

**City University of Hong Kong**  
**Information on a Course**  
**offered by Department of Information Systems**  
**with effect from Semester A in 2012 / 2013**

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**Part I**

Course Title:	<u>Qualitative IS Research Methods</u>
Course Code:	<u>IS8004</u>
Course Duration:	<u>One Semester (13 weeks)</u>
Credit Units:	<u>2</u>
Level:	<u>R8</u>
Medium of Instruction:	<u>English</u>
Prerequisites:	<u>Nil</u>
Precursors:	<u>Nil</u>
Equivalent Course:	<u>IS8004M Qualitative IS Research Methods</u>
Exclusive Courses:	<u>Nil</u>

**Part II**

**1. Course Aims**

This course aims to equip IS research students with the necessary foundations and skills to evaluate and perform qualitative IS research at a postgraduate level.

## 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

*Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:*

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)
DEC1	Develop a strong sense of intellectual curiosity, challenge assumptions and positions, and engage in a shared process of enquiry	
DEC2	Develop critical thinking skills associated with knowledge creation that can be applied to real-world problem solving	
DEC3	Develop the ability to reflect on their own discovery and innovation process	
1.	Explain the nature of contemporary qualitative IS research in the context of behavioural IS research and in relationship to quantitative research methods.	2
2.	Describe current IS research directions, with a particular focus on qualitative methods.	3
3.	Apply appropriate qualitative methodologies to solve behavioural IS research problems.	3
4.	Develop a research proposal following suitable qualitative research methodologies.	2

(3: Relatively most focused ILOs; 2: moderately focused ILOs; 1: less focused ILOs)

## 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

*(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)*

Seminar: 2 hours per week

### TLA1: Seminar

The following items form the content of the seminar:

1. Introduction to and overview of qualitative IS research in the context of behavioural IS research and with reference to quantitative IS research.
2. Focused examination of specific qualitative research methods: including case studies, ethnography, and action research; modes: including hermeneutics, semiotics, narrative and metaphor; and qualitative data sources such as interviews, diaries, observations, documents and texts.
3. Detailed examination of selected qualitative IS research papers.

Participants are required to engage actively in discussion sessions during each seminar.

<b>ILO No.</b>	<b>TLA 1: Seminar</b>	<b>Hours/week (if applicable)</b>
DEC 1	2	
DEC 2	2	
DEC 3	2	
CILO 1	2	
CILO 2	2	
CILO 3	2	
CILO 4	2	

(1: Indirectly Supporting ILO; 2: Directly Supporting ILO)

#### **4. Assessment Tasks/Activities**

*(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)*

Coursework : 100%

AT1. In-class participation, including discussion (40%): The seminar will be designed to include opportunities for students to explore and discuss different empirical and methodological issues associated with qualitative IS research.

AT2. Critical Analysis (30%): Each student is required to present a critical analysis of one or more qualitative IS research papers.

AT3. Proposal Development (30%): Each student is required to develop a research proposal founded on a qualitative research methodology, demonstrating their ability to solve research problems.

<b>ILO No</b>	<b>AT1 (40%)</b>	<b>AT2 (30%)</b>	<b>AT3 (30%)</b>
DEC 1	2	1	2
DEC 2	2	2	1
DEC 3	2	2	1
CILO 1	2	1	1
CILO 2	2	1	1
CILO 3	1	2	2
CILO 4	1	2	2

(1: Indirectly Supporting ILO; 2: Directly Supporting ILO)

#### **5. Grading of Student Achievement:**

Grading is assigned based on students' achievement of ILOs in accordance to the defined grading criteria. Grading pattern: Standard (A+, A, A- .. C-, D, F)

## Part III

### Keyword Syllabus

1. Introduction to behavioural IS research: research designs and the roles of qualitative and quantitative methods; the evolution and status of qualitative IS research methods; the nature and characteristics of qualitative IS research, in comparison with quantitative IS research; areas of current qualitative IS research; characteristics of good qualitative research (with reference to standards for good quantitative IS research).
2. Conducting qualitative IS research: identifying a research problem; theory identification or building; research design and method(s) identification (whether quantitative, qualitative or a combination); measurement issues; specific research methods: case study research; action research; ethnography; data collection and analysis – texts, interviews, observations.

### Recommended Reading

#### General

Benbasat, I. and Zmud, B. (2003) The Identity Crisis Within the IS Discipline: Defining and Communicating the Discipline's Core Properties, MIS Quarterly, 27, 2, 183-194.

Benbasat, I. and Zmud, R. (1999) Empirical Research in Information Systems: The Practice of Relevance, MIS Quarterly, 23, 1, 3-15.

Iivari, J., Hirschhem, R. and Heinz, K. (2001) A Dynamic Framework for Classifying Information Systems Development Methodologies and Approaches, Journal of Management Information Systems, 17, 3, 179-218.

Landry, M. and Banville, C. (1992) A Disciplined Methodological Pluralism for MIS Research, Accounting, Management and Information Technology, 2, 2, 77-97.

Myers, M.D. (1997) Qualitative Research in Information Systems, MIS Quarterly, 21, 2, 241-242. MISQ Discovery, archival version, June 1997, [http://www.misq.org/discovery/MISQD\\_isworld/](http://www.misq.org/discovery/MISQD_isworld/). MISQ Discovery, updated version, last modified: May 13, 2010 [www.qual.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.qual.auckland.ac.nz)

Walsham, G. (1995) The Emergence of Interpretivism in IS Research, Information Systems Research, 6, 4, 376-394.

#### Action Research

Baskerville, R. (1999) Investigating Information Systems with Action Research, Communications of the AIS, 2, 19: online.

Davison, R.M., Martinsons, M.G. and Kock, N. (2004) Principles of Canonical Action Research, Information Systems Journal, 14, 1, 65-86.

Davison, R.M. and Vogel, D.R. (2000) Group Support Systems in Hong Kong: An Action Research Project, Information Systems Journal, 10, 1, 3-20.

Henfridsson, O. and Lindgren, R. (2005) Multi-Contextuality in Ubiquitous Computing: Investigating the Car Case through Action Research, Information and Organization, 15, 2, 95-124.

Iversen, J.H., Mathiassen, L. and Nielsen, P.A. (2004) Managing Risk In Software Process Improvement: An Action Research Approach, MIS Quarterly, 28, 3, 395-433.

Kohli, R. and Kettinger, W.J. (2004) Informating The Clan: Controlling Physicians' Costs And Outcomes, MIS Quarterly, 28, 3, 363-394.

Lee, A.S., Baskerville, R.L., Liebenau, J. and Myers, M.D. (1995) Judging Qualitative Research in Information Systems: Criteria for Accepting and Rejecting Manuscripts, Proceedings of the Sixteenth International Conference on Information Systems.

Mathiassen, L. (2002) Collaborative Practice Research, Information Technology & People, 14, 4, 321-345.

See <http://www.qual.auckland.ac.nz/action.aspx> for a longer list.

### **Ethnography**

Avison, D.E. and Myers, M.D. (1995) Information Systems and Anthropology: An Anthropological Perspective on IT and Organizational Culture, Information Technology & People, 8, 3, 43-56.

Bentley, R., Rodden, T., Sawyer, P., Sommerville, I., Hughes, J., Randall, R. and Shapiro, D. (1992) Ethnographically-Informed Systems Design for Air Traffic Control, CSCW '92. ACM 1992 Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work: Sharing Perspectives. New York, ACM Press, 123-129.

Harvey, L. and Myers, M.D. (1995) Scholarship and Practice: The Contribution of Ethnographic Research Methods to Bridging the Gap, Information Technology & People, 8, 3, 13-27.

Klein, H.K. and Myers, M.D. (1999) A Set of Principles for Conducting and Evaluating Interpretive Field Studies in Information Systems, MIS Quarterly, 23, 1, 67-93.

Myers, M.D. (1999) Investigating Information Systems with Ethnographic Research, Communication of the AIS, 2, 23, 1-20.

See <http://www.qual.auckland.ac.nz/ethrefs.aspx> for a longer list

### **Case Studies**

Benbasat, I., Goldstein, D.K. and Mead, M. (1987) The Case Research Strategy in Studies of Information Systems, MIS Quarterly, 11, 3, 369-386.

Dubé, L. and Paré, G. (2003) Rigor in Information Systems Positivist Case Research: Current Practices, Trends, and Recommendations, MIS Quarterly, 27, 4, 597-636.

Eisenhardt, K.M. (1991) Better Stories and Better Constructs: The Case for Rigor and Comparative Logic, Academy of Management Review, 16, 3, 620-627.

Lee, A.S. (1989) A Scientific Methodology for MIS Case Studies, MIS Quarterly, 13, 1, 33-52.

Lee, A.S. (1994) Electronic Mail as a Medium for Rich Communication: An Empirical Investigation Using Hermeneutic Interpretation, MIS Quarterly, 18, 2, 143-157.

Markus, M.L. (1983) Power, Politics and MIS Implementation, Communications of the ACM, 26, 430-444.

Myers, M.D. (1994) A Disaster for Everyone to See: An Interpretive Analysis of a Failed IS Project, Accounting, Management and Information Technologies, 4, 4, 185-201.

Orlikowski, W.J. (1996) Improvising Organizational Transformation Over Time: A Situated Change Perspective, Information Systems Research, 7, 1, 63-92.

Shanks, G. (1997) The Challenges of Strategic Data Planning: An Interpretive Case Study, Journal of Strategic Information Systems, 6, 69-90.

Walsham, G. (1995) Interpretive Case Studies in IS Research: Nature and Method, European Journal of Information Systems, 4, 74-81.

Yin, R.K. (2002) Case Study Research, Design and Methods, 3rd ed. Newbury Park, Sage Publications.

See <http://www.qual.auckland.ac.nz/case.aspx> for a longer list