

City University of Hong Kong
Course Syllabus

offered by Department of Information Systems
with effect from Semester A 2022 / 2023

Part I Course Overview

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

Part II Course Details

1. Abstract

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)

No.	CILOs	Weighting	Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate)		
			A1	A2	A3
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.	Describe current IS research directions, with a particular focus on qualitative methods.			✓	
3.	Apply appropriate qualitative methodologies to solve behavioural IS research problems.				✓
4.	Develop a research proposal following suitable qualitative research methodologies.				✓

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 self-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.

3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

Seminar: 2 hours per week

TLA	Brief Description	CILO No.							Hours/week (if applicable)
		DEC 1	DEC 2	DEC 3	1	2	3	4	
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.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	

4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

Coursework: 100%

Assessment Tasks/Activities	CILO No.							Weighting	Remarks
	DEC 1	DEC 2	DEC 3	1	2	3	4		
Continuous Assessment: 100 %									
<u>AT1. In-class participation, including discussion:</u> The seminar will be designed to include opportunities for students to explore and discuss different empirical and methodological issues associated with qualitative IS research.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	40%	
<u>AT2. Critical Analysis:</u> Each student is required to present a critical analysis of one or more qualitative IS research papers.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30%	
<u>AT3. Proposal Development:</u> Each student is required to develop a research proposal founded on a qualitative research methodology, demonstrating their ability to solve research problems.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	30%	
								100%	

5. Assessment Rubrics

Applicable to students admitted in Semester A 2022/23 and thereafter

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B)	Marginal (B-, C+, C)	Failure (F)
AT1. In-class participation, including discussion	Ability to explore and discuss different empirical and methodological issues associated with qualitative IS research.	High	Significant	Moderate	Not even reaching marginal levels
AT2. Critical Analysis	Ability to present a critical analysis of one or more qualitative IS research papers.	High	Significant	Moderate	Not even reaching marginal levels
AT3. Proposal Development	Ability to develop a research proposal founded on a qualitative research methodology, demonstrating their ability to solve research problems.	High	Significant	Moderate	Not even reaching marginal levels

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23

Assessment Task	Criterion	Excellent (A+, A, A-)	Good (B+, B, B-)	Fair (C+, C, C-)	Marginal (D)	Failure (F)
AT1. In-class participation, including discussion	Ability to explore and discuss different empirical and methodological issues associated with qualitative IS research.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
AT2. Critical Analysis	Ability to present a critical analysis of one or more qualitative IS research papers.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels
AT3. Proposal Development	Ability to develop a research proposal founded on a qualitative research methodology, demonstrating their ability to solve research problems.	High	Significant	Moderate	Basic	Not even reaching marginal levels

Part III Other Information

1. 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.

2. Reading List

2.1 Compulsory Readings

1.	Nil
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2.2 Additional Readings

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/. MISQ Discovery, updated version, last modified: May 13, 2010 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) Informing 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