



The University of British Columbia
School of Social Work
Course Outline – SOWK554c (001)

School Vision: Building upon a foundation of social justice and an ethic of care, we are a community of learners actively engaged in the development of critical, transformative knowledge for social work practice.

The UBC School of Social Work acknowledges that we are located on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam people. We thank and honour the Musqueam people for making space in their territories for us to learn, work and live as visitors on their territory.

Year/Term	2017-2018
Course Title	SOWK 554C-001 - Qualitative Methods in Social Work Research
Course Schedule	Fridays 9:00 am – 12:00 m
Course Location	Room 224 Jack Bell Building

Instructor	Office Location	Office Phone	e-mail address
Pilar Riaño-Alcalá	Room 333	604-827-5493	pilar.riano@ubc.ca
Office Hours	Fridays 12:00 to 1:00 pm or by appointment		

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

This course provides an overview of the research frameworks, questions and designs that are appropriately addressed using *qualitative* methods. The course takes a critical approach to qualitative research enquiring on the ways of knowing, design, ethics, process and methods that are consistent with social justice practice.

The first term will focus on developing a theoretical and ethical understanding of qualitative research and methodology, identifying critical issues and questions in designing and developing a qualitative research project. The second term will provide the opportunity to apply this understanding to the implementation of the proposed study.

This section of the course may be useful for students interested in critical and participatory approaches to doing qualitative research.

Course Goals:

1. Introduce students to the processes, methods and issues in qualitative research from a critical and engaged perspective;
2. Familiarize students with theories of knowledge and a variety of approaches to qualitative inquiry;
3. Identify sources of research ideas and questions in social work practice that can be addressed through critical qualitative research;

4. Examine how researchers and qualitative research reproduce existing hierarchies of power and privilege;
5. Develop awareness and skills in examining issues and ethics in qualitative research processes;
6. Strengthen ability to critically read, write, reflect and evaluate qualitative research and qualitative research methods.

Format of the course:

The course will consist of lectures, discussions of readings, practical exercises, small group work, peer review, and the implementation of a series of research assignments. The creation of a community of learning and exchange is a pivotal aspect of this course. A key aspect of developing and implementing your research project is the ongoing dialogue with peers and instructor. An active, respectful and democratic engagement in the various activities and discussions in the class is expected.

Reading of chapters and articles is very important for the design and conceptualization of your research project. You are expected to come to class prepared to discuss the readings and to contribute your questions and insights.

Please refrain from using social media during class. All phones must be turned off and put away.

Texts:

Creswell, John. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: choosing among five approaches* (Fourth ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE.

Brown, Leslie and Susan, Strega. (2015). *Research as resistance: revisiting critical, indigenous, and anti-oppressive approaches* (Second ed.). Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press. [eBook](#) [all eBooks can be fully accessed through UBC library]

Additional Recommended texts [some of these books will be very useful once you define your research project]

Campbell, M., & Gregor, F. (2002). *Mapping social relations: A primer in doing institutional ethnography*. Aurora, ON: Garamond [eBook](#). **Institutional Ethnography**

Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. **Indigenous Methodologies**

Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.). (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [eBook](#). **Narrative Inquiry**

Hall, B. L., Rosenberg, D. G., Dei, G. J. S., & Goldin Rosenberg, D. (2000). *Indigenous knowledges in global contexts: Multiple readings of our world*. Toronto: OISE/UT book published in association with University of Toronto Press. [eBook](#). **Indigenous Methodologies**

Hesse-Biber, S. and P. Leavy. (2011). *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. (2nd ed.) Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. **Research Design**

Janesick, V. (2010). *Oral History for the Qualitative Researcher. Choreographing the Story*. New York: The Guildford Press. **Narrative Inquiry / Oral History**

Kindon, S; Pain, R; Kesby, M. (2007). *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting People, Participation and Place*. Taylor & Francis. [eBook](#). **Action Research**

Knowles, G. and A. Cole. *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE Publications, Inc. [eBook](#). **Arts based research**

- Kohler, C. (2008). *Narrative Methods for the Human Sciences*. Los Angeles: Sage. **Narrative Inquiry**
- Kovach, Margaret. (2009). *Indigenous methodologies: characteristics, conversations and contexts*. Toronto [Ont.]: University of Toronto Press. **eBook. Indigenous methodologies.**
- Sousa Santos, B. D.(Ed.). (2008). *Another knowledge is possible: Beyond Northern Epistemologies*. London: Verso. **Social Justice Research**
- Maxwell, J.A. (2013) *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. **Research Design**
- Lieblich, A., Tuval-Mashiach, R., & Zilber, T. (1998). *Narrative Research. Reading, Analysis and Interpretation*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. **Narrative Inquiry**
- Smith, L. T. (1999). *Decolonizing Methodologies. Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London: Se Books. **Indigenous Methodologies**
- van Manen, Max. (2014). *Phenomenology of Practice. Meaning Giving Methods in Methodological Research and Writing*. London: Routledge. **eBook. Phenomenology**
- _____. (2001). *Researching Lived Experiences: Human Science for Action Sensitive Pedagogy*. (2nd Edition ed.). London: Althouse Press. **eBook Phenomenology**
- Warren, Jonathan W., and Twine, France Winddance, eds. (1999). *Race-Ing Research, Researching Race: Methodological Dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*. New York, NY, USA: New York University Press (NYU Press). **Critical Race research**
- Wilson, Shawn. (2008) *Research is Ceremony. Indigenous Research Methods*. Fernwood Publishing. **Indigenous Methodologies**

Relevant Journals:

- Qualitative Inquiry (Interdisciplinary)
- Qualitative Health Research Journal
- Narrative Inquiry
- Action Research
- International Journal of Qualitative Methods (Nursing)
- Qualitative Research Journal (Education)

Reference:

The American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*. (6th ed.). Washington, DC: The American Psychological Association.

The Style Manual for Writers in Social Work. It includes rules on how to cite sources and organize information in a scholarly manner and social work related documents.

The UBC library research guides are useful. Check:

[Social work](#) library guide

[Indigenous methodologies](#) library guide

ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE EVALUATION:

The major assignment for Term 1 is the completion of a research proposal. Additionally, smaller assignments have been developed to provide the opportunity for on-going feedback and formative evaluation throughout the term. This feedback will include peer feedback for some of the assignments.

Please send your assignments electronically to pilar.riano@ubc.ca Assignments should be sent before the class starts on the due date.

Assignments for Term 1:

1. Location and positionality: observing everyday interactions Due: October 20

Critically reflect on your location/positionality (factors such as class, race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, political beliefs) and life history (with special attention to your previous encounters with research) and how these influence your perceptions, assumptions, beliefs and attitudes about research and the group, setting or environment in which you may conduct research. A handout will be distributed in class with more detailed guidelines.

2. Conceptual context and research questions Due Date: November 3rd

Review ten sources relevant to your project. Use these to develop a *visual map* of the literature related to the topic and an *outline of the conceptual context*. The conceptual context provides a rationale for your study. Conclude by identifying your research question(s).

The purpose of this assignment is to help you begin to synthesize the literature into a 'story' that sets up your research and that supports your research questions and at the same time locate yourself in relationship to your research. See attached detailed guidelines.

Length: 10-12 pages (double-spaced).

Value: 20%

2. Ethics Review

Due Date: November 24th

Submit a draft of a completed UBC Ethics Form. Before you work on the form, you are required to successfully complete the BREB on-line [ethics tutorial](#) by **November 20th**. **Once you complete it, notify the instructor of completion.**

Once you have the certificate, create and complete in [RISE](#) an ethics application.

Value: 20%

5. Research Proposal

Due Date: December 18th

Submit a full and final draft of your research proposal. Detailed guidelines and evaluation criteria can be found at the end of the course syllabus. During the first and second class in January 2016, students will present their research proposals. The aim is to receive formative feedback from peers and instructor. Prepare a power point or prezi presentation summarizing your research proposal.

Length: 20-25 pages

Value: 60%

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week1 – September 8th

Knowledge organization in qualitative research

What makes research qualitative? What ways of knowing are embraced in qualitative research? How can research be framed as a social justice practice?

Strega, S and L. Brown. (2015). Introduction: From resistance to resurgence, in *Research as Resistance*

Please review course outline previous to class and readings and bring your comments and suggestions.

Week 2 - September 15th

Designing qualitative research: Purposes, power and knowledge

What is knowledge? How do we engage with qualitative research that is relevant, socially responsible and rigorous? Whose knowledge and voices? For what to conduct qualitative research? For whom and for what uses? How does research perpetuates relationships of dominance?

Potts, K. and L. Brown. (2015). Becoming an anti-oppressive researcher [chapter 1], in *Research as Resistance*

**Lincoln, Y; Lynham, S. and E. Guba (2011). Paradigmatic Controversies, Contradictions, and Emerging Confluences Revisited, in N. Denzin and Y. Lincoln (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 4th Edition, (97-128). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Recommended:

Ramazanoglu, C. & J. Holland. (2002). Researching 'others': Feminist methodology and the politics of difference. *Feminist Methodology: Challenges and Choices*, (105-123), London: SAGE Publications. [eBook UBC](#)

Week 3 - September 22nd

Conceptual Context II: Developing a framework, Social location and critical reflexivity

**Maxwell, J.A. (2013) *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Chapter 3

**Fine, M. (2004) Dis-stance and Other Stances: Negotiations of power inside feminist research. In A. Gitlin (Ed.), *Power and methods* (pp. 13-55). New York: Routledge.

Absolon, K. and C. Willett. 2005. Putting Ourselves Forward: Location in Aboriginal Research. In *Research as Resistance* (Chapter Four). Open access at: https://occupyresearchcollective.files.wordpress.com/2012/06/research_as_resistance_critical_indigenous_and_anti_oppressive_approaches1.pdf

Recommended:

Pillow, W. (2003). Confession, Catharsis or Cure? Rethinking the Uses of Reflexivity as Methodological Power in Qualitative Research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 16(2), 175-196

Valentine, Gill. (2002). People Like Us: Negotiating Sameness and Difference in the Research Process. In P. Moss, Eds., *Feminist Geography in Practice*, 116–126. Oxford: Blackwell

Week 4 – September 29th**Use of Library Resources and Databases for Research - Meet at Koerner's library at 9 am**

For general library orientation on social work research check:
<http://guides.library.ubc.ca/socialwork>

Week 5 - October 6th**Conceptual context I: Developing a framework and research questions**

**Maxwell, J.A. (2013) *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Chapter 4
 Creswell and Poth, chapter 2. Recommended: Chapter 3

Week 6 – October 13th**A critical eye on research and knowledge production**

Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending damage: a letter to communities. *Harvard Educational Review* 79(3): 409.

Davis, A. and K. Bhavani (2000). Women in Prison: Researching Race in Three National Contexts. In F. Winddance Twine and J. Warren, eds., *Racing Research, Researching Race: Methodological Dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*, (227-246). New York: NYU Press, eBook

Kovach, Margaret. (2015). Emerging from the Margins: Indigenous Methodologies, in *Research as Resistance*, chapter 2

Zavala, M. (2013). What do we mean by decolonizing research strategies? Lessons from decolonizing, indigenous research projects in New Zealand and Latin America. *Decolonization: Indigeneity*, 2(1)

Second part: Research presentation by students from previous classes**Week 6 – October 20th Strategies of Inquiry: Narrative and phenomenology**

Creswell and Poth, chapter 4 (pp. 67-74); chapter 5 (pp. 75-81) and Appendix B and C

Benmayor, R. (2011). Contested Memories of Place: Representations of Salinas' Chinatown." *Oral History Review* 37.2 (2010): 225-234.

Rogan, A. (2005). Chronicles from the Classroom. Making Sense of the Methodology and Methods of Narrative Analysis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11(4): 628-649

Spector-Mersel, G. (2010). Narrative research: Time for a paradigm. *Narrative Inquiry*, 20(1), 204-224.

Kay A. Lopez and Danny G. Willis (2004). Descriptive Versus Interpretive Phenomenology: Their Contributions to Nursing Knowledge. *Qualitative Health Research* 14: 726-735

Baldursson, Stefan. nd. The Nature of At-Homeness. In *Phenomenologyonline. A Resource for Phenomenological Inquiry*. <http://www.phenomenologyonline.com/sources/> This website has a large selection of articles of phenomenological research.

van Manen, Max. (2014). *Phenomenology of Practice. Meaning Giving Methods in Methodological Research and Writing*. Pp. 15-36. London: Routledge eBook

Recommended:

Clandinin, D. J. (Ed.). (2007). *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. [eBook](#)

Million, D. (2009). Felt Theory: An Indigenous Feminist Approach to Affect and History. *Wicazo Sa Review* **24**(2): 53-76.

Week 7 – October 27th

Strategies of Inquiry: Grounded Theory and Participatory Action Research

Creswell and Poth, chapter 4 pp. 82-89, 116-117 and Appendix D

Charmaz, K. (1990). 'Discovering' chronic illness: using grounded theory. *Social Science & Medicine*, 30(11): 1161-1172.

**Charmaz, K. (2011). Grounded theory methods in social justice research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 359-380). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

_____. (2006a). Adopting a constructivist approach to grounded theory: Implications for research design. *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, 12: 8-13.

Kindon, S. Pain, R. and M. Kesby (2007). *Participatory Action Research Approaches and Methods: Connecting people, participation and place*. Routledge (Chapter 1, 2, 3 and 4). [eBook UBC](#)

Clover, D. (2011). Successes and challenges of feminist arts-based participatory methodologies with homeless/street-involved women in Victoria. *Action Research* 9: 12-26

*****Required:** In preparation for November 10th class and to be able to work on your ethics application, you need to successfully complete a tutorial. Go to this page <http://research.ubc.ca/ethics/you-apply>. This tutorial takes approximately 2 hours, and students are required to complete it before they submit their application for ethical review.

Week 8 – November 3rd

Research Methods

How will you answer your research questions? What methods are appropriate and valid to answer your research question and to engage with research participants?

Check in the *SAGE Encyclopaedia of Qualitative Research Methods* by Lisa M. Given (2008) for the following entries: participant observation; visual research and arts based research. [eBook UBC](#)

**Chilisa, B. (2012). *Indigenous Research Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Chapter 5 and 7

Finley, S. (2008). Arts-Based Research. Chapter 6. *Handbook of the Arts in Qualitative Research: Perspectives, Methodologies, Examples, and Issues*. SAGE Publications, Inc. Thousand Oaks, CA, SAGE Publications, Inc. [eBook](#)

Week 9 - November 10th

Respectful, Trustworthy Research and Ethics

What are ethical and respectful forms of engagement in research? What constitutes quality, validity and trustworthiness? In what context and for what purposes?

UBC Ethics Review: Review guidelines and instructions at:
<http://research.ubc.ca/ore/breb-forms-guidance-notes>

Recommended:

Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans.
http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/archives/tcps-eptc/docs/TCPS%20October%202005_E.pdf

Week 10 – November 17th

Ethics II: Outside the Box

Duncan, P. K. (1999). Some Effects of Invasive Inquiry. *Journal for a Just and Caring Education* 5(2) pp. 157 - 169.

Massat, C. and M. Lundy. (1997). Empowering Research Participants. *Affilia* 12(1) p. 33.

Schnarch, Brian. (2004). Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP) or Self-Determination Applied to Research: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary First Nations Research and Some Options for First Nations Communities. *Journal of Aboriginal Health*, January 2004, 1(1)

Boman, J. and R. Jevne (2000). Pearls, Pitfalls and Provocations. *Qualitative Health Research* 10(4)

Islam, N. 200 0. Racing Research, Researching Race: Methodological Dilemmas in Critical Race Studies. In France Winddance Twine and Jonathan Warren (eds.), *Racing Research, Researching Race: Methodological Dilemmas in Critical Race Studies*. New York: NYU Press. Chapter 2. [eBook](#)

Week 12 – November 24th

Analysis, Representation and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research

Meredith, M and N. Wallerstein, Eds. (2010). *Community-Based Participatory Research for Health : From Process to Outcomes (2nd Edition)*. Read Part 4 Introduction and Chapter 13 (Bradbury and Reason). [eBook](#)

(**) Fine, M. et. Al., (2003). For Whom? Qualitative Research, Representations and Social Responsibilities. In Denzin, N. and Y. Lincoln (eds). *The Landscape of Qualitative Research* (167-207). Thousand Oaks: SAGE.

Week 13 –December 1st

Research proposal: Bringing it all together

Prepare a 6 minutes presentation of your research proposal

COURSE POLICIES

UBC MSW Vision: The MSW program offers an accessible, advanced professional degree focused on social work practice in the fields of child and family welfare, health and social care,

and international and social development, using a social justice lens. The purpose of this MSW program is to prepare our graduates to be competent social work professionals, equipped with state-of-the-art knowledge and skills, a critical analytic lens, and a social justice orientation”.

In May 2013, the School Council approved an Equity Action Plan aimed at realization of an equitable learning and working environment, and creation of accountability measures for monitoring implementation of this plan. A key element in attaining this goal is ensuring that instructors and students are committed to maintaining a classroom environment free of any form of discrimination and racism and that welcomes and respects different worldviews, ways of knowing and social locations.

Excerpt from the UBC calendar: Regular attendance is expected of students in all their classes (including lectures, laboratories, tutorials, seminars, etc.).

Students who miss more than three (3) classes during a semester may either be expected to complete an additional assignment, to be developed in consultation with the instructor, in order to fulfill the requirements of the course, or be asked to withdraw from the course.

Students who neglect their academic work and assignments may be excluded from the final examinations. Students who are unavoidably absent because of illness or disability should report to their instructors on return to classes.

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. Please let your instructor know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds. Students who plan to be absent for varsity athletics, family obligations, or other similar commitments, cannot assume they will be accommodated, and should discuss their commitments with the instructor before the drop date.

It is recommended that students retain the digital copy of all submitted and marked assignments in case you wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing.

Academic Dishonesty:

Please review the UBC Calendar “Academic regulations” for the university policy on cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic dishonesty. Also visit www.arts.ubc.ca and go to the students’ section for useful information on avoiding plagiarism and on correct documentation.

Electronic Devices: Students wishing to use any electronic devices including computers and recorders must have the permission of the instructor and *must have the wireless capacity of the device turned off.*

All cell phones must be turned off

ASSIGNMENTS

Submitting Assignments

Please send them electronically to my email address pilar.riano@ubc.ca

Return of marked student assignments

The instructor will comment and mark assignments using track changes and comments. Assignments and grade will be sent back via email.

Late assignments

Grades will be reduced by 2 points for each day late unless an emergency outside the control of the student prevents meeting deadline. A medical certificate must be presented.

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Review ten sources relevant to your project. Use these to develop a *visual map* of the literature related to the topic and an outline of the *conceptual context which provides a rationale* for your study. Conclude by identifying your research question(s). The purpose of this assignment is to help you begin to synthesize the literature into a 'story' that sets up your research and that supports your research questions: a way of making visible your implicit “theory” that Maxwell describes as “a picture of what you think is going on with the phenomenon you are studying.”

Your conceptual context:

- ✚ Introduces a rationale for the proposed study based on a review of relevant sources in the literature.
- ✚ Gives an overview of some current findings in the area and some of the texts and trends informing the thinking which has led to the formation of your research question(s).
- ✚ Maps *connections* between concepts and key ideas and shows how your research builds upon existing literature or addresses gaps in the literature.

The assignment:

- ✚ It is in an essay format; use of visuals or maps is welcomed.
- ✚ It's not an exhaustive list of your bibliography. Remember the difference between a literature review and a conceptual framework.
- ✚ It should demonstrate coherence and logic.
- ✚ It must include full references. Follow APA style.

Criteria for Evaluation:

Content (Coherence and Logic): 70%

Writing: 30%

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

A strong and solid research proposal identifies a question that is worthy of qualitative research. In the proposal, you should be able to explain your research design and plan in terms of: a clear statement of the issue (or research problem) to be discussed; a clear justification of why it is worthy of discussion and further research; a clear explanation of where and how you intend to conduct research and analysis of your chosen topic, and a review of the significant issues raised by your proposed study.

CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS: The “exemplary” case

TOPIC (30 points)

- Explains the importance of the topic to you and the academic world
- Includes logical underlying assumptions necessary to complete the research
- Defines important terms
- Feasible in terms of time and resources

CONTENT (50 points)

- Research problem or need are stated clearly
- Questions and issues are stated clearly and in relationship to all the other components of the proposal
- Conceptual Framework: Discusses prior research relevant to topic and methods, cites relevant literature
- Social Location: Includes a section that reflects on the ways in which you as researcher might shape and affect the process and product of your research.
- Methods: Identifies and discusses methodological strategy and appropriate research methods.
 - Data and validation: Makes explicit the study trustworthiness and ways to validate findings
 - Procedures: Fully describes procedures and use of research techniques.
- Steps: Lists major research activities
- Citations: cites relevant literature, includes citations for ideas/facts that are not part of general knowledge, uses consistent, standard format
- References: Includes all literature cited and follows APA style

FORMAT (10 points)

- Organization: Follows Maxwell’s general outline customized to your topic; headings are used in a logical arrangement that shows your organization
- Length and Detail: 20-25 pages plus appendices;

WRITING (10 points)

- Includes continuity and transitions from topic to topic

- Complete sentences, parallel constructions, subject-verb agreement
- Clarity and tone: precise language with a clear style
- APA style

OUTLINE

This outline identifies content which generally is included in the proposal. **The content and organization of your proposal, however, should be appropriate to the specific study you are proposing to do.** You should have a rationale for what you have included and excluded in your proposal.

Title

Abstract – 150 words (must have an abstract)

Introduction

- Relevant background: how did the issue arise? Social, political and personal context
- What do you want to study
- Aims of the research
- Why it is a worthy and/or interesting topic
- General overview of main research question(s)
- Assumptions underlying the study
- Researcher's social location in the study

Context

- Outline of the research background of the topic. Giving an overview of some current findings in the area, with references
- What are the main texts and trends informing the thinking which has led to the formation of your research question(s)?
- Evaluation of the body of literature reviewed: relevant findings, gaps, unresolved or underdeveloped issues
- Rationale for the proposed study based on the literature

Research question(s)

- Relationship to prior research and theory, to your own experience and purposes
- Focus of your questions

Design and Methods of data collection

- Strategy of inquiry: rationale

- Setting
- Selection/sampling criteria and rationale
- Methods of data collection, approach and procedures
- Planned methods of data analysis
- Dissemination of results

Ethical and Validity Issues

Timeline

References

Appendices

Please consult Maxwell's Chapter 7 and Appendix A for an analytical perspective of the relationship between research design and research proposal and the key elements of a research proposal.

GRADING CRITERIA:

Letter Grade	Percent Range	Mid-Point	
A+	90-100	95	Represents work of exceptional quality. Content, organization and style are all at a high level. Student demonstrates excellent research and reference to literature where appropriate. Also, student uses sound critical thinking, has innovative ideas on the subject and shows personal engagement with the topic.
A	85-89	87	
A-	80-84	82	
B+	76-79	77.5	Represents work of good quality with no major weaknesses. Writing is clear and explicit and topic coverage and comprehension is more than adequate. Shows some degree of critical thinking and personal involvement in the work. Good use of existing knowledge on the subject.
B	72-75	83.5	
B-	68-71	69.5	
C+	64-67	65.5	Adequate and average work. Shows fair comprehension of the subject, but has some weaknesses in content, style and/or organization of the paper. Minimal critical awareness or personal involvement in the work. Adequate use of literature.
C	60-63	62.5	
C-	55-59 (fail)	57	
D	50-54	52	Minimally adequate work, barely at a passing level. Serious flaws in content, organization and/or style. Poor comprehension of the subject, and minimal involvement in the paper. Poor use of research and existing literature.
F	0-49		Failing work. Inadequate for successful completion of the course or submitted beyond final date of acceptance for paper.

A reminder that **only 6 credits** of pass standing (60-67%) may be counted toward a master's program. For all other courses, a minimum of 68% must be obtained.