CHL7001H: Introduction to Mixed Methods Research for Public Health

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Sessions: Thursdays, 9:30am to 12:30pm

Prerequisites: At least one qualitative or quantitative research methods course, or permission of the instructors. This course is intended for students in the 2nd year of the Master’s program or any year of the PhD program.

Objective:

The goal of this course is to introduce the use of mixed methods public health research. Mixed methods approaches are becoming increasingly common in research across areas of public health. However, most research methods courses focus on either qualitative or quantitative methods, and rarely address how to meaningfully integrate the two. In this course, students will explore the epistemological and methodological issues involved in conducting mixed methods research in public health. Students will acquire the skills to critique mixed-method research designs and will design their own mixed methods study in an area of public health of interest to them. Both students who are primarily trained in quantitative methods (e.g., epidemiology) and students primarily trained in qualitative methods (e.g., social sciences) will benefit from this course, and opportunities will be provided for students to learn from one another’s expertise.

Topics to be covered include:

- Review of the key strengths and limitations of monomethod (qualitative and quantitative) designs
- Strengths and limitations of mixed methods approaches in public health research
- Theoretical and paradigm issues in mixed methods research
- Mixed methods research questions and study designs
- Mixed methods approaches to sampling, data collection and data analysis
- Quality appraisal in mixed methods research
- Writing and publishing mixed methods research

Evaluation:

Grades for this course will be based on one primary assignment, which will be broken into its component parts.
Over the duration of the course, students will be required to develop a proposal for a mixed methods study on a public health topic of interest to them. As part of this, students will be required to write three short papers to: 1) present the proposed research question, explain why a mixed methods approach is appropriate to address it, and outline the relevant theoretical framework and/or hypotheses; 2) justify the proposed research design and sampling strategy; and 3) describe the proposed data collection and analysis plan. The final term assignment will be the full proposal, first delivered as an oral presentation for instructor and peer feedback, and then as a final paper, summarizing the proposal in the format of a funding application.

Grades for the course will be determined as follows:

Research questions assignment: 20%
Research design and sampling assignment: 20%
Data collection and analysis assignment: 20%
Final assignment (full proposal): 40% (10% oral presentation + 30% final paper)

Points will be deducted for handing in assignments late, unless permission is obtained ahead of time (5% if turned in 1 day late; 10% 2 days late; 15% 3 days late and so on). Late assignments will not be accepted after marked assignments have been returned.

Grading Complaints: If you have a complaint about a grade, submit the complaint in writing and it will be considered.

Plagiarism:
Plagiarism is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated. Give credit where credit is due. Plagiarism includes representing someone else’s work or ideas as your own. The University of Toronto’s Code of Behavior on Academic Matters provides a complete discussion of the university policy on plagiarism and other offenses: http://www.utoronto.ca/govcnd/pap/policies/behaveac.html

Required Text:

Other Recommended Readings:

### Schedule for 2015:

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<td>Sept. 17 Introduction: What is mixed methods and why does it work? Examples from the field</td>
<td>Dionne &amp; Lori</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Sept. 24 Paradigms, theories and hypotheses</td>
<td>Lori</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Oct. 1 Research questions - Details for Assignment 1 provided</td>
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<td>Oct. 8 Research designs – part 1</td>
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<td>Oct. 15 Research designs – part 2 - Assignment 1 due</td>
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<td>Oct. 22 Sampling, recruitment and sample size</td>
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<td>Oct. 29 Data collection methods - Assignment 2 due</td>
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<td>Nov. 5 Data analysis methods</td>
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<td>Nov. 12 Quality appraisal - Assignment 3 due</td>
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<td>Nov. 19 Student presentations of proposals</td>
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<td>Dec. 3 Writing and publishing mixed methods research</td>
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<td>Dec. 10 Final proposal due</td>
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