

**University of Guelph**  
**Department of Population Medicine**  
**POPM\*6950\*01: Qualitative Research Methods**  
**Winter 2021**

**Instructor:** Dr. Stephen Lin

**Email:** stephlin@uoguelph.ca

**Office Hours:** By appointment only

**Class Time:** Mondays 08:30am – 11:20am

---

### **Course Description**

This course introduces a selection of qualitative research methods that are used to collect, analyze, and interpret individual and population health experiences. Population health research is popularly characterized by the collection and analysis of quantitative health information for purposes such as developing treatments, managing medical institutions, or steering health policy. Equally, if not more important to understanding health, are the individual and collective social meanings that people have for their health and the social organizations and communities that service them. Health and healthcare are social processes. Health organizations function, and are structured, according to multiple realities, with some being more politically, economically, or culturally dominant than others. Qualitative research enables researchers to collect data that shed light on these social complexities in everyday health experience.

### **Course Objectives**

1. Describe the underlying theoretical and empirical assumptions associated with the use of various qualitative methodologies
2. Understand the social implications of various qualitative methods, such as content analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography, in-depth interview, and focus group.
3. Develop qualitative data analysis skills and learn how to interpret qualitative data
4. Demonstrate the ability to communicate qualitative findings effectively through written and oral means.

### **Course Structure**

In this course, learning and teaching are considered a shared responsibility. My role is to guide, facilitate and support your learning. Your responsibility is to use the resources and to engage in dialogue and reflective, critical thought. This course is designed to foster discussion, debate, and critical examination of concepts relevant to qualitative methods. The learning activities are designed to assist you in developing insight and to critically consider issues of qualitative methods. Attendance in class and active participation in all activities is therefore expected. Students will have opportunities to share thoughts and exchange ideas with each other.

## Required Texts

Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2018). *Qualitative Methods for Health Research* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. (ISBN: 978-1473997110)

\*Additional readings are posted on CourseLink.

## Method of Evaluation

Content Analysis (February 22)	15%
Group Presentation (Starting from February 1)	20%
Online Ethnography Assignment (March 26)	20%
Research Proposal (April 16)	45%

## Evaluation Breakdown

### Content Analysis (15%) – Monday, February 22

You will be asked to choose one advertisement from selected themes and analyze the content of the chosen advertisement according to a set of questions. See details in the assignment instruction sheet available on CourseLink. This paper should be **4 pages maximum**. Please see the detailed instruction on CourseLink. This assignment is due on Monday, February 22 by 11:59pm. Submit your paper to the dropbox on CourseLink.

### Online Ethnography (20%) – Friday, March 26

This online ethnography is designed to help you understand the key components in unobtrusive research. Specifically, you will learn how to conduct research based on your critical observational skill. Instead of conducting ethnography in a specific site, you will be asked to watch a video and write **a maximum of 4-page report, double-spaced, excluding the title and reference page**, based on your personal interaction with the content of the video. Please see the detailed instruction on CourseLink. This assignment is due on Friday, March 26, by 11:59pm. Please submit your paper to CourseLink.

### Research Proposal (45%) - Friday, April 16

At the end of this semester, you will submit a research proposal based on your own research interest. You are required to apply relevant course materials to this assignment, such as the formulation of your research question, the design of your qualitative study, literature review, sampling techniques as well as ethical issues that may possibly emerge from your study. Please see the detailed instruction sheet on CourseLink. This assignment should be **8 pages maximum, double-spaced, excluding the title and reference page**. This assignment is due on Friday, April 16 by 11:59pm. Please submit your paper to CourseLink.

### **Group Presentations (20%) – Maximum 45 minutes**

Starting from **February 1**, the first half of the class will be a seminar presentation led by **2 students**. This will involve a presentation that briefly summarizes the major points of **all the readings for that week** and raises issues/debates for class discussion.

Presenters will be responsible for guiding class discussion. You must prepare a set of questions throughout your presentation. Next, your group will prepare one additional scholarly article and briefly discuss how it relates to the topic of your topic in the context of population health/medicine. After that, your group will provide some hands-on learning activities, so your fellow classmates can practice what they have learned from you. Finally, your group should include some take-home messages that sum up the key points of your assigned topic.

In order to do well on this group presentation, you must integrate the reading material with the general theme on qualitative research methods. Be creative!! I encourage you to use multi-media (e.g., magazine articles, video clips or photos) to make your presentation appealing (**Note: After your group presentation, please email me your PowerPoint slides**)

### **Course Schedule and Readings**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic/Assignment</b>	<b>Assigned Readings</b>
1	Jan 11	Introduction to the Course Forming a Group (2 students)	G & T Ch. 1
2	Jan 18	Designing a Qualitative Study	G & T Ch. 3
3	Jan 25	Content Analysis	G & T Ch. 8 Alexander (2003)
4	Feb 1	Discourse Analysis Critical Discourse Analysis (P)	Van Dijk (1993) Phillips & Jorgensen (2002)
5	Feb 8	Ethnography (P)	G & T Ch. 7 Emerson, Fretz & Shaw (1995)
6	Feb 15	<b>Winter Break (No Class)</b>	No Reading
7	Feb 22	In-Depth Interviewing (P)  <b>**Content Analysis due by Monday, February 22 11:59pm</b>	G & T Ch. 5 Hesse-Biber (2014)

8	March 1	Focus Group (P)	G & T Ch. 6 Carey (1994)
9	March 8	Qualitative Research in a Digital Age (P)	G & T Ch. 9 Wilkerson et al. (2014)
10	March 15	Sampling in Qualitative Research Research Proposal Workshop	Luborsky & Rubinstein (1995)
11	March 22	Grounded Theory (P) Analyzing Qualitative Data I (P)  <b>**Online Ethnography Assignment Due on Friday, March 26 by 11:59pm</b>	G & T Ch. 10 Charmaz (2014)
12	March 29	Analyzing Qualitative Data II	G & T Ch. 11 LeCompte (2000)
13	April 5	Ethics in Qualitative Research (P)	G & T Ch. 4 Wright et al. (2016)
14	April 12	Research Proposal Work Day (No Class)  <b>**Research Proposal Due on Friday, April 16 by 11:59pm</b>	No Reading

\*(P) indicates student presentation week

## University Statements

### Email Communication

As per university regulations, all students are required to check their e-mail account regularly: e-mail is the official route of communication between the University and its students.

### When You Cannot Meet a Course Requirement

When you find yourself unable to meet an in-course requirement because of illness or compassionate reasons please advise the course instructor (or designated person, such as a teaching assistant) in writing, with your name, id#, and e-mail contact. The grounds for Academic Consideration are detailed in the Undergraduate and Graduate Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Consideration and Appeals

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-ac.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Grounds for Academic Consideration

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Academic Consideration, Appeals and Petitions

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/index.shtml>

## **Drop Date**

Students will have until the last day of classes to drop courses without academic penalty. The deadline to drop two-semester courses will be the last day of classes in the second semester.

This applies to all students (undergraduate, graduate and diploma) except for Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and Associate Diploma in Veterinary Technology (conventional and alternative delivery) students. The regulations and procedures for course registration are available in their respective Academic Calendars.

Undergraduate Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Registration Changes

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/genreg-reg-regchg.shtml>

Associate Diploma Calendar - Dropping Courses

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/diploma/current/c08/c08-drop.shtml>

## **Copies of Out-of-class Assignments**

Keep paper and/or other reliable back-up copies of all out-of-class assignments: you may be asked to resubmit work at any time.

## **Accessibility**

The University promotes the full participation of students who experience disabilities in their academic programs. To that end, the provision of academic accommodation is a shared responsibility between the University and the student.

When accommodations are needed, the student is required to first register with Student Accessibility Services (SAS). Documentation to substantiate the existence of a disability is required; however, interim accommodations may be possible while that process is underway.

Accommodations are available for both permanent and temporary disabilities. It should be noted that common illnesses such as a cold or the flu do not constitute a disability.

Use of the SAS Exam Centre requires students to book their exams at least 7 days in advance and not later than the 40th Class Day.

For Guelph students, information can be found on the SAS website <https://www.uoguelph.ca/sas>

For Ridgetown students, information can be found on the Ridgetown SAS website <https://www.ridgetownc.com/services/accessibilityservices.cfm>

## **Academic Integrity**

The University of Guelph is committed to upholding the highest standards of academic integrity, and it is the responsibility of all members of the University community-faculty, staff, and students-to be aware of what constitutes academic misconduct and to do as much as possible to prevent academic offences from occurring. University of Guelph students have the responsibility of abiding by the University's policy on academic misconduct regardless of their location of study; faculty, staff, and students have the responsibility of supporting an environment that encourages academic integrity. Students need to remain aware that instructors have access to and the right to use electronic and other means of detection.

Please note: Whether or not a student intended to commit academic misconduct is not relevant for a finding of guilt. Hurried or careless submission of assignments does not excuse students from responsibility for verifying the academic integrity of their work before submitting it. Students who are in any doubt as to whether an action on their part could be construed as an academic offence should consult with a faculty member or faculty advisor.

Undergraduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/undergraduate/current/c08/c08-amisconduct.shtml>

Graduate Calendar - Academic Misconduct

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/registrar/calendars/graduate/current/genreg/index.shtml>

## **Recording of Materials**

Presentations that are made in relation to course work - including lectures - cannot be recorded or copied without the permission of the presenter, whether the instructor, a student, or guest lecturer. Material recorded with permission is restricted to use for that course unless further permission is granted.

## **Resources**

The Academic Calendars are the source of information about the University of Guelph's procedures, policies, and regulations that apply to undergraduate, graduate, and diploma programs.

Academic Calendars

<https://www.uoguelph.ca/academics/calendars>

## **Disclaimer**

Please note that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic may necessitate a revision of the format of course offerings and academic schedules. Any such changes will be announced via CourseLink and/or class email. All University-wide decisions will be posted on the COVID-19 website (<https://news.uoguelph.ca/2019-novel-coronavirus-information/>) and by email.

## **Illness**

The University will not require verification of illness (doctor's notes) for the fall 2020 or winter 2021 semesters.