

**American University of Beirut
Faculty of Health Sciences**

**HPCH 334
Qualitative Research In Health Promotion
[2 credits]**

**Course Syllabus
Spring Semester, Academic Year 2021-22**

Class time and venue:

Tuesdays 3:30-5:10pm Classroom 332 Van Dyck

Course Instructor(s) and Contact Details:

Dr Judy Makhoul

e-mail: jm04@aub.edu.lb

Office hours: virtual

Course Description

The course develops learners' qualitative research skills to address a research question relevant to health promotion. Students engage through classroom discussions, role play and assignments to gain hands on experience in conducting qualitative research beyond class settings. Students learn about qualitative research designs and methods and then apply the research process by generating data, and analyzing the data to answer a research question of their choice. They will also learn how to evaluate the quality or rigor of a qualitative research proposal or manuscript. Topics include in-depth interviews, observations, focus groups, thematic analysis, research rigor and research ethics.

Teaching approach and virtual platforms

The class will be conducted through interactive Zoomx platforms and in person meetings depending on the conditions and instructor-student preferences. The class will follow a lecture-application session approach where an overview of the main points of that week will be introduced through a short lecture either synchronous and recorded or asynchronous (a recorded voice with powerpoint). This will be followed by hands on applications, discussions, role plays and other interactive class activities using real examples and students' own work. The material for the class sessions will be prepared by the course instructor and posted on Moodle a few days before class sessions.

The instructor will send course-related communications via **Moodle messages or announcements which will also reach** students' emails as well. So please check your inbox frequently to read important announcements. If the session material posted is asynchronous, then students can take the Moodle lessons at their own pace and convenience, but should complete them before coming to the following class.

Course Learning Objectives (LOs)

By the end of the course the students will be able to:

1. Discuss the merits and challenges of qualitative research approaches and methods.
2. Generate primary qualitative data to answer a relevant health promotion research question.
3. Conduct a collaborative or individual rigorous analysis of empirical qualitative data using thematic analysis.

4. Write a critique of a qualitative research protocol or draft manuscript.
5. Apply public health ethics in all stages of the research process.
6. Present research findings in writing to diverse audiences.

Course List of Reading Material:

The reading material for a course topic will be posted on the relevant Moodle block from including book chapters to articles, as there is no single textbook for the course. Students are required to read the relevant course material (Table 3) **before class sessions** to be used for class activities and discussions. Examples of journals and on-line books include:

1. Sparkes, A.C. and Smith, B. (2014). *Qualitative Research Methods In Sport, Exercise and Health: From process to product*. Routledge.
2. Tolley, E. E., Ulin, P. R., Mack, N., Robinson, E. T., & Succop, S. M. (2016). *Qualitative methods in public health: a field guide for applied research*. John Wiley & Sons.
3. *Qualitative Health Research* has examples of qualitative research for health promotion. The journal is available online from SML homepage through “Journal Finder”.

The teaching/learning process is a contract between students and instructor. One of the requirements of this contract is that BOTH parties must be prepared for class. Part of students' preparation is completing the assigned readings.

Course Requirements and Student Evaluation

Pre-requisites: Foundations of Public Health (PBHL 312) and Research Methods in Public Health (PBHL 310) or an equivalent course.

We all know how uncomfortable it may be to attend online classes and meetings, sitting in front of a computer, with poor internet connection, lack of sleep, etc. However, this is how some of the class may be delivered, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This means we need to adapt to this challenge as best as we can. As we would do if we had to come to campus. So whether virtual or in person, we need to:



Be ready for class, by reading materials beforehand, appearing presentable, professional, wearing clothes as if you had to go out and meet someone in person; make sure you are online and ready for the live session at **least 10 minutes** in advance, to make sure your connection is stable and that you don't encounter technical issues.



Show your reactions, by turning your camera on, as much as possible; this may slow your connection, but this is the only way you can show your non-verbal reactions to the content provided and it is fundamental when you cannot meet someone in person.



Engage, by participating in the discussions, asking questions, and contributing actively to classroom activities.



Avoid distractions while attending a live session, by silencing your phones and leaving them out of sight, not checking your emails, and closing open browsers. It is a matter of respect for the instructor and for other colleagues who want to follow the session.

Student Evaluation: Students will be evaluated on written assignments. Research writing is an important skill that is needed in the Graduate Program as well as in the public health profession. We hope that this course will be a place to further practice and refine this skill. That is why we will use written assessments of students' work and peer reviews of homework.

Instruction sheets and assessment rubrics for each assignment will be posted on Moodle and discussed in class.

Table 1. Course learning objectives mapped to HPCH distinct competencies

| | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO5 | LO6 | Assignment where Competency primarily assessed |
|--|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| HPCH-CC1. Demonstrate a critical understanding of multidisciplinary theories/frameworks utilized in health promotion research and practice | X | | | | | | FG and Observation assignments |
| HPCH-CC3. Conduct rigorous quantitative and qualitative research for health promotion | | X | X | | | | evaluation paper |
| HPCH-CC5. Promote social justice and equity in health promotion research, practice, and policy | | | | X | X | X | written research report |

Table 2. Summary of students' assessments mapped to course learning objectives

| Assessment method | Learning Objectives | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| | LO1 | LO2 | LO3 | LO4 | LO5 | LO6 |
| Observation assignment (20%) | | X | X | | X | X |
| FOCUS GROUP assignment (25%) | | X | X | | X | |
| Group assignment: Written research report (30%) | | | X | | X | |
| Evaluation of a qual. research paper (25%) | X | | | X | | |

Table 3. Description of Assessment methods, Due Dates and Corresponding Learning Objectives

| Assessment method | Date (tentative) | LOs covered | Grade percentage |
|--|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Observation assignment | <i>week 6</i> | <i>LO2,3,5,6</i> | 20% |
| Each student performs observational work outside class [3-4 observations] in answer to a research question from a list assigned by the instructor and writes an account of the process and findings. | | | |
| Focus group assignment | <i>Week 9</i> | <i>LO2,3,5</i> | 25% |
| Students work individually to conduct and record a focus group discussion depending on the research question assigned. | | | |
| Group assignment: Written research report | <i>Week 12</i> | <i>LO3,5,6</i> | 30% |
| This is an essay type assignment worked on and written by the group of students who share the same research question. The students [groups of four to five] analyze the data from their individual focus group that they have already conducted for their individual assignments. They then write a referenced report of their research findings using the outline discussed in class. | | | |
| Written evaluation of a qualitative research paper | <i>after Week 14</i> | <i>LO1,4</i> | 25% |

This is an individually written assignment critiquing a published paper assigned by the course instructor an students if possible. The assignment includes a discussion of the methodological and ethical strengths and deficiencies supported with reference to the relevant theoretical literature.

Policies and other General Notes

Academic Integrity

Education is demanding and time management is essential. Do not hesitate to use the resources available to you in the University [Libraries, Writing Center, Academic Computing]. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. It is the student's responsibility to become familiar with the Student Code of Conduct [AUB Student Handbook or from AUB website <http://www.aub.edu.lb> home page]. Read the definitions and penalties. If you are in doubt as to what constitutes plagiarism, ask your instructor. AUB has a strict anti-cheating and anti-plagiarism policy. **Penalties include: a zero on the assignment in question, which may lead to failing the course**, suspension or expulsion from University and a record of the disciplinary action in the student's file.

Special Needs

AUB strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience academic barriers due to a disability (such as ADHD, learning difficulties, mental health conditions, chronic or temporary medical conditions), please inform me immediately so that we can privately discuss options. In order to help establish reasonable accommodations and facilitate a smooth accommodations process, you are encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Office: accessibility@aub.edu.lb; +961-1-350000, x3246; West Hall, 314.

Non-Discrimination – Title IX – AUB

AUB is committed to facilitating a campus free of all forms of discrimination including sex/gender-based harassment prohibited by Title IX. The University's non-discrimination policy applies to, and protects, all students, faculty, and staff. If you think you have experienced discrimination or harassment, including sexual misconduct, we encourage you to tell someone promptly. If you speak to a faculty or staff member about an issue such as harassment, sexual violence, or discrimination, the information will be kept as private as possible, however, faculty and designated staff are required to bring it to the attention of the University's Equity/Title IX Coordinator. Faculty can refer you to fully confidential resources, and you can find information and contacts at www.aub.edu.lb/titleix. To report an incident, contact the University's Equity/Title IX Coordinator Ms. Mitra Tauk at 01-350000 ext. 2514, or titleix@aub.edu.lb. An anonymous report may be submitted online via EthicsPoint at www.aub.ethicspoint.com.

Detailed Course Schedule

| Dates | CCs | Topic | Due dates |
|-------------------|------------|---|---------------------|
| Jan 25 | | Introduction to the course | |
| Feb 1 LO1 | CC1 | <p>Qualitative Health Research: Paradigm and Methodology Required:</p> <p>- Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). <i>Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product</i>. Routledge. pp 6-32.</p> <p>-Tolley, E. et al (2016). <i>Qualitative methods in public health: a field guide for applied research</i>. John Wiley & Sons. Chapter 1 and 2 selected pages.</p> <p><u>Light reading choose one:</u></p> <p>- Makhoul, J. and Nakkash, R. (2007). Understanding youth: the use of qualitative techniques to verify quantitative community indicators. <i>Health Promotion Practice</i>. doi:10.1177/1524839907301423</p> <p>- Makhoul, J., Ghanem, M., and Barbir, F. (2011) Starting Over from Scratch: social support and youth coping with internal displacement. <i>Family and Community Health</i> 34(4): 340-348.</p> <p>- Goins, R. T., Spencer, S. M., & Williams, K. (2011). Lay meanings of health among rural older adults in Appalachia, <i>The Journal of Rural Health</i>, 27(1), 13-20.</p> | |
| Feb 8 LO1 | CC1 | <p>Qualitative Research Traditions</p> <p>- Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). <i>Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product</i>. Routledge. pp 33-59 (selected pages).</p> <p>- Examples (Ethnography, phenomenology,...)</p> | |
| Feb 15 LO 2 | CC2,3 | <p>Methods of data collection</p> <p>1. Observational methods</p> <p>-Tolley, E. et al. (2016). <i>Qualitative methods in public health: a field guide for applied research</i>. John Wiley & Sons. Ch.4 p86-97.</p> <p>- Briggs, K et al (2003). Accomplishing care at home for people with dementia: using observational methodology. <i>Qualitative Health Research</i>, 13(2), 268-280.</p> | |
| Feb 22 LO2,3,5 | | Observational work- In class peer review of HW | |
| Mar 1 LO2,3,5 | CC2 CC5 | <p>2. Interviewing (In-depth Interviews and Focus groups)</p> <p>- Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). <i>Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product</i>. Routledge. pp 83-99.</p> <p>- Warne, M. et al (2013). Promoting an equal and healthy environment: Swedish students' views of daily life at school. <i>Qualitative health research</i>, 23(10), 1354-1368.</p> | Obs. Assign. |

| Dates | CCs | Topic | Due dates |
|------------------|------------|--|--------------------------|
| | | <p>- Makhoul, J, et al (2011). Starting Over from Scratch: social support and youth coping with internal displacement. <i>Family and Community Health</i> 34(4): 340-348.</p> <p>Focus Groups</p> <p>-Tolley, E. et al (2016). <i>Qualitative methods in public health: a field guide for applied research</i>. John Wiley & Sons. Chapter 4 p113-127.</p> | |
| Mar 8 | | Classwork and role play | |
| Mar 15 LO2 | CC3 | <p>Sampling and access</p> <p>- Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). <i>Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product</i>. Routledge. Pp 68-73 & pp 76-78.</p> | |
| Mar 22 LO3,6 | CC3 | <p>Data Analysis</p> <p>- Sutton, J., & Austin, Z. (2015). Qualitative research: data collection, analysis, and management. <i>The Canadian journal of hospital pharmacy</i>, 68(3), 226.</p> <p>- Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). <i>Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product</i>. Routledge. p115-146.</p> | FGD Assign |
| Mar 29 | | <u>Group work on data analysis</u> | |
| Apr 5 LO5,6 | CC3 CC5 | <p>Writing and presenting research findings</p> <p>-Tolley, E. et al (2016). <i>Qualitative methods in public health: a field guide for applied research</i>. John Wiley & Sons. Chapter 8 pp255-263; 267-275.</p> <p>- Nakkash, R., et al (2017). The practice of research ethics in Lebanon and Qatar: Perspectives of researchers on informed consent. <i>Journal of Empirical Research on Human Research Ethics</i> 1556264617730643.</p> | |
| Apr 12 LO 4,5 | CC3 CC5 | <p>Research Rigor and hands on practice</p> <p>- Sparkes, A. C., & Smith, B. (2014). <i>Qualitative research methods in sport, exercise and health: From process to product</i>. Routledge. pp 179-205.</p> <p>-Tong, A. et al. (2007). Consolidated criteria for reporting qualitative research (COREQ): a 32-item checklist for interviews and focus groups. <i>International journal for quality in health care</i>, 19(6), 349-357.</p> | Group assign |
| Apr 19 LO 4,5 | CC3 CC5 | <p>Research Ethics in Qualitative research</p> <p>- Van den Hoonaard, W. C., & Van den Hoonaard, D. K. (2016). <i>Essentials of thinking ethically in qualitative research</i>. Routledge. Chapters 2,11.</p> | |
| Apr 26 | | | Evaluation report |

Apr 14 last day of course withdrawal