

**Instructor:** Heather Boon

**Email:** heather.boon@utoronto.ca

**Office:** Simcoe Hall room 225

**Office Hours:** By appointment (Please contact my assistant: Justine Cox  
[justine.cox@utoronto.ca](mailto:justine.cox@utoronto.ca) )

**Class time:** Wednesdays 10-1 beginning September 11, 2019. **Note: no classes on September 18 or November 6;** last class December 4, 2019.

**Classroom:** Room 705 Health Sciences Building, 155 College Street

### **Rationale**

Qualitative research methods are gaining in importance in the health sciences, and the need for graduate students to learn about qualitative research and conduct their own projects is growing. Unfortunately, basic training in qualitative research often focuses mostly on the tools – or methods – used by qualitative researchers, ignoring their important historical, intellectual and social underpinnings. In Block 1, this graduate seminar course will introduce students to qualitative research methods in the health sciences, with an emphasis on the interpretive and critical traditions. It will anchor qualitative research in ways that will help students articulate its relationship with other forms of research, its strengths and limitations, and emphasize the continuous questioning that is characteristic of interpretive and critical qualitative research. This section of the course has a substantial required reading load; students are expected to complete the week's readings before class, and to be ready to discuss and apply them to specific research topics during class. In Block 2, students will learn about specific tools for qualitative data collection; and in Block 3, they will learn about different ways to analyze data.

Each 2-3 hour class will include a critical discussion of the readings, didactic sessions with hands-on activities and small- and large-group discussion. Examples from the qualitative health sciences literature and from the instructor's own research will help students connect methods texts to published empirical articles, and to demystify the research and publication process.

### **Learning Objectives**

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Conceptualize, write up and justify scientifically a research project that uses qualitative research methods;
2. Articulate how interpretive and critical qualitative research traditions differ from other forms of research in the health sciences, including quantitative and post-positivistic traditions;

3. Evaluate the rigour of qualitative research methods in health sciences research.

Specific learning objectives for each session are provided in this syllabus.

### **Scheduling and Format of Assessments**

#### **Assessment # 1: Asking a qualitative research question and drafting objectives (10% of Final Grade)**

*Description:*

*Before class* on Week 4 (Oct 2, 2019), students will submit their tentative research question and 2-4 objectives on Quercus in preparation for the final research proposal. Students who miss this class are also responsible for submitting their research question and objectives on Quercus by that time. Feedback will be given to help students refine their project and identify the kind of data collection tool that might be most appropriate. Approval of the research question and objectives is required before moving forward with the proposal.

**Due on Wed, October 2, 2019 before 10 am**

#### **Assessment # 2: Interview Assignment (30% of Final Grade)**

*Description:*

Each student will interview a fellow student and be interviewed by a fellow student using an interview guide we create together in class. Each student will then write a reflection on what they learned being the interviewer compared with what they learned from being interviewed and will submit this reflection on Quercus *before class* on November 13, 2019. Students are expected incorporate concepts discussed in the readings and class materials and to work independently on their reflections.

**Due on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 before 10 am**

#### **Assignment #3: Final research proposal (45% of Final Grade)**

*Description:*

As their final project, students will submit a 10-page research proposal that builds upon the knowledge and skills acquired during this course. The proposal will include a research question, short literature review, consideration of the project's paradigm and theory (if applicable), description of methods, and a plan for data analysis. It is expected that students consider the recommended materials pertinent to their chosen method.

Students are encouraged to team up with colleague(s) to gather feedback and revise their proposal.

**Due Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at noon**

### **In-class participation (15% of Final Grade)**

#### *Description:*

This is a graduate seminar course and students are expected to come to class prepared and engage in conversations during the class. Students will be evaluated not merely on attendance, but on their substantive participation to class discussions. In addition, each student will be expected to volunteer to be a formal “discussant” of 2-3 required readings during the course. Full credit will be given for demonstration of critical understanding of the materials. Please contact the instructor if you will miss a class and arrange with a classmate to obtain notes.

### **Late Assignments:**

Note that late assignments will be penalized by 5% every 24 hours, starting immediately after the due time, including evenings and weekends. Any assignment submitted after the agreed-upon date and time will be considered late. For example, the interview assignment is due on November 13, at 10 am. Assignments submitted between 10:01 am on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 9:59 am on the 14<sup>th</sup> will be graded and then 5% will be deducted; between 10:01 am on the 14<sup>th</sup> and 9:59 am on the 15<sup>th</sup>, assignments will be graded and then 10% will be deducted from the grade for the assignment; etc.

### **Submitting Assignments**

Students should submit assignments directly to Quercus. Please use Times New Roman size 12 and a line spacing of 1.5 for all your assignments. All margins should be 1.5”. Consistency in citation style is expected, and preference is given to Chicago or Vancouver styles. Please use a citation software if possible, and discuss with the instructor if you want suggestions. This is a good investment for your academic career.

In preparation for the final research proposal, students are encouraged to work with classmates, and to meet with the instructor. In the interest of fairness, note that the instructor will not provide comments on draft proposals, and that students are not expected to have their work revised by their Master’s or PhD supervisors beforehand.

### **Use of personal computers**

Students are welcome to bring their own personal computer to class to take notes, refer to the articles we will be discussing, and work on assignments. Please refrain from

accessing email and social media in ways that are not related to the class as this is disruptive to other students' learning.

### **Recommended e-Text**

We will be using videos from the Centre for Critical Qualitative Health Research e-book *Learning and Teaching Qualitative Research in Ontario: A Resource Guide*:  
<http://qualitativeresearchontario.openetext.utoronto.ca/>

## **Topics, Specific Learning Objectives and Readings**

### **Block 1: Qualitative Research in Theory and Practice.**

#### **Week 1. September 11, 2019. Why use qualitative methods?**

##### *Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Describe your understanding of qualitative research in terms of research paradigms, worldviews, and politics (i.e. critical research);
- Discuss why qualitative research is important to the health sciences;
- Articulate your own aims for learning/using qualitative inquiry.

##### *Mandatory Readings:*

1. Green, J. and N. Thorogood. 2009. "Qualitative methodology and health research" in *Qualitative methodologies for health research*, Second edition. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA. 3-34.
2. Bunniss, S. and D.R. Kelly. 2010. "Research Paradigms in Medical Education." *Medical Education*, Vol. 44, No. 4. 358-66.

##### *In Class Readings:*

3. Xavier University Library. 2012. Qualitative versus quantitative research table. [http://www.xavier.edu/library/students/documents/qualitative\\_quantitative.pdf](http://www.xavier.edu/library/students/documents/qualitative_quantitative.pdf)

##### *Recommended Readings:*

4. Hacking, I. 1999. *The Social Construction of What?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

**Week 2. September 18, 2019. Class Cancelled**

**Week 3. September 25, 2019 (3 hour session).**

**Session A: How do qualitative researchers think, work and write?**

**Session B: Asking a qualitative research question.**

**Session A: How do qualitative researchers think, work and write?**

*Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Discuss the unfolding of qualitative research projects, and of the constitutive elements of qualitative research articles;
- Describe the range of traditions in health research, and where interpretive, critical qualitative research might fit;
- Reflect on and articulate how your past experiences and education have shaped your own assumptions about what can be known, and how it can be known.

*Mandatory Readings:*

1. Ponterotto, J.G. 2005. "Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology: A Primer on Research Paradigms and Philosophy of Science." *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 126-136.
2. Illing, J. 2014. "Thinking about research: Theoretical perspectives, ethics and scholarship", in T. Swanwick (ed.), *Understanding Medical Education: Evidence, Theory and Practice*, Second Edition. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd. 331-347.

**Session B: Asking a qualitative research question.**

**Learning Objectives**

*Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Discuss the characteristics of "good" qualitative research questions
- Describe the affordances and limitations of qualitative research;
- Integrate the knowledge learned so far and start to apply it to your own area of interest.

*Mandatory Readings:*

3. Patton, M. Q. 2002. "Designing Qualitative Studies", in *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods Integrating Theory and Practice*, Third Edition. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA. **209-230 (not sampling)**.
4. O'Brien, B.C., Ruddick, V.J. and J.Q. Young. 2016. "Generating Research Questions Appropriate for Qualitative Studies in Health Professions Education." *Academic Medicine*. Vol. 91, No. 12. E16.

*Recommended Readings:*

1. Bryman, A. and J.J. Teevan. 2005. *Social Research Methods, First Canadian Edition*. Oxford University Press, chapters 1 and 8.
2. Eakin, J. 2016. Educating Critical Qualitative Health Researchers in the Land of the Randomized Controlled Trial. *Qualitative Inquiry*. Vol. 22, No. 2. 107–118.

*Watch:*

Mah, K. 2018. "Studying Qualitative Research: Nudging My Inner Health Scientist." *CQ E-Learning Qualitative Methods*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mvz35HwHP6A>

**Week 4. October 2, 2019. Sampling in qualitative research.**

**SUBMIT ASSIGNMENT 1 BEFORE CLASS**

*Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Use specific, scholarly language to talk about the different forms of qualitative research sampling strategies;
- Connect these strategies to implications for knowledge claims.

*Mandatory Readings:*

1. Patton, M. Q. 2002. "Designing Qualitative Studies", in *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods Integrating Theory and Practice*, Third Edition. Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA. pp. **230-ff. (only sampling)**.
2. Malterud, K., Siersma, V.D. and A.D. Guassoral. 2015. "Sample Size in Qualitative Interview Studies: Guided by Information Power." *Qualitative Health Research*, November 27, 2015. doi: 10.1177/1049732315617444
3. Sim, J., Saunders, B., Waterfield J. and T. Kingstone. 2018. "Can sample size in qualitative research be determined a priori?" *International Journal of Social*

*Research Methodology*. Vol. 21, No. 5. 619-34. DOI:  
10.1080/13645579.2018.1454643

*Recommended Readings:*

4. Paradis, E. 2015. "Unanswered questions on access from the margins." *Medical Education*, Vol. 49, No. 2, 145-146.

**Week 5. October 9, 2019. Using theory in qualitative research.**

*Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Articulate the importance of theory as a lens through which to see the world;
- Differentiate paradigms from grand theories, middle-range theories, conceptual frameworks and concepts, as well as implicit and explicit theories;
- Describe how theory is a means of cumulative knowledge and scholarly community building.

*Mandatory Readings:*

1. Reeves, S., Albert, M., Kuper, A. and B.D. Hodges. 2008. "Why use theories in qualitative research?" *BMJ*. Vol 337. 631-7.
2. Stewart, D. and S. Klein. 2016. "The use of theory in research." *International Journal of Clinical Pharmacy*, Vol. 38. 615-619. doi:10.1007/s11096-015-0216-y
3. Creswell, J.W. and Creswell JD (2018) "The Use of Theory." *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Fifth Edition. Los Angeles: Sage. Qualitative research section, pages: 49-74.
4. Revisit your notes on theory from Green and Thorogood, Week 1.

*Recommended Readings:*

5. Nimmon, L., Paradis, E., Schrewe, B. and M. Mylopoulos. 2016. "Qualitative rip out series: Integrating theory into qualitative medical education research." *Journal of Graduate Medical Education*, Vol. 8, No. 3. 437-438. doi:  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.4300/JGME-D-16-00206.1>

**Block 2: Data Collection. What's the right tool?**

**Week 6. October 16, 2019. Designing and conducting interviews.**

*Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Describe the key aspects that determine the success of interviews as a method of data collection;

- Compare the features of several types of interviews (open-ended, semi-structured, and structured);
- Discuss key ethical issues arising during interview research.

*Mandatory Readings:*

1. Bourdieu, P., Accardo, A. and Ferguson, P. P. 1999. "Understanding" in *The weight of the world: Social suffering in contemporary society*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 607-629.
2. Kvale, S. and S. Brinkmann. 1996. "Thematizing and Designing an Interview Study", in *InterViews: Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA. 99-140.
3. Groven, K.S., Råheim, M. and G. Engelsrud. 2013. "Dis-appearance and dys-appearance anew: living with excess skin and intestinal changes following weight loss surgery." *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy*, Vol. 16, No. 3, 507–523.

*Recommended Readings:*

4. DiCicco-Bloom, B. and B.F. Crabtree. 2006. "The qualitative research interview." *Medical Education*, Vol. 40, No.4, 314–321
5. Fontana, A. and J. Frey. 1994. "Interviewing: The Art of Science", in Denzin, N. and Y.S. Lincoln (ed.) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. 361-376.

*Watch:*

Gardner, P. 2018. Qualitative Interviewing – More Than Asking Questions and Getting Answers. CQ E-Learning Qualitative Methods.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3nviCBklmfQ>

**Week 7. October 23, 2019. Designing and conducting focus groups.**

*Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- List the different forms (tools) of data collection methods;
- Describe the key aspects that determine the success of focus groups as a method of data collection;
- Discuss key ethical issues arising during focus group research.

*Mandatory Readings:*

1. Stalmeijer, R.E.E., McNaughton, N. and W.N. Van Mook. 2014. "Using focus groups in medical education research: AMEE Guide No. 91." *Medical Teacher*, Vol. 36, No. 11, 923-939.

2. Kidd, P.S. and M.B. Parshall. 2000. "Getting the Focus and the Group: Enhancing Analytical Rigor in Focus Group Research." *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 10, No. 3, 293-308.
3. Drummond, M.J.N. 2003. "Retired Men, Retired Bodies." *International Journal of Men's Health*, Vol. 2, No. 3, 183-199.

*Recommended Readings:*

4. Green, J. and N. Thorogood. 2014. "Group Interviews," in *Qualitative Methods for Health Research, Third Edition*. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, London. 123-146.

*Watch:*

Sakamoto, I. 2018. Focus Groups. CQ E-Learning Qualitative Methods.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=emHEs3H42rQ>

**Week 8. October 30, 2019. Designing and conducting an observation study.**

*Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Explain the key aspects that determine the success of observations as a method of data collection;
- Describe the complexity inherent to description based on observations;
- Discuss issues of emic versus etic perspectives on social phenomena;
- Critically reflect on the concept of triangulation in observational research;
- Integrate the knowledge gained in Block 2 to compare and contrast different forms of data collection, their defining features, strengths and limitations.

*Mandatory Readings:*

1. Allen D. (2010). Fieldwork and participant observation. In I. Bourgeault, R. Dingwall, & R. deVries (Eds.), *SAGE handbook of qualitative methods in health research* (pp. 353-372). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications Inc.
2. Mulhall, A. 2003. "In the field: notes on observation in qualitative research". *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, Vol. 41, No. 3, 306–313.
3. Paradis, E., Leslie, M. and M.A. Gropper. 2016. "Interprofessional rhetoric and operational realities: an ethnographic study of rounds in four intensive care units." *Advances in Health Sciences Education*. Vol. 21, No. 4. 735-48. doi: 10.1007/s10459-015-9662-5

*In Class Readings:*

4. Irby, D. 1992. "How attending physicians make instructional decisions when conducting teaching rounds." *Academic Medicine*. Vol. 67, No. 19. 630-8.

*Recommended Readings:*

1. Green, J. and N. Thorogood. 2014. "Observational methods," in *Qualitative Methods for Health Research*, Third Edition. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, London. 147-172.
2. Paradis, E. and G Sutkin. January 2017. "Beyond a good story: from Hawthorne effect to reactivity in health professions education research" *Medical Education*. Vol. 51, No. 1. 31-39. doi: 10.1111/medu.13122.
3. Madison, D.S. 2012. "Introduction to critical ethnography," in *Critical Ethnography*, Second Edition. Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, CA. 1-15.

*Watch:*

Paradis, E. (2018) "(Participant) Observations in Qualitative Health Research." *CQ E-Learning Qualitative Methods*.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p\\_\\_z2cAqAul](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p__z2cAqAul)

### Block 3: Data Analysis, Quality, Rigor and Ethics.

**Week 9. November 6, 2019. Class Cancelled**

**Week 10. November 13, 2019. What do I do with my data? Data analysis strategies I.**

#### **SUBMIT ASSIGNMENT 2 BEFORE CLASS**

*Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Compare the broad features of different types of coding (open vs. directed, theoretically-driven coding, grounded theory, frequency coding);
- Describe how different forms of coding lead to different findings;
- Critically discuss the language of theme emergence;
- Reflect on the practice of coding and its connection to knowledge claims, including the role of subjectivity in data analysis.

*Mandatory Readings:*

1. Braun, V. and V. Clarke. 2006. "Using thematic analysis in psychology." *Qualitative Research in Psychology*. 3(1): 77-101.
2. Hsieh, H.F. and S.E. Shannon. 2005. "Three approaches to qualitative content analysis." *Qualitative Health Research*. Vol. 15, No. 9. 1277-88.

3. Boeije, H. 2002. "A Purposeful Approach to the Constant Comparative Method in the Analysis of Qualitative Interviews". *Quality and Quantity*, Vol. 36, No. 4, 391-409. doi: 10.1023/A:1020909529486
4. Revisit figures 1 and 2 from Bunnis and Kelly 2010, Week 1.

*Watch:*

Eakin, J. (2018) Qualitative Analysis and Interpretation I: Theoretical Background and Introduction. CQ E-Learning Qualitative Methods.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hHQhzdV1UxE>

**Week 11. November 20, 2019. What do I do with my data? Data analysis strategies II and reflexivity**

*Learning Objectives:*

- Same as previous week.

*Mandatory Readings:*

1. Frankham J., Stronacha, I., Bibi-Nawaza, S., Cahilla, G., Cuia, V., Dymokea, K., Dunga, M.T., Lungkaa, P., Mat-Soma, H. and M.M. Khira. 2014. "De-skilling data analysis: the virtues of dancing in the dark." *International Journal of Research and Method in Education*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 87-100.  
doi:10.1080/1743727X.2013.795531
2. Finlay, L. 2002. "'Outing' the Researcher: The Provenance, Process, and Practice of Reflexivity." *Qualitative Health Research*, Vol. 12, No. 4. 531-545. doi: 10.1177/104973202129120052

*Recommended:*

1. Lynch, M. 2000. Against reflexivity as an academic virtue and source of privileged knowledge." *Theory, Culture & Society*, Vol. 17 No. 3. 26-54.

*Watch:*

Eakin, J. (2018) Qualitative Analysis and Interpretation II: Key principles and Analytic Devices. CQ E-Learning Qualitative Methods.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=247&v=ogeT7UPTTgl](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=247&v=ogeT7UPTTgl)

**Week 12. November 27, 2019. Class Cancelled**

**Week 13. December 4, 2019 (3 hours)**

**Session A. Quality and rigour in qualitative research**

**Session B. The Ethics of Qualitative Research Process.**

**Session A. Quality and rigour in qualitative research**

*Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Situate debates over the *rigour* and *quality* of qualitative research in historical context;
- Use scientific language to describe quality and rigour in qualitative research;
- Discuss critically the strengths and limitations of a checklist approach to qualitative research.

*Mandatory Readings:*

1. O'Brien, B.C., Harris, I.B., Beckman, T.J., Reed, D.A. and D.A. Cook. 2014. "A synthesis of recommendations." *Academic Medicine*, Vol. 89, No. 9. 1245-1251. doi: 10.1097/ACM.0000000000000388
2. Varpio, L., Ajjawi, R., Monrouxe, L.V., O'Brien, B., and C.E. Rees. 2017. Shedding the cobra effect: problematising thematic emergence, triangulation, saturation and member checking. *Medical Education*. Vol. 51, No. 1. 40-50. <https://doi.org/10.1111/medu.13124>
3. Eakin, J. and E Mykhalovskiy. 2003. "Reframing the evaluation of qualitative health research: reflections on a review of appraisal guidelines in the health sciences." *Journal of Evaluation in Clinical Practice*. <https://doi.org/10.1046/j.1365-2753.2003.00392.x>

*In Class Readings:*

1. Frambach, J.M., Van der Vleuten, C.P.M. and S.J. Durning. 2013. "Last page: Quality criteria in qualitative and quantitative research." *Academic Medicine*, Vol. 88, No. 4. 552.

*Recommended Readings:*

1. Barbour, R.S. 2001. "Checklists for improving rigour in qualitative research: a case of the tail wagging the dog?" *BMJ*, Vol. 322, 7294. 1115-1117.
2. Malterud, K. 2001. "Qualitative research: standards, challenges, and guidelines." *The Lancet*, Vol. 358. 483-488.
3. Cho, J. and A. Trent. 2006. "Validity in qualitative research revisited." *Qualitative Research*. DOI: 10.1177/1468794106065006

## **Session B. The Ethics of Qualitative Research Process**

### *Learning Objectives:*

At the end of this session you should be able to:

- Reflect on concrete examples of research in the health sciences to develop an understanding of the ethical issues that arise in qualitative research.
- Integrate your learning to date and apply it to your own research proposal.

### *Mandatory Readings:*

1. Guillemin, M and L. Gillam. 2004. "Ethics, Reflexivity, and 'Ethically Important Moments' in Research." *Qualitative Inquiry*, Vol.10, No. 2. 261-80. doi: 10.1177/1077800403262360.
2. Scheper-Hughes, N. 2004. "Parts unknown. Undercover ethnography and the organs-trafficking underworld." *Ethnography*. Vol. 5, No. 1. 29-73
3. Reid, A.M., Brown, J.M., Smith, J.M., Cope, A.C. and S. Jamieson. (2018) "Ethical dilemmas and reflexivity in qualitative research." *Perspectives on Medical Education*. Vol. 7, No. 2. 69-75.

### *Recommended Readings:*

1. Rekdal, O.B. (2014) "Academic urban legends." *Social Studies of Science*. Vol. 44, No. 4. 638-54. DOI: 10.1177/0306312714535679

### *Watch:*

Eakin, J. (2018) "Creative Presence of the Researcher and Reflexivity." *CQ E-Learning Qualitative Methods*.  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZIOT9izAZo>

**SUBMIT FINAL RESEARCH PROPOSAL BY WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 11, 2019 AT NOON.**