PA 5041: Qualitative Methods for Policy Analysts (4 credits)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spring 2016</th>
<th>Professor Sarah Parkinson</th>
<th>TA Marta Monti</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4 credits: Letter grade only</td>
<td>Office: HHH 255 Email: <a href="mailto:sparkins@umn.edu">sparkins@umn.edu</a> Office Hours: W 10am-11am and 1:30-2:30, online signup</td>
<td>Office: Cube AK by room 157 Email: <a href="mailto:monti035@umn.edu">monti035@umn.edu</a> Office Hours: TBD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Description:

This class is designed to introduce students to qualitative research design, data collection, and analysis. It provides students with first-hand experience in designing, gathering and analyzing qualitative data. The class involves two weekly class sessions that consist of lectures, discussion, presentations, and practical training. The course also includes a weekly 75-minute lab to learn and practice additional technical skills related to qualitative research.

Course outcomes:

After successfully completing this course students should be able to:

- Determine when to use qualitative methodology
- Develop strong qualitative research designs
- Navigate the ethical and practical challenges of research with human subjects
- Gather qualitative data via primary source documents and human subjects research
- Deploy a variety of interviewing techniques
- Use qualitative analysis techniques such as discourse analysis and process tracing

Course Readings:

Required readings are listed below by class and lab session. All readings are available through the required texts and via download on the course website on Moodle.

_I will ask questions about the readings in class. Evidence of completion and reflection on the readings is an important factor in the participation grade._

Grading:

Your final grade will be based on the following:

1. Course Participation (20 points): Class participation reflects attendance and active participation at lectures and lab sessions. Active participation includes completion of the required reading, participation in research workshops and paired feedback sessions, and active involvement in interviewing practice.
2. **Course Assignments (Individual)(30 points):** Class assignments receive points. Their purpose is to help students build toward the analysis and interpretation due in the final project. *All assignments due dates are listed on the syllabus and on Moodle.* Assignment details are found on the Moodle website. Assignments include:

   a. Memo: Research question, scope, concepts, assumptions (6)
   b. Memo: “State of the Debate” on your research topic (6)
   c. Practice interview questions/revised interview protocol (6)
   d. Practice focus group questions AND either: focus group protocol OR second, revised interview protocol (6)
   e. Interview transcript/coding of data (6)

3. **Research Proposal (Group)(20 points)** including your research question, revised literature review, scope conditions, research design, case(s), and data-gathering approach. IRB, informed consent documents, and sample introductory/interview questions/topics MUST be presented as separate appendices.

4. **Final Project (Group)(30 points):** Over the course of one semester, students in PA5041 will learn the principles of qualitative data collection and analysis by conducting their own research project individually or in small groups. They will produce a piece of original written and/or presented research due at the end of the semester. Students will write or orally present a summary of literature on the topic, justify their research question and design, analyze relevant primary-source documentation, conduct fieldwork including interviews, code and analyze data, and use process-tracing or develop typologies as necessary.

   Students have three options for a final project:

   a. Research Paper (2,500-3,000/individual or 5,000-6,000/group words, word count does not include bibliography or appendices). Papers are due the day of the final at 5pm.
   b. Presentation: 20 (individual) or 30 (group) minute presentation of research using PowerPoint or Prezi, to be followed by a 15 minute Q&A. A title and 200 word abstract must be provided to the entire class by 5pm the day before the presentation. Depending on the number of presentations we will work to schedule them the day of the final or the last day of class.

**Policies:**

**Attendance:** Attendance at class and lab sessions takes on added significance in Qualitative Methods because we will be planning and carrying out a research project with human subjects. Missing a class may mean missing a crucial step in the research training and feedback. For this reason **attendance and full participation are weighted heavily.** The only acceptable reasons to miss class are for health or family emergencies; please email Professor Parkinson or Marta if these conditions arise. If you miss a class, please make arrangements to copy notes from one of your colleagues and to consult with them regarding any initial questions.
Extensions: This course requires that you manage your time well, keep track of the assigned readings, and attend all lectures and lab sessions. Pay attention to the deadlines in the syllabus. **You may use ONE “no questions asked.” 24-hour extension on any of the assignments listed under “Grading 2: Assignments (a-e).”** There will be no extensions on either the Research Proposal or the Final Project without a medical or family excuse. In the case of a group project where one member becomes ill or must cope with a family situation, other group members should expect to submit their completed work on time.

Religious conflicts: Students may ask for reasonable and timely accommodations for religious observances. Please review the syllabus closely to determine if your religion will present scheduling conflicts with any of the assignments. **You must inform the instructors of any conflicts within the first two weeks of the semester.**

Accommodations: It is University policy to provide, on a flexible and individualized basis, reasonable accommodations to students who have documented disability conditions (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, hearing, or systemic) that may affect their ability to participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. Students with disabilities are encouraged to contact Disability Services and their instructors for a confidential discussion of their individual need for academic accommodations. Disability Services is located in Suite 180 McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak Street. Staff can be reached by calling 612-626-1333 voice or TTY.

Plagiarism: Students should be aware of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents’ policy on student conduct and scholastic dishonesty. It can be found at: [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.html](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/academic/Student_Conduct_Code.html).

Acts of scholastic dishonesty and plagiarism will be reported to the Office of Judicial Affairs ([http://www.sja.umn.edu](http://www.sja.umn.edu)) and will result in a grade of “F” or “N” for the entire course. For more information regarding plagiarism, please consult the Universities policies and procedures at: [http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/](http://writing.umn.edu/tww/plagiarism/).

In this class, the instructors may utilize “Safe Assign” at their own discretion. “Safe Assign” is an anti-plagiarism tool that the instructor may use to analyze assignments from students (for more information see [http://www.safeassign.com/](http://www.safeassign.com/)). **Students are encouraged to consult their instructors with any questions or concerns regarding citations or plagiarism.**

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, and Affirmative Action: The University will provide equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy: [http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/administrative/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.html](http://www1.umn.edu/regents/policies/administrative/Equity_Diversity_EO_AA.html).

Mental Health and Stress Management: As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health
concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University of Minnesota services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu.

**Communication with Professor Parkinson and Marta:** We will make every effort to respond to emails within two days (48 hours) of receiving them, unless they are received over a weekend (5pm Friday to 9am Monday). Please understand that we cannot guarantee email responses over weekends or during spring break. We appreciate students’ efforts to keep emails brief (three sentences or shorter). In the context of this class, most questions that require longer emails are likely better addressed either during class or office hours.

**Required Texts:**


**Optional, but recommended:**


**PART I: RESEARCH FOUNDATIONS**

**Week 1: What are qualitative methods? What are they good for? What types of questions can we ask? What kinds of answers will we get?**

**Class 1.1 (January 19)**

M&H pages 8-16

Mahoney, James, and Gary Goertz. 2006. “A Tale of Two Cultures: Contrasting Quantitative and Qualitative Research.” *Political Analysis* 14 (3) (June 20): 227–249.

Class 1.2 (January 21)


_Discussion, Class 2: Poor Numbers_

**Week 1, Lab: Citations, bibliographies, and RefWorks**

**Week 2: What Am I Studying? Concept Formation, Scope, and Measurement**

Class 2.1 (January 26)


_In-class presentation and exercise: “What is a Riot?” videos. Brainstorming, presentation, and discussion_

_In-class exercise: What is democracy? Discuss in relation to Freedom House framework (will hand out in class), Wedeen, and Collier and Levitsky._

**ASSIGNMENT (due WEDNESDAY, January 27, 5PM on Moodle):**

1.) Find and read three recent (within the last five years) scholarly articles related to your general topic of interest. We may be using these pieces in lab, so **be sure to have a digital copy with you** on Wednesday.

2.) Write a short memo (100-200 words) that includes your initial research question, defines key concepts, clarifies the scope conditions, and outlines assumptions. Please include, in proper format, a bibliography including the three scholarly articles you found (the bibliography does not count towards your word count). Submit via Moodle and bring a printed copy of your memo to class on Thursday. (Assignment 2.a)

3.) Please skim your classmates’ memos on Moodle

Class 2.2 (January 28)

M&H pp 17-42

In-class exercise: Peer review of research questions and conceptual frameworks

**Week 2, Lab: Literature Reviews**


**Week 3: Ethics, Human Subjects, and the IRB**

**Class 3.1 (February 2)**

M&H Chapter 3


READ THE UMN IRB WEBSITE: [http://www.irb.umn.edu/training.html#/Uczkoj7F1At](http://www.irb.umn.edu/training.html#/Uczkoj7F1At)

Read sample informed consent documents.

Come to class with any questions you might have about completing an IRB for your research topic. What are potential ethical challenges in your research? What type of review is most suited to your project?

**Guest Speaker:** Jeffery Perkey, IRB Office Representative

**Class 3.2 (February 4)**

*By Thursday’s class: COMPLETE ONLINE HRPP/CITI TRAINING (duration: approx. one hour): [http://www.irb.umn.edu/training.html#.UjZKBj8IKMU](http://www.irb.umn.edu/training.html#.UjZKBj8IKMU]. Please email your completion email to Marta by the beginning of Thursday’s class.*


Week 3 Lab: The Ethics of Researching Sex Work

ASSIGNMENT Due Sunday February 7 (5pm on Moodle):
Submit a 300-400 word memo on “The State of the Debate” that includes your general topic and answers the following questions: What kinds of questions have been asked? What scope conditions have been used? Where has empirical research been conducted and how? What types of work are missing or underrepresented? Be sure to include a list of references in proper bibliographic format. (Assignment 2.b)

Week 4: Research Design and Case Studies I

Class 4.1 (February 9)


Lecture: Mill’s Methods
In-class exercise: Diagram “After Neoliberalism”

Class 4.2 (February 11)


Thursday in-class exercise: Design a case study-based project on deinstitutionalization and homelessness. Background provided in class. Emphasis on comparative v. within-case designs.

Lab Week 4: Case study designs
Week 5, Class 5.1 (February 16): Research Design and Case Studies II

Rubin and Rubin Chapter 3


In-class exercise: Diagram and discuss Soss 2005

PART II: RESEARCH SKILLS

Week 5, Class 5.2 (February 18): Sampling and Field Research

M&H Chapter 5-7


Week 5, Lab: “To get” lists

ASSIGNMENT (due Sunday February 21 at 5pm on Moodle):
Submit an 1000-1200 word research proposal covering your research question, relevant literature, scope conditions, case(s), and data-gathering approach. CITI completion email, IRB, informed consent documents, and sample introductory/interview questions/topics MUST be presented as separate appendices. (Assignment 3)
Week 6: Archives, Newspapers, and Historiography

Class 6.1 (February 23)


Rubin and Rubin Chapter 7

Lecture preparation: Find documents or materials from at least three different sources relevant to your project. What types of materials are relevant to your work? What types of biases are present? What power dynamics were involved in the production of these materials?

Class 6.2 (February 25)


In-class exercise: Develop a research project on the topic of “political scandal”

Week 6, Lab

**MID-SEMESTER COURSE EVALUATION IN CLASS**

Week 7: Interview Methods I (Formal/informal, structured/unstructured)

Class 7.1 (March 1)

Rubin and Rubin Chapters 8 and 9


In-class exercise: “Do you want to play at questions?” Rosencrantz & Gildenstern are Dead (1990)

Class 7.2 (March 3)

Rubin and Rubin Chapter 10
M&H Chapter 4


_In-class discussion: Advantages and applications of formal and informal interviews_
_In-class exercise: Interviewing practice_

**ASSIGNMENT (marked for completion):**
*Develop interview questions for in-class practice on Thursday. Revise as necessary and begin scheduling/conducting with appropriate interviewees (given approval).*

**Week 7, Lab**

**Week 8: Interview Methods II (Interpretive)**

Class 8.1 (March 8)


Class 8.2 (March 10)


_In-class exercise Thursday: OLA Interviewing_

**ASSIGNMENT (marked for completion):**
*Develop interview questions for in-class practice on Thursday. Revise as necessary and begin scheduling with appropriate interviewees (given approval).*

**ASSIGNMENT DUE FRIDAY, MARCH 11 BY 12PM on Moodle:**
*Submit a revised interview protocol designed for a one-hour session using techniques from Week 7 or Week 8. (Assignment 2.c)*

**Week 8, Lab**
SPRING BREAK!

Week 9 (March 22-24): Participant Observation/Ethnography

Class 9.1


Class 9.2


Recommended:

Ethnographic study from 1990 census follow-up (TBD: all studies available at: http://www.census.gov/srd/www/byeve.html)

Week 9, Lab: Observation practice

Week 10: Interview Methods III (Focus groups)

Class 10.1 (March 29)


Class 10.2 (March 31)


Week 10, Lab: Focus group practice

ASSIGNMENT (marked for completion):
Develop focus group questions for in-class practice on Thursday. Revise as necessary and begin scheduling with appropriate interviewees (given approval).

ASSIGNMENT DUE SUNDAY, APRIL 3 BY 5PM on Moodle:
Submit a revised focus group protocol designed for a 1.5-2 hour session OR second interview protocol designed for a one-hour session using techniques from Week 7 or Week 8. (Assignment 2.d)

PART III: DATA ANALYSIS

Week 11 (April 5 and April 7): Narrative and Discourse Analysis

Rubin and Rubin chapter 12

M&H 9-11


In-class exercise: Coding the Frost-Nixon interviews for three research topics: 1.) Executive privilege; 2.) Separation of powers; 3.) Presidential legacy

Week 11, Lab

Week 12 (April 12 and April 14): Process Tracing


Part IV: EXTENSIONS

Week 13 (April 19 and April 21): Typologies

George and Bennett chapter 11


In-class exercise: Conduct an hour of research on a militant organization in the Middle East and place it in Staniland’s framework. Be prepared to discuss in class.

NO CLASS APRIL 21; USE CLASS AND LAB TIME TO WORK ON YOUR PROJECTS

ASSIGNMENT DUE THURSDAY, APRIL 21 BY 5PM on Moodle:
Submit your codebook and a three-page section of a coded interview or focus group transcript. (Assignment 2.e)

Week 14 (April 26 and April 28): Social Networks


Readings TBA
