Qualitative Research in Nursing and Health
NUR 990 Special Topics (3 credits)
Thursdays, 12:40-3:30 pm
Room 500 West Fee Hall
Spring 2008

Course Description
This course introduces students to the epistemology, research design, participant recruitment, and data analysis strategies of health research using the major qualitative research approaches (phenomenology, grounded theory and ethnography). Students will gain hand-on data analysis practice using qualitative software. Students will develop skills for analyzing the quality of research reports and plans. Finally, students will conceptualize a research plan from a qualitative perspective in their area of interest. Ethical, gender and power issues will be explored throughout the course.

Course Objectives
1. Compare and contrast the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms, and develop a position regarding the strengths, weakness and complementarities of these research methodologies.

2. Describe the philosophy, aims, sampling methods, data collection procedures and analysis strategies of the three major types of qualitative methods used in nursing research.

3. Critique published qualitative research papers, presentations and/or qualitative research grant applications according to the NIH guidelines.

4. Use the appropriate strategies to analyze and report the findings from a small amount of qualitative data individually or as part of a team.

5. Demonstrate beginning level facility with one qualitative research method by conceptualizing a question, sampling plan, interview protocol, and analysis plan.

Prerequisites
Open to masters and doctoral students in health related disciplines or approval of college.
Course Faculty

Denise Saint Arnault, Ph.D., RN
Associate Professor
B 510B West Fee Hall
Phone (517) 355-3332; saintarn@msu.edu

Instruction

a. Methodology. This interactive course will meet three class hours weekly. The course incorporates seminar, class discussion, demonstration, hand-on practice, student lead presentations and discussion of outside of class activities.

b. Required Textbooks.

c. Optional (Recommended) Textbooks.

Class activities and Evaluation:

- Week 1: Preliminary foundations
  - Research paradigms for qualitative and quantitative research
  - Strengths and limitations of various approaches
  - Evaluating the appropriate approach for the research question
  - Issues in qualitative and quantitative research
    - truth value: credibility and internal validity
    - applicability: transferability and external validity
    - consistency: dependability and reliability
    - Neutrality: conformability and objectivity
    - Power
o Week 2-3: Phenomenology
  o Design
  o Interview construction
  o Participant recruitment
  o Data collection and analysis
  o Issues and strategies
  o 2 page analysis of report due week 3 (10%)

o Week 4-5: Grounded theory
  o Design
  o Interview construction
  o Participant recruitment
  o Data collection and analysis
  o Issues and strategies
  o 2 page analysis of report due week 5 (10%)

o Week 6-7: Ethnography and field methods
  o Design
  o Participant observation and other data collection
  o Data analysis
  o Issues and strategies
  o 2 page analysis of report due week 7 (10%)

o Week 8: Analysis techniques and software
  o Introduction to Atlas

o Week 8-11: Analysis of qualitative data in teams

o Week 9: Critique of qualitative research
  o NIH qualitative research report used for evaluation

o Week 10: Other qualitative methods
  o Case studies
  o Focus groups
  o Content analysis
  o Research paper critique due (20%)

o Weeks 12: Application
  o Defining a clinical problem and research question
  o Developing a theoretical framework
  o Developing a sampling strategy in qualitative research
  o Developing interview schedule
  o Data collection plan
  o Data management plan

o Week 13-14 Student presentations
  o Individual presentations (20%)
  o IRB application for potential research due week 14 (30%)

o Week 15: Dissemination of findings—finding the findings
Course Grading Scale
The Michigan State University 4.0 grading system will be used to calculate final course grades.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>100-94%</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93-89%</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84-88%</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83-79%</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-78%</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74-70%</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-69%</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>≤64%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Points will be rounded to the nearest whole numbers using the “0.5 rule.” Points at the ≥ 0.5 will be rounded up while those ≤ 0.5 will be rounded down to the nearest whole number.

Writing Requirements
The College of Nursing requires that students refer to a style manual when writing required papers and bibliographies. The reference format adopted by the College of Nursing is the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (most recent edition).

Professionalism
All graduate students at Michigan State University should be fully familiar with the Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities Articles (published by the Graduate School; available at [http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/gradrights.htm](http://www.vps.msu.edu/SpLife/gradrights.htm)); University guidelines for ethical research (published by the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects [UCRIHS]; available at [http://www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs/](http://www.msu.edu/user/ucrihs/)); The MSU Guidelines for Integrity in Research and Creative Activities, [http://grad.msu.edu/all/ris04activities.pdf](http://grad.msu.edu/all/ris04activities.pdf) and specific principles for informal conflict management, in the Graduate Student Resource Guide (published by the Graduate School; available at [http://grad.msu.edu/conflict.htm](http://grad.msu.edu/conflict.htm)).

The Graduate Student Rights and Responsibilities (GSRR) Articles address professional standards for graduate students as follows: “Each department/school and college shall communicate to graduate students, at the time of their first enrollment in a degree program or course in the unit, any specific codes of professional and academic standards covering the conduct expected of them.” (Article 2.4.7). “The graduate student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards” (Article 2.3.8).
In addition to meeting academic standards included in the Academic Progression Guidelines, students and faculty in the Doctoral Program in Nursing have shared responsibility for adherence to the professional standards referred to in the Doctoral Student Handbook of the CON.

Professional expectations are rooted in the maintenance of high quality working relationships with faculty, peers, research participants, staff, and all others with whom the graduate student interacts. Aspects of high quality working relationships that are addressed in the GSSR as shared faculty-student responsibilities include: *mutual respect, understanding, and dedication to the education process* (2.1.2); *maintenance of a collegial atmosphere* (2.3.7); and, *mutual trust and civility* (2.3.1.2).

Communication. Faculty can be reached through email or phone. Faculty response to email may take up to 3 days.

**Policies**

**Academic Integrity:** Article 2.3.3 of the *Academic Freedom Report* states that "The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards." In addition, the College of Nursing adheres to the policies on academic honesty as specified in General Student Regulations 1.0, Protection of Scholarship and Grades; the all-University Policy on Integrity of Scholarship and Grades; and Ordinance 17.00, Examinations. (See *Spartan Life: Student Handbook and Resource Guide* and/or the MSU Web site: www.msu.edu.) Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including homework, lab work, quizzes, tests and exams, without assistance from any source. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in NUR 901. Students who violate MSU rules may receive a penalty grade, including--but not limited to--a failing grade on the assignment or in the course. Contact your instructor if you are unsure about the appropriateness of your course work. (See also [http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html](http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/honestylinks.html).)

Students engaged in scholarly activities (e.g. dissertation, scholarly projects) should follow the guidelines of scholarly writing as outlined in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (most recent edition). Ethical principles ensure the accuracy of scientific and scholarly knowledge and protect intellectual rights. Principles include reporting of results, plagiarism, publication credit, sharing data, and copyright.

Research Misconduct and Questionable Research Practices within the college are defined consistently with the Interim University Document on Intellectual Integrity approved by the President of Michigan State University on August 5, 1994, and revised June 29, 1995. Refer to the CON Doctoral Student Handbook.
Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities should contact the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities to establish reasonable accommodations. For an appointment with a disability specialist, call 353-9642 (voice), 355-1293 (TTY), or visit MyProfile.rcpd.msu.edu.

Disruptive Behavior: Article 2.3.5 of the Academic Freedom Report (AFR) for students at Michigan State University states: "The student's behavior in the classroom shall be conducive to the teaching and learning process for all concerned." Article 2.3.10 of the AFR states that "The student has a right to scholarly relationships with faculty based on mutual trust and civility." General Student Regulation 5.02 states: "No student shall . . . interfere with the functions and services of the University (for example, but not limited to, classes . . .) such that the function or service is obstructed or disrupted. Students whose conduct adversely affects the learning environment in this classroom may be subject to disciplinary action through the Student Faculty Judiciary process.

Attendance: Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not attend this class. Students who fail to attend the first four class sessions or class by the fifth day of the semester, whichever occurs first, may be dropped from the course.

(Attendance policy, if different from the University attendance policy and especially when the attendance policy affects students' grades. For details, see Attendance Policy, Excused Absences and Make-up Work on the Ombudsman's Web site. This site includes discussion of student observance of major religious holidays, student-athlete participation in athletic competition, student participation in university-approved field trips, medical excuses and a dean's drop for students who fail to attend class sessions at the beginning of the semester).

College of Nursing policies regarding Professional Development Guidelines [found in CON Student Handbooks at CON website]. Students are responsible for the information found in the CON Doctoral Student Handbook.

Effective conflict management/negotiation skills are essential for navigating the graduate school experience and maintaining high quality working relationships. Specific principles for conflict management/negotiation are addressed in the Graduate Student Resource Guide. Doctoral students are responsible for making concerted good faith efforts to resolve conflicts with others in a constructive and informal fashion, prior to proceeding to formal conflict resolution options, as consistent with the GSRR statement on informal conflict resolution (Article 5.3.2). Doctoral students who have specific questions or concerns about professional standards or conflict resolution issues should consult with their Major Professor, the Associate Dean for Research and Doctoral Programs, and/or the University Ombudsman for guidance, as appropriate.