Qualitative Methods

DEMS4721
WINTER/2025

Course Information

Course Instructor: Mustahid Husain, PhD
E-mail: TBD
Phone: N/A
Office Hours & Location: By Appointment

Course Time & Days: Thurs, 2:30 – 5:30 p.m.
Class Location: Ross South 122
Course eClass site: TBD

Land Acknowledgment

York University recognizes that many Indigenous Nations have longstanding relationships with the territories upon which York University campuses are located that precede the establishment of York University. York University acknowledges its presence on the traditional territory of many Indigenous Nations. The area known as Tkaronto has been care taken by the Anishinabek Nation, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, and the Huron-Wendat. It is now home to many First Nation, Inuit, and Métis communities. We acknowledge the current treaty holders, the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. This territory is subject of the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, an agreement to peaceably share and care for the Great Lakes region (LA&PS Land Acknowledgement).

Course Overview

Course Description

This advanced undergraduate-level course provides students with comprehensive theoretical and practical training in qualitative research methodologies specific to disaster and emergency management contexts. Participants will develop sophisticated skills in designing, conducting, and evaluating qualitative research that captures the complex human dimensions of crisis events, community resilience, and organizational response mechanisms.

The course explores multiple qualitative research approaches, including phenomenological, ethnographic, narrative, and case study designs. Students will learn to critically analyze research methodologies that illuminate the lived experiences of individuals and communities during and after disaster scenarios. Emphasis will be placed on understanding the nuanced social, cultural, psychological, and systemic factors that influence emergency preparedness, response, and recovery processes.

Practical components will involve hands-on training in research instrument development,

fieldwork protocols, data management, and sophisticated analytical and evaluation techniques. Students will engage with case studies from diverse disaster contexts, including natural disasters, humanitarian emergencies, public health crises, and complex humanitarian emergencies.

The course culminates in a comprehensive qualitative research proposal or pilot study that demonstrates advanced methodological skills and innovative approaches to understanding disaster and emergency management through rich, contextually grounded research designs.

[Research design; relationships with study participants, field techniques, and data analysis, evaluation, and presentation. [3-0-0]]

Pre-Requisites:
Course Credit Exclusions (CCE):

Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:
1. Developing rigorous qualitative research design strategies tailored to disaster management contexts;
2. Mastering advanced data collection techniques such as in-depth interviews, participant observation, focus groups, and archival research, among others;
3. Understanding ethical considerations and challenges unique to conducting research in high-stress, vulnerable community environments;
4. Analyzing complex qualitative data through systematic coding, thematic analysis, and interpretive frameworks;
5. Critically evaluating existing qualitative research in emergency management literature; and
6. Designing research projects that generate meaningful insights for policy development, community resilience, and organizational improvement

Course Organization

The course will run in a workshop style. Each week, you will do readings to prepare. Combined with some short presentations from me, this will help you to understand the content. Then, we will spend the majority of our time together *applying* this knowledge to your projects, and to analyzing real-world research done on disasters.

Instructor Office Hours and Communication Guidelines

The instructor office hours will be 1– 2 p.m. Thursday, or by appointment.

Please kindly use your york.ca email address to ensure that your email messages are not

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filtered out by spam software and include "**DEMS4721**" in the subject line. I will try to reply to all appropriate emails within 48 hours on business days. Keep your emails brief, and come to my office for longer discussions.

Required Course Materials

Instead of an expensive textbook, I will be posting readings, videos, study guides, and practice quizzes on eClass. I highly recommend studying directly from these sources. There are no expected costs for you to access required course materials.

Technical Requirements

Several platforms will be used in this course (e.g., eClass, Zoom, etc.) where students will interact with the course materials, the course director/TA, as well as with each other.

Here are some useful links for computing information, resources, and help:
- Student Guide to eClass
- Zoom@YorkU Best Practices
- Zoom@YorkU User Reference Guide
- eLearning Getting Started (LA&PS eServices)
- Student Guide to Remote and Online Learning

To determine Internet connection and speed, there are online tests, such as Speedtest, that can be run. If you need technical assistance, please consult the University Information Technology (UIT) Student Services web page or write to askit@yorku.ca.

Course Evaluations

Course Evaluation Chart

Assessment	Due Date	Weight %	Course Learning Outcome
Weekly Quizzes	During class time	40%	1-6
2 Writing Assignments	End of the term	(30% + 30%) = 60%	4-6
		100%	

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Assessment Descriptions

My goals in assessment are to: 1) ensure you have actually learned the materials, not just cramped it for an exam; 2) to help you practise the skills you'll need in your life and career; and c) to offer you 'formative' feedback throughout the whole process. We also need to make sure understand the theory, application, and analysis of research and evaluation methods alike.

Weekly Quizzes: 40% of your grade will come from weekly quizzes beginning the second week. These are closed book and cumulative (i.e., each quiz tests everything we have covered thus far in class). I will only count your best 9 of 11 quizzes. The format for the quizzes can include short-answer, multiple choice, or number of questions on each.

*Unless a student has formal accommodation in place and/or communicates in advance of the quiz date an illness or exceptional circumstance, there will be no opportunity to make up the quiz grades.

Writing Assignments: For the other 60% of your mark, you will choose two out the five following assignments:

- Comparing how two studies compare a method
- Developing an alternative to a real study
- Doing a 'deep dive' on a specific method
- Supervising an AI to develop a protocol
- Developing a proposal for a research project

You will sign up for assignments using an online form between January 20 – 24. You will have the option to complete the assignment alone or in pairs. More information can be found in each assignment description on eClass.

Unless a student receives formal accommodation for illness through Academic Counselling, late Writing submissions will be penalized at the rate of 5%/day late for up to a total of 5 days (including weekends) following the due date. Late Writing submissions will not be accepted after 5 days.

How to Submit Assessments

Details will be included with each assignment.

Late Work Policy

Unless a student receives formal accommodation for illness through Academic Counselling, late Writing submissions will be penalized at the rate of 5%/day late for up to a total of 5 days (including weekends) following the due date. Late Writing submissions will not be accepted

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after 5 days. If formal accommodation in place, students *should* indicate their request to use formal accommodation in any and all extension requests.

Missed Tests and Exams

If you are unable to write a final exam at the scheduled time - due to illness, a personal or family emergency, or religious commitment - you can ask to write the final exam at a later date, as arranged by the main office for ADMS and DEMS courses – by completing and submitting a Deferred Standing Agreement. Depending on the circumstances, you may be asked to provide supporting documentation.

Link for form: https://www.yorku.ca/laps/sas/academic-resources/deferred-exam-requests/

Your request must be received by the office within 7 days of the date of the final examination for which you are asking for a deferred standing.

How to Use Citations in this Course

Good citation practices are important because they support academic integrity by linking information back to an identifiable source. This course will require students to use APA style formatting for citations and references for all Assignments.
Resources to help with citations:
- I need to cite and reference, Learning Commons
- Drop-in Research Support, YorkU Libraries
- Writing Centre
- SPARK Student Papers & Academic Research Kit

Grading

The grading scheme for this course conforms to the 9-point system used in undergraduate programs at York University. For a full description of the York grading system, visit the York University Academic Calendar.

Grade	Grade Point	Percent Range	Description
A+	9	90-100	Exceptional
A	8	80-89	Excellent
B+	7	75-79	Very Good
B	6	70-74	Good
C+	5	65-69	Competent

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Grade	Grade Point	Percent Range	Description
C	4	60-64	Fairly Competent
D+	3	55-59	Passing
D	2	50-54	Marginally Passing
E	1	(marginally below 50%)	Marginally Failing
F	0	(below 50%)	Failing

Course Schedule

Important Dates

Explore the York University Academic Calendar to find a list of important dates, such as class start/end dates, drop deadlines, holidays and more.

Weekly Course Schedule

Week	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates	Learning Outcomes
Week 1 9 January	Introduction – Concept Map for the Course	No assignment	1-6
Week 2 16 January	Key Research Ideas	16 January	1-6
Week 3 23 January	Core Research Concepts	23 January	1-6
Week 4 30 January	Sampling	30 January	1-6
Week 5 6 February	Item Problems	6 February	1-6
Week 6 13 February	Structuring Questionnaires	13 February	1-6
Week 7 20 February	**Winter Reading Break – NO CLASS**	**No assignment**	

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Week	Readings and Activities	Assessment Due Dates	Learning Outcomes
Week 8 27 February	Interviews	27 February	1-6
Week 9 6 March	Observations	6 March	1-6
Week 10 13 March	Existing Data + Systematic Reviews	13 March	1-6
Week 11 20 March	Coding	20 March	1-6
Week 12 27 March	Qualitative Analysis	27 March	1-6

Course Policies

Please review the course policies in this section. All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information:
- Student Rights & Responsibilities
- Academic Accommodation for Students with Disabilities

Academic Integrity

Academic integrity is a fundamental and important value of York University. To maintain a fair and honest learning environment, you are responsible for understanding and upholding academic integrity in all courses and academic activities. You are encouraged to connect with reliable on-campus resources that support your coursework and academic honesty. To better understand the serious consequences of breaching academic honesty policies, familiarize yourself with the *Senate Policy on Academic Conduct*. You can learn more about upholding academic integrity in your courses by exploring Guiding Principles for LA&PS and Academic Integrity for Students.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI)

Students are not permitted to use generative artificial intelligence (AI) in this course. Submitting any work created (in whole or part) through the use of generative AI tools will be considered a violation of York University's *Senate Policy on Academic Conduct*. Using AI apps such as ChatGPT, GPT-3, DALL-E, translation software among others to complete academic work **without your instructor's knowledge or permission**, is considered to be a breach of academic

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honesty. For more information, please review AI Technology & Academic Integrity: Information for Students.

If you're not sure whether using an AI app for your academic work is acceptable, it is recommended that you:

- Carefully review the guidelines for your assessments
- Check for any messages from your instructor on eClass
- Ask your instructor or TA if they are permitting the use of these tools

Turnitin

To promote academic integrity in this course, students will normally be required to submit their written assignments to Turnitin (via the course's eClass site) for a review of textual similarities and the detection of possible plagiarism. In so doing, students will allow their material to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used only for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin service are described on the Turnitin.com website. York students may opt out of using Turnitin. If you wish to opt out, you should contact your instructor as soon as possible.

Accessibility

York University is committed to creating a learning environment which provides equal opportunity to all members of its community. If you anticipate or experience any barriers to learning in this course, please discuss your concerns with your instructor as early as possible. For students with disabilities, contact Student Accessibility Services to coordinate academic accommodations and services. Accommodations will be communicated to Course Directors through a Letter of Accommodation (LOA). Accommodations for tests/exams normally require three (3) weeks (or 21 days) before the scheduled test/exam to arrange.

Religious Observance Accommodation

York University is committed to respecting the religious beliefs and practices of all members of the community and making reasonable and appropriate accommodations to adherents for observances of special significance. Should any of the dates specified in this syllabus for course examinations, tests, or deadlines conflict with a date of religious significance, please contact the instructor within the first three (3) weeks of class. If the date falls within the formal examination periods, you must complete and submit a Religious Accommodation for Examination Form at least three (3) weeks before the start of the exam period.

Intellectual Property

Course materials are designed for use as part of this particular course at York University and are the intellectual property of the instructor unless otherwise stated. Third-party copyrighted

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materials (such as book chapters, journal articles, music, videos, etc.) have either been licensed for use in this course or fall under an exception or limitation in Canadian copyright law. Students may not publish, post on an Internet site, sell, or otherwise distribute any course materials or work without the instructor's express permission. Course materials should only be used by students enrolled in this course.

Copying this material for distribution (e.g., uploading material to a commercial third-party website) may lead to a charge of misconduct according to York's *Code of Student Rights and Responsibilities*, the *Senate Policy on Academic Conduct*, and/or legal consequences for copyright violations.

Student Support and Resources

York University offers a wide range of student supports resources and services, including everything from writing workshops and peer mentorship to wellness support and career guidance. Explore the links below to access these on-campus resources:

- Academic Advising is available to provide students support and guidance in making academic decisions and goals.
- Student Accessibility Services are available for support and accessibility accommodation when required.
- Student Counselling, Health & Wellbeing offers workshops, resources, and counselling to support your academic success.
- Peer-Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) Program provides student study sessions for students to collaborate and enhance their understanding of course content in certain courses.
- Student Numeracy Assistance Centre at Keele (SNACK) supports students in courses involving math, stats, and Excel.
- The Writing Centre provides multiple avenues of writing-based support including drop-in sessions, one-to-one appointments, a Multilingual Studio, and an Accessibility Specialist.
- Centre for Indigenous Student Services offers a community space with academic, spiritual, cultural, and physical support, including writing and learning skills programs.
- ESL Open Learning Centre (OLC) supports students with building proficiency in reading, writing, and speaking English.
- Learning Skills Services provides tips for time management, effective study and learning habits, keeping up with coursework, and other learning-related supports.
- Learning Commons provides links to supports for time management, writing, study skills, preparing for exams, and other learning-related resources.
- Roadmap to Student Success provides students with timely and targeted resources to help them achieve academic, personal, and professional success.
- Office of Student Community Relations (OSCR) is responsible for administering the *Code of Student Rights & Responsibilities* and provides critical incident support.

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- Peer Mentorship helps students transition through their first year by connecting them with upper-year students. The mentors can help find supports and resources. They also lead a community hub on campus.
- goSAFE is staffed by York students and can accompany York community members to and from any on-campus location, such as the Village Shuttle pick-up hub, parking lots, bus stops, or residences.

For a full list of academic, wellness, and campus resources visit Student Support & Resources.

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