

Qualitative Research Methods

(MA/PhD course, Spring 2022)

Instructor: Piotr Binder, PhD, IFiS PAN

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Office hours: by appointment, Zoom

Teaching period: second (February 1st - April 24th, 2022)

Dates of meetings: Feb 17, 18, 25; Mar 4, 11, 18, 25; Apr 1, 8, 14, 20, 22

Class hours: primarily 17:00-19:00 with exceptions on Feb 17 and Apr 20 (for details please see below)

Class mode: online (Zoom)

Course description

This course has been developed primarily for MA students and PhD students in the early stages of their research projects. Its central goal is to provide the participants with basic training in qualitative methods and support participants in specifying the methods they will apply within their research projects, shaping their research strategies, and considering possible approaches to qualitative data analysis. A vital element of the course will be designing research to be both safe and productive in reality, disturbed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The course has a format of a seminar. Its duration is the equivalent of thirty class hours. The material is divided into eleven two-hour (120 minutes) sessions with a short break after the first hour. Each session will focus on two main topics distinguished in the syllabus. The participants are expected to engage in the in-class discussions based on the included list of readings.

Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students should understand the role of non-statistical research methods in social sciences, their advantages and limitations, and critically assess academic studies based on qualitative methodology. Students are expected to be familiar with current methodological literature and classic examples of applying the discussed research methods. The reading assignments should allow students to develop research designs suitable for their research problems, contemplate possible approaches to analyzing data, and defend their choices.

MEETING 0 (Feb 17, Thu, 14:00-14:30)

A 30-minutes long organizational session, the primary purpose of which will be to discuss the syllabus, the rules for completing the course, and explain all the organizational matters.

MEETING 1 (Feb 18, Fri, 17:00-19:00)

Topics

- The Nature of Qualitative Research
- Qualitative Research During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Readings

- Flick, Uwe. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, Ch 2: Qualitative Research: Why and How to Do It (pp. 11-22) and Ch 3: Qualitative and Quantitative research (pp. 23-35).
- Paulus, Trena M. and Jessica N. Lester. (2021). *Doing Qualitative Research in a Digital World*, London: Sage. Ch 1: Introduction to Doing Qualitative Research in a Digital World (pp. 1-30).

MEETING 2 (Feb 25, Fri, 17:00-19:00)

Topics

- Qualitative Research Ethics
- Theoretical Issues in Qualitative Research

Readings

- Flick, Uwe. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage. Ch 4. Ethics of Qualitative Research (pp. 35-44).
- Kelle, Udo. Theorization from Data (pp. 554-568). In: Uwe Flick (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage.
- Silverman, David. (2017). *Doing Qualitative Research 5E*. London: Sage. Ch 7. Using Theories (pp. 131-155).

MEETING 3 (Mar 4, Fri, 17:00-19:00)

Topics

- Designing Qualitative Research
- Research Questions

Readings

- Flick, Uwe. (2007). *Designing Qualitative Research*: Ch 2: From an idea to a research question (pp. 16-25); Ch 3: Sampling, selecting and access (pp. 25-35); Ch 4: Qualitative research design (pp. 36-50).
- Paulus, Trena M. and Jessica N. Lester. (2021). *Doing Qualitative Research in a Digital World*, London: Sage. Ch 2: Qualitative Research Design in a Digital World (pp. 31-76).

MEETING 4 (Mar 11, Fri, 17:00-19:00)

Topics

- Field Research
- Participant Observation

Readings

- Flick, Uwe. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, Ch 17: Observation and Ethnography (pp. 221-238).
- Babbie, Earl. (2010). *The Practice of Social Research* 12th Ed., Ch 10: Qualitative Field Research (pp. 295-328).
- Emerson, Robert M., Rachel I. Fretz, and Linda L. Shaw (2011). *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*, Ch 2: In the Field - Participating, Observing, and Jotting Notes (pp. 21-43).

MEETING 5 (Mar 18, Fri, 17:00-19:00)

Topics

- Individual In-Depth Interview (IDI)
- Focus Group Interview (FGI)

Readings

- Flick, Uwe. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, part 4: Verbal Data, Ch. 13. Interviews (pp. 149-175); Ch. 14. Narratives (pp. 176-191), Ch. 15. Focus Groups (pp. 194-206).

MEETING 6 (Mar 25, Fri, 17:00-19:00)

Topics

- Conducting Online & Onsite Interviews
- Analyzing Interviews

Readings

- Kvale, Steinar and Svend Brinkmann. (2009). *InterViews Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. London: Sage, Ch 7. Conducting an Interview (pp. 123-142).
- James, Nalita, and Hugh Busher. Online Interviewing (pp. 245-260). In: David Silverman (2016). *Qualitative Research 4E*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Roulston, Kathryn. Analyzing Interviews (pp. 297-312). In: Uwe Flick (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage.

MEETING 7 (Apr 1, Fri, 17:00-19:00)

Topics

- Analyzing Documents
- Visual Data Analysis

Readings

- Coffey, Amanda. Analyzing documents (pp. 367-379). In: Uwe Flick (2014). *Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: Sage.
- Flick, Uwe. (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, part 5: Observation and mediated data, Ch. 18. Visual Data (pp. 239-253); Ch. 19. Using Documents as Data (pp. 254-263).

MEETING 8 (Apr 8, Fri, 17:00-19:00)

Topics

- Qualitative Online Research
- Social Media in Qualitative Research

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 (2016). *Qualitative Research 4E*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

MEETING 9 (Apr 14, Thu, 14:00-16:00)

Topics

- Qualitative Content Analysis
- Developing Qualitative Data Analysis

Readings

- Rapley, Tim. Some Pragmatics of Qualitative Data Analysis (pp. 331-346). In: David Silverman (2016). *Qualitative Research 4E*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Silverman, David. (2017). *Doing Qualitative Research 5E*. London: Sage. Ch 15. Developing Data Analysis (pp. 316-354).

MEETING 10 (Apr 20, Wed, 12:00-14:00)

Topic

- The Practice of Grounded Theory Method
- Reanalysis of Qualitative Data

Readings

- Bishop, Libby, Secondary Analysis of Qualitative Data (pp. 395-413). In: David Silverman (2016). *Qualitative Research 4E*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Charmaz, Kathy and Antony Bryant, *Constructing Grounded Theory Analyses* (pp. 347-362). In: David Silverman (2016). *Qualitative Research 4E*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

MEETING 11 (Apr 22, Fri, 17:00-19:00)

Topics

- Grounding Qualitative Research
- Writing and Presenting Findings

Readings

- Flick, Uwe (2009). *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*, part 7: Grounding and Writing Qualitative Research (pp. 381-424).
- Flick, Uwe (2007). *Designing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage. Ch 11. Designing qualitative research: some conclusions (pp. 109-114).

Course requirements and assessment

Regular attendance

Participation in classes is mandatory. If one has a legitimate reason for being late regularly, they notify the instructor at the beginning of the course. Excessive absences, persistent lateness, or leaving too early will unfavorably affect the final course mark by a “-“ (i.e., “B” goes to “B-“). Any COVID 19-related issues on personal health and the ability to participate will be taken into consideration.

Contribution to the in-class discussions (10% of the grade)

Class discussions are an essential element of this course. Everyone is expected to come to class prepared for a meaningful discussion of the readings. The overall mark for the course may be modified (by "+" or "-") in recognition of the active involvement in the classroom debates. Such recognition will be based on the quality of the contribution.

Essay (90% of the grade)

Students are required to submit an essay of about 3,000 words (+/- 5%) in English (plus abstract and bibliography). Participants will analyze a monograph, where qualitative methods were the essence of the empirical part. The book must be an example of an academic study. It is expected that the book will address subjects within the area of the chosen MA track or PhD project profile. The analysis should include three essential elements: (1) a brief description of the qualitative methods used by the author(s); (2) a critique of it; (3) suggestions for a revised research design.

Participants should consult the title of the selected book with the instructor by meeting 5. In case of difficulties with choosing a book, participants should report it to the instructor by the same date. Students will then receive selection suggestions from the instructor.

All essays should be submitted via the Turnitin platform, an Internet-based plagiarism detection service. Each paper should include a half-page abstract preceding the main text, a word count (of essay text excluding the abstract and bibliography), name of the author, and page numbers.

If a student cannot submit a piece of work on time, then s/he should supply good reasons in advance to the Academic Director of the School to obtain permission. In the case of absence or delay due to sickness, medical certificates should be provided. Essays submitted after the deadline will be penalized at a rate of one grade per day (i.e., A becomes A-). Essays submitted two weeks or more after the deadline will receive a mark of “Fail,” “D-“ or “D.”

Deadline for essays: 13:00 on Tuesday, May 10th, 2022 (Handbook)