Course Description and Objectives
ED 525 introduces students to the methods involved in conducting interviews and focus groups and in managing and interpreting the data they generate. The course covers a range of issues from developing protocols and identifying participants to reporting results.

Format
The course uses lectures, discussion, and hands-on activities to provide students with the knowledge and skills to be able to design projects that include interviews and focus groups and critique studies that utilize these approaches.

Student Expectations
1. All assignments are due when indicated. No incompletes will be granted.
2. Students must attend each class. If a student misses any part of a class he/she will have to re-take the course the next time it is offered.
3. I wish to fully include persons with disabilities in this course. Please let me know if you need any special accommodations in the curriculum, instruction, or assessments of this course to enable you to fully participate.

Course Requirements and Grading Policy

There are two required books which can be purchased in the UR bookstore:


The course will be graded on a pass/fail basis.
Course Schedule

Sept. 12 – Day 1
• Course Overview
• An Introduction to Interviews
  o Definitions and Terminology
  o Benefits and Drawbacks
  o The Interviewer
    ▪ Developing a Rapport
    ▪ Probing
  o Protocols or Topic Guides
• Important Tips

Required Reading
Rubin & Rubin Ch. 5-7

Sept. 19 – Day 2
• An Introduction to Focus Groups
  o Definitions and Terminology
  o Benefits and Drawbacks
  o The Moderator
  o Discussion Guides
  o Participants and Setting
• Data Collection
  o Having Multiple Interviewers
  o Recording Data

Required Reading
Stewart et al Ch. 3-6

Sept. 26 – Day 3
• Data Analysis
  o Transcribing the Data
  o Reducing the Data
  o Interpreting the Data
  o Using Qualitative Software Packages
  o Incorporating Subject Checks
• Presentation of Results

Required Reading:
Rubin & Rubin Ch. 10-12
Assignments

Class Participation. My expectation is that students will attend and participate fully in all class sessions. This includes contributing to small group and large group discussions, completing all reading assignments prior to class, and completing all group projects either during class time or after class, as applicable. I encourage students to share any experiences they have had conducting interviews and focus groups as part of our class discussions.

Homework and Final Project.
The course involves a number of group activities that you will either complete in class or finish your work outside of the class. I expect you to contribute fully to these assignments and if they are below a “passing” level or if instructions for the assignment are not followed, you will be required to revise and resubmit your assignment.

The course involves a final project that will allow you to put into practice the things that you learned in this course. Additional details will be provided during class on Sept. 26. The final project must be posted to Blackboard by Oct. 13 at noon.

Additional Interview and Focus Group Resources


