SOCW 6348: SEMINAR IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODS

Faculty and Course Information

Instructor
Regina T. P. Aguirre, PhD, LMSW-AP
Associate Professor
University of Texas at Arlington School of Social Work

Office
Social Work Complex, GACB 113. This office may not be accessible for those with visual disabilities. If this is the case, please notify the professor and she will arrange assistance for you.

E-mail
rtpaguirre@uta.edu. E-mail is the preferred method of communication.

Time and Place of Class Meetings
8-10:50am, Tuesdays, Social Work Complex A114
Classes may occasionally be held online. **You should login to the class website at least twice a week for important announcements about assignments and resources.** To access the class website, go to http://www.uta.edu/blackboard. Login using your UTA NETID. You should see the course in your list of courses.

Office Hours
By appointment.

Description of the Course Content
This course will address the epistemology, paradigms, and theoretical orientations of scientific inquiry using a variety of qualitative approaches to knowledge building and research. It is designed to prepare students to carry out individual research projects using qualitative methods within their areas of interest. Substantive content will include the research process using qualitative methodologies including discussions of knowledge development, study designs, data collection and analysis, and dissemination. A primary means of instruction will be active-learning. The active-learning component of this course will involve the students producing a qualitative project suitable for publication in one of three possible formats to be explained later in this document.
Course Objectives
At the conclusion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of qualitative approaches to knowledge building in social work practice.
2. Critically examine qualitative studies with emphasis on issues regarding cultural diversity, gender, sexual orientation, and other sensitive topics (social and economic justice, oppression and populations at risk).
3. Identify the differences and similarities in approaches between qualitative, quantitative and mixed method research as they are used in social work research.
4. Understand the relevance of social, cultural, economic and other diversity factors in the selection of topics, the methods employed, the nature of analysis, and the conclusions drawn in qualitative research.
5. Identify and use common methods of qualitative data collection.
6. Analyze data collected using traditional and computer-based means.
7. Interpret data, reach meaningful conclusions, and identify implications for social work practice, policy and future research.
8. Understand the application of the Qualitative Interpretive Meta-Synthesis (QIMS) method for synthesizing qualitative studies.

Required Text

Yin, R. (2011). *Qualitative research from start to finish.* New York: Guilford Press.

Recommended Texts


Your Responsibilities

Each week, you should:
1. Attend class.
2. Check Blackboard at least twice; announcements will be updated on the home page.
3. Complete your readings in the required textbook; supplemental readings are noted in the course calendar in this document and are available in the “Course Content” area of Blackboard.
4. Complete the assignments for that week. These are designated in the course calendar in this document. All assignments should be submitted through Blackboard.
5. Evaluate whether you understand the course content. If you have questions about the course content, then please ask in class or email your questions to the professor.

Librarian to Contact for Assistance with Papers

Course Assignments (Subject to Modification)
All class assignments will build toward a comprehensive qualitative project that will preferably end in a manuscript suitable for publication.

General project information:
You have 3 choices for your project:
1. Agency project (service-learning): Select an agency partner from the partnerships arranged by Dr. Aguirre. This will involve collaborating with an agency to analyze qualitative data already collected. Students wishing to collaborate with a partner agency must consult with Dr. Aguirre by class on January 22.
2. Secondary data set project: Identify a qualitative secondary data set to be used for the assignments. This data set must be approved by Dr. Aguirre by class on January 22.
3. Qualitative Interpretive Meta-Synthesis (QIMS): This will involve an interpretive synthesis of existing qualitative studies on a topic of interest to you (should be closely related to your dissertation area of study). The topic must be approved by Dr. Aguirre by class on January 22.

Assignments (these will be the same regardless of which of the three project options selected above); due dates will be reflected in the course schedule:

A. Researcher Credibility Statement: Students will write and submit their researcher credibility statement. Guidelines (Patton, 1999) and samples (e.g., Dillon, 1989; dissertations in blackboard; some assigned readings) are available via Blackboard. This narrative should be related to the project you have chosen for the class. (25 pts.)

B. Coding: Students will complete coding of their data (i.e., agency project, secondary data, or studies included in the QIMS. Students are expected to submit their coding and reflections (memoing) as appendices to assignment F. Coding may be done in one’s own handwriting, NVivo, or via inserting text into a Word or PDF document and then inserting the code into the document using the “comment” feature. (25 points)

C. Research Reflections: periodically, the professor will request reflection papers reflecting upon various aspects of your respective projects. (100 points). Due date TBA.

D. Midterm. (100 points)

E. Abstract Submission to the Society of Social Work Research (SSWR) (25 pts.)—Due date is
F. Final Paper: This should be written in journal article format including: introduction, literature review, method, results, discussion, and reflective post-script. (100 points)

G. Project Presentation: The presentation should, at a minimum, explain the project, your reflections on the experience, and the results. (25 pts.)

Expectations for written work
All written work is to follow APA style. Text citations and reference lists must be in correct APA (6th ed.) format. Though the manual is helpful, it is not necessary to purchase it as two websites are available to you that are accurate. The Purdue University OWL APA website and the APA’s website are the only websites you should use to assist you with APA. The professor does not approve of other websites nor of computer programs which automatically construct citations for you. These usually have errors. The websites on the rubrics are hand-picked by the professor and match her grading criteria. All sentences should be carefully comprised of a student’s own words. Ideas, information, and concepts that originated from any other source, as well as quotations (which should be used sparingly) must be correctly cited in APA style. Material that is not correctly cited is considered to be plagiarized and provides grounds for academic discipline. Assignments should be carefully proofed for spelling and grammar.

Grading Policy
In most cases, expect the professor to grade assignments within 2-3 weeks of the due date. If you have questions about your grade, check the grade book on Blackboard. Do not ask when the professor will assign grades. FERPA, a federal law that provides privacy to university students, severely limits the professor’s ability to discuss grades over the internet or phone. Consequently, the professor discusses grades in person. Do not email the professor about your grades, rather check Blackboard. If you have questions about grades posted in Blackboard, send the professor an email to make an appointment.

Final Grade Calculation
Total maximum pts. = 400 pts.

A = 360 +
B = 320-359
C = 280-319
D = 279-240
F = 239 and below

Generally, the professor will not grant an “incomplete” grade. The professor assigns “incomplete” grades only in rare circumstances.

Course Syllabus and Due Date Modifications
Modifications to assignments and the class schedule may be necessary. Modifications to these items and the course syllabus, if needed, will be made after consultation with students.

UTA Policies

Withdrawal
To avoid receiving a failing grade due to absences, it is the student's responsibility to drop the class according to university guidelines and time frames.

Revised January 7, 2014
Adding and Dropping Courses
Graduate students who wish to change a schedule by either dropping or adding a course must first consult with their Graduate Advisor. Regulations pertaining to adding or dropping courses are described below. The last day to drop a course taught in regular semesters is at the end of the 12th week of class. The last day to drop a course in the other, non-traditional semesters corresponds to 75 percent of the duration of the course. The last day to drop a course is listed in the Academic Calendar.

Course Add/Drop Regulations.
1. A student may not add a course after the end of late registration.
2. A student dropping a graduate course after the Census Date but on or before the end of the 12th week of class may with the agreement of the professor, receive a grade of W but only if passing the course with a C or better average. A grade of W will not be given if the student does not have at least a C average. In such instances, the student will receive a grade of F if he or she withdraws from the class.
3. A student desiring to drop all courses in which he or she is enrolled is reminded that such action constitutes withdrawal (resignation) from the University. The student must indicate intention to withdraw and drop all courses by filing a resignation form in the Office of the Registrar or by Web at www.uta.edu/registrar.
4. In most cases, a student may not drop a graduate course or withdraw (resign) from the University after the 12th week of class. Under extreme circumstances, the Dean of Graduate Studies may consider a petition to withdraw (resign) from the University after the 12th week of class, but in no case may a graduate student selectively drop a course after the 12th week and remain enrolled in any other course. Students should use the special Petition to Withdraw for this purpose. See the section titled Withdrawal (Resignation) From the University for additional information concerning withdrawal.

Americans with Disabilities Act
The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of federal equal opportunity legislation; reference Public Law 92-112 - The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended. With the passage of federal legislation entitled Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), pursuant to section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, there is renewed focus on providing this population with the same opportunities enjoyed by all citizens.

If you have a disability (hidden or visible) or a medical condition that may have some impact on your work in this class and for which you may require accommodations, please see the professor as soon as possible with the appropriate documentation from the Office for Students with Disabilities. All information will remain confidential. For more information for obtaining academic accommodations and appropriate documentation, please visit the Office for Students with Disabilities (http://www.uta.edu/disability, Rm. 102 of University Hall, or 817-272-3364).

Academic Integrity
It is the philosophy of The University of Texas at Arlington that academic dishonesty is a completely unacceptable mode of conduct and will not be tolerated in any form. All persons involved in academic dishonesty will be disciplined in accordance with University regulations and procedures. Discipline may include suspension or expulsion from the University. "Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, the submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student or the attempt to commit such acts" (Regents' Rules and Regulations, Series 50101, Section 2.2).
Student Support Services Available
The University of Texas at Arlington supports a variety of student success programs to help you connect with the University and achieve academic success. These programs include learning assistance, developmental education, advising and mentoring, admission and transition, and federally funded programs. Students requiring assistance academically, personally, or socially should contact the Office of Student Success Programs at 817-272-6107 for more information and appropriate referrals.

E-Culture Policy
The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the University email address as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of email, UT-Arlington is able to provide students with relevant and timely information, designed to facilitate student success. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation may be sent to students through email.

All students are assigned an email account and information about activating and using it is available at http://www.uta.edu/email. New students (first semester at UTA) are able to activate their email account 24 hours after registering for courses. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, and it remains active as long as a student is enrolled at UT-Arlington. Students are responsible for checking their email regularly.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Class Topics</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments (All assignments should be submitted via Blackboard unless otherwise noted)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/14/14</td>
<td>Syllabus, Introduction to Qualitative, Introduction to Class Projects</td>
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| 1/21/14| Understanding Qualitative Research; Qualitative Research Ethics | C: Chapters 1-2  
Y: Chapters 1-3  
Class project choice due in class for professor’s approval. |
| 1/28/14| Qualitative Design; Qualitative Credibility        | C: Chapter 3  
Y: Chapter 4  
| 2/4/14 | Qualitative Design                                | C: Chapters 4-5, 10 | Credibility statement due                                                             |
| 2/11/14| Qualitative Design                                | The first is required; then select one from the remaining listed:  


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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Chapters</th>
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| 2/18/14 and 2/25/14 | Qualitative Data Collection | C: Chapters 6-7  
Y: Chapters 5-7 |
| 3/4/14     | Qualitative Data Analysis                   | C: Chapter 8    
Y: Chapters 8-9 |
| 3/11/14    | Spring Break!                               |                |
| 3/18/14    | **In-class Midterm**                        |                |
| 3/25/14    | Qualitative Data Analysis                   | C: Chapter 8    
Y: Chapters 8-9 |
| 4/1/14     | NVivo; Displaying Qualitative Data          | Y: Chapter 10   
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Assigned Reading</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>4/15/14</td>
<td>In Class Writing; Triangulation</td>
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<td>SSWR abstract due</td>
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<td>4/22/14</td>
<td>Presentations; In Class Writing; Triangulation</td>
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<td>4/29/14  (last week of classes)</td>
<td>Presentations; In Class Writing; Triangulation</td>
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<td>5/6/14</td>
<td>Class Party!!!!</td>
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<td>Paper Due</td>
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