

# Syllabus “Qualitative Research Methods”

## Course description

<b>Course title</b>	Qualitative Research Methods
<b>Course code</b>	29016
<b>Scientific sector</b>	SECS-P/08
<b>Degree</b>	PHD Programme in Management and Economics on Organizational and Institutional Outliers
<b>Semester and academic year</b>	2st semester 2017/2018
<b>Year</b>	1
<b>Credits</b>	4
<b>Modular</b>	No

<b>Total lecturing hours</b>	24
<b>Attendance</b>	Mandatory
<b>Prerequisites</b>	No prerequisites

<b>Specific educational objectives</b>	<p>The course provides training in core methods expected to be required by students intending to undertake qualitative research, together with an understanding of broader qualitative approaches/methodologies within which they may be utilized.</p> <p>The course objectives can be summarized as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Introducing students to qualitative research methods, and discussing the appropriateness of these methods for different areas of research and types of research questions.</li> <li>2. Exposing students to insights in the practice of qualitative research, and encouraging them to experiment in the use of the fundamental methods for qualitative data collection and analysis.</li> <li>3. Sharing experience in collecting, analyzing, and reporting from qualitative research, and discussing the challenges and opportunities of publishing qualitative research.</li> </ol> <p>At the end of the course, the students will be able to select and use properly the main approaches characterizing qualitative research in different situations. Moreover, they will be able to assess the rigour and trustworthiness of qualitative inquiry.</p>
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<b>Lecturer</b>	Alfredo De Massis Office E512b e-mail: <a href="mailto:alfredo.demassis@unibz.it">alfredo.demassis@unibz.it</a> Tel: 0471013 303 <a href="https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/37012-alfredo-de-massis">https://www.unibz.it/en/faculties/economics-management/academic-staff/person/37012-alfredo-de-massis</a>
<b>Scientific sector of the lecturer</b>	SECS-P/08
<b>Teaching language</b>	English
<b>List of topics covered</b>	<p>The main topics covered course within the course are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to qualitative methods</li> <li>• Theorizing from qualitative data</li> <li>• Approaches to qualitative research</li> <li>• Case study research</li> <li>• Collecting information</li> <li>• Triangulation of different data sources</li> <li>• Analyzing data and coding</li> <li>• Moving from data analysis to theoretical development</li> <li>• Presenting the results</li> <li>• Tables and figures: Visual aids in qualitative data analysis</li> <li>• Developing process models</li> <li>• Ethnographies and observation</li> <li>• Grounded theory</li> <li>• Mixed-methods research</li> <li>• Ensuring findings' validity and reliability</li> <li>• Publishing qualitative research</li> <li>• Final presentation of working paper</li> </ul> <p>During the sessions, we will discuss the following topics:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Ontological and epistemological assumptions of qualitative research</li> <li>b) Consistency between research questions and methods adopted</li> <li>c) Selecting a qualitative research method</li> </ol>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d) Designing qualitative research: site selection, sampling, and data collection</li> <li>e) Data analysis: Case analysis, cross-case comparison, coding procedures</li> <li>f) Writing and publishing qualitative research</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching format</b>	Frontal lectures, readings, in-class discussions.

<b>Learning outcomes</b>	<p>Knowledge and understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate the key features and benefits of qualitative research and when and how it can be utilized.</li> <li>• Assess the applicability of a range of core qualitative approaches to their own research topics and understand how these approaches can be applied to conduct effective research.</li> </ul> <p>Applying knowledge and understanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a range of qualitative data collection techniques including interviews, observations, and documents.</li> <li>• Effectively analyze and write up qualitative data in order to answer your research questions and disseminate your findings.</li> </ul> <p>Making judgments on the appropriate approaches to qualitative inquiry</p> <p>Learning skills: In conducting qualitative research, effectively address issues relating to validity, reliability and ethics.</p> <p>Communication skills to effectively present the findings from a qualitative study.</p>
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<b>Assessment</b>	<p>Your assessment for this course will have two components.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Essay and presentation (70%)</i>. During the course, you will be asked to write up a short essay (working paper). The goal is to analyze a research question suitable to be investigated through qualitative research methods. The research question should ideally be linked to the topic of your doctoral dissertation. The essay will include the following sessions: (1) Introduction. (2) Theoretical Background – brief introduction to the topic of research and key references. (3) Methodology: research question, suitable method(s), research design, data collection procedure, hypothetical data analysis procedure.</li> </ol>
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	<p>(4) Implications for research: How does the qualitative method enrich your research? What is the contribution to theory and practice of applying a qualitative method? (5) Conclusions: Any issue in thinking about this approach?</p> <p>10000 words maximum</p> <p>This essay must be delivered after the course is over. The assessment of your essay will consider the appropriateness of the selected method for your research question, the soundness and feasibility of your research design, and the overall quality of the manuscript.</p> <p>You will be asked to present the working paper in class. You will be assessed on the quality of this work as well as of the presentation. An excellent working paper will be characterized by accurate and comprehensive data collection procedure, rigorous analysis, and insightful observations.</p> <p>2. <i>In-class participation and other potential assignments</i> (30%). I expect active and intelligent engagement during the course. This involves <u>reading carefully and critically the assigned articles, being able to discuss these readings, and engaging with in-class discussions</u> of qualitative work. You may be given some specific assignments to be done in class. <u>Simple attendance will not earn you participation points.</u></p>
<b>Assessment language</b>	English
<b>Evaluation criteria and criteria for awarding marks</b>	<p>To pass the exam students must obtain a positive overall evaluation.</p> <p>It is relevant for the working paper and presentation: appropriateness of the selected method for your research question, the soundness and feasibility of your research design, and the overall quality of the manuscript, and clarity of presentation.</p> <p>It is relevant for the in-class participation and other potential assignments: critical thinking, insightful observations and discussion skills.</p>
<b>Required readings</b>	<p>All the slides of the lectures will be available to the students.</p> <p>Each week, I will assign a number of key readings that will help you understand how qualitative research is actually done. Course readings will include two types of articles (see detailed course plan): methodological articles</p>

and empirical pieces. These readings will be distributed to you via email.

When reading empirical articles, focus on methodological aspects: What did the authors do? How do they describe and justify the way in which they collected and analyze data? How do they report from their analysis? How do they try to reassure readers about the soundness of their conclusions? What are the most (and the least) convincing aspects of their method?

If you are interested in a comprehensive textbook, here are some of the most popular ones:

Creswell, J. 2012. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4<sup>th</sup> ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Denzin, N, and Lincoln, Y. 2011. *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Lincoln, Y.S. & Guba, E.G. 1985. *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Lee, T. W. 1999. *Using Qualitative Methods in Organization Research*. London: Sage.

Marshall, C. & Rossman, G. B. 2006. *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miles, M.B., Huberman, A.M. & Saldana, J. 2014. *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook – Third edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Patton M. Q. 2002. *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*, Newbury Park: Sage.

Silverman, D. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*, London: Sage