

***The Ph.D. Program in Psychology
Qualitative Research Methods Concentration
Proposal¹***

Students in doctoral training-area areas in the Psychology Ph.D. program in coordination with the Social Welfare Ph.D. program at the CUNY Graduate Center can pursue a *Qualitative Research Methods Concentration* by completing the requirements listed below. This *Qualitative Concentration* is administered by the Psychology doctoral program by a committee of faculty members from the Psychology Ph.D. Program and Social Welfare. Successful completion of the concentration can be formally recognized on the student's CV and other professional documents.

The purpose of this concentration is to provide students with ways of knowing, instruction, and practice across a range of diverse, rigorous qualitative research methodologies to use in their independent research projects and/or to broaden their expertise on methodologies for subsequent research. Importantly, the concentration supports subsequent professional teaching and research goals.

I. **Required Survey Course – (3 credits)**

Conceptual and Methodological Foundations of Qualitative Research

This survey course reviews basic shared principles, practices, and contributions of qualitative research theory and methods. One faculty member organizes the course, and up to seven faculty members across Psychology Training Areas and other programs involved in the *Qualitative Concentration* will present a class. Guest faculty, who will rotate to allow for broad interested participation, will assign readings for the day and discuss their qualitative research approach, highlighting theory/epistemology of method, methodological processes, an illustrative study, and a related publication. The primary course professor, then, leads discussions and qualitative data analysis activities in weeks following the guest faculty presentations.

Offered each year, this course will be the first in the *Concentration* and may be taken in the same semester as a designated elective. Students must achieve a grade of at least B in all courses.²

II. **Qualitative Electives (at least 9 credits³)**

Students must complete at least three courses on specific qualitative approaches and methods and complete each course with the grade of at least B. All the courses on the preliminary list of electives that appear below have been taught multiple times by CUNY faculty in the GC Ph.D. programs. These courses have been well received, and are projected to be offered in the future, across a range of programs.

The list below is not exhaustive, and additional courses may fulfill the advanced courses requirement. Such courses will be added to the list of possible courses to fulfill this requirement, pending the instructor's agreement to participate. In addition, students may fulfill some of these elective requirements with relevant courses across the Graduate Center and, with permission of their advisors, courses taken through the CUNY consortium agreement. If students wish to take courses not listed below to

fulfill one of the elective requirements, they must obtain approval from their faculty advisor **or** a member of the Qualitative Concentration Coordinating Committee⁴ *in advance* and/or prior to registration.

- *Critical Methods* (PSYC #80103)
- *Doing Visual Research* (UED #75100)
- *Narrative Inquiry* (PSYC #82005)
- *Study of Lives* (PSYC #80103)
- *Listening Guide* (PSYC #80103)
- *Advanced Listening Guide* (PSYC #80103)
- *Qualitative Research Methods in Social Welfare I* (SSSW #77000)
- *Feminist Ethnography* (PSYC #80103)
- *Ethnography of Space and Place* (ANTHRO #)
- *Critical Community Based Research* (SSSW 785000)
- *Community Psychology* (PSYC #)
- *Childhood and Youth Studies: Approaches and Methods* (MALS78900 & PSYC 80103)
- *Critical Discourse Theory and Analysis* (PSYC 72203)
- *Critical Remote Ethnography* (PSYC 80103)
- *Qualitative Research Methods in Social Welfare II* – (SSSW# 77100)

Please note: the courses above have been offered before and are planned for the future. The Committee will continue to poll faculty for any relevant courses they have offered. We are aware of course caps and the need to include and to schedule courses to ensure that they will fill.

III. **Qualitative Research Methods Presentation Day and Procedures**

In addition to the course work, a student pursuing the *Qualitative Concentration* is required to present an original research project that highlights qualitative methods. This presentation may be one that the student created for one of their elective courses or an original research project, such as the Second Year Research Project or Dissertation. The Presentation for the concentration will be in addition to any other required presentation (such as for the dissertation defense or second year project festival).

The *Qualitative Research Presentation Day* will take place in the Spring semester of each academic year (possibly during Psychology Research Day). At the end of the Fall Semester, the Qualitative Concentration Coordinating Committee will announce a late spring date for the Presentation Day. Students pursuing the Qualitative Concentration can register in February to present their projects by completing the ‘Qualitative Concentration Day Presentation Form.’ The Form will include a tentative presentation title and the names of two faculty members (ideally including the student’s chosen faculty advisor) to comment on the presentation as part of the event. Guidelines for presentation elements (such as focusing on a known qualitative approach, explaining the conceptual foundations, and summarizing findings) will be provided to the students and commenting faculty. Any student not deemed to have

successfully addressed the guidelines will have the opportunity to re-present to the commenting faculty at a time convenient to the student and their faculty commenters.

IV. **Procedures for Concentration Completion**

Generally, there are four steps for documenting completion of the Qualitative Research Methods Concentration:

- (1) Early in the semester when the student will have completed the course requirements for this Concentration, the student will submit the Concentration Completion Form to the Committee. The Form will list the courses completed for the concentration, the semesters when taken, and course grades. It will also include the title of the work presented at the Presentation Day with faculty commenters.
- (2) The Committee will review the Concentration Completion Forms.
- (3) After successfully completing all requirements, the student will receive a letter acknowledging this completion from the Committee.

V. **Administration of the Qualitative Concentration.**

A Qualitative Concentration Coordinating Committee consisting of four Ph.D. faculty from any area of Psychology or Social Welfare and two students from these Ph.D. programs will serve for two academic years. The roles of this Committee include (1) preparation of related materials; (2) review of students' declarations to present and complete the concentration, (3) planning and organization of the Qualitative Research Methods Presentation Day, and (4) informing students of their achievement.

VI. **Activities subsequent to Psych Council Approval**

The Committee will collaborate to identify student members of the Committee, design the Foundations course, obtain approval at all levels at GC, apply for course numbers for the 80103 courses, plan an announcement of the Concentration, establish a three-year schedule of relevant course offerings. The Committee will compile a list of course descriptions, as well as matrix indicating the epistemological foundations, data gathering methods, data analysis strategies, and other foci covered in each course. The course descriptions and matrix should, thus, provide students and faculty with information relevant to course selection and the overall range of methods and any gaps.

¹ This proposal was approved by the Ph.D. Program in Psychology, Executive Committee, December 2019

² Course descriptions and other links appear on our website, going live in winter 2021.

³ Ph.D. programs at the Graduate Center require 60 credits, among other requirements. Students who arrive with masters degrees sometimes transfer credits, so the 12-credit minimum for this concentration is a significant portion of their curriculum. Ideally, for full engagement with qualitative research methods, students will take more than 9 credits of electives.

⁴ The Qualitative Concentration Coordinating Committee for 2019 – 2022 includes cdaiute@gc.cuny.edu, dtolman@hunter.cuny.edu, hgoodman@gc.cuny.edu, jvanora@kbcc.cuny.edu, mfine@gc.cuny.edu, r.connor.clark@gmail.com, smunshi@bmcc.cuny.edu