

Course instructors: Dr Piotr Binder, Dr Marta Olcoń-Kubicka
Approaches to Qualitative Methods in Research Practice 1
Academic year 2019/2020 (winter semester)

The course description

The course is designed primarily for PhD students on the early stages of their dissertation research, but may be helpful for other students as well. A central goal of it is to provide basic training in qualitative methods and support participants: in specifying the methods they are going to apply within their PhD research projects, shaping their research strategies, and considering possible approaches to analyzing data.

The course consists of three parts. The first one (meetings 1-3) covers defining research questions, discussion on ethical aspects of doing qualitative research (very often omitted) and the role of theory within the area of qualitative research. The second part (meetings 4-11) focuses on selected methods of collecting verbal data as well as data beyond talk. The third part of the course (meetings 12-15) is devoted to the process of analyzing data as well as writing qualitative research and research proposals.

Learning outcomes likely to be achieved

By the end of the course students should be able to understand the nature non statistical research methods in social sciences, their advantages and disadvantages (together with their limitations), but also to be able to critically evaluate scholarly work. Students are expected to be familiar with up to date methodological literature as well as with classical examples of the application of the discussed research methods. They are expected to be able to match their research problems and questions with the qualitative methods and techniques, and to be able to justify their choices. Finally they are expected to contemplate on possible approaches to analyzing data before or at the initial stages of their dissertation research.

I. Theoretical issues and initial foray

1. Defining research questions and developing a research project (October 18)

Readings:

- Flick, Uwe. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research (Edition 4)*. London: Sage. Ch 8. The Qualitative Research Process (pp. 89-98); Ch 9. Research Questions (pp 97- 104); Ch 12. How to Design Qualitative Research: An Overview (pp. 127-146).

Supplementary readings:

- Lofland, John [et al.] 2006. *Analyzing social settings : a guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (Edition 4). Belmont, CA : Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Ch 1. Starting Where You Are (pp. 9-14), Ch 7. Asking Questions (pp. 144-167).
- Merton, Robert K. 1959. "Notes on Problem-Finding in Sociology" (pp. 17-42). In: Robert K. Merton, Leonard Broom, and Leonard S. Cottrell. *Sociology Today: Problems and Prospects*. New York. Basic Books Inc.

2. Ethical dilemmas in conducting qualitative research (October 25)

Readings:

- Flick, Uwe. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research (Edition 4)*. London: Sage. Ch 4. Ethics of Qualitative Research (pp. 35-44).
- Kvale, Steinar and Svend Brinkmann. 2009. *InterViews Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage. Ch 4. Ethical Issues of Interviewing (pp. 61-80).

Supplementary readings:

- Wood, Elisabeth Jean. 2006. "The Ethical Challenges of Field Research in Conflict Zones." *Qualitative Sociology*, 29 (pp. 373-386).
- Christians, Clifford G. 2000. Ethics and Politics in Qualitative Research (pp. 133-155) In: Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

3. Theoretical issues in qualitative research (November 8)

Readings:

- Babbie, Earl. 2010. *The Practice of Social Research (12th edition)*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Ch 2. Paradigms, Theory, and Research (pp. 31-61).
- Flick, Uwe. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research (Edition 4)*. London: Sage. Ch 7. Theoretical Positions Underlying Qualitative Research (pp. 56-73).
- Silverman, David. 2005. *Doing Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)*. London: Sage. Ch 7. Using Theories (pp. 95-109).

Supplementary reading:

- Becker, Howard. 1998. *Tricks of the Trade. How to Think About your Research While You're Doing It*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Ch 1. Tricks (pp. 7-20), Ch 2. Imagery (pp. 21-95).

II. Gathering/generating new data

4. Case Study (November 15)

Readings:

- Ragin, Charles C. and Howard S. Baker. 1992. *What Is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Introduction. Introduction: Cases of "What is a case?" (pp. 1-17).
- Silverman, David. 2005. *Doing Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)*. London: Sage. Ch 9. Selecting a case (pp. 125-139).

Supplementary readings:

- George, Alexander L., and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Wieviorka, Michael. 2000. "Case Studies: History or Sociology?" (pp. 159-172) in: Ragin, Charles C. and Howard S. Baker. 2000. *What Is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

5. Documents as Data (November 22)

Readings:

- Flick, Uwe. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research (Edition 4)*. London: Sage. Ch 22. Using Documents as Data (pp. 254-263).

- Rapley, Tim. 2007. *Doing Conversation, Discourse and Document Analysis*. London: Sage. Ch 9. Exploring documents (pp. 111-125).
- Prior, Lindsay. 2003. *Using Documents in Social Research*. London: Sage. Ch 3. Documents in Action. Documents in Organizational Settings (pp. 50-69).

Supplementary Reading:

- Garfinkel, Harold. 1999 [1967] *Studies in Ethnomethodology*. Cambridge: Blackwell Publishers. Ch 6. Good organizational reasons for 'bad' clinical records (pp. 186-208)

6. Qualitative Discourse Analysis (December 6)

Readings:

- Fairclough, Norman. 1998. *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity, Introduction (pp. 1-12), Ch 1. Approaches to Discourse Analysis (pp. 12-37).
- Potter, Johnnatan, and Margaret Wetherell. 2002. *Analyzing Discourse* (pp. 47-66), In: Alan Bryman, and Robert G. Burgess (Eds) *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. New York: Routledge.

Supplementary reading:

- Unher, Johann W. et al., *Critical Discourse Studies and Social Media Data* (277-293), In: David Silverman (Ed.) 2016. *Qualitative Research 4E*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

7. Mixed Methods Research (December 13)

Readings:

- Creswell, John W. and Vicki L. Plano Clark. 2006. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. Ch 1. Understanding Mixed Methods Research (pp. 1-19).
- Johnson, R. Burke et al. 2007. "Toward a Definition of Mixed Methods Research", *Journal of mixed methods Research* Vol 1, No2 (pp. 112-133).

Supplementary readings:

- Teddlie, Charles, and Abbas Tashakkori. 2011. Overview of Contemporary Issues in Mixed Methods Research (pp. 1-41). In: Abbas Tashakkori, and Charles Teddlie (Eds). *SAGE Handbook of Mixed Methods in Social and Behavioral Sciences (2nd Edition)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Creswell, John. 2011. Controversies in Mixed Method Research (pp. 269-284). In: Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research (4th Edition)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

8. Online research methods (December 20)

Readings:

- Hine, Christine. 2015. "The E3 Internet: Embedded, Embodied, Everyday Internet" (pp. 19-55) in: *Ethnography for the Internet*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Markham, Annette and Simona Stavrova Internet/Digital Research (pp. 227-244) In: David Silverman (Ed.) 2016. *Qualitative Research 4E*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Snelson, Chareen L. 2016. "Qualitative and Mixed Methods Social Media Research: A Review of the Literature." *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 15(1):1–15.

Supplementary readings:

- Bouchard, Karen L. 2016. "Anonymity as a Double-Edge Sword : Reflecting on the Implications of Online Qualitative Research in Studying Sensitive Topics." *The Qualitative Report* 21(1):59–67.
- Moore, Tom, Kim McKee, and Pauline McCoughlin. 2015. "Online Focus Groups and Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences: Their Merits and Limitations in a Study of Housing and Youth." *People, Place and Policy* 9(1):17–28.

9. Ethnographic research (January 10)

Readings:

- Gobo, Giampietro and Lukas T. Marciniak. What is Ethnography? (pp. 103-120) In: David Silverman (Ed.) 2016. *Qualitative Research 4E*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. Ch 1. Fieldnotes in Ethnographic Research (pp. 1-16), Ch. 2. [separate file on Common] In the Field: Participating, Observing, and Jotting Notes (pp. 17-38).

Supplementary readings:

- Becker, Howard S. 1958. "Problems of inference and proof in participant observation". *American Sociological Review* Vol. 23. No. 6 (pp. 652-660).
- Nippert-Eng, Christena. *Watching Closely. A guide to ethnographic observations*. 2015. Oxford University Press.
- Daynes Sarah and Terry Williams, *On Ethnography*. 2018. Polity Press.
- Whyte, William F. 1993 [1943]. *Street Corner Society. The Social Structure of an Italian Slum (4th Edition)*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

10. Interviews: part 1 (January 17)

Readings:

- Flick, Uwe. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research (Edition 4)*. London: Sage. Ch 13. Interviews (pp. 149-175), Ch. 14. Narratives (pp.176-194)

Supplementary readings:

- Kvale, Steinar and Svend Brinkmann. 2009. *InterViews Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage, Ch 6. Thematizing and Designing an Interview Study (pp. 99-123).

11. Interviews: part 2 (January 24)

Readings:

- Flick, Uwe. 2009. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research (Edition 4)*. London: Sage. Ch 15. Focus Groups (pp. 194-210), Ch 16. Verbal Data: An Overview (pp. 210-218).

Supplementary readings:

- Fontana, Andrea, and James H. Frey. 2000. The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text (pp. 645-673). In: Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln (Eds.). *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Kvale, Steinar and Svend Brinkmann. 2009. *InterViews Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage, Ch 7. Conducting an Interview (pp. 123-142): Ch. 8. Interview Variations (pp. 143-160).
- Rubin, Herbert J., and Irene S. Rubin. 1995. *Qualitative Interviewing. The Art of Hearing Data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

III. Data Analysis

12. Qualitative Data Analysis – Basic Approaches (February 14)

Readings:

- Kukartz, Udo. 2014. *Qualitative Text Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage. Ch 4. Three Basic Methods of Qualitative Text Analysis (pp. 65-121)
- Rapley, Tim. Some Pragmatics of Qualitative Data Analysis (pp. 331-346). In: David Silverman (Ed.) 2016. *Qualitative Research 4E*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Silverman, David. 2005. *Doing Qualitative Research (2nd Edition)*. London: Sage. Ch 11. Beginning Data Analysis (pp. 149-170), Ch 12. Developing Data Analysis (pp. 171-188).

Supplementary readings:

- Lofland, John [et al.] 2006. *Analyzing social settings: a guide to qualitative observation and analysis* (Edition 4). Belmont, CA : Wadsworth/Thomson Learning. Ch 9. Developing Analysis (pp. 195-219).
- Hughes, Christina. 2001. From Field notes to dissertation: analyzing the stepfamily (pp. 35-47). In: Alan Bryman, and Robert G. Burgess (Eds) *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. New York: Rutledge.

13. The Practice of Grounded Theory Method (February 21)

Readings:

- Charmaz, Cathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory. A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis*. London: Sage. Ch 1. An Invitation to Grounded Theory (pp.1-12), Ch 6. Reconstructing Theory in Grounded Theory Studies (pp. 123-150).
- Corbin, Juliet, and Anselm Strauss. 2008. *The Basics of Qualitative Research. Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory* (3rd Edition). Thousand Oaks: Sage. Ch 3. Prelude to Analysis (pp. 45-64), Ch. 4. Strategies for Qualitative Data Analysis (pp. 65-86).

Supplementary readings:

- Glaser, Barney, and Anselm Strauss. 1967. *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine.
- Gibson, Barry, and Jan Hartman. 2014. *Rediscovering of Grounded Theory*. London: Sage.

14. Writing Qualitative Research (February 28)

Readings:

- Abbott, Andrew. 2014. *Digital Paper: A Manual for Research and Writing with Library and Internet Materials*, Chicago University Press. Ch. 12 Endphase, (pp 238-247).
- Becker Howard. 2007. - *Writing for Social Scientists: How to Start and Finish Your Thesis, Book, or Article*, Chicago University Press, selected chapters.

Supplementary reading:

- Abbott, Andrew. 2004. *Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

15. Writing research proposals and grant applications (March 6)

Readings:

- Flick, Uwe. 2007. *Designing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage. Ch. 3. Sampling, selecting and access (pp. 25-35); Ch 4. Qualitative research designs (pp 36-50); Ch 5. Resources and stepping-stones (pp. 51-60); Ch 11. Designing qualitative research: some conclusions (109-114).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADING

25% - active participation in seminar discussions, sharing ideas and insights (half of the class will be devoted to discussion)

75% - written assignment

Each participant of the „ Qualitative Methods in Research Practice 1” course must submit a standard **3000 words (+/- 5%) essay in English (plus abstract and bibliography)** presenting the methodological part of his or her PhD project including the research design and methodological orientation. At the same time, this document should NOT be a synopsis or an outline of a PhD project. The topic is expected to fall within the broad area of qualitative methods.

Participants who do not apply any qualitative methods, will analyze a sociological monograph, where qualitative methods were the essence of the empirical part. The book must have academic character and the analysis should include three basic elements: (1)

brief description of the qualitative methods used by the author(s); (2) a critique of it; (3) suggestions for a revised research design.

All participants are expected to write clearly and edit carefully. Please note, that including the author's name and page numbers significantly facilitate the process of grading. All essays need to be submitted via "Turn It In" website. The maximum grade for an essay submitted after the deadline is **C**.

Deadline for submitting essays: March 20 (5:00 PM, GMT+2)