**MHPE 532: Qualitative Methods**

**Instructor: Laura E. Hirshfield, PhD**

**Course Overview:** This course is designed to introduce students to the logic and practice of qualitative research. After discussing various theories of research design, we will examine several methods of qualitative data collection used by researchers in health professions education, discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each, and talk about how social scientists decide which methods are appropriate for particular research questions and in particular research contexts. These methods include in-depth qualitative interviews, focus groups, participant observation/ethnography, and qualitative content analysis. We will also focus on how to analyze qualitative data once it has been collected. Finally, students will have the opportunity to practice these methods through in-class activities and homework assignments, and the coursework will culminate in the development of a proposal for a rigorous qualitative research study.

**Course Objectives:**

By the end of the course, all students should be able to:

1. Choose (qualitative) research methods that are best suited for their health professions research questions
2. Gather quality qualitative data including:
   1. semi-structured, qualitative interviews and focus groups
   2. ethnographic fieldwork and observation
   3. open-ended survey questions/narrative data
3. Choose appropriate analytic methods for their qualitative data
4. Develop and propose a methodologically-sound study using qualitative data and analytic methods

**Readings:**

There is no textbook or coursepack to buy for this course. Instead, your readings have been posted in a Box folder that I will share with you all. It will be your responsibility to print these for yourselves (or to read them online). If you notice that there is a problem with a reading please let me know ASAP so that I can resolve the issue.

**Student Assessment:**

## Since this class is a discussion-based practicum, it is imperative that students come to class prepared to think about and discuss the readings and/or their in-class exercises critically. Assignments must be turned in in a timely manner or they will not count toward your final grade. Your final assessment will be determined by the following:

Participation: 30%

S*tudents’ participation in discussions and activities is essential for the success of this course. Therefore, students are expected to attend each class (punctually), as well as read assignments before class and participate actively in each class session. If you tend to be quiet, and feel concerned that your quietness may impact your participation grade, please let me know and I will work to develop some alternative assignments to supplement your participation grade.*

In-class Course Assignments: 40%

*As a practicum, the bulk of the work in this class involves the acquisition of qualitative research methods skills, which you will demonstrate through a series of in-class course assignments.*

Final proposal/presentation: 30% - **DUE**

*Your final project in this course will be an informal, mock grant proposal and presentation of your proposal incorporating at least one of the methods you have learned in the course.*

**Contacting Me:**

I’m happy to meet with students in person or to set up appointments on zoom (like skype) or by phone. I also respond to email questions, though I am not always as prompt in email responses as I would like. (There are just so many!) If you anticipate any challenges in completing your coursework, need accommodations, or have questions about your projects, please let me know sooner rather than later, and I will do my best to help or to connect you with someone who can.

**Schedule and Readings Coming Soon!**