

PIA8618: QUALITATIVE METHODS

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Qualitative Methods

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

8618

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

R8 - Research Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

POL8618 Qualitative Methods

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course enables post-graduate research students to develop competency in both theory and the application of qualitative methods that are commonly used in social sciences. It gives students an applied understanding of the fundamental

qualitative mode of enquiry and methods needed for social research and explores topics including: ethnography, interpretivist approaches and grounded theory and field interviews, focus groups and case studies. This course serves as a foundation for developing the ability of doctoral students to work methodologically as independent scholars using relatively advanced qualitative designs and techniques in their work.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Demonstrate a good understanding of major qualitative techniques often used in social science research	x	x	
2	Demonstrate understanding of the trade-off between alternative research approaches and analytic techniques	x	x	
3	Learn to implement research designs and translate them into qualitative methods for data analysis		x	x
4	Demonstrate capacity to translate analytic skills learned in the class to solving real problems in social science research			x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs	Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)	
1	Structured seminars	Students attend seminars in which different research approaches are discussed	1, 2, 3, 4	3 hours/week
2	Preparation material for seminars	Students study the material to be discussed in seminars	1, 2, 3, 4	
3	Student presentations	Students prepare and present one research approach and related qualitative methods in a group	1, 2	

4	Essay writing	Students write an essay that reflects on the applicability of various research approaches and related qualitative methods to their PhD topic	1, 2	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Class participation	1, 2, 3, 4	10	Students should actively participate in meetings.	Yes
2	Group presentation	1, 2, 3, 4	30	Students have to place a research approach and related qualitative methods amongst others.	No
3	Individual essay (4000 words)	1, 3	60	Students reflect on the relevance of research approaches and related qualitative methods for their PhD research.	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Class participation (10%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Willingness to contribute to class discussions by asking questions, making statements, debating and explaining issues related to qualitative research methods.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Always contributes to class discussions.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Often contributes to class discussions

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Occasionally contributes to class discussions

Marginal

(D) Rarely contributes to class discussions.

Failure

(F) Never contributes to class discussions

Assessment Task

Group presentation (30%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Ability to present knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent presentation of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good presentation of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Basic presentation of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Marginal

(D) Poor presentation of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Failure

(F) Inadequate presentation of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Assessment Task

Individual essay (60%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Ability to demonstrate knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent demonstration of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good demonstration of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Basic demonstration of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Marginal

(D) Poor demonstration of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Failure

(F) Inadequate demonstration of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Assessment Task

Class participation (10%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Willingness to contribute to class discussions by asking questions, making statements, debating and explaining issues related to qualitative research methods.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Always contributes to class discussions.

Good

(B+, B) Often contributes to class discussions

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Occasionally contributes to class discussions

Failure

(F) Never contributes to class discussions

Assessment Task

Group presentation (30%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Ability to present knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent presentation of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Good

(B+, B) Good presentation of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Basic presentation of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Failure

(F) Inadequate presentation of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods.

Assessment Task

Individual essay (60%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Ability to demonstrate knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent demonstration of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Good

(B+, B) Good demonstration of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Basic demonstration of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Failure

(F) Inadequate demonstration of knowledge of approaches to qualitative research and related methods, and capacity to translate these to research proposals with a high standard of writing, analysis and evaluation.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Qualitative/quantitative and mixed methods analysis, history of qualitative research, interpretive approaches, grounded theory, feminist research, critical research, postcolonial research, interviewing, discourse analysis, ethnography, focus groups, software applications.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Leavy, Patricia (2014) Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research, New York: Oxford University Press.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Crang, M (2005) Qualitative methods: there is nothing outside the text? Progress in Human Geography 29(2): 225-233.
2	Fontana, A and Frey, J. H (2000) The Interview: From Structured Questions to Negotiated Text. Denzin, Norman, K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (eds.) Handbook of qualitative research. London, Sage. 645-672
3	Galasiński, D and Kozłowska, O (2010) Questionnaires and Lived Experience: Strategies of Coping With the Quantitative Frame. Qualitative Inquiry 16(4): 271-284
4	Onwuegbuzie, A.J., Leech, N.L., (2005) On Becoming a Pragmatic Researcher: The Importance of Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Research Methodologies. International Journal of Social Research Methodology 8, 375-387.
5	Cope, M (2009) Transcripts (coding and analysis). In International Encyclopedia of Human Geography, Kitchin, R and Thrift, N (eds), Oxford: Elsevier; 350-354.
6	Manning, P.K and Cullum-Swan, B. (1994) Narrative, content and semiotic analysis. Denzin, Norman, K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (eds.) Handbook of qualitative research. London, Sage. 463-478
7	Guest, Greg; Namey, Emily E. and Mitchell, Marilyn L. (2013) Collecting Qualitative Data: A Field Manual for Applied Research. London: Sage. Chapter 3. H62 .G829 2013 http://www.sagepub.com/upm-data/48454_ch_3.pdf
8	Kitzinger, J., & Barbour, R. (Eds.). (1999). Developing focus group research: politics, theory and practice. London: Sage. Introduction: 1-20. H61.28 .D48 1999 http://www.sagepub.in/upm-data/9384_005836Ch1.pdf
9	Ali, S and Kelly, M (2004) Ethics and Social Research. Seale, Clive (ed) Researching Society and Culture, London, Sage: 58-73
10	Babbie, Earl R. 2010. The Practice of Social Research. Belmont, Calif : Wadsworth Cengage.

11	Denzin, Norman, K., and Yvonna S. Lincoln. (eds.) 2000. Handbook of qualitative research. London, Sage.
12	George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2004. Case studies and theory development in the social sciences. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press.
13	Gubrium, Jaber F. and James A. Holstein. (eds.) 2002. Handbook of interview research: context and method. London, Sage.
14	Seale, Clive. (ed.) 2004. Social research methods: A reader. London, Routledge.
15	Wysocoki, Diane Kholos. (ed.) 2004. Readings in social research methods. Toronto, Wadsworth.
16	Yin, Robert K. 2002. Case study research: Design and methods. 3rd edition. Sage Publications, Inc.
17	Brannen, J. (2005) Mixing Methods: The Entry of Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches into the Research Process. International Journal of Social Research Methodology 8, 173-184.
18	Basit, T. (2003) Manual or electronic? The role of coding in qualitative data analysis. Educational Research 45, 143-154.