PUBPOL 525 – Qualitative Methods and Field Analysis
Spring Quarter 2017
Mondays 1:00-3:50pm
Parrington Hall 308

PROFESSOR: Dr. Kara Dillard

CONTACT INFORMATION:
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OFFICE HOURS:
Monday 11:00-12:30pm
Other times by appointment

REQUIRED MATERIAL:
A course reader will be available at RAM Copy on 42nd and University.

COURSE OVERVIEW:
This course serves as an introduction to qualitative methods, specifically designed for public policy students. The course will instruct students in four methodological approaches: interviews, ethnographic observations, focus groups and qualitative surveys. Students will complete readings, exercises, and workshops to provide hands-on application of methodological techniques and to contextualize conceptual issues inherent in qualitative research design, and will complete a final paper that integrates and extends their field work.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
Students will come away from this course with an appreciation of qualitative research methods and a basic ability to conduct a variety of different types of qualitative research in public policy settings.

Specifically, students will:
• Have a proficiency in writing a research design proposal that focuses on using qualitative tools to gather data
• Learn about a variety of qualitative tools and how they can be used in public policy analysis
• Perform an interview, transcribe it using transcription software, and perform a coded analysis that could be used in public policy analysis
• Perform ethnographic field work and then analyze data for major themes
COURSE EVALUATION

Class participation and preparation 20% of grade/20 points
Research proposal 10% of grade/10 points
Field Work: Transcribed interview excerpt 10% of grade/10 points
Field Work: Ethnographic notes 10% of grade/10 points
Coded analysis of one transcribed interview 10% of grade/10 points
Essay on emergent theme from analysis 10% of grade/10 points
Final report 30% of grade/30 points

Incomplete grades: Only under extreme circumstances and with instructor approval will students be given an incomplete. If you are failing the course, you need to consult with me as soon as possible or withdraw.

Explanation of Graded Assignments

Class participation and preparation
Our learning will benefit from strong and robust class discussions and I want everyone to actively contribute and benefit from our exchanges. My expectations for participation in class discussions will be similar to those in the core MPA management courses at the Evans School. In class, we will workshop research proposals and papers-in-progress, critique interview questions, and work through various in-class case studies. Thus, being prepared for class with the required documents to share and participating in class discussion and the peer reviews is important for your own and others’ learning.

Research proposal
The research proposal should mimic a proposal used in policy settings to guide granting agencies, nonprofits or local government in qualitative driven research. This paper will outline your research question, provide a very brief literature review justifying the question, describe your research site and why you chose it, justify a proposed sampling strategy, and expected or potential findings. The proposal should be 3-5 pages in length. Grading guidelines and style requirements are listed elsewhere in the syllabus.

Field Work: Transcribed interview excerpt
As a part of learning how to conduct field work, you will interview one person hopefully related to your research project. If you are not conducting an interview for your research project, find someone – a friend, a colleague, a mentor - to interview for practice purposes. This interview should be short (no more than 8 questions). You will turn in an excerpt of your transcribed interview of no more than five pages in length. When grading, I am looking at quality of questions and appropriate phrasing and clarity in transcription.

Field Work: Ethnographic notes
Similar to the interview field work, you will perform an ethnography and then submit the detailed field notes from your site observation. Your field notes should be typed and follow the style requirements found in the syllabus as well as the structure found in the examples located in the Modules section of Canvas (“Example #1 of fieldnotes”). Also, at the top of your field notes, cite which strategy for writing fieldnotes you employed and why (See: Wolfinger reading in Canvas, p. 89 for more details). There is no page minimum/maximum for this assignment.
Coded analysis of one transcribed interview
You will choose a qualitative coding program (Atlas.ti, NVivo, etc) and write a coded analysis of your transcribed interview. The analysis should follow a traditional research paper formatting (introduction, description of your interviewee and interview questions, coding methods, results, conclusion). Your analysis should be no more than five pages long and follow the style guidelines found in the syllabus.

Essay on emergent theme from analysis
Using your ethnographic field notes, you will analyze and describe one emergent theme from your observations. The formatting of this paper should be organizationally similar to the interview analysis, including a page limit of no more than five pages.

Final report
Your final paper will be based on your fieldwork performed in this class, whether interview, ethnographic work, participant observation, focus groups, or another method. Your paper should be no more than 20 pages in length and include a description of your data collection and analysis methods (including the justification for your fieldwork site, your sampling strategy), your findings and a conclusion. A bibliography section should be included as well as an appendix with your field notes or interview questions or focus group questions.

Grading Guidelines for Written Work:* Written assignments must be typed, double spaced with Times New Roman 12-point font. Assignments should include your first and last name as well as the course title and assignment name. The section with your name should not be double spaced. Absolutely no handwritten assignments will be accepted unless otherwise noted.

In order to better understand how I will evaluate and grade your written work, please review the following guidelines.

An “A” paper will contain: Sustains insightful, in-depth analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with logically compelling reasons and/or highly persuasive examples; is well focused and well organized; skilfully uses sentence variety and precise vocabulary to convey meaning effectively; demonstrates superior facility with sentence structure and language usage but may have minor errors that do not interfere with meaning.

A “B” paper will contain: Provides generally thoughtful analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with logically sound reasons and/or well-chosen examples; is generally focused and well organized; uses sentence variety and vocabulary to convey meaning clearly; demonstrates good control of sentence structure and language usage but may have minor errors that do not interfere with meaning.

A “C” paper will contain: Provides competent analysis of complex ideas; develops and supports main points with relevant reasons and/or examples; is adequately organized; conveys meaning with reasonable clarity; demonstrates satisfactory control of sentence structure and language usage but may have some errors that affect clarity.

A “D” paper will contain: Displays some competence in analytical writing skills, although the writing is flawed in at least one of the following ways: limited analysis or development, weak
organization; weak control of sentence structure or language usage, with errors that often result in vagueness or lack of clarity.

An “F” paper will contain: Displays serious weaknesses in analytical writing. The writing is seriously flawed in at least one of the following ways: serious lack of analysis or development; lack of organization; serious and frequent problems in sentence structure or language usage, with errors that obscure meaning.

*This is based on the Graduate Record Examination analytical writing score level descriptions.

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON POLICIES

Academic Civility: Academic etiquette is required. Students are expected to conduct themselves with honesty and civility. Excessive disruptions such as tardiness, loud private conversations, cell phones, etc., will not be tolerated. The respectful treatment of the contributions of all members is essential. You do not have to agree with each other, or even with me, but dismissive or combative displays of contempt, insults, slurs, or other forums of disrespectful language, verbal harassment, or belligerent behavior are in violation of the general code of student conduct and will not be tolerated. Even if class has not yet started or has just concluded, you must act with civility. According to the code of conduct, UW requires students to conduct themselves honestly and responsibly, and to respect the rights of others. Conduct that unreasonably interferes with the learning environment or violates the rights of others is prohibited and may be reported to the Dean of Students and/or campus law enforcement. I reserve the right to withdraw you from the course if this behavior exists.

Given those limits, you are expected to show some courage when it comes to expressing your views, especially if you suspect that they might be unpopular. While you should feel free to say anything that you are prepared to defend with reasoned argument, you ought to accept academic challenges with grace.

Access and Accommodations: Your experience in this class is important to me. If you have already established accommodations with Disability Resources for Students (DRS), please communicate your approved accommodations to me at your earliest convenience so we can discuss your needs in this course.

If you have not yet established services through DRS, but have a temporary health condition or permanent disability that requires accommodations (conditions include but not limited to; mental health, attention-related, learning, vision, hearing, physical or health impacts), you are welcome to contact DRS at 206-543-8924 or uwdrs@uw.edu or disability.uw.edu. DRS offers resources and coordinates reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities and/or temporary health conditions. Reasonable accommodations are established through an interactive process between you, your instructor(s) and DRS. It is the policy and practice of the University of Washington to create inclusive and accessible learning environments consistent with federal and state law.
**Academic Integrity:** Honesty is a primary responsibility of you and every other UW student. The following are common guidelines regarding academic integrity:

1. Students will not collaborate on any quizzes, in-class exams, or take-home exams that contribute to their grade in a course, unless the course instructor grants permission. Only those materials permitted by the instructor may be used to assist in quizzes and examinations.
2. Students will not represent the work of others as their own. A student will attribute the source of information not original with himself or herself (direct quotes or paraphrases) in compositions, theses, and other reports.
3. No work submitted for one course may be submitted for credit in another course without the explicit approval of both instructors.

If you are caught plagiarizing an assignment, the automatic penalty is a “0” on the assignment and an automatic grade cap of a “B.” Initial instances of academic misconduct can be reported to the University at the professor’s discretion. A second violation will result in an automatic grade of “F” for the course and will be reported to the University Disciplinary and Honor Code Committee as academic integrity violation.

**CLASS POLICIES**

**General Course Expectations:**
- Attend each class session, be on time, and stay the entire period.
- Come prepared to discuss each week’s readings or to participate in the skills building section of the course. Your grade will be penalized if you are not prepared for class.
- Leave distracting devices at home. Turn your cellphones to vibrate.
- You are welcome to bring a computing device to take notes, but please use them only for that purpose. If you are distracting other students with your laptop, I will request that you leave it in your bag.

**Participation/Attendance:** The class, as I envision it, needs your participation. I do my best to encourage you to participate because it makes you an active learner. This means that attendance and participation are both encouraged and required. As stated above, you will not receive points for in-class assignments unless you are in class or otherwise excused by the University. Being sick, a family emergency, a doctor’s appointment, another group project, or a job are not acceptable excuses for missing class. Notification prior to missing class does not constitute an excuse. A note from the doctor’s office does not constitute an excuse, either. I will reserve the right to award attendance points on any day where student attendance is low. Please, do not ask to be allowed to make up missed in-class work or an examination if you do not have a University excused reason for being absent. You will not receive credit.

**Visitors:** Only you, the enrolled and registered student, are permitted to attend class. Friends, parents and children are not allowed to attend class with you.
**Canvas:** Please check our course’s Canvas site for various kinds of information usually provided in handouts or other kinds of feedback. It is your responsibility to check Canvas for any kind of announcements or information pertinent to class and class assignments. If you are having problems submitting an assignment to Canvas or if you need an introduction to using the system, do not call/email/not turn in the assignment.

**Email etiquette:** As a member of an academic community, you must show appropriate care in your electronic communications with your professor. I attempt to return all emails within 48 hours during the week, 72 during the weekend. Please plan accordingly. If you need to email me, you must include the following items in your email:

- Your full name
- Title of the class and time it meets (ex: PUBPOL 525, 100pm) in the subject line
- Specific chapter or assignment you are inquiring about

If you do not include these items in your email I will not respond. If your email does not contain full sentences complete with appropriate punctuation and grammar, I will not respond. Remember, you are held to the academic civility and integrity policies of UW and this course. Your email is an extension of your speech and any harassing or belligerent emails will not be tolerated. My preferred method of contact (outside of office hours) is via email. Phone calls are not likely to be returned.

**Paper submission requirements:** Written assignments must be typed, double spaced with Times New Roman 12-point font. Assignments should include your first and last name as well as the course title and assignment name. The section with your name should not be double-spaced. Absolutely no handwritten assignments will be accepted unless otherwise noted.