I. COURSE PURPOSE

This doctoral level course explores critical issues in specific qualitative research methods at an advanced level, including the philosophical underpinnings, ethical and socio-cultural considerations, and value stances of the methodologies. The course focuses on connecting research questions require different research approaches and emerge from different ways of knowing. While recognizing numerous methodological approaches within qualitative research, this course provides an in-depth exploration of conceptually different methods (grounded theory, narrative, phenomenology, participatory action, and content analysis), with an emphasis on the application and critique of these methods. In addition, the course introduces the student to use of computer software for managing the data, analysis, and presentation of qualitative findings. Course format consists of lecture, seminar discussion, and computer lab.

II. EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Students will accomplish the following core objectives:

1. Develop knowledge in the philosophy, values, and ethical considerations unique to specific qualitative research methods.

2. Understand variations in the epistemology, philosophical underpinnings, and presentation and interpretation of findings for different qualitative research approaches.
3. Develop an increased understanding of the challenges and opportunities inherent in research observation and interviewing, using specific research methods, with a particular focus on socio-cultural considerations and the researcher’s unique instrumental role.

4. Understand and distinguish between the research methodologies used in grounded theory research, narrative research, phenomenology, participatory action research, and content analysis.

5. Demonstrate skill in the methods and the technology of qualitative data collection, including the use of documents as data sources and the use of QDA computer software in data analysis.

6. Examine and analyze the relevance, quality, and rigor of specific qualitative methods for program evaluation and the study of specific social work problems that evolve from both macro and clinical social work orientations.

7. Gain experience in conducting qualitative research.

III. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

A. Required Texts (copies of all texts are on reserve in the library)

B. Recommended Texts

C. Other Recommended Resources
   http://www.nova.edu/sss/QR/web.html (online journal)
   http://sophia.smith.edu/~jdrisko/index.htm (webpage with links for qualitative research)
   http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs/fqs-eng.htm (online journal)
   http://www.atlasti.com/ (webpage for Atlas.ti QDA software company)
D. Course Assignments
Students will receive detailed handouts outlining the written assignment on the first day of class. Assignment #1 is a research paper, based on qualitative empirical research, and the grade for the paper is divided into three portions, combined for a final grade. Assignment #2 is a critique of two qualitative research studies.

E. Grading Policy and Weights of Assignments
Grades will be based on the CUA Grading Policy as described in the Graduate Announcements. Full credit will not be given for assignments that are submitted late. The following provides weights for the various course assignments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #1</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment #2</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grading System

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Letter Grade</th>
<th>Numeric Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>95 – 100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90 – 94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87 – 89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83 – 86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80 – 82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70 – 79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

F. Preparation, Attendance & Participation
Students are required to attend classes and are expected to participate meaningfully in class discussion/exercises and online forums as required. The class participation grade will be determined by the instructor’s perception of the student’s preparation for and contributions to class discussion/activities. Different students will make different kinds of contributions. Some will have an easy time with spontaneous interactions while others will be more comfortable making planned statements about key ideas from the readings or other sources. Both types of contributions are valued.

G. Course and Instructor Evaluation
NCSSS requires written evaluations of doctoral level courses, and students will receive an evaluation form during the last class. Additional, informal written or verbal feedback to the instructor during the semester is encouraged and welcome. Students and instructor are mutually responsible for ongoing, shared, verbal evaluation of the course in order to meet the learning needs of the students.

IV. CLASS EXPECTATIONS

Please refer to NCSSS Announcements, or appropriate Program Handbook for Academic Requirements (http://ncsss.cua.edu/courses/index.cfm), including scholastic and
behavioral requirements. 
NCSSS is committed to creating an open and inclusive learning environment where all members - including students, faculty, administrators, and staff – strive to listen to and learn from one another. We recognize that in a multicultural society, it is inevitable that issues or tensions relative to diversity and different life experiences will arise. It is how we handle these events that matters. Therefore, when such issues occur – inside or outside of the classroom - we agree to engage in respectful and productive discussion with one another until learning is enhanced and understanding is deepened by all involved.

A. Scholastic Expectations
All written work should reflect the original thinking of the writer, cite references where material is quoted or adapted from existing sources, adhere to APA, v.6 format, and should be carefully proof read by the student before submission to the instructor for grading.

B. Behavioral Requirements
Students are expected to maintain accepted standards of professional conduct and personal integrity in the classroom. Students should:
- Attend all classes and contribute constructively to the classroom culture
- Recognize and avoid behavior that jeopardizes the learning/teaching environment of other students or the instructor
- Demonstrate competence in planning academic activities and in following through on those plans
- Reasonably respond to and respect others’ reactions to one’s comments or actions in the classroom
- Use an appropriate level of class time and instructor’s time and attention in and out of class
- Behave in a manner that is consistent with the ethical principles of the social work profession.

C. Academic Honesty
Joining the community of scholars at CUA entails accepting the standards, living by those standards, and upholding them. Please refer to University Policy (http://graduatestudies.cua.edu/currentstudents/academintgtrt.cfm) and appropriate Program Handbooks.

D. Confidentiality
Each student is expected to adhere to the Confidentiality Agreement. This agreement covers “practice materials” in classes, supervisory sessions, case conferences, seminars, and other educational settings within the NCSSS doctoral program. These materials are for professional learning purposes only and are subject to strict professional standards of confidentiality. These same standards of confidentiality also extend to various forms of written communication and peer consultation.
Adherence to these standards means all students refrain from communicating beyond the classroom setting about practice material that is presented in class. Students will also refrain from using social media outlets (blogs, twitter, Facebook, etc.) or email to discuss practice settings, program responsibilities and projects with individuals who are not in teaching or supervision roles directly related to the situation.

E. Accommodations
Students with physical, learning, psychological, or other disabilities wishing to request accommodations must identify with the Disability Support Services (DSS) and submit documentation of a disability. If you have documented such a disability to DSS that requires accommodations or an academic adjustment, you much present that documentation to your instructors and arrange a meeting with as soon as possible to discuss these accommodations.

F. Use of Electronic Devices
Please turn off all cell phones or other devices that would disrupt the learning environment of the classroom and put them away and removed from the classroom environment.

Class Schedule

1  INTRODUCTION and GETTING STARTED

Required readings:
Padgett, pp. 1-61.

2  RESEARCHER AS INSTRUMENT and ENTERING THE FIELD

Required readings:
Padgett, pp. 63-130; 179-198.
3-5 GROUNDED THEORY
Origins & history; GT methods vs. formal GT; Sampling & coding;
In context with other research methods

Required readings:
Bryant & Charmaz, pp. 31-57; 75-93; 97-126; 151-164; 229-289; 363-397; 436-453.
Charmaz, pp. 42-122; 123-150; 177-189.

6-7 NARRATIVE METHODS
Origins & history; Thematic & structural analysis; Dialogic & visual analysis

Required readings:
Bryant & Charmaz, pp. 417-435.
Riessman, pp. 1-200.

8 CODING and ANALYZING THE DATA
Using Atlas.ti to code via grounded theory & narrative methods

Required readings:
Bryant & Charmaz, pp. 265-289
Muhr, T., & Friese, S. (Eds.). (2004). *ATLAS.ti V.6: User’s guide and reference* (2nd ed.). Berlin: Scientific Software Development. (This guide has been placed on blackboard)
Padgett, pp. 131-178.

9 PHENOMENOLOGY

(Guest Speaker—Readings to be announced)

10-11 PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH
Origins & history; Relevance to SW

Required readings:
Bryant & Charmaz, pp. 498-416.
Required readings:

12 ONLINE ETHNOGRAPHY; EVALUATION RESEARCH

Required readings:


13 CHALLENGES OF WRITING UP QUALITATIVE STUDIES

Required readings:
Bryant & Charmaz, pp. 515-538.
Charmaz, pp. 151-176.

14 SYNTHESES and CONCLUSION

Required readings: