





Nursing (NURS) 712

Advanced Qualitative Research

Status: Replaced with new revision, see the [course listing](#)  for the current revision 

Delivery mode: [Paced study](#) 

Credits: 3

Area of study: Health

Prerequisites: For MHS Students: **MHST 601, MHST 603**
For MN-Gen Students: **NURS 603, NURS 608**

Precluded: None

Faculty: [Faculty of Health Disciplines](#) 

Overview

The Advanced Qualitative Research course focuses on the knowledge and skills required to conduct qualitative research projects and analyze the results of

qualitative investigations. This course extends and deepens the exploration of qualitative methodologies, with the intent to help graduate students choose the approach that is best suited to their thesis study or research interests. The course introduces students to the management and presentation of qualitative data using the NVivo software package.

Outline

Unit 1: Advanced Qualitative Methods: Beginnings and Evolution

In the first unit of the course, students will explore the context within which qualitative research occurs, and the importance of understanding the roots that shape the various traditions in qualitative research, including differing methodological approaches and philosophic and interpretive orientations. A framework for understanding Indigenous Research Methodologies will be introduced.

Unit 2: Issues of Design in Qualitative Research

In Unit 2, students will explore common characteristics of qualitative approaches to inquiry and examine the process of designing a qualitative research project. What qualitative research requires of the researcher will be considered along with the phases in the qualitative research process. The role of theory in qualitative research will be introduced, and the creative presence of the researcher and the role of reflexivity will be explored. Students will learn about methodological congruence and the importance of building in rigour (or quality) from the beginning of the research process. Ethical considerations, which are crucial to the process of planning and designing a qualitative study, are examined and addressed.

Unit 3: Methodological Approaches to Qualitative Inquiry

In Unit 3, students will explore a variety of approaches to qualitative research, and begin to think about their own areas of interest and which approach might be the most appropriate to address their own research question(s). Students will explore the relationship between purpose and design in research and consider the relevance of these with respect to the methodology they choose. (Note: In the text, five methodological approaches are identified. In this unit, additional methodologies will be introduced, and students will have an opportunity to select the approaches most relevant to their own work.)

Unit 4: Introducing and Focusing the Study and Generating Data

In Unit 4, students will learn about the importance of the beginning or introduction to the study, its role in focusing the study, and the significance of this in the entire research proposal development process. Students will go on to

explore a variety of data collection activities and the role that each can play within various qualitative approaches to inquiry.

Unit 5: Data Analysis and Representation

In Unit 5, students will explore the processes involved in data analysis, which centre around organizing, giving structure to, and eliciting meaning from the research data that have been collected. Students examine the qualitative data analytic skills that provide a foundation for all qualitative analysis.

Unit 6: Writing Up Qualitative Research

In Unit 6, students will examine writing from a variety of research perspectives, and learn some of the nuances that will help them recognize how particular approaches might look when it is completed.

Unit 7: Quality in Qualitative Research

In Unit 7, students will study perspectives of quality and credibility in qualitative research that speak to the soundness of the whole research endeavour, and consider ways in which they might evaluate the credibility of qualitative research studies.

Unit 8: Coming Full Circle: Beginning to End and Back Again

In Unit 8, the closing unit of the course, students will explore what is meant by “turning” the story. It is hoped that students will come to the understanding that qualitative research can bring them full circle in their understanding of a phenomenon, and that in coming full circle, their understanding increases, broadens, and invites a continuing search for yet deeper knowing and understanding.

Learning outcomes

In this course, you will access health-related websites worldwide. You will also participate in email and computer conferencing with other students. Students are expected to connect to an Internet Service Provider at their own expense.


Objectives

MHST/NURS 712 is designed to help students achieve the following course learning outcomes..

1. Discuss the philosophical and ethical considerations and values that are unique to qualitative research;
2. Distinguish between the methodologies used in qualitative research;

3. Identify the importance of reflexive research journals in qualitative research, and create a research journal that will form the beginning of their qualitative research journeys;
4. Develop research questions framed from a qualitative perspective and construct a plan for answering those question(s);
5. Apply the qualitative methodology studied during the course to research projects;
6. Select from a repertoire of strategies for generating data and develop a plan for generating/collecting data in qualitative research;
7. Apply data-coding strategies;
8. Formulate plans for analyzing and representing data based on a chosen research approach;
9. Examine strategies for writing up and disseminating qualitative research;
10. Apply digital literacy skills developed through class learning activities using computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software.

Evaluation

In the MHS and MN:Gen programs, students must achieve an overall program GPA of 2.7 (B- or 70 percent), to graduate. The minimum passing grade requirement for each MHS and MN:Gen course is **C- (60 percent)** .

The following course activities will contribute to your course grade, with the percentage weighting of each activity as follows:

Activity	Weight
Assignment 1A & B: Reflexive Research Journal	15%
Assignment 2: Coding, Themes, and Write-Up	25%
Assignment 3: Methodology Term Paper	35%
Assignment 4: Working with NVivo	10%
Participation	15%

Activity	Weight
Total	100%

The assessment structure for this course is based on the following course activities, with the percentage weighting of each activity as indicated. Your final grade for the course will be a composite mark based on your performance on these course activities.

Conference Participation (15%)

Each unit of the course includes a conference, during which the class engages in scholarly dialogue around the unit content with one another and the course instructor. Scholarly dialogue goes beyond question-and-answer interactions, building on the discussion as you interact with your classmates. Dialogue also means engaging in conversation periodically throughout the week, as opposed to creating 3 or 4 postings in a single session. It is anticipated that you will have, at minimum, 4 postings per week (with the exception of week 7; no postings are scheduled that week).

A Resource Wiki has been established for the course, to house any new resources you find that are not already included in the course. The wiki will be a resource that you can take with you when you finish the course. It is expected that you will make a minimum of 5 contributions to the Resource Wiki over the course of the semester.

Collaborative Presentation with a partner in Week 6

Participation Criteria

Conference participation is evaluated on the basis of the quality, quantity and timeliness of the comments that you post in the conference. The quality of your comments is evaluated on the basis of criteria similar to those used in evaluating written assignments (see above). The quantity of your conference participation is determined by monitoring the number of comments entered into each conference. It is expected that you will post both your own original comments and responses to your classmates' ideas. The timeliness of your comments is determined by monitoring the dates and times at which your comments are posted, to ensure your participation throughout the timeframe of the unit conference rather than only at the outset or near the end.

Assignment 1: Reflexive Research Journal **(15% of final mark; Submission 1 = 5% and Submission 2 = 10%)**

Develop a reflexive journal (beginning in your first week of the course).

The reflexive journal is a diary in which a researcher makes regular entries during the research process. In these entries, the researcher records methodological decisions (and the reasons for them), the logistics of the study, and their reflections upon events in the context of their own values and interests. While you will not conduct an actual research study in this course, you will learn about research processes (including components like reflexivity, methodology, researcher influence, role of beliefs and values, etc.) and gathering data for analysis, both of which require reflection on how they impact the research process and your understanding. As such, the reflexive research journal will be an important part of your learning process throughout the course.

Begin your reflexive journal in Unit 1 in Week 1, as suggested in the activity in your study guide. You will use your reflexive journal throughout the course, at times in response to what you are learning, and at other times during your data gathering and analysis. When completing your journal submissions, you may want to refer back to the articles in Unit 1. Each journal submission must include an assignment title page and a description.

Assignment 2: Research Report (coding, analyzing/theming and write-up) **(25% of final mark)**

Assignment 2 simulates the “working experience” of qualitative researchers as you collect and code raw data, thematize, and record your activities and decisions in your research journal. In this assignment, you will not choose a particular methodological approach. Instead, you will develop a research question around a specific topic, generate research data, use a coding scheme you’ve chosen to develop themes that will help you answer your research question, and write a short paper that addresses your research question.

Assignment 3: In-depth Methodology Paper **(35% of final mark)**

The intent of this assignment is for you to select a qualitative research methodology that you have studied in the course (if you have an interest in another methodology, check with the course professor) and develop an in-depth understanding of that approach to research, including the rationale for choosing it as a methodology for your own research. Once you have immersed


yourself in the literature on your chosen methodology, write a term paper of no more than 10–12 pages (excluding title page, abstract, and references) which explains the central principles and philosophical underpinnings of the methodology, and assess some of the concerns at stake in its use.

Assignment 4: Working with NVivo (10% of final mark)

This activity will be created using the data from Assignment 2. You will be introduced to a qualitative research software program (NVivo) and learn how to use it to manage and work with your qualitative data.

Materials

Creswell, J.W. and Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design:*

Choosing among five approaches (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks. CA: Sage. 
(Print)

Online Materials

- Introduction: Provides important information about the course design and materials.
- Online Study Guide
- Schedule: Provides an outline of the timing and sequencing of course activities.
- Units: There are 8 units in this course.
- Video Lectures (based on work from the Centre for Critical Qualitative Health Research or CCQHR at University of Toronto; see below)
- Assessment: Outlines the assignments/evaluation procedures of the course.
- References: Listing of reading selections used in the course.
- Resources: Listing of websites, media, blogs, and other related resources.

Online Resources

An excellent resource that can be used and referred to throughout the course is the International Institute for Qualitative Methodology. It provides links to numerous training and networking opportunities as well as the International Journal of Qualitative Methods. <http://www.iiqm.ualberta.ca/> 

Video links will be provided in different units throughout the course as a way of adding some variety and interest for relevant topics.

Technical Requirements

Computer System

In order to successfully complete this course, you must own or have ready access to certain computer hardware and software programs. For complete and up-to-date information on the minimum computer requirements required to complete the graduate nursing courses, visit the **Centre for Nursing and Health Studies** [↗](#) technical site.

Important links

- › [Academic advising](#) [↗](#)
- › [Program planning](#) [↗](#)
- › [Request assistance](#) [↗](#)
- › [Support services](#) [↗](#)

Athabasca University reserves the right to amend course outlines occasionally and without notice. Courses offered by other delivery methods may vary from their individualized study counterparts.