

Syllabus

Qualitative Method (Doctoral Course, 7.5 ECTS)

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Background

This course builds on the proposition that qualitative methods stand as a distinct and equally valid approach in social science, neither inferior to nor less legitimate than any other research method.

In this course, students will engage in practical training with various qualitative methods, complemented by reflective exercises on their experiences with these methods. This hands-on approach will help students appreciate the distinct knowledge each qualitative method can produce and understand the benefits of integrating different methods within qualitative research.

The course is designed to guide students through an array of qualitative methods, providing both an overview and an in-depth analysis of their potentialities. Structured to alternate between the application of qualitative research methods and the exploration of related literature, the course aims to enhance students' understanding and skills in qualitative research.

Aim

The course has two aims:

- Doing certain qualitative methods to gain experience on the field
- Reflect upon the doing of the method(s).

Course content

The course will engage with three more or less conventional qualitative methods; observation, interviews and document studies. These three methods are, however, further divided into analogue/digital, and stationary and mobile, possibly opening up for more uncharted territories:

- *Obeservation*: observe people digitally (e.g. digital footprints and on-line 'live events') as well as analogue (physical), stationary (one place) and mobile (e.g. shadowing).
- *Interviews*: digital (e.g. zoom, teams) and analogue (physical) and stationary (fixed place) and mobile (for example walking and talking interviews)

- *Document studies*: digital resources as well as more traditional analogue resources (e.g. paper documents, graffiti), including all sorts of formats (video, podcasts, music, poetry, etc.) and mobile documents (e.g. collaborative, ‘open-source’, documents) as well as stationary documents (e.g. reports, organizational maps).

Learning outcomes

On successful completion of the course the student should be able to:

- Apply adequate methods to investigate and interpret various aspects of society and social life.
- Justify different qualitative methods.
- Discuss and reflect about problems and challenges that emerge from using various methods to investigate aspects of society and of social life.

Teaching and learning activities

The course is taught through a combination of seminars, individual exercises, presentations, and written assignments. The language of instruction and examination is English.

The three methods on this course are executed individually by the student, and each method is a distinct module on the course.

Module 1: Observation.

Module 2: Interviews

Module 3: Document studies

The fourth module – Module 4: reflection – contains the part where in which the students reflect upon strength and weaknesses with each method respectively, and also reflect upon the combined strength of the executed methods on this course. For the fourth module, the students are also asked to reflect on the possibilities for analysis when different methods are combined.

During this course, it is the students who will search and use relevant literature on each module.

The students will write a memo to each module, a memo that is written *after* the particular method is executed. This means that:

- The method is first executed (of course reading in to the method in use beforehand is necessary)
- And then reflected upon the method in use in the written memo

Each memo for module 1-3 should be about 2000 words, *maximum*. For module four, the memo should be 3000 words, *maximum*.

All examination forms are individual.

The student shall prepare a short power-point presentation to each module. The presentation shall be around 10-15 minutes.

Examination

1. Exercises where students test out different qualitative methods corresponding with module 1-3.
2. Memo 1-3, maximum 2000 words.
3. Memo 4, maximum 3000 words.

Participation in all activities is compulsory.

Your performance on the course is assessed individually and graded according to a two-level scale (Pass or Fail). In order to pass the course, you must have participated in at least 80% of scheduled course meetings, and passed all assignments (i.e., module 1-4 with correlating field work in module 1-3).