

**HS3811G Qualitative Health Research in Practice
Winter 2025**

Instructor: Lesley Gittings, PhD (she/her) Office: Email: lesley.gittings@uwo.ca Office Hrs: To be determined. TAs: To be determined.	Lectures: 3 hours Winter 2024 Instruction Mode: In person
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NOTE: All course information including grades, assignment outlines, deadlines, etc. are available via OWL. Check the website regularly for course announcements.

Calendar Course Description (including prerequisites/anti-requisites):

An introduction to the principles and practices of qualitative research methods and methodologies in the health sciences. Through readings and assignments, students will learn the foundations of qualitative research practice and gain experience crafting research questions and using qualitative research methods.

Antirequisite(s): Family Studies and Human Development 3230A/B, Psychology 3860F/G, Psychology 3861F/G, Sociology 3307F/G, Sociology 3310F/G, Thanatology 3330F/G.

Prerequisite(s): Family Studies and Human Development 2300F/G or Health Sciences 2800 or Health Sciences 2801A/B or equivalent.

You are responsible for ensuring that you have successfully completed all course pre-requisites, and that you have not taken an anti-requisite course.

Statement on Prerequisite Checking

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites

NOTE: If you wish to enroll in this course without the stated pre-requisite(s), you must obtain written approval from the course instructor. The approval should then be forwarded to your academic counsellor.

Course Description

An introduction to the principles and practices of qualitative research methods and methodologies in the health sciences. Through readings and assignments, students will learn the foundations of qualitative research practice and gain experience crafting research questions and using qualitative research methods.

You will actively engage in the different phases of the research process, whilst reflecting on your learning in an atmosphere of collaboration with their fellow peers and instructors. This 'hands-on' approach to qualitative research methods will enable students to develop more confidently their own research projects, both in academic and

non-academic contexts. Qualitative research methods are central to understanding, contextualizing and responding to health experiences, practices and outcomes across diverse populations. For this reason, this course is especially important for students who aim to pursue graduate training, or health research, policy and/or practice. A committed engagement with the proposed academic readings and tasks is expected and essential for success.

Course Objective:

To develop an understanding of qualitative methodologies in health research and to be able to apply that understanding in the development of a small-scale research project. Qualitative research methods are central to understanding, contextualizing and responding to health experiences, practices and outcomes across diverse populations.

Learning Outcomes:

Upon completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify and describe the core characteristics and principles of qualitative research;
2. Explain key concepts about epistemology and qualitative research traditions;
3. Design a qualitative research question and research tool;
4. Describe, plan and apply diverse methods of collecting qualitative data;
5. Describe and apply methods of qualitative data analysis;
6. Describe and apply methods of writing a research report based on qualitative data;
7. Identify ethical concerns in all phases of qualitative research;
8. Appraise your learning journey, identifying strengths and weaknesses to delineate actions for improvement.

Course Schedule

Week #	Date	Topics
<i>Part 1. Qualitative Ways of Knowing and Doing</i>		
1	TBD	Introduction to the course & each other Introduction to qualitative research
<i>Part 2. Mapping the field & situating ourselves</i>		
2	TBD	Theory Developing a qualitative research question Developing qualitative research proposals
3	TBD	Positionality & reflexivity Ethics Case study: Research with children and in low-and-middle-income contexts
<i>Part 3. Methods: Techniques of Data Collection and Analysis</i>		
4	TBD	Designing, Preparing, Conducting and Recording Individual Interviews
5	TBD	Group Interviews Introduction to Data analysis
6	TBD	Visual & arts-based methods
February 18 -21 Spring Reading Week		
7	TBD	Ethnographic & observational methods <i>Guest lecture by Dr. Anushka Ataullahjan</i>
8	TBD	Thematic analysis Coding book development workshop Software to support my journey

9	TBD	Engaging Power: Participatory & community-based approaches Software workshop
10	TBD	Participatory Dissemination & knowledge translation: Reaching and engaging with audiences Writing up and presenting my research
11	TBD	Place, space and qualitative health research: land/water- and place-based approaches; remote & digital methods Final report workshopping
12	TBD	Course plenary.

Required Course Material:

Green, J., & Thorogood, N. (2018). *Qualitative methods for health research*. London: Sage. This title is not available in the library. Western bookstore has informed me that this title will be available for you in physical copies and digital copies. Please see:

https://bookstore.uwo.ca/textbook-search?campus=UWO&term=W2022B&courses%5B0%5D=001_UW/HTH3811G

This will be the only purchase necessary for the course.

Additional materials may be assigned at any time, and will be posted on the course website. Students are responsible for the content covered in all assigned course materials. Required readings and resources will be posted on OWL on a weekly basis.

Course Evaluation:

Assessment Method	Date	Weight (%)
Research questions and interview guide	TBD	15%
In-depth interview transcript & reflective report	TBD	30%
Codebook	TBD	15%
Final research reflective report	TBD	40%

All assignments are to be submitted as a Word file through the assignment tool in OWL, by the end of the submission date.

During the course, you will develop a small research project, undertaking specific tasks throughout the semester. Ample time will be provided in class to practice, work with peers and to engage with the instructor on your assigned tasks. Alongside this work, you will also reflect upon your own learning journey, documenting difficulties and doubts, milestones, new understandings and insights. *This project includes four main steps, which are outlined below.* Further details will be provided in the first weeks of class.

1) *Research questions and interview guide (15%, due date TBD)*

In a group of 5 students, you will together: (1) determine a research question and (2) design an interview guide for an in-depth, semi-structured interview on a health-related topic of your choice.

2) *In-depth interview transcript & reflective report (30%, due date TBD)*

You will conduct and transcribe one in-depth semi-structured interview. Your interviewee will be a fellow group member, and each class member will experience conducting an interview,

and being interviewed themselves. You will submit the transcript, as well as a reflective report. The requirement length for the report is between 1000 and 1500 words. This is an individual assignment.

3) *Codebook* (15%, due date TBD)

As a group, you will create a codebook of inductive and deductive codes. Your dataset will include all interviews by your group members.

4) *Final report* (40%, due date TBD)

Expanding your earlier submissions – and taking into account the feedback provided by the instructors and peers – you will submit a full research paper that includes: (i) your research question; (ii) a brief description of your research and analysis method; (iii) your research tool; (iv) a reflection section; (v) a presentation of findings; and, (vi) a brief discussion section. The requirement length for this assignment is between 3000 and 4000 words. This is an individual assignment.

Formatting: The word count for all assignments excludes references, appendices and the title page. Documents should be double-spaced and formatted using a font size no smaller than 12 points. Referencing must follow the APA guidelines.

Extensions and late assignments

In order to be fair to your peers, the instructor and teaching assistant, assignments submitted after the deadline which did not receive a written, pre-arranged approval for extension by the instructor will be penalized by 5 percentage points per day (including Saturday and Sunday) and will only be accepted up to seven days after the due date/time. If you think you will be unable to hand in an assignment on time, please contact the instructor as soon as possible.

Note-Taking for Lecture Slides:

A copy of my lecture slides for each unit will be provided for you, immediately prior to the lecture. They do not represent “all” of the content for which you are responsible. Additional comments are often made during lectures that extend beyond what is contained on each slide. It is your responsibility to take additional notes as suitable.

Communication

The Course Instructor will hold weekly office hours each **date and time TBD**, unless otherwise communicated. If you are unable to attend office hours, please contact your course instructor over email to set up an appointment.

Outside of classes and office hours, you are welcome to e-mail questions and comments. Your Teaching Assistant is your first point of e-mail contact for this course. If there are questions or comments that require the course instructor, the teaching assistant will jointly email the course instructor and student. We will respond to your emails in as timely a fashion as possible (although unlikely after 5pm or on weekends). Please note: you are expected to use your “UWO” e-mail address for this course).

E-mails, like any other form of communication with the course Instructor/Teaching Assistants, are appropriate when their content is respectful, when they are not anonymous, and when their sender does not ask for information delivered during a lecture to be repeated. If you have a question or do not understand a term or phrase, it is your responsibility to tell the Course Instructor/Teaching Assistants what you think the answer is, what you think would be an appropriate example, and/or what it is that you are having difficulty interpreting, as this is in service of your learning. Inappropriate e-mails will either receive no response or will receive a response in which you are directed to review this component of the course outline and then invite you to e-mail again. Any inappropriate emails will be forwarded to the appropriate administrative office to be placed on-file.

Mutual Expectations

I have prepared a course that allows you to meet the course learning outcomes. Throughout all course components, I will strive to promote a collegial atmosphere of mutual respect conducive to the exchange of ideas and learning. I require the same from you. Any and all disruptive behaviours which may impede the ability of you or other students to learn are unacceptable behaviours. If we all abide by this code of civility and mutual respect, we set the stage for a healthy and stimulating intellectual forum.

Students should log into OWL on a regular basis (i.e., daily in case of announcements) using their UWO username and password for access to the HS 3811G course OWL site.

Course/University Policies

1. The website for Registrar Services is <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>.

In accordance with policy, the centrally administered e-mail account provided to students will be considered the individual's official university e-mail address. It is the responsibility of the account holder to ensure that e-mail received from the University at his/her official university address is attended to in a timely manner.

2. Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, in the Academic Calendar (westerncalendar.uwo.ca).

Plagiarism

Student work is expected to be original. Plagiarism is a serious academic offence and could lead to a zero on the assignment in question, a zero in this course, or your expulsion from the university. You are plagiarizing if you insert a phrase, sentence or paragraph taken directly from another author without acknowledging that the work belongs to him/her. Similarly, you are plagiarizing if you paraphrase or summarize another author's ideas without acknowledging that the ideas belong to someone else. All papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between Western University and Turnitin.com (www.turnitin.com).

Re-submission of Previously Graded Material

Without the explicit written permission of the instructor, you may not submit any academic work for which credit has been obtained previously, or for which credit is being sought, in another course or program of study in the University or elsewhere.

Use of Statistical Pattern Recognition on Multiple Choice Exams

Computer-marked multiple-choice tests and/or exams may be subject to submission for similarity review by software that will check for unusual coincidences in answer patterns that may indicate cheating.

3. Use of Electronic Devices

During Exams: Unless you have medical accommodations that require you to do so, or explicit permission from the instructor of the course, you may not use any electronic devices during ANY tests, quizzes, midterms, examinations, or other in-class evaluations.

During Lectures and Tutorials: Although you are welcome to use a computer during lecture and tutorial periods, you are expected to use the computer for scholastic purposes only, and refrain from engaging in any activities that may distract other students from learning. From time to time, your professor may ask the class to turn off all computers, to facilitate learning or discussion of the material presented in a particular class. **Unless explicitly noted otherwise, you may not make audio or video recordings of lectures – nor may you edit, re-use, distribute, or re-broadcast any of the material posted to the course website.**

Personal Response Systems (“clickers”) may be used in some classes. For those classes in which we use this technology, it is your responsibility to ensure that the device is activated and functional. You must speak with the course instructor immediately, if you have any concerns about whether or not your clicker is malfunctioning.

You must use only your own clicker. For all components of this course in which clicker records are used to compute a portion of the grade:

- The use of somebody else’s clicker in class constitutes a scholastic offence;
- The possession of a clicker belonging to another student will be interpreted as an attempt to commit a scholastic offense

4. Academic Considerations and Absences from Lectures and Assessments

Religious Accommodation

When a course requirement conflicts with a religious holiday that requires an absence from the University or prohibits certain activities, students should request (in writing) any necessary academic considerations at least two weeks prior to the holiday to the academic counsellors in their Home Department. Additional information is provided in the [Western Multicultural Calendar](#).

Academic Accommodation

Please contact the course instructor if you require lecture or printed material in an alternate format or if any other arrangements can make this course more accessible to you. Students with ongoing accommodation needs within this course are also encouraged to contact [Accessible Education](#), which provides recommendations for accommodation based on medical documentation or psychological and cognitive testing. The policy on Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities can be found [here](#).

Academic Consideration

The University recognizes that a student’s ability to meet their academic

responsibilities may, on occasion, be impaired by extenuating circumstances that are medical or compassionate in nature. These extenuating circumstances may be acute (short term), or it may be chronic (long term), or chronic with acute episodes. In all cases, students are advised to consult with the academic counsellors in their home units, at their earliest opportunity. Academic counsellors may refer students to Accessible Education for ongoing academic accommodations.

Most forms of academic consideration require documentation, and this documentation is to be submitted to academic counsellors within five (5) business days of their return to academic responsibilities. Any such documents will be retained in the student's file, and will be held in confidence in accordance with the University's Official Student Record Information Privacy Policy. Once the petition and supporting documents have been received and assessed, appropriate academic considerations shall be determined by academic counseling, in consultation with the student's instructor(s). Academic considerations may include extension of deadlines, waiver of attendance requirements for classes/labs/tutorials, arranging Special Exams or Incompletes, re-weighting course requirements, or granting late withdrawals without academic penalty. Academic considerations shall be granted only where the documentation indicates that the onset, duration and severity of the illness are such that the student could not reasonably be expected to complete their academic responsibilities. (Note – it will not be sufficient to provide documentation indicating simply that the student “was seen for a medical reason” or “was ill.”).

Whenever possible, students who require academic considerations should provide notification and documentation in advance of due dates, examinations, etc. Under no circumstances are students expected to submit rationales for (or documentation of) any absences, to course instructors. Students are, however, required to follow-up with course instructors, in a timely fashion, to identify the ways in which the academic consideration will be implemented.

Regular attendance is expected and essential for course success. Participation means not only attendance, but active engagement in the class, including (for example) contribution to small and large group discussions, a demonstrated effort to prepare for class by completing assigned readings before class, and following the instructor's guidelines for use of electronic devices during class time. **Students who miss classes, or parts of classes, are responsible for the material they have missed. Instructors are not obliged to review the contents of missed lectures.**

Examination Conflicts

A student completing tests or examinations with flexible submission times (e.g., where one or more evaluation is a take-home assessment) cannot request alternative arrangements unless a conflict cannot be avoided by rescheduling writing the exam to a different time within the window specified by the instructor. This applies to direct conflicts as well as “heavy load” conflicts (e.g., three exams

within a 23-hour period). The student should discuss any concerns about a potential conflict and/or request academic considerations with their academic counselling unit prior to the deadline to drop a course without academic penalty

In the case of online tests and examinations, use of a “Conflict Room,” wherein student can write two proctored exams concurrently, will be interpreted as arrangements for continuous proctoring.

5. **Contingency Plan for an In-Person Class Pivoting to 100% Online Learning**

In the event of a situation that requires this course to pivot to online content delivery, all remaining course content will be delivered entirely online, either synchronously (i.e., at the times indicated in the timetable) or asynchronously (e.g., posted on OWL for students to view at their convenience). The grading scheme will **not** change. Any remaining assessments will also be conducted online as determined by the course instructor

Note that disruptive behaviour of any type during online classes, including inappropriate use of the chat function, is unacceptable. Students found guilty of Zoom-bombing a class or of other serious online offenses may be subject to disciplinary measures under the Code of Student Conduct.

6. **Online Proctoring**

Tests and examinations in this course may be conducted using a remote proctoring service. By taking this course, you are consenting to the use of this software and acknowledge that you will be required to provide **personal information** (including some biometric data) and the session will be **recorded**. Completion of this course will require you to have a reliable internet connection and a device that meets the technical requirements for this service. More information about this remote proctoring service, including technical requirements, is available on Western’s Remote Proctoring website at: <https://remoteproctoring.uwo.ca>.

7. **Grades**

Where possible assignment objectives and rubrics will be posted on OWL.

Generally, students can expect some form of feedback on their performance in a course before the drop date.

- November 13th, 2023 (for first term half-courses)
- November 30th, 2023 (for full-year courses)
- March 7th, 2024 (for second term half-or full year courses)

A+	90-100	<i>One could scarcely expect better from a student at this level</i>
A	80-89	<i>Superior work that is clearly above average</i>
B	70-79	<i>Good work, meeting all requirements and eminently satisfactory</i>
C	60-69	<i>Competent work, meeting requirements</i>
D	50-59	<i>Fair work, minimally acceptable.</i>
F	below 50	<i>Fail</i>

Rounding of Grades (for example, bumping a 79 to 80%):

This is a practice some students request. The final grade documented is the grade that you have achieved. There is no rounding to the next grade level, or ‘giving away’ of marks. Please don’t ask me to do this for you; the response will be “please review the course outline where this is presented”. In the same vein, you will not be permitted to do extra work, an extra

assignment etc in order to improve any part of, or your final grade.

Appealing a Grade Within this Course

You have the right to appeal any grade within this course. The grounds for a grade appeal may be one or more of: medical or compassionate circumstances, extenuating circumstances beyond the student's control, bias, inaccuracy, or unfairness. All grounds advanced in a request for relief must be supported by a clear and detailed explanation of the reasons for the request together with all supporting documentation.

Appeals generally proceed in this order:

1. Course instructor (informal consultation)
2. Department Chair (submission of written request)
3. The Dean of the Faculty (submission of written request)

In the case of perceived procedural unfairness, steps 2 and 3 are carried out within the Department and Faculty offering the course. In the case of extenuating medical or compassionate circumstances that impact on a grade, steps 2 and 3 are carried out within a student's Home Department and Faculty.

A request for relief against a mark or grade must be initiated with the instructor as soon as possible after the mark is issued. In the event that the instructor is not available to the student, or fails to act, or if the matter is not resolved satisfactorily with the instructor, a written request for relief must be submitted to the Chair of the Department within three weeks of the date that the mark was issued. In the case of a final grade in a course, the written request for relief must be submitted to the Chair of the department by January 31st (for first-term half courses) or June 30th (for second-term half courses or full-year courses)

8. Support Services

Health and Wellness:

Information regarding health and wellness-related services available to students may be found at <http://www.health.uwo.ca/>.

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to Mental Health@Western (<http://www.health.uwo.ca/>) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

There are various support services around campus and these include, but are not limited to:
Student Development Centre -- <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/ssd/>
Ombudsperson Office -- <http://www.uwo.ca/ombuds/>

9. Student Code of Conduct

The purpose of the Code of Student Conduct is to define the general standard of conduct expected of students registered at Western University, provide examples of behaviour that constitutes a breach of this standard of conduct, provide examples of sanctions that may be imposed and set out the disciplinary procedures that the University will follow. For more information, visit <https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/board/code.pdf>

Common Concerns

This table summarizes a list of common student concerns and how they are to be resolved.

Concern	How to address concern
Course administrative matters	Read through the course outline. If the question cannot be answered from information in the course outline, email your TA.
Course content questions	Refer to the OWL Resources. If you can not find the answer, email your TA.
Grade disputes and requests for appeals	A student requesting an appeal to a specific course with respect to a grade for an assignment or examination must first contact their instructor to discuss such matters. Visit the following website for guide on submitting an appeal: https://uwo.ca/fhs/policies/appeals.html