SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK

SOWO 921

THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT CHAPEL HILL

COURSE NUMBER: SOWO 921
COURSE TITLE: Qualitative Analysis
SEMESTER & YEAR: Spring 2018
TIME: Thursdays 2-4:50pm
LOCATION: Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building, Room 101
INSTRUCTOR: Betsy (Sarah E.) Bledsoe, PhD, MPhil, MSW
School of Social Work
Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building, Campus Box 3550
Phone: (919) 843-6543
E-mail: bledsoe@email.unc.edu

OFFICE HOURS: by appointment (524c)

This course will introduce the application of qualitative research methods for social work research.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:
The student who successfully completes this course will be able to:

1. Distinguish qualitative research from other research paradigms and understand the utility of qualitative research methods in intervention research;
2. Define fundamental concepts of qualitative research including: interpretation, participant meaning, and context;
3. Understand sampling and recruitment of participants and the ethical issues involved in qualitative research with vulnerable participants;
4. Apply basic methods of study design, instrument development, data collection and data analysis, and writing qualitative research reports; and
5. Understand rigor in qualitative research methods and critically appraise the rigor of qualitative research studies.

*THE INSTRUCTOR RESERVES THE RIGHT TO MODIFY THE REMAINING PORTION OF THE SYLLABUS IF REQUIRED TO BEST MEET THE LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE.

EXPANDED DESCRIPTION:
The objective of this course is to provide an overview of the fundamentals of the use of qualitative research, particularly as it applies to intervention research. The focus of this class is
on the development of skills used by qualitative researchers. Particular attention will also be paid to developing skill in the evaluation of qualitative research methods, designing rigorous, high quality qualitative studies, and the protection of vulnerable research participants in qualitative studies.

**REQUIRED TEXTS/READINGS:**
*Chapters from the following textbook will also be assigned. This text may be of particular relevance to social work researchers.*

Additional required readings for this course can be obtained via the course website or the UNC library.
*Additional readings may be assigned throughout the semester.*

**RESOURCE READINGS**
A list of resource reading is provided under most class topics and a more comprehensive list of resource reading is provided at the end of this syllabus. Many of these readings were identified during my observation of Dr. Margarete Sandelowski’s advanced qualitative methods course taught in the School of Nursing. Resource readings are provided primarily as a learning tool. Resource readings are not required. However, additional readings may be assigned during the course of the semester and some of these may come from the resource readings lists.

**TEACHING METHODS**
This course is a seminar and the contributions of all students are central to the success of the class. Class sessions will consist of a mix of lecture, discussion, and exercises completed as part of the qualitative work group formed by the class. Students will learn by doing and will be expected to apply the knowledge from reading and classroom discussion to demonstrate competence by successfully completing an independent qualitative study over the semester.

To promote an inclusive classroom environment the instructor will endeavor to use gender-neutral pronouns (they/them/their) and encourages students to do the same unless you know the pronoun used by an individual in the class.

**Trauma content:** This course focuses on the use of qualitative research methods in social work and related fields and therefore may include some intense content related to traumatic events experienced by children, adolescents, and/or adults. Students may experience strong reactions related to their own trauma history, or related to their lack of previous exposure to detailed

2
accounts of harm that children/adults experience. Students may find themselves emotionally triggered or possibly overwhelmed, as well as having judgmental thoughts (e.g., about survivors and/or victims, caregivers, and perpetrators of harm).

Students are encouraged to develop and use self-care strategies during class sessions and when reading and/or completing assignments for class that may include trauma content. Students may have strong reactions that are more safely processed outside of the classroom and with appropriate support from the instructor or with professional support. In the event that students experience significant distress, please notify the instructor. The instructor will seek to foster a safe classroom environment in which learning may occur. This includes setting guidelines for safe behavior collaboratively with students, preparing students for graphic qualitative material, and utilizing alternative assignments when determined to be beneficial.

Class participation: The participation of each student is essential, and responsibility for class discussion is shared. Class participation includes attendance, being prepared to discuss readings and assignments, sharing opinions on the topic at hand, facilitating the participation of other students, and engaging with speakers.

Attendance: Attendance is crucial to the learning experience of all students. We will be covering a great deal of information in each class. Students who are unable to attend a class should let the instructor know as soon as possible. It is the students’ responsibility to obtain handouts, information about class content, and information about announcements, etc. from classmates if unable to attend a class.

Phone Policy: Phones can create a disruption to the learning process. Please silence your phone during class. If you must answer or return a call please step out of the class.

Reading assignments: Students are responsible for reading all assigned material before the class for which the readings are assigned, with the exception of material assigned for Week 1.

Grading System:
Grades are assigned pursuant to the grading system adopted by the UNC Graduate School, as follows:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>Clear Excellence</td>
<td>94-100</td>
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<tr>
<td>P</td>
<td>Entirely Satisfactory</td>
<td>80-93</td>
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<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>Low Passing</td>
<td>70-79</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Failed</td>
<td>&lt;70</td>
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Accessibility and Resources Services:
The University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations, including resources and services, for students with disabilities, chronic medical
conditions, a temporary disability or pregnancy complications resulting in difficulties with accessing learning opportunities. All accommodations are coordinated through the Accessibility Resources and Service Office. In the first instance please visit their website http://accessibility.unc.edu, call 919-962-8300, or Email: accessibility@unc.edu. A student is welcome to initiate the registration process at any time, however, the process can take time. ARS is particularly busy in the run-up to Finals and during Finals. Students submitting Self-ID forms at that time are unlikely to have accommodations set until the following semester. Please contact ARS as early in the semester as possible.

**WRITING SUPPORT:**
Clear, cogent writing is an essential skill for social work professionals. Writing support is available to all students through the School’s Writing Support Team; they can help you strengthen your writing skills by sharing strategies for organizing information, presenting a cohesive argument, ensuring clear communication, and mastering APA style. Writing Support offers a learning opportunity for students but does not merely copy edit student papers. Writing support is available in-person, by e-mail, or by phone. E-mail a requested appointment day and time to SOSWwritingsupport@gmail.com. In addition, see the Writing Resources and References page on the School’s website (under the Current Students tab: https://ssw.unc.edu/students/writing).

**POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:**
Students are expected to complete assigned and independent readings, contribute to the development of a positive learning environment, and demonstrate learning through written assignments and class participation. Original written work is expected and required. The University of North Carolina has a rich and longstanding tradition of honor. Carefully read the Student Code of Honor. All submitted work must conform to the Honor Code of the University of North Carolina as follows: *I have neither given nor received any unauthorized assistance on this assignment.*

In keeping with the UNC Honor Code, if reason exists to believe that academic dishonesty has occurred, a referral will be made to the Office of the Student Attorney General for investigation and further action as required.

**POLICY ON INCOMPLETES AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS:**
To be successful in completing the work of this course, including mastering the learning objectives, it is essential that all assignments be completed on time. Written assignments should be submitted by 2pm on the day they are due in hard copy and electronically using drop box on our course website. Late papers, including those needing substantial revisions, will be reduced by 10% for each 24-hour period for which they are late, without exception. After 10 days, late assignments will not be accepted unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor. In cases of emergency, a late paper may be accepted without penalty at the discretion of the
instructor. However, the student must alert the instructor of the emergency within a reasonable time period and negotiate a new due date with the instructor in order for any late penalty to be waived.

ASSIGNMENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ASSIGNMENTS</th>
<th>DUE DATE</th>
<th>% COURSE GRADE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CITI TRAINING CERTIFICATION</td>
<td>1/31</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH STUDY COMPONENTS</td>
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<tr>
<td>Qualitative Workgroup Assignments</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>IRB Application</td>
<td>2/15</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Introduction, Literature Review, &amp; Research Questions</td>
<td>2/21</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>3/7</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Results</td>
<td>4/4</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>4/18</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation</td>
<td>4/25</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Feedback</td>
<td>4/26</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>FINAL EXAM: Revised Paper</td>
<td>5/2</td>
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ASSIGNMENT DESCRIPTIONS

**Attendance and Participation (10%)**
Students are expected to attend class and be prepared to participate in class.

**CITI Human Subjects Protection Training (5%)**
This training is required for any person conducting research with human subjects. It provides an opportunity to review the history as well as current standards for ethical research that involves people as participants. This on-line training is comprised of multiple sections with a practice quiz at the end of each section. Please see directions at the end of the syllabus if needed.

**Qualitative Research Study (85%)**
The qualitative study is the primary assignment for this course. In this assignment, students will conduct an abbreviated qualitative research study to understand a construct of interest from the perspective of a specific target population, with the intention of informing the design of future intervention studies. Examples of constructs include: work-family balance, social support, help-seeking behavior, compliance with health guidelines, attitudes toward caregiving or care receiving, role identity, and effective parenting. Target populations can be any population of interest to social work scholars, practitioners, or policy makers.
Students will be expected to choose a construct, develop a research question, conduct a literature review, develop a semi-structured interview guide to gain understanding of the nature, scope and definition of the construct as perceived by members of target population, complete an IRB application, recruit and interview 5 (or more) members of target population, analyze interview data using Atlas.ti or other qualitative software/methods, and discuss the implications of your findings for policy, practice, and/or future research.

The final products of the Qualitative Research Study are 1) a conference style presentation of your study and study findings and 2) a research manuscript describing the completed study. Students should identify an appropriate peer-reviewed journal for dissemination of the final paper. All sequentially submitted components and the final paper should be written in a style suitable for publication following the guidelines of the identified target journal. This paper should include the following components, which are due sequentially, as noted in the table above.

**Institutional Review Board Application (10%, not included in the final paper)**
Using the online application system at UNC (https://irbis2.research.unc.edu/irb/), students will develop a thoughtful and comprehensive plan that describes how vulnerable research participants will be protected during the course of their research. Students who plan to complete and present or publish research beyond the class presentations should submit the IRB application and receive approval prior to data collection (after receiving approval from the instructor and any additional faculty advisor supervising the research activities). Students who do not plan to present or publish findings from the qualitative study must still complete the IRB application and receive approval from the instructor prior to data collection but should not submit the final application to the IRB.

Be concise, but address each point (required by the UNC IRB) in turn. Detailed instructions as well as a sample application are provided on the IRB website. The school of social work faculty member, Mary Anne Salmon, who reviews all application for the school before they are submitted to the IRB will be presenting information in class prior to the due date of this assignment. She will also be available to answer any questions you may have at that time. Further, samples of successful IRB applications for qualitative and mixed methods studies are available for your review on our course website. Students should use these samples as guidelines in completing their IRB application, particularly if they are unfamiliar with the IRB application process.

**Qualitative Workgroup Assignments (10%)**
During the semester students will have qualitative work group assignments that are designed to assist in the preparation of components necessary to implement and complete the qualitative research study (i.e., research questions/aims, interview guide, codebook). In order to progress through the course successfully the timely completion of these assignments is essential. Qualitative Workgroup Assignments (QWAs) are listed with due dates under the detailed class schedule. The parameters of each assignment will be discussed in the prior class. The instructor
reserves the right to add additional QWAs as needed. Students will be given at least one week to complete all QWAs.

**Introduction, Literature Review & Research Question(s) (10%; 5-page limit)**
This introduction to the construct that is being studied should include its importance to the profession. The theoretical literature review must critically analyze at least 6 scholarly articles regarding the construct of interest and include qualitative research if available. The methodology and research question(s) guiding your qualitative study should also be discussed in the introduction as well as the epistemology and methodology guiding your qualitative inquiry.

**Methods (10%; 5-page limit)**
The methods section should include a description of the qualitative methods used including but not limited to: expert feedback on interview questions; a description of the sampling strategy and obtained sample for interviews, data collection procedures, data management, and data analysis procedures for interview data.

**Results (10%; 7-page limit)**
The presentation of the findings should include the results of the analysis of interview data. In example, based on the analysis of interview data, how does the targeted population define the nature and scope of the construct? Results should include a mixture of displayed data and summary of the overall findings.

**Discussion (10%; 5-page limit)**
This section of the paper discusses the findings and their significance, links the findings to the existing research reviewed in the literature review and the research question(s), describes the limitations of the methods and design; and offers an assessment of the implications for theory, social work intervention (practice and/or policy), and future research. The discussion should be closely tied to points made in the introduction and to the results of the research.

**Presentation (10% )**
Each student will give an oral paper conference style presentation of their qualitative study and findings in the final class. Students should submit PowerPoint slides and any other presentation materials to the instructor and their assigned primary reviewer by 12:00 pm on the day of the final class meeting. Presentations should be no longer than15 minutes allowing 10 minutes to present the study and its findings and 5 minutes for questions and feedback from the audience. Time limits will be strictly enforced.

**Peer Feedback (5%, not included in the final paper)**
As audience participants, students will be expected to provide constructive feedback to the presenters in order to support revisions to the final paper as well as improved future qualitative research and oral presentation skills. Each student will be assigned as the primary reviewer for one presentation. This primary reviewer will be responsible for taking notes during the presentation focused on comments from the instructor and the audience for the presenter
including their own detailed written feedback. Feedback should be provided to both the student and the instructor no later than 2pm on the day following presentations.

Feedback should be divided into 2 sections: 1) notes of key points made by the audience during the question and answer period of the presentations and 2) detailed feedback on the presentation provided by the primary reviewer. Primary reviewer feedback should highlight not only strengths of the presentation, but also areas for improvement in each of the following components: 1) background, literature review, epistemology/methodology, and research questions/aims; 2) methods; 3) results; 4) discussion/conclusions; and 5) the presenters overall presentation and delivery.

This type of feedback can be difficult to give and receive but is a critical component of the peer review and scientific processes. This assignment is designed to provide the presenter with feedback to improve their qualitative study manuscript, presentation, and overall presentation skills and to give students and opportunity to practice being a part of the peer review process.

**FIANL EXAM: Revised Paper**
The final exam for this course is a revised paper due on Thursday, May 2 by 2PM. The final revised paper should be formatted in the style required by the student’s target peer-reviewed journal. Page and/or word limits should be determined by the target journal. By this point in the course, students will have feedback from the instructor on all submitted sections of the final paper. The revision should be a paper of sufficient quality for submission to a peer review journal (with the possible exception of sample size and saturation). It should incorporate all prior feedback as well as any instructor or peer feedback from the presentation. Students are encouraged to begin revisions early and to keep a ‘working draft’ of the final paper that incorporates changes to questions aims, methods, results, and discussion.

**Detailed Class Schedule**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1 (1/10)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topic:</strong></td>
<td>Welcome and introduction; overview of the course &amp; qualitative research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Readings:</strong></td>
<td>Hesse-Biber: Chapter 1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Miles, et al: Chapter 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Padgett: Chapter 1</td>
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1/17/19 – **NO CLASS**
**WEEK 2 (1/24)**

**Topic:** Qualitative research: approaches, research questions

**Readings:**
- Hesse-Biber: Chapter 2-3
- Miles, et al: Chapter 3
- Padgett: Chapter 2

**Resources:**

**Due:** QWA 1: Becoming Familiar with the Qualitative Research in Your Substantive Area.

This assignment will provide grounding in the qualitative literature for the individual qualitative study, the main assignment for this course. Students should identify a construct of interest from the perspective of a specific target population and social problem, with the intention of informing the design of future intervention research. Students should complete a literature search to identify at least 5 recently published, peer-reviewed articles reporting the findings of qualitative studies addressing their chosen construct. A summary of the findings of the studies (minimum of 1 paragraph – maximum of 2 pages) with references should be turned in at the beginning of class one. The summary should focus on identifying any gaps in the literature that the student’s qualitative study might fill. This assignment provides a foundation for the literature review and formation of study questions for the qualitative study. Students should carefully choose a construct, population, and substantive area that fits with their overall research interest, dissertation, or thesis topic.

**WEEK 3 (1/31)**

**Topic:** Sampling, Recruitment, Ethics and Vulnerable Populations
**Speaker:** Mary Anne Salmon, M.A., Ph.D., Clinical Associate Professor, UNC School of Social Work, masalmon@email.unc.edu

**Readings:**
- Hesse-Biber: Chapter 4
- Miles, et al: Chapter 3
- Padgett (2008) chapters 3-4

**Resources:**

**Due:**
- **CITI Training Certificate**
- **QWA 2: Research Questions/Study Aims and Methodology**
  Bring the following to class:
  1) a draft of at least one study question/aim
  2) a draft of the statement you will include in your paper regarding the methodology guiding your study.
  3) the citation for at least one reading supporting the methodology you will be using to guide your qualitative inquiry.
  (Please bring 2 additional hard copies for qualitative work group review).
  Be prepared to discuss your research question, chosen construct, and population of interest and initial thoughts on the methodology that will inform your qualitative study including the justification for your methodology and if and how this methodology may impact your study methods.

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### WEEK 4 (2/7)

**Topic:** Data Collection: In-depth Interviews and Skills (Interviewing, Probing, Active Listening)

**Readings:**
- Hesse-Biber: Chapter 5
- Padgett: Chapter 5

**Resources:**

**Due:**
- **QWA 3: Sampling and Recruitment**
  Be prepared to discuss your sampling and recruitment strategy. Bring a draft/outline of the section covering sampling and recruitment for the methods
section of your research study. Please bring 3 hard copies draft or outline of your plan for the qualitative work group.

**WEEK 5 (2/14)**

**Topic:** Data Collection: Oral History, Focus Group Research, & Ethnography

**Readings:**

**Resources:**

**Due:**
- Institutional Review Board Application
- QWA 4: Interview Guide

Draft of semi-structured interview guide (please bring additional 3 hard copies for qualitative work group review).

**WEEK 6 (2/21)**

**Topic:** Data Collection: Case Studies, Use of Media, Images, & Texts

**Readings:**

**Due:**
- Introduction, Literature Review, & Research Question(s)

**WEEK 7 (2/28)**

**Topic:** Data Analysis

**Readings:**
- Miles, et al: Chapter 4
- Padgett: Chapter 6-7

**Resources:**
**Due:**  **QWA 5: Code Book** Draft of initial codebook (please bring additional 3 hard copies for qualitative work group review).

### WEEK 9 (3/7)

**NOTE:** CLASS MEETS AT ODUM INSTITUTE FOR ATLAS.ti WORKSHOP WITH PAUL MIHAS IN DAVIS LIBRARY 3010

**Topic:** Data analysis with Atlas ti  
**Readings:** Miles, et al: Chapters 5-7  
**Due:** Methods

### SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS MEETING (3/14)

### WEEK 10 (3/21)

**Topic:** Data Analysis  
**Readings:** Miles, et al: Chapters 8-11  

### INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH INSTRUCTOR – NO CLASS MEETING (3/28)

### WEEK 11 (4/4)

**Topic:** The Writing and Representation of Qualitative Research: Results  
**Readings:** Hesse-Biber: Chapter 12  
Miles, et al: Chapter 12  
Padgett: Chapter 9  
**Due:** Results

### WEEK 12 (4/11)

**Topic:** Quality in Qualitative Methods: Rigor and Relevance  
**Readings:** Padgett: Chapter 8  

**Resources:**

**WEEK 13 (4/18)**

**Topic:** Introduction Mixed Methods/Special Topics in Qualitative Methods

**Speaker:** TBD

**Readings:**
- Hesse-Biber: Chapter 10
- Padgett: Chapter 10

**Resources:**

**Due:** Discussion

**WEEK 14 (4/25)**

**Topic:** Student Presentations

**Due:** Presentation

(4/26 BY 2:00 PM)

**Due:** Peer Feedback

(5/2 BY 2:00 PM)

**Due:** FINAL EXAM: Revised Paper
**Recommended Texts/Readings**


The list is provided for your reference.

**Additional Resource Readings**

Agar, M. (2004). We have met the other and we’re all nonlinear: Ethnography as a nonlinear dynamic system. *Complexity, 10*, 16-24.


American Anthropological Association Ethics

[http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethics.htm](http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethics.htm)


Halkier, B. (2010). Focus groups as social enactments: Integrating interaction and content in the analysis of focus group data. *Qualitative Research, 10*, 71-89.


Kamat, V. 2006. ‘I thought it was only ordinary fever!’ cultural knowledge and the micropolitics of therapy seeking for childhood febrile illness in Tanzania. *Social Science and Medicine, 62*, 2945-2959.


Warr, D. J. (2005). “It was fun...but we don’t usually talk about these things”: Analyzing sociable interaction in focus groups. *Qualitative Inquiry, 11*, 200-225.


**Book-Length Ethnographic/Grounded Theory Studies**


Book-Length Phenomenologic & Narrative/Discourse Studies

Qualitative Research On-Line

Other Resources
In addition to social work journals, you should regularly peruse such journals as: Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry; Gender & Society; Qualitative Health Research; Qualitative Inquiry; Qualitative Research: Qualitative Sociology; Journal of Contemporary Ethnography; Medical Anthropology Quarterly; Science, Technology, & Human Values; Social Science & Medicine; Sociology of Health & Illness.
CITI Training Description and Directions

This training is required for any person conducting research with human subjects. It provides an opportunity to review the history as well as current standards for ethical research that involves people as participants. This on-line training is comprised of multiple sections with a practice quiz at the end of each section. You may take the quizzes as many times as you need, but you must complete and pass all of them.

1. Log onto the CITI Course in the Protection of Human Research Subjects webpage at: https://www.citiprogram.org
2. Click on the New Users Register Here link.
3. Use the pull down menu for the Participating Institutions option and click on University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
4. Provide a username for yourself such as your name or email address
5. Provide your name and e-mail address information Click on Submit.
6. Provide your member information (For Department, type in ‘Social Work’. For your role in human subject research, click on the Social Worker option)
7. Select Group 2: Social and Behavioral Research when given the option for which group is appropriate to your research activities.
8. Click on Grade book link when you arrive at the learner menu.
9. You can stop and start as needed. You can also retake any quiz by going back to the same section again.