

Department of Psychology

MA in Program Evaluation

PSY884: Qualitative and Mixed Methods in Program Evaluation Summer 2021 Syllabus

Part 1: Course Information

Instructor Information

Instructor: Gail Vallance Barrington, PhD, CE

Office Hours: Online, by email, by phone & by Zoom: Monday-Friday, 10 am-4 pm MST or as arranged.

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Course Description

Qualitative and mixed-method designs and data analytic approaches are essential for process and outcome evaluation. This course will familiarize students with qualitative and mixed method designs that are commonly used in program evaluation. Students will learn basic approaches to qualitative and mixed method data analysis.

Textbook & Course Materials

Required Texts and Course Pack Articles

- Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE. (e-version available.)
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *A concise introduction to mixed methods research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.
- The PSY 884 Summer 2021 electronic course pack (e-pack) is available for sale for \$44.07. Click to purchase your electronic course pack
<https://caps.itservices.msu.edu/roundabout/17f380b5-01b0-44e8-b10e-79ad48f33936>

Be sure to supply your @msu.edu email address before adding the course pack to your basket. More information is provided in our D2L course.

Course Requirements

- A high-speed (broadband) internet connection
- Computer manufactured within the last four years
- Minimum screen resolution of 1024x768
- Access to Desire2Learn
- Headset for video conferencing
- Audio recorder
- MSU Google apps (<http://googleapps.msu.edu/>)
- Zoom technology uploaded to your computer
- Knowledge of Word and PowerPoint

Course Structure

This course will be delivered entirely online through the course management system Desire2Learn (D2L). You will need your MSU NetID to login to the course from the D2L home page (<http://D2L.msu.edu>).

In D2L, you will access online lessons, course materials, and additional resources. Activities will consist of lectures with PowerPoint visuals, discussion forums, Zoom presentations, observation, interviewing, interactive exercises, online research, essay writing, and email.

Our week starts every **Wednesday morning at 12:01 AM EST** and runs until **Tuesday evening at 11:30 pm EST**. We have four units in the course. Each unit is broken down into several modules. Every week there is a brief introduction about the topic under discussion and then the module is broken down into four components:

1. **Readings & Lecture**—outlines weekly requirements including readings, a PowerPoint, lecture, and videos, along with other essential resources. Please complete the readings first so you have a clear understanding of the topic at hand and then proceed to the learning activity.
2. **Learning Activity**—contains exercises and hands-on activities to consolidate the material you have learned in the Readings & Lecture component. While some of these activities occur at your desk, others take you out in the field. Sometimes, a guest may drop by to speak to us.
3. **Discussion**—contains one graded discussion question per week to be discussed in your small group (to be assigned). A minimum of three posts is required, one to initiate your thoughts on the topic and two additional posts to interact with and respond to other students' comments. This discussion allows you to interpret and reflect on what you have learned from the readings, lecture, and learning activities as well as to share your experiences with your classmates. Note that while there is one graded forum each week, additional forums are provided for optional involvement.
4. **Assignment**—provides a description of the current assignment. There are four main assignments required in this course, some have several parts. Each assignment has an Assignment Information Sheet. Due dates and related information are provided.

All tasks associated with a particular week must be completed by **Tuesday evening at 11:30 pm EST**. The modules will remain open throughout the semester for further review or additional comments but are graded immediately after the module ends. If you have any questions or experience any issues with access, please contact your professor.

Technical Assistance

If you need technical assistance at any time during the course, or to report a problem, you can:

- Visit the Distance Learning Services Support Site <https://lib.msu.edu/dls/>
- Visit the Desire2Learn Help Site <http://help.d2l.msu.edu/> or call Distance Learning Services for D2L, Zoom or MediaSpace: Contact the MSU IT Service Desk at 517-432-6200 (phone), (800) 500-1554, or email: ithelp@msu.edu. Learning systems support is available from 7am-Midnight every day.

Resource Persons with Disabilities (RCPD)

- To make an appointment with a specialist, contact: (517) 353-9642 or TTY: (517) 355-1293
- Web site for RCPD: <http://MYProfile.rcpd.msu.edu>

Your Mental Health Is Important!

As our Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Teresa Woodruff, has said, the pandemic and its many effects powerfully impact our mental health. Four special break days have been provided throughout the spring semester to help you decompress and recharge. MSU's Counseling and Psychiatric Services is on standby to help students throughout the academic year. CAPS has expanded its virtual resources to ensure you have access to the help and support you need in this remote learning environment. You can take advantage of crisis

counseling, download a virtual care kit and seek consultation services, among many other programs. Please, reach out if you need support or a listening ear. If you need immediate help, our crisis hotline is available 24/7: Dial 517-355-8270 and press "1" to be connected with a crisis counselor.

We ask that you all work to extend kindness and empathy to one another and to all members of our MSU community. As you study and learn, please remember we need to continue to be supportive of one another and understand that we each face unique challenges as we continue to navigate the remote environment and a global pandemic

Part 2: Course Objectives

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, you will be able to:

1. Identify strategic themes and key traditions in qualitative research.
2. Construct evaluation questions that are appropriate for qualitative research designs.
3. Use a range of data collection techniques to gather qualitative data.
4. Implement basic procedures to analyze and interpret qualitative data.
5. Use verification strategies and quality criteria to ensure quality in qualitative studies.
6. Describe the core characteristics of mixed methods designs, identifying reasons why qualitative and quantitative methods should be combined.
7. Describe common approaches to mixed methods analysis, identifying challenges and mitigating strategies associated with them.
8. Reflect on your learning journey in this course.

Values

To achieve these outcomes, you will demonstrate the following values:

- **Reflexivity**—engage in ongoing critical reflection to facilitate design and analytic insight, to problem solve, and to further develop research-related thinking.
- **Collaboration**—participate in online discussions and shared activities with other learners to truly benefit from the online environment.
- **Respect**—work from a stance that recognizes and is responsive to differences and cultural complexity, recognizing the limitations of one's own assumptions, and interacting genuinely and respectfully with all stakeholders.

Core Competencies

This course will support your development in following core competency areas identified for program evaluators:

Reflective Practice: Being aware of one's self as an evaluator (knowledge, skills, dispositions) and reflecting on personal evaluation practice including competencies and areas for growth.

Technical Practice: Developing and using skills in evaluation theory and practice that are related to qualitative and mixed methods design, data collection, analysis, and interpretation.

Interpersonal Practice: Developing and using interpersonal skills, collaboration, partnering, and shared work goals.

Part 3: Course Outline & Schedule

Also see the January -April PSY 884 Calendar 2021 provided as a separate document and add course requirements to your personal calendar.

This course has four units (two on qualitative research and two on mixed methods). Each unit has several modules.

Getting Started: Course Orientation & Overview (May 17&18, 2021)

The first two days of the course are for orientation. Familiarize yourself with course materials, structure, philosophy, and assignments. Meet your professor and classmates through introductory discussion postings.

Unit 1.0 Qualitative Research (QR) Foundations (May 19—June 15, 2021)

Module 1.1 Strategic Themes in QR

- *What is qualitative inquiry?*
- *Research vs. evaluation*
- *Ontology & epistemology*
- *Objectivity vs. subjectivity*
- *The self as researcher*

Module 1.2a & 1.2b Key Traditions in QR

- *Ethnography*
- *Grounded theory*
- *Phenomenology*
- *Descriptive qualitative*
- *Footprints of qualitative research in evaluation*

Module 1.3 Asking Good QR Questions

- *The qualitative research question*
- *Linking logic in the evaluation framework*

Unit 2.0 QR Data Collection & Analysis (June 16—July 27, 2021)

Module 2.1a & 2.1b QR Data Collection Procedures

- *Participant observation & field notes*
- *Semi-structured interviews*
- *Case studies*
- *Selecting methods*
- *Sampling & saturation*

Module 2.2a & 2.2b QR Content Analysis

- *Deduction, induction & abduction*
- *Coding, categorizing & developing themes*
- *Common analysis errors*
- *Qualitative software & other analysis techniques*

Module 2.3 Synthesizing QR Data

- *Synthesis techniques*
- *Qualitative software and other analysis tools*

Module 2.4 Ensuring Quality in QR

- *Rigor*
- *Elements of Quality*

Unit 3.0 Mixed Methods Research (MMR) (July 28—August 10, 2021)

Module 3.1 MMR Thinking

- *Mixed methods thinking*
- *Definition of mixed methods*
- *Basic features of mixed methods research*
- *Pragmatism as a working philosophy*

Module 3.2 Core Characteristics & Basic Designs in MMR

- *Motivations for using mixed methods research*
- *Basic & advanced mixed methods design*
- *Steps in designing a mixed methods study*

Unit 4.0 MMR Analysis (August 11—18, 2021)

Module 4.1 MMR Data Analysis

- *Diagramming*
- *Use of frameworks*
- *Convergence & divergence*
- *Data integration & making meaning*

Module 4.2 MMR Issues & Quality

- *Sampling issues: selection & size*
- *Integrating qualitative & quantitative data*
- *Evaluating quality in mixed methods studies*

Part 4: Assignments and Grading Policy

Graded Course Assignments (See weekly modules on D2L for details)

Assignment	% of grade	Points
<p>Assignment 1 Using Photovoice (See Assignment 1 Information Sheet)</p> <p>An experiential learning project in which you:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Take three photos that reflect the challenges and benefits of life as a graduate student during a pandemic. Engage in a photo-based partner discussion on Zoom, using the SHOWed method (Wang & Burris, 1994, 1997). Select one photo for your Assignment 1 submission using a PowerPoint format. Provide a caption that summarizes the shared experiences and concerns of you and your partner, demonstrating where consensus was achieved, where it wasn't, and why any differing views remained. Submit your assignment (with cover sheet) in the Dropbox. <p>Due: June 1, 2021.</p>	12%	12
<p>Assignment 2 Semi-structured Interview Project in Four Parts with a Partner</p> <p>Part 1. The Interview: Question Development (See Assignment 2, Part 1 Information Sheet)</p> <p>Design a joint interview protocol with your partner. Each student will submit the same protocol in the Dropbox. Expect that additional revisions will be required prior to finalization and receiving permission to go into the field.</p> <p>Due: June 15, 2021.</p>	5%	5
<p>Part 2. The Interview: Conducting the Interviews (See Assignment 2, Part 2 Information Sheet)</p> <p>Each student will individually contact a non-profit organization, request the opportunity to conduct 2 interviews with volunteers, conduct (on Zoom or phone), tape the interviews, and transcribe their own data. Discuss the experience with your partner. Attach a brief one-page Reflective Appendix that summarizes your key successes and challenges. Each student will submit their own transcripts and Appendix in the Dropbox.</p> <p>Due: June 29, 2021.</p>	5%	5
<p>Part 3. The Interview: Individual Coding (See Assignment 2, Part 3 Information Sheet.)</p> <p>Individually code interview transcripts.</p> <p>Individually identify codes for your interview data using gerund coding. Attach a brief one-page Reflective Appendix that summarizes your key successes and challenges. Each student will submit their own coded transcripts and Appendix in the Dropbox.</p> <p>Due: July 13, 2021.</p>	5%	5
<p>Part 4. The Interview: Joint Categorizing, Theming & Interpreting Findings (See Assignment 2, Part 4 Information Sheet.)</p> <p>Jointly complete template of interview data.</p> <p>Each student will review their codes and identify categories and themes to summarize the findings. Then, working together with your partner and integrating the data from all four interviews, discuss and develop shared categories and themes using the Template provided. Prepare memos to reflect how you arrived at your interpretation. Summarize your findings. Each student will submit the same completed Template in the Dropbox. Be prepared to discuss your successes and challenges in this assignment in a Discussion Forum set up for that purpose.</p> <p>Due: July 20, 2021.</p>	5%	5
<p>Assignment 2 Total</p>	20%	20

Assignment	% of grade	Points
<p>Assignment 3 Qualitative Evaluation Critique (See Assignment 3 Information Sheet)</p> <p><i>Critique an evaluation article of interest selected from a list of articles provided by the professor. Use the quality criteria provided by Goodyear et al (2014) as well as knowledge you have acquired in this course. Determine the extent to which the article demonstrates rigor. Identify strengths, gaps, & make suggestions for improvement. Be sure to cite course materials. Submit your completed paper in the Dropbox.</i></p> <p>Due: August 3, 2021.</p>	20%	20
<p>Assignment 4 Mixed Methods Peer Review Paper & PowerPoint Presentation (See Assignment 4 Information Sheet)</p> <p><i>This is a group presentation. You have been asked by a new mixed methods journal editor to act as peer reviewers and to review an assigned article using the Criteria Checklist provided. Determine the quality and appropriateness of the article for publication in this new journal. Make a recommendation regarding its publication and prepare a 5-page paper that summarizes your findings and your decision. Prepare a brief, narrated 5-slide PowerPoint presentation that explains your decision process & lessons learned. Cite references that supported your decision. All students in each group will submit the same paper and PowerPoint presentation in the Dropbox. Have your group leader post your PowerPoint in the appropriate Discussion Forum.</i></p> <p>Paper & presentation due: August 16, 2021.</p>	20%	20
<p>Class Participation in Weekly Discussion Forums</p> <p><i>Individually participate in a group forum for weekly discussion posts. At least three posts are expected per week. Your participation is worth 2 points per week. You are expected to post 3 times each week: initial post with opening comment and attached learning activity or thought memo (worth 1 point) + 2 additional posts which are substantive responses to at least 2 classmates' comments (worth .5 each). The total is 3 posts/week x 14 weeks = 28 points. Your first post is due on Sunday and your final post no later than Tuesday evening You are expected to:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Post promptly & show initiative,</i> ➤ <i>Contribute to the learning community,</i> ➤ <i>Make your post relevant,</i> ➤ <i>Express yourself clearly & respectfully, and</i> ➤ <i>Use appropriate style, grammar & citations.</i> <p><i>Other optional discussion forums are also provided for additional participation.</i></p> <p>Due: Weekly</p>	28%	28
<p>Interim and Final Self-evaluations</p> <p>Due: July 9 & August 13, 2021. Submit in the Dropbox. (Ungraded.)</p>	-	-
Total	100%	100

Grading Scale and Expectations

Final grades are determined based on your mastery of course materials, your demonstration of required skills and your completion of course assignments. All of these components will contribute to the final grade, which will be determined by professional standards at the graduate level. You can view the total points earned at any given point in the semester via the gradebook in D2L.

Grade	Percentage	Expectations
4.0	90-100%	The student demonstrates a critical orientation to the material, incorporating an extensive knowledge base, reflection, discovery of tacit meanings, highly original thinking, and critical analysis and synthesis; consistent ability to integrate theory and practical experience.
3.5	85-89%	The student demonstrates some evidence of a critical orientation to the material, incorporating a wide knowledge base, and using reflection, discovery of tacit meanings, some original thinking, critical analysis and synthesis; able to integrate theory and practical experience.
3.0	80-84%	The student demonstrates an interpretive orientation to the material, incorporating a sound knowledge base, identification of underlying principles or themes, examples of situations or experiences, and some original thinking, critical capacity and analytic ability; able to integrate theory and practical experience to some extent.
2.5	75-79%	The student demonstrates some evidence of an interpretive orientation to the material, incorporating an adequate knowledge base, identification of underlying principles or themes, examples of situations or experiences, and some original thinking, critical capacity and analytic ability; integrates theory and practical experience to a limited extent.
2.0	70-74%	The student demonstrates a descriptive orientation to the material, incorporating a satisfactory knowledge base, some ability to analyze and evaluate critically, and some original thinking; limited integration of theory and practice.
1.5	65-69%	The student demonstrates some evidence of a descriptive orientation to the material, incorporating a fairly narrow knowledge base, some ability to analyze and evaluate critically and demonstrating limited original thinking; negligible integration of theory and practice.
1.0	60-64%	The student demonstrates a limited knowledge base, uses concrete problem-solving, limited critical evaluation, and negligible original thinking; no integration of theory and practice.
0.0	Less than 60%	The student evidences an unsatisfactory knowledge base, uses concrete problem-solving, and demonstrates negligible critical evaluation and original thinking; no integration of theory and practice.

Part 5: Course Policies

Participate

Students whose names do not appear on the official class list for this course may not participate with this class. Students who fail to log-in during the first two weeks will be dropped from the course.

You are expected to participate in all online activities as listed on the course calendar. If you miss more than three consecutive weeks of class, i.e., do not participate actively in class assignments or activities, and have not communicated the instructor to be excused from class, you will receive a failing grade of 0.0 in the course.

If you are going to be absent from class for a week (or more) and unable to complete an assignment on time, you must inform the instructor in advance to be formally excused and still receive credit for the assignment. You must provide the instructor with an explanation in writing at least 24 hours before the absence. Emails received later than this will not be honored and your assignment will not be accepted.

If you have an emergency situation, the instructor must be contacted prior to the assignment due date to make alternative arrangements. Otherwise, you will receive a 0.0 for the missed assignment(s).

The D2L tracking tool, discussions, chat sessions, group work participation and self-evaluations will be considered in preparing this grade.

Build Rapport

If you find that you have any trouble keeping up with assignments or other aspects of the course, make sure you let your instructor know as early as possible. As you will find, building rapport and effective relationships are key to becoming an effective professional. Make sure that you are proactive in informing your instructor when difficulties arise during the semester so that we can help you find a solution. It is also important to build rapport with your classmates. Collaboration is a keystone of professional life today.

Complete Assignments

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through D2L unless otherwise instructed. Assignments must be submitted by the given deadline or special permission must be requested from instructor before the due date. Extensions will not be given beyond the next assignment except under extreme circumstances.

All discussion assignments must be completed by the assignment due date and time. Late or missing discussion assignments will affect your grade.

Inform Your Instructor of Any Accommodations Needed

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. If you have a documented disability and verification from the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD), and wish to discuss academic accommodations, please contact your instructor as soon as possible. It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of disability to RCPD and meet with an RCPD specialist to request special accommodation before classes start.

Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a verified individual services accommodation ("VISA") form. Please present this form to the instructor at the start of the term and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.) Requests received after this date will be honored whenever possible.

RCPD may be contacted by phone at (517) 884-7273 (884-RCPD), or via their website (<http://www.rcpd.msu.edu>). RCPD is located in 120 Bessey Hall, near the center of the Michigan State University campus, on the southwest corner of Farm Lane and Auditorium Road.

Limits to Confidentiality

Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues to protect the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructors, we must report the following information to other University offices (including the Department of Police and Public Safety) if you share it with us:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

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.

Understand When You May Drop This Course

It is your responsibility to understand when you need to consider un-enrolling from a course. Refer to the Michigan State University Office of the Registrar for important dates and deadlines.

Commercialized Lecture Notes

Commercialization of lecture notes and university-provided course materials is not permitted in this course.

Internet

Some professional journals will not consider a submission for publication if the article has appeared on the Internet. Please notify your instructor in writing if you do not want your course papers posted to the course Web site.

Disruptive Behavior

Article 2.III.B.4 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.III.B.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 Judicial Affairs office.

Commit to Integrity: Academic Honesty

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 department of Psychology 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.) For questions, contact the MSU Ombudsperson.

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 this course. Students who violate MSU academic integrity rules may receive a penalty grade, including 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 the Academic Integrity webpage.)

Plagiarism

Taking credit for someone else's work or ideas, submitting a piece of work (for example, a paper,

assignment, discussion post) which in part or in whole is not entirely your own work without fully and accurately attributing those same portions to their correct source. This includes information taken from the Internet.

Unless authorized by their instructors, you are expected to do your own, original work on each assignment in each class. If you recycle your own course work from one class to another, you may face an allegation of academic dishonesty. If your instructor believes you have committed an act of plagiarism, he/she may take appropriate action, which includes the issuing of a “penalty grade” for academic dishonesty. Article 11 of the Academic Freedom Report for Students at Michigan State University, or the “AFR,” defines a penalty grade as “a grade assigned by an instructor who believes a student to have committed academic dishonesty.” A penalty grade can include, but is not limited to, a failing grade on the assignment or in the course.

For examples of what constitutes plagiarism, see:

- [Indiana University Writing Tutorial Services](#)
- [Purdue Online Writing Lab](#)
- [University of Alberta Guide to Plagiarism](#)

Evaluate the Course

Michigan State University takes seriously the opinion of students in the evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction and has implemented the SIRS (Student Instructional Rating System) process to gather student feedback. This course utilizes the “online SIRS” system, and you will receive an e-mail sometime during the last two weeks of class asking you to fill out the SIRS at your convenience. As a reminder to be sure to fill out the SIRS evaluation form, the final grade for this course will not be accessible on STUINFO during the week following the submission of grades for this course unless the SIRS online form has been filled out. You have the option on the online SIRS form to decline to participate in the evaluation of the course – we hope, however, that you will be willing to give us your frank and constructive feedback so that we may instruct students even better in the future.”

Informal self-evaluations are provided for student to complete at the mid-point and end of the semester.

Note: The instructor reserves the right to make changes to the syllabus during the course of the semester. Changes will be announced in the course announcement area.