Objectives:**

At the successful conclusion of class, students will be able to:

1. Determine optimal methods for collecting and analyzing qualitative data with scientific rigor;
2. Recognize ethical and IRB concerns in qualitative research and how to address them;
3. Anticipate and address common challenges in qualitative and mixed method research;
4. Describe elements of equity, inclusion, quality, and validity in qualitative research.
5. Contribute to and critically evaluate the research literature;

**Competencies:**

1. Select and utilize appropriate research methodology to answer qualitative and mixed method research questions. This course will focus on individual interviews and focus groups as two common methods for qualitative data collection.
2. Plan qualitative research in a sensitive, ethical, and effective manner, with attention to scientific rigor and transparency.
3. Become familiar with the how-to of qualitative data collection including planning and conducting interviews and focus groups.
4. Describe and apply the basics of analyzing qualitative data, including creating and applying data codes.
5. Effectively and appropriately interpret and disseminate research findings to communities and colleagues.
6. Attend to ethical concerns, equity and inclusion, and well-being of research participants at each stage of the research process. Recognize power dynamics, interpersonal and systemic bias, and histories that affect our interactions with participants, their interactions with us, and the interpretation of data and results.

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**COURSE POLICIES**

**Grading:**

Your grade will be based on homework assignments; in-class participation and exercises; discussion board participation, research proposal and presentation. \*See “Assignments and Deliverables” for detailed descriptions. Grading Scale for MPHS Courses: A+: 97-100; A: 93-96; A-: 90-92; B+: 87-89; B: 83-86; B-: 80-82; C+: 77-79; C: 73-76; C-: 70-72

**Attendance and Participation:**

Class attendance is required. As a courtesy to other students and the instructors, you are expected to arrive on time and participate in class discussion and activities. Missing more than two classes or not participating in in-class activities may result in losing participation points. Whenever possible you are expected to notify the instructor if you will be out. If you miss two consecutive classes without any notice to the instructor, she may contact the program directors.

**Submitting your assignments on time:**

Assignments are to be submitted in Canvas. Assignments are due by the start of class (1pm) on the day they are due. Please plan ahead as you are able or alert the instructor if you won't be able to meet a deadline. If an assignment is more than 48 hours late, you will start to lost points.

**CLASS CALENDAR [UPDATED 8.15.2022]**

The schedule of topics/assignments may change at the discretion of the instructor. It is your responsibility to check Canvas for required pre-work. Readings will be posted about 5 days before class.

<b>Class #</b>	<b>Topic and Readings</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>
#1 (8/30)	<b><u>Foundations - 1: Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods</u></b> <i>We will cover the types and forms of qualitative research, underlying philosophies, and set the stage for the rest of the semester.</i> <u>Required Reading:</u> Tolley et al, Chapter 1 (i.e., your textbook);	
#2 (9/6)	<b><u>Foundations-2: Ethics and Equity in Qualitative Research</u></b> <i>We will discuss ethical challenges in qualitative research, with particular attention to working with vulnerable populations.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Tolley et al., Chapter 2	
#3 (9/13)	<b><u>Methods- 1: Planning your study: Sampling and Sample Size</u></b> <i>We'll discuss how to choose a population, develop a sampling scheme, and different strategies for actually getting the sample you want/need with an eye towards inclusive samples and equitable opportunity to participate.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Tolley et al., Chapter 3	
#4 (9/20)	<b><u>Methods – 2 : Interviews and Observation</u></b> <i>There are many considerations when conducting interviews. This class will go into methods and also address interviewer selection and training.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Tolley et al., Chapter 4	
#5 (9/27)	<b><u>Methods 3 - : Focus Groups</u></b> <i>We'll address when focus groups are a good choice and the multitude of factors that go into planning – and conducting – a focus group study.</i>	<b>Article Critique 1</b> <b>DUE</b>
#6 (10/4)	<b><u>Methods- 4: What are your Measures? Asking Good Questions</u></b> <i>The data we get is only as good as the questions we ask participants.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Tolley et al., Appendix	
#7 (10/11)	<b><u>Methods 5: Mixed Methods</u></b> <i>Mixed methods means using both quantitative and qualitative methods, but it is more than just doing 2 separate studies.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Tolley et al., Case study 1,3,4	<b>Draft interview guide due</b>
#8 (10/18)	<b><u>Getting and Keeping Good Data: Field Notes, Transcription, Data Management and Supervision</u></b> <i>Qualitative research is complex and collects a wealth of data, and often you may have multiple people collecting data. We'll talk about how to stay organized and maintain rigor.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Tolley et al., Chapter 5, Appendix 3 & 5	

#9 (10/25)	<b>Special Topics: (guest speaker, tentative topic: Participatory Research)</b> <i>We'll discuss some novel ways to apply qualitative methods and engage participants in our research.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Tolley et al., Chapter 7, Appendix 10, 11, 12	<b>Interview Skills Packet DUE</b>
#10 (11/1)	<b><u>Analysis I: Intro to Coding</u></b> <i>Moving from an audio-recording to actually pulling out information is the key challenge in qualitative analysis. We will introduce the concepts of coding data and do some practice coding.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Tolley et al., Chapter 6,	
# 11 (11/8)	<b><u>Analysis III: Presenting and Writing Up Qualitative Research: Choosing Quotes, (Revisit Coding)</u></b> <i>We will re-visit coding, discuss how to move from codes to findings, and explore different ways of presenting findings. A critical piece of this is how we identify the quotes we present in a paper or presentation to support our findings.</i> <u>Reading:</u> Tolley et al., Chapter 8, Appendix 7,8,9	<b>Article Critique 2 DUE</b>
#12 (11/15)	<b><u>Analysis II: Rigor and Quality in Qualitative Research</u></b> <i>Reliability, validity, and rigor all apply to qualitative research, but we talk about them slightly differently from how we do in quantitative work. We'll also discuss ways of promoting rigor in qualitative coding and analysis, and responding to critiques of qualitative research</i>	
#13 (11/22)	<b>Class Presentations of your research Proposals</b>	<b>Analysis Skills Packet DUE</b>
#14 (11/29)	<b>Class Presentations</b>	
#15 (12/6)	<b>Special Topics (Class Choice or Review of Previous Topics)</b>	<b>Research Proposal DUE</b>
#16 (12/13)	<b>Class Wrap-Up/Debrief</b>	

## ASSIGNMENTS and DELIVERABLES

Assignments and brief descriptions are listed below; additional provided in Canvas. It may help you to focus your assignments on the same topic so that each one builds on the previous one and toward your research proposal but this is not required. If you are struggling for a topic, you can talk with the Instructor.

- Article Critiques (10%)
- In-class and discussion board participation (20%)
- Interview Skills Packet (25%)
- Analysis Skills Packet (20%)
- Research Proposal and Presentation (25%)

### Critiques (Expected Length 2-3 pages each)

- Article Critique 1. Review a Qualitative Article. Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the research method described by the authors, focusing on whether it fits the research question, whether the sample is appropriate, and reflecting on the sampling and recruitment sections.
- Article Critique 2. Using the knowledge gained throughout the semester, critically evaluate and discuss a (different from above) qualitative article of your choice. For this second critique, focus on the analysis, results, and conclusions. Overall, how well did the investigators/authors "do"? Can you identify strengths of the study/approach? Are there things you would have suggested/asked as a reviewer? Are there things you might have done differently if you were the investigator? Are the findings credible to you?

### Interviewing Skills Packet - THIS WILL TAKE YOU LONGER THAN YOU THINK

- Interview guide. You will develop an interview guide with introductory consent paragraph, key questions and probes, and a closing/wrap-up question. You are expected to turn in your interview guide (questions) in for review before your practice interview. Please allow a few days for getting comments.
- Interviewer Instructions. You will also include ~ 1 page of instructions to the interviewer (e.g., if it is a RA or colleague).
- Practice interviews and Transcript. You will conduct **TWO** brief (~15 minute) practice interviews using your interview guide and audio record them. You will transcribe your audio recorded interviews on your own (i.e., do not use transcribing software), and turn in the transcript (not the audio).
- Reflection. You will write 1-2 paragraphs summarizing and reflecting on your experience. What went well? What was a challenge? How might you change your approach or your questions?

### Analysis Skills Packet

- Identify some text - either from your interviews or finding narrative text online. Many students choose to use their practice interview for this exercise, if there is enough data there.
- Codebook. From that text, inductively identify 4-5 codes in the data. Develop a mini-codebook around these (code name, definition, inclusion/exclusion, example quote).
- Code your text. Based on your codebook, code several pages of text by linking quotes/data to your defined codes.
- Interpret your codes. Analyze your coded text and identify 1 or 2 themes that are in the data, writing 3-5 sentences about the code, supported by at least one exemplar quote.
- Reflect on your experience – what more do you want to know about coding?

### Research Proposal & Presentation.

Students will be expected to integrate the knowledge and skills learned in the class into a cohesive qualitative research proposal. Proposals vary in length but are generally 8 to 10 pages in length. Presentations are in mid-November and are your chance to present your idea and work through any method issues with the instructor and your classmates. This gives you a time to revise your plan before your final proposal is due. Attendance at the presentations is required. Further instruction will be provided.

**In-class activities and participation.** Successful learning in this class will only come from active participation in the class discussions and exercises. Active participation means engaging in the activity or discussion – both in terms of speaking your perspective and listening to and respecting other student's opinions. You are allowed up to 2 missed classes without a grade penalty.

Participation includes interaction on the Discussion Board. There will be at least 5 Discussions and you are expected to participate actively in at least 4 of them to receive full credit. Participation means a multi-sentence initial post on your insights, take-aways, and linkage to your clinical or work experience, and a reply to at least one other student's answers. Responses must acknowledge the poster's comment and follow-up with an insight or question. Outstanding posts include questions that occur to you (that will likely prompt responses from your classmates). No points will be recorded if a post is negative, disrespectful, or otherwise inappropriate. Posts that are personal attacks, contain disrespectful or inappropriate language may be elevated to Program Directors.

**A note on the originality of written work:** This class is designed to be helpful to you in your development as a scientist. As such, many enrollees who enter with a research study already in mind find it helpful to orient their assignments to that topic – a grant or grant proposal, dissertation topic, or something like that.

It is not acceptable to use someone else's written materials for assignments. For example, if you are working on your mentor's or supervisor's research study, you cannot use their background and significance for an assignment – the words must be your own.

You also may not use an interview guide that was co-developed for someone's project by other people. What you can do is take a piece of that topic and make it your own – if there a related topic that you are interested in, write about that.

If you use someone else's work for your assignment, you will receive a 0.

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **Drop Dates:**

You may drop for any reason during the course of the semester, in accordance with the rules of your degree program. However, you may only receive a partial or no tuition reimbursement depending upon how far into the semester you drop the course. See the [MPHS Student Handbook](#). Late withdrawals will appear on your transcript as a withdrawal.

### **MPHS Academic Policy Guidelines:**

Guidelines regarding MPHS course registration and enrollment, grades, tuition obligation, and academic leave are consolidated in the [MPHS Student Handbook](#). Please review this document.

### **MPHS Guidelines for Academic and Non-Academic Transgressions:**

By registering for this course you have agreed to the terms of the **MPHS Academic Integrity Policy, outlined below and in more detail in the** MPHS Student Handbook. Please review this policy before submitting your first graded assignment.

### **Academic Integrity/Plagiarism Policy:**

- Academic dishonesty is a serious offense that may lead to probation, suspension, or dismissal from the University. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism (the use of someone else's ideas, statements, or approaches without proper citation). Academic dishonesty also includes copying information from another student, submitting work from a previous class for a new grade without prior approval from your instructor, cheating on exams, etc. You are responsible for reviewing [WashU's academic integrity resources](#) to become aware of all the actions that constitute academic dishonesty.
- All instances of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Registrar for investigation and potential disciplinary action. In addition, the instructor will make an independent decision about the student's grade on any assignment in question. The MPHS process regarding academic dishonesty is described in the [MPHS Student Handbook](#)

## **DISABILITY RESOURCES**

It is the goal of Washington University to assist students with disabilities in removing the barriers their disabilities may pose and provide support in facing the challenge of pursuing an education at Washington University.

Washington University recognizes and accepts its professional, legal and moral responsibility to avoid discrimination in the acceptance and education of qualified students with disabilities and to provide reasonable accommodations to such students consistent with the principles embodied in the law. These guidelines apply to students seeking admittance as well as to those who become disabled while they are enrolled.

Washington University makes every effort to insure that all qualified applicants and students can participate in and take full advantage of all programs and opportunities offered within the university. Washington University encourages and gives full consideration to all applicants for admission. Washington University does not discriminate in access to its programs and activities on the basis of age, sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, religion, color or national origin.

To learn more about services provided to students with disabilities, initiate the process of formal documentation and/or to arrange for accommodations, please review the [Disability Resources](#) for the Med School at the start of the course.

### **MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

Mental Health Services' professional staff members work with students to resolve personal and interpersonal difficulties, many of which can affect the academic experience. These include conflicts with or worry about friends or family, concerns about eating or drinking patterns, and feelings of anxiety and depression. See: [shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth](https://shs.wustl.edu/MentalHealth).

### **SEXUAL ASSAULT RESOURCES**

You can also speak confidentially and learn about available resources by contacting [Dr. Gladys Smith, PhD](#), Sexual Violence Prevention Therapist and Licensed Psychologist at the Medical Campus, (314) 362-2404. Additionally, you can report incidents to the Office of Student Affairs or by contacting WUSM Protective Services 314-362-4357 or your local law enforcement agency.

### **BIAS RESOURCES**

The University has a process through which students and staff who have experienced or witnessed bias, prejudice or discrimination against a student can report their experiences to the University's Bias Report and Support System (BRSS) team. For details see: [diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/brss/](https://diversityinclusion.wustl.edu/brss/).

### **Office of the Associate Vice Chancellor for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)**

**The DEI Training Team** designs, facilitates and leads diversity education programming for faculty, staff and students on a wide range of topics including: creating a climate of respect, the value of diversity and the role of biases in our day-to-day lives.

[diversity.med.wustl.edu/training/](https://diversity.med.wustl.edu/training/)

**The Office of Diversity Programs** promotes diversity among and prepares medical students to lead in a global society. A priority for the Office of Diversity Programs is to cultivate and foster a supportive campus climate for students of all backgrounds, cultures and identities.

[mdiversity.wustl.edu/](https://mdiversity.wustl.edu/)

**The Diversity and Inclusion Student Council** promotes an inclusive campus environment for all School of Medicine students.

[sites.wustl.edu/disc/](https://sites.wustl.edu/disc/)

**The Office for International Students and Scholars** embraces the university's mission of welcoming promising students from around the world.

[wumma.wustl.edu/](https://wumma.wustl.edu/)