Part 1: Course Information

Instructor Information

**Instructor:** Gail Vallance Barrington, PhD, FCMC, CE  
**Office Hours:** Online and by email, Monday-Friday, weekly  
**Office Telephone:** 1-403-289-2221  
**E-mail:** barrin28@msu.edu

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**

- PSY 884 Electronic Course Pack. The cost is $55.97 and is available for purchase at https://caps.itservices.msu.edu/roundabout/17f380b5-01b0-44e8-b10e-79ad48f3936

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

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, reflective
journaling, 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 and each is broken down into several Modules. Every week there is a brief introduction about the topic under discussion and then four sub-modules are presented, as follows:

1. **Readings & Lecture**, the first sub-module, outlines required readings, a weekly PowerPoint/lecture/video, and other resources that form the foundation of the week’s work. As the week’s learning activity relates to these materials, please complete the readings first so you have a clear understanding of the topic at hand.

2. **Learning Activity**, the second sub-module, contains exercises and hands-on activities to consolidate the material you have learned in the Readings and Lecture section. Some of these activities occur at your desk, others take you out in the field, and we may have a couple of surprise guests drop by to speak to us.

3. **Discussion**, the third sub-module, contains from one to three discussion questions. Each is posted in a separate forum. These allow you to interpret and reflect on what you have learned from the readings and the learning activity. They also provide an opportunity to share your experiences with your classmates. Note that you are graded for participation in these discussion forums.

4. **Assignment**, the fourth sub-module, provides a description of the current assignment (five assignments in total). Each assignment has an Assignment Information Sheet. Due dates and related information are provided.

All tasks associated with any specific week must be completed by the following Tuesday evening at 11:30 pm EST. The modules will remain open throughout the semester for further review or additional commentary. 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 need to report a problem, you can:

- Visit the [Distance Learning Services Support Site](#)
- Visit the [Desire2Learn Help Site](#)

**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. Identify reasons for combining qualitative and quantitative methods and describe the core characteristics of mixed methods designs.
7. Describe common approaches to mixed methods analysis and identify challenges associated with conducting mixed methods studies.
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 world view 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**: Awareness of one’s self as an evaluator (knowledge, skills, dispositions) and reflection on personal evaluation practice including competencies and areas for growth.
- **Technical Practice**: Development and use of skills in aspects of evaluation theory and practice related to qualitative and mixed methods design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting.
- **Interpersonal Practice**: Development and use of interpersonal skills, collaboration, partnering, and working toward common goals.

Part 3: Course Outline & Schedule
(NB The January-May 2018 PSY 884 Calendar, provided as a separate document, offers a useful visualization of course activities.)

**Getting Started: Course Orientation & Overview** (January 8 & 9, 2018)
The first two days provide the opportunity to familiarize yourself with course materials, structure, philosophy, and assignments. You will also meet your professor and classmates through discussion postings.

**Unit 1.0 Qualitative Research (QR) Foundations** (January 10-February 6, 2018)
This unit runs for four weeks and has three modules:

- **Module 1.1 Strategic Themes in QR** (January 10-16, 2018)
  - 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** (January 17-30, 2018)
  (NB This module runs for two weeks)
  - Ethnography
  - Grounded theory
  - Phenomenology
  - Descriptive qualitative
  - Footprints of qualitative research in evaluation
Module 1.3 Asking Good QR Questions
(January 31-February 6, 2018)

- The qualitative research question
- Linking logic to the evaluation framework

Unit 2.0 QR Data Collection & Analysis
(February 7-March 27, 2018)
This unit runs for six weeks (excluding Spring Break) and has four modules:

Module 2.1a & 2.1b QR Data Collection Procedures
(February 7-20, 2018)
(NB This module runs for two weeks)
- Participant observation & field notes
- Semi-structured interviews
- Case studies
- Social media analysis
- Selecting methods
- Sampling & saturation

Module 2.2a & 2.2b QR Content Analysis
(February 21-March 13, 2018)
(NB This module runs for two weeks excluding Spring Break)
- Deduction, induction & abduction
- Coding, categorizing & developing themes
- Common analysis errors
- Qualitative software & other analysis techniques

Module 2.3 Synthesizing QR Data
(March 14-20, 2018)
- Synthesis & making meaning
- Considerations for crafting conclusions
- Representation, writing & reflexivity

Module 2.4 Ensuring Quality in QR
(March 21-27, 2018)
- Rigor
  - Validity, generalizability & reliability
  - Verification strategies
- Elements of Quality
  - The evaluator as oneself
  - Building trusting relationships
  - Employing sound, systematic & explicit methodology
  - Staying true to the data
  - Fostering learning

Unit 3.0 Mixed Methods Research (MMR)
(March 28-April 10, 2018)
This unit runs for two weeks and has two modules:

Module 3.1 MMR Thinking
(March 28-April 3, 2018)
- 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 (April 4-10, 2018)
- Motivations for using mixed methods research
- Basic & advanced mixed methods designs
- Steps in designing a mixed methods study

Unit 4.0 MMR Analysis (April 11-27, 2018)
This unit runs for two weeks and has three modules. Module 4.3 only runs for three days.

Module 4.1 MMR Data Analysis (April 11-17, 2018)
- Diagramming
- Use of frameworks
- Convergence & divergence
- Data integration & making meaning

Module 4.2 MMR Issues & Quality (April 18-24, 2018)
- Sampling issues: selection & size
- Integrating qualitative & quantitative data
- Evaluating quality in mixed methods studies

Module 4.3 Putting it All Together (April 25-27, 2018)
- Reflections and feedback

Part 4: Assignments and Grading Policy
Graded Course Assignments (See weekly modules for details)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation in Weekly Discussion Forums</td>
<td>Participation in weekly discussion forums is worth one point per week for a total of 15 weeks. You are graded for a) Posting promptly &amp; showing initiative; b) Contributing to the learning community; c) Making your post relevant; d) Expressing yourself clearly &amp; respectfully; and e) Using appropriate style &amp; grammar. At least three posts are expected per week, the first no later than Sunday of each week. Due: weekly (1 point per week)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 1 Preliminary Researcher Identity Memo (See Assignment 1 Information Sheet)</td>
<td>A personal reflective essay on your goals, experiences, assumptions, feelings, and values coming into the course. Due: January 16, 2018 (11:30 pm EST) in Dropbox.</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2 Semi-structured Interview Project in Three Parts (with partner) as follows:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2a) The Interview, Part 1 Question Development (See Assignment 2a Information Sheet)</td>
<td>Design interview protocol. Due: February 6, 2018 (11:30 pm EST) in Dropbox</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2b) The Interview, Part 2 Conducting the Interviews (See Assignment 2b Information Sheet)</td>
<td>Each partner conducts 2 interviews, transcribes data, discusses experience with partner. Due: February 20, 2018 (11:30 pm EST) in Dropbox</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2c) The Interview, Part 3 Coding, Categorizing, Theming &amp; Interpreting Findings (See Assignment 2c Information Sheet)</td>
<td>Individually identify codes, categories, and themes for your interview data. Interpret findings and summarize them. Prepare memos. Discuss findings with partner and integrate data. Due: March 2, 2018 (11:30 pm EST) before Spring Break in Dropbox Lessons Learned to Discussion Forum Due: March 12, 2018 (11:30 pm EST)</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 2 Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Assignment 3 Qualitative Evaluation Critique (See Assignment 3 Information Sheet)
Critique an evaluation article of interest selected from a list provided by the professor using criteria by Goodyear et al (2014) and knowledge you have acquired in this course. Determine the extent to which the article demonstrates rigor. Identify strengths, gaps & make suggestions for improvements.
**Due:** March 27, 2018 (11:30 pm EST) in Dropbox.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 3</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment 4 Mixed Methods Review Panel (See Assignment 4 Information Sheet)
Working as a peer review panel of 3-5 members, consider an article submitted for a new mixed methods journal. Using the Criteria Checklist provided, determine the quality & appropriateness of the article and make a recommendation regarding publication. Hold at least two review meetings; summarize your conclusions in a joint five-page paper and prepare a short class presentation.
**Due:** April 16, 2018 (11:30 pm EST) in Dropbox.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 4</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assignment 5 Final Researcher Identity Memo (See Assignment 5 Information Sheet)
A revised critical reflection based on your journey through PSY 884. Identify any changes to your goals, experiences, assumptions, feelings, and values as they relate to your role as a graduate student, as a qualitative and mixed methods researcher, and as a program evaluator.
**Due:** April 24, 2018 (11:30 pm EST) in Dropbox.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assignment 5</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other Informal Group Work and Exercises
Hands-on tasks, observations, case studies, exercises, and games will be assigned as needed to support your learning. No grades are assigned to these informal activities but discussion forum postings provide an opportunity to share what you have learned with your classmates. Your participation in the forums is graded.

**Due:** As required.
**Interim and Final Self-evaluations.**
**Due:** February 27 & April 19. Send to professor by email.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>% of grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other Informal Group Work and Exercises</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>90-100%</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>85-89%</td>
<td>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 capacity and analytic ability; able to integrate theory and practical experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>80-84%</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>75-79%</td>
<td>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; able to integrate theory and practical experience to some extent.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 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 Desire2Learn tracking tool, discussions, chat sessions, group work participation and self-evaluations will be considered in preparing this grade.

**Complete Assignments**

All assignments for this course will be submitted electronically through Desire2Learn 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.

**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.
Drops and Adds

The last day to add this course is the end of the first week of classes. The last day to drop this course with a 100 percent refund and no grade reported is February 2, 2018 at 8:00pm Eastern Time. The last day to drop this course with no refund and no grade reported is February 28, 2018 at 8:00pm Eastern Time. You should immediately make a copy of your amended schedule to verify you have added or dropped this course.

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.

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 Psychology Department 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.)

Academic integrity is a minimal expectation of this course. Academic dishonesty in any form will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, and submitting work of another person. Any student involved in academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs and the Office of Student Affairs and a grade of 0.0 may be issued for the course.

Lectures and other course materials must remain the property of the Department of Psychology and must not be copied from the internet for distribution to anyone who is not registered for this course. Online discussions and exercises are confidential and should not be discussed with others who are not enrolled in the class.

It is important for each course participant to express his/her ideas. All ideas need to be respected in discussions and exercises. Any “group projects” that are required, still require individual work as a minimal expectation.

All assignments are to be done on your own, without the assistance of additional materials, i.e., internet, texts, articles, other people, etc., unless you are instructed to do otherwise. This includes weekly assignments and exams.

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 has 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.

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.