Overview and Objectives:

- **OVERVIEW:** This course will introduce participants to the characteristics and various approaches to designing and conducting qualitative research projects in health and health services research. Students will gain hands-on experience in various qualitative methods and analysis techniques while carrying out a research project related to their area of interest.

- **OBJECTIVES:**
  - To become familiar with the characteristics, language and logic of qualitative research methods;
  - To understand the available techniques for designing a qualitative research study;
  - To understand the available techniques for qualitative data analysis;
  - To be able to recognize and assess quality and rigor in evaluating a qualitative research study.

Responsibilities:

- There will be reading assignments in the textbook in addition to selected articles and handouts distributed during class. The readings of book chapters assigned in the syllabus are expected to be completed before class.

- Students will have homework assignments. Homework assignments should be submitted to the following class instructors via e-mail: Zickmund and Chang. They should also be posted on Blackboard.

- Homework assignments are due to these instructors no later than 5:00 PM on the Monday before the session in which the assignment is discussed. Students will receive a 5% (1/2 grade) deduction per day on the points awarded by the instructor for an assignment received late.

- A student who anticipates problems concerning an upcoming deadline should consult with a course coordinator (Zickmund or Chang) to determine whether alternative arrangements are possible. All assignments must be completed to receive credit and a final grade for the course.

- Class attendance and participation are required.
**Course Requirements:**

Letter grade, based on participation, assignments and final research paper.

30% Participation  
40% Course assignments  
30% Final paper

**Attendance Policy:**

Students are expected to sign-in to each class (computer provided in suite lobby). If a problem is encountered with the sign-in system, please contact the course instructor(s) as well as Lauren Talotta (talottals@upmc.edu) immediately.

**Course Grading Scale:**

- 100-90 –A  
- 89-80—B  
- 79-70—C  
- 69-60—D  
- 59 and below--F

**Required Textbook(s):**


**Supplemental Textbook(s):**

NA

**Website resources:**

Assignments and readings listed on the web or available in the Course Packet.

**Academic Integrity:**

Students in this course will be expected to comply with the University of Pittsburgh's Policy on Academic Integrity (http://www.provost.pitt.edu/info/ai1.html). Any student suspected of violating this obligation for any reason during the semester will be required to participate in the procedural process, initiated at the instructor level, as outlined in the University Guidelines on Academic Integrity. This may include, but is not limited to, the confiscation of the examination of any individual suspected of violating University Policy. Furthermore, no student may bring any unauthorized materials to an exam, including dictionaries and programmable calculators.
Course Schedule

Session 2: Topic(s) Overview of Course

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

• Understanding the characteristics, language and contributions of qualitative research to health and health services research.

Topics:

• Distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research approaches and methods.
• Session overview, assignments, expectations, etc.
• Student introductions and research interests.

Required Reading(s):

• Giacomini MK, Cook DJ. 2000. User’s guide to the medical literature: XXIII. Qualitative research in health care B. What are the results and how do they help me care for my patients? JAMA 284(4): 478-482

Homework assignment(s):

• Interview/Focus Group Script Assignment—due next week.
  Create or revise interview or focus group questions.

Session 2: Topic(s) Study Design and Interview Data Collection

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

• Understand how to construct an interview or focus group semi-structured interview script

Topics:

• Designing research questions
• Sampling
• IRB issues
• Designing an interview guide and interview questions
• Interviewing
• Brief overview of field observation and other methods

Required Reading(s):

Homework assignment(s):

• Interview Assignment—due next week.
  Interview 1 participant using your script and audio record the session.

Due Today:

• Interview/Focus Group Script Assignment
  Based on class discussion and readings, create or revise interview or focus group
  questions. Submit for discussion.

Session 3: Topic(s) Qualitative Data Collection Theory and Codebook Development

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

• Understand the basics of qualitative methods and the approach to codebook
  development.

Topics:

• Qualitative schools of thought
• Initial thoughts on qualitative analysis
• ABCs of Codebook development

Required Reading(s):

• Patton, pp. 440 – 442 (Organizing the Data and Protecting the Data) and Patton 452-471
  (start with section entitled “Pattern, Theme, and Content Analysis”)

• (Suggested but not required): Strauss A and Corbin J. 2000. Grounded theory
  methodology: an overview. In Handbook of qualitative research. NK Denzin and YS

Homework assignment(s):

• Transcription Assignment—due next week.
  Take the interview that you conducted and transcribe a minimum of five double-spaced
  pages of the interview. Write a 1 paragraph summary of the instructions for
  transcription you used and why you felt this was the best approach.

Due Today:

• Interview Assignment
  Identify and recruit 1 interview participant. Conduct 1 audio-taped interview using your
  interview script. Listen to entire interview, take notes on: interesting findings, ways to
  revise questions for future use. Please type up a minimum of 1 paragraph, on what was
  interesting in the text you examined, what would be important to capture in codes, what
  qualitative methods you would use for your data collection/analysis.
Session 4: Topic(s) Qualitative Data Analysis

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

- Develop and analysis plan for qualitative research

Topics:

- Coding
- Building analysis/theory
- Working with teams
- Intercoder reliability

Required Reading(s):


Homework assignment(s):

- **Grant/Article language—due next week at the beginning of class.**
  Turn in your first draft of the qualitative data collection methods. Be sure to include: Description of the sampling frame, qualitative data collection methods, any piloting of the script, training of the interviewers/ focus group staff, details of data collection (description of the focus group details, method/ procedure for collecting interview data, etc.), method of capturing information (note taking, audio recording, etc.), whether transcripts are used or audio file and details specific to that process.

Due Today:

- **Transcription Assignment**
  Take the interview that you conducted and transcribe a minimum of five double-spaced pages of the interview. Write a 1 paragraph summary of the instructions for transcription you used and why you felt this was the best approach.

Session 5: Topic(s) Writing About Qualitative Research

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

- Understand the basics of writing qualitative manuscripts.

Topics:

- Publishing qualitative research (*Guest Lecturer: Bob Arnold*)
- Writing up the qualitative data collection methods
Required Reading(s):


Homework assignment(s):

• Coding Assignment, Part 1—due next week.  
  You will either work with your own interviews or focus group scripts (or ones provided by the class). Read 5 interviews or 2 focus groups in conjunction with its script and the research questions. Do a close reading of the data with a focus on important emerging themes, keeping in mind key issues critical to answering the research questions. Develop a preliminary codebook. Use a fine-grained coding approach with the goal of capturing more themes than you expect to remain after the refinement process. Type up a list of the codes, provide initial definitions, and how many times they were encountered in the coding process.

Due Today:

• Grant/Article language  
  Turn in your first draft of the qualitative data collection methods. Be sure to include: Description of the sampling frame, qualitative data collection methods, any piloting of the script, training of the interviewers/focus group staff, details of data collection (description of the focus group details, method/procedure for collecting interview data, etc.), method of capturing information (note taking, audio recording, etc.), whether transcripts are used or audio file and details specific to that process.

Session 6: Topic(s) Focus Group Data Collection

At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:

• How to approach the art of focus group data collection

Topics:

• Focus groups: theory and practice.

Required Reading(s):


Homework assignment(s):

• Coding Assignment, Part 2—due next week.
Take the coding list developed above and train your partner in your codebook to see codes the same way you do. Type up a list of these refined codes, provide refined definitions, and how many times they were encountered in the coding process. Note the frequency of agreement/disagreement per code. Add a 1 paragraph description of success and challenges in this codebook refinement process.

Due Today:

- **Coding Assignment, Part 1.**
  You will either work with your own interviews or focus group scripts (or ones provided by the class). Read 5 interviews or 2 focus groups in conjunction with its script and the research questions. Do a close reading of the data with a focus on important emerging themes, keeping in mind key issues critical to answering the research questions. Develop a preliminary codebook. Use a fine-grained coding approach with the goal of capturing more themes than you expect to remain after the refinement process. Type up a list of the codes, provide initial definitions, and how many times they were encountered in the coding process.

### Session 7: Topic(s) Mixed Methods and Qualitative software

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

- Be able to use the basic functions in Atlas.ti

**Topics:**

- Combining qualitative and quantitative methods
- Software tools, data tracking and management
- Writing up the thematic analysis section of an article

**Required Reading(s):**


- *(Suggested but not required): Devers KJ. 1999. How will we know “good” qualitative research when we see it? Beginning the dialogue in health services research. Health Services Research 34(5): 1153-1188.*

**Homework assignment(s):**

- **Analysis Assignment——due next week at the beginning of class.**
  Turn in your first draft of the qualitative analysis section for an article or grant. Be sure to include: qualitative methods used with a description of the overall approach, the codebook development process, the team or individuals who will be involved in coding and the process you will use for training, describe the codebook refinement process, intercoder reliability process, data management, and the approach to the final thematic analysis.

**Due Today:**
• **Coding Assignment, Part 2**
  Take the coding list developed above and train your partner in your codebook to see codes the same way you do. Type up a list of these refined codes, provide refined definitions, and how many times they were encountered in the coding process. Note the frequency of agreement/disagreement per code. Add a 1 paragraph description of success and challenges in this codebook refinement process.

**Session 8: Topic(s) Intercoder Reliability, Qualitative Check-List, Course Wrap up**

**At the conclusion of this lecture, the student will be able to:**

• Understand the fundamentals of intercoder reliability.

**Topics:**

• Calculating intercoder reliability
• Discussion of final papers
• Overview and assessment of course

**Required Reading(s):**

• Giacomini MK, Cook DJ. 2000. Users’ Guides to the medical literature: XXII. Qualitative research in healthcare, are the results of the study valid? *JAMA* 284:357-62.


**Homework assignment(s):**

• **Final Paper Assignment**
  For the final assignment you should provide either a grant or an article methods/analysis section as described throughout the class. The goal is to use this opportunity to refine the prose of the sections that have already been created in order to walk away with a polished approach to qualitative data collection and analysis that you can use for grants and articles. The one segment that is included here that has not been previously assigned and workshoped is a thematic analysis. The methods and approach to this final paper will be spelled out as we go along, as will the final thematic analysis, which will be based on the class codebook refinement assignment.

**FINAL PAPER ASSIGNMENT E-mail**

**Due Today:**

• **Analysis Assignment.**
  Turn in your first draft of the qualitative analysis section for an article or grant. Be sure to include: qualitative methods used with a description of the overall approach, the codebook development process, the team or individuals who will be involved in coding and the process you will use for training, describe the codebook refinement process,
intercoder reliability process, data management, and the approach to the final thematic analysis.