

**PhD Course**  
**Qualitative Methods in Social Sciences**

Spring 2018  
[Department of Sociology](#)

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## **OVERVIEW**

### Learning outcomes

After completing the course, the student should be able to use, evaluate and critically review different qualitative methods within the social sciences.

### Content

The course will present various qualitative methods and engage students in discussions over specific technical aspects of these methods. Students will learn how to use the different methods through practical applications.

### Instruction

The course consists of lectures, training exercises and seminars. Both attendance to lectures and active participation in seminars are compulsory.

### Assessment

The course is examined through individual assignments.

## COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course is designed to provide PhD students with the opportunity to deepen their knowledge of qualitative research methods in social sciences and to make use of it.

Due to the limited amount of time we have we need to be both selective and organised. This means that we will only focus on four main types of qualitative research (including some variations): **participant observation/ethnography, in-depth interviewing, focus groups, comparison/case studies**. Closely related, five additional topics to deal with are **research design, ethics, grounded theory, qualitative discourse analysis and participatory action-research**.

Throughout the course we will practice fundamental skills of post-graduate level reading, writing, summarising, collecting and analysing data, and presenting arguments based on research. Students will present their research exercises during five seminars. The skills developed in the course are intended to support the planning and successful completion of your PhD thesis.

**The 9 lectures and 5 seminars will be conducted in English. All of your assignments will also have to be written in English.** A description of the written assignments is provided below and will be discussed during our meetings. You can also check <http://scriptor.sprakverkstaden.uu.se/en/> should you need complementary tips to improve your own academic writing.

Remember that it is essential that you read the literature **prior** to each lecture and seminar (including the first lecture), and that you complete the exercises listed below **before** the seminars. I expect each of you to stay abreast of the assigned readings, and to actively and insightfully participate in the discussions that we will have.

The maximum number of enrolled students is 12. Applications from outside the Department of Sociology will be reviewed according to students' background and motivation.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

**1. Reading Assignments and In-Class Discussion.** Every lecture will include the discussion of the assigned readings and the corresponding focal questions. You are therefore expected to attend, be prepared and participate.

A useful training to understand the suggested papers is ‘reverse outlining’ (i.e. academic articles breakdown), which forces you to reconstruct their underlying outline of arguments, structure and methodological choices.

**2. Research exercises in Seminars.** Five seminars will be scheduled. Conduct your research exercises and write them down before presenting them at the seminars.

**3. Methodological Essay.** Write a 3,000 to 4,000 word (not counting the references) analytical and reflective essay about qualitative methods. Option 1: Review one monograph that has a chapter on qualitative methods and may serve as a key reference for your PhD dissertation; critically discuss technical aspects (design, sampling, validity, implementation, etc.). Option 2: Develop a preliminary methodological chapter of your PhD dissertation based on qualitative methods; justify your methodological decisions, plans, arguments, etc.

## COURSE GRADING

Your final grade will be based on the quality of your performance on each of the following responsibilities and assignments: Participation in class discussions (up to 20%), Research exercises (up to 30%) and Methodological essay (up to 50%).

**Grading system:** Fail (U), Pass (G), Pass with distinction (VG).

## READINGS

Readings largely consist of journal articles and book chapters. They are listed below under each lecture and seminar session, and they will be available online when possible.

General guides for writing your essays and dissertation:

Becker Howard S. 2007. *Writing for Social Scientists*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 1999. *The Clockwork Muse: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses, Dissertations, and Books*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Tilly, Charles. 1984. *Big Structures, Large Processes, Huge Comparisons*. New York: Sage.

## CLASS SCHEDULE

### LECTURE #1

#### Overview on Qualitative Research Methods (Miguel A. Martínez)

Date: 22 March 2018

Time: 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ENG/2-1026 Torgny Segerstedt-rummet

#### Contents

- Research design with qualitative methods --why?
- How many qualitative research methods?
- How does qualitative sampling look like?
- How rigorous and reliable qualitative research must be?

#### Compulsory readings

Guba, E. & Lincoln, Y.S. 1994. Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 105-117.

Gentles, S. J., Charles, C., Ploeg, J., & McKibbin, K. 2015. Sampling in Qualitative Research: Insights from an Overview of the Methods Literature. *The Qualitative Report*, 20(11), pp. 1772-1789.

#### Supplementary readings

Mills, C. Wright. 1959. *The Sociological Imagination*. London: Oxford, Appendix: On Intellectual Craftsmanship.

Morse, J. M., Barrett, M., Mayan, M., Olson, K., & Spiers, J. 2002. Verification strategies for establishing reliability and validity in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 1(2), pp. 13-22.

**LECTURE #2**  
**Ethics in Qualitative Research** (Stina Bergman Blix)

Date: 29 March 2018

Time: 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ENG/2-1026 Torgny Segerstedt-rummet

Contents

- Research ethics.
- Professional codes.
- Consent agreements.

Compulsory readings

Punch, M. 1994. Politics and Ethics in Qualitative Research. In Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 83-97.

Brinkmann, Svend & Kvale, Steinar. 2005. Confronting the ethics of qualitative research. *Journal of Constructivist Psychology*, 18(2): 157-181.

Supplementary readings

Dench, Sally; Iphofen, Ron & Huws, Ursula. 2004. *An EU Code of Ethics for Socio-Economic Research*. Brighton: The Institute for Employment Studies.

ISA. 2001. Code of Ethics. <http://www.isa-sociology.org/en/about-isa/code-of-ethics/>

In addition, please, read carefully this before starting your fieldwork:

<http://www.codex.vr.se/en/forskninghumsam.shtml>

(especially <https://publikationer.vr.se/en/product/good-research-practice/>)

**LECTURE #3**  
**Participatory-Action Research** (Miguel A. Martínez)

Date: 5 April 2018

Time: 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ENG/2-1026 Torgny Segerstedt-rummet

Contents

- Positionality and political engagement –sympathy, empathy and synergy.
- Fake PAR.
- Methodological democracy?
- Participatory methods –workshops, plans, actions-performances.

Compulsory readings

Martínez, M., & Lorenzi, E. 2012. Autonomous Activist-Research: the Case of the Squatters' Movement in Madrid. *Revista Internacional de Sociología*, 70(2), pp. 165-184.

Streck, D. 2007. Research and Social Transformation: Notes about Method and Methodology in Participatory Research. *International Journal of Action Research* 3(1+2): pp. 112-130.

Supplementary readings

Fuster, Mayo. 2009. Action research: mapping the nexus of research and political action. *Interface: a journal for and about social movements* 1 (1): 21 – 45.

Hale, Charles R. 2011. What is Activist Research?  
[https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313514894\\_What\\_is\\_activist\\_research](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313514894_What_is_activist_research)

Hee Pedersen, Christina & Ravn Olesen, Birgitte. 2007. What Knowledge – Which relationships? Sharing Dilemmas of an Action Researcher. *International Journal of Action Research* 4(3), 254-290.

Lafazani, Olga. 2012. The Border between Theory and Activism. *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 11(2): 189-193.

Piven, F. F. 2010. Reflections on scholarship and activism. *Antipode* 42, pp. 806-10.

Udvarhelyi, Éva Tessa. 2013. Justice on the streets. Production of critical knowledge through participatory action research with homeless people in Budapest. DOI: 10.18030/socio.hu. 2013en.43

**LECTURE #4**  
**Participant Observation / Ethnography** (Stina Bergman Blix)

Date: 10 April 2018

Time: 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ENG/2-1026 Torgny Segerstedt-rummet

Contents

- Access to the field.
- Types of participation and observation.
- Researcher's role and representation.

Compulsory readings

Bergman Blix, S., & Wettergren, Å. 2015. The emotional labour of gaining and maintaining access to the field. *Qualitative Research*, 15(6), pp. 688-704.

Alan Fine, G., & Hallett, T. 2014. Stranger and stranger: creating theory through ethnographic distance and authority. *Journal of Organizational Ethnography*, 3(2), pp. 188-203.

McDonald, S. 2005. Studying actions in context: a qualitative shadowing method for organizational research. *Qualitative research*, 5(4), pp. 455-473.

Supplementary readings

Agar, M. 1986. *Speaking of ethnography*, Newburt Park: Sage.

Blackman, S. J. 2007. 'Hidden Ethnography': Crossing Emotional Borders in Qualitative Accounts of Young People's Lives. *Sociology*, 41(4), 699-716.

Desmond, M. 2016. *Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City*, New York: Crown Publishers.

Hage, G. 2009. Hating Israel in the Field On ethnography and political emotions. *Anthropological Theory*, 9(1), 59-79.

Katz, J. 2001. From how to why On luminous description and causal inference in ethnography (part I). *Ethnography*, 2(4), 443-473.

Katz, J. 2002. From How to Why On Luminous Description and Causal Inference in Ethnography (part II). *Ethnography*, 3(1), 63-90.

Okely, J. 2007. Fieldwork Embodied. *The Sociological Review*, 55: 65–79.

Willis, P., & Trondman, M. 2000. Manifesto for" Ethnography. *Ethnography*, 1(1), 5-16.

**LECTURE #5**  
**Focus Groups (Miguel A. Martínez)**

Date: 19 April 2018

Time: 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ENG/2-1026 Torgny Segerstedt-rummet

Contents

- Types according to the structure of questionnaires and the researcher's role.
- Group composition.
- Group dynamic.
- Researcher's participation.

Compulsory readings

Kitzinger, J., & Barbour, R. (Eds.). 1999. *Developing focus group research: politics, theory and practice*. London: Sage. Introduction, pp. 1-20.

Ruiz, Jorge. 2017. Collective Production of Discourse: an approach based on the Qualitative School of Madrid. In Barbour, Rosaline S. & Morgan, David L. (eds.) *A New Era in Focus Group Research*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 277-300.

Supplementary readings

Cameron, J. 2005. 'Focussing on the Focus Group', in Iain Hay (ed.), *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, Melbourne, Chapter 8.

Colucci, Erminia. 2007. "Focus Groups Can Be Fun": The Use of Activity-Oriented Questions in Focus Group Discussions. *Qualitative Health Research* 17(10): 1422–1433.

Kidd, P. & Parshall, M. 2000. Getting the Focus and the Group: Enhancing Analytical Rigor in Focus Group Research. *Qualitative Health Research* 10, pp. 293-308.



**LECTURE #6**  
**Qualitative Discourse Analysis** (Miguel A. Martínez)

Date: 3 May 2018

Time: 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ENG/2-1026 Torgny Segerstedt-rummet

Contents

- Qualitative and Critical Discourse Analysis.
- Units of analysis and coding –inductive and deductive approaches.
- Syntax, semantics and pragmatics of discourses.
- Foucauldian discourse analysis.

Compulsory readings

Ruiz, Jorge. 2009. Sociological Discourse Analysis: Methods and Logic. *Forum Qualitative Social Research* 10(2): art. 26. <http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1298/2882>

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1991. Language and symbolic power. Cambridge: Polity. Chapter **TBD**

**On Foucault TBD**

Supplementary readings

Banks, Marcus. 2001. “Encountering the Visual”, in *Visual Methods in Social Research*, pp. 13-42.

Cobley, Paul & Randviir, Anti. 2009. What is Sociosemiotics? *Semiotica* 173(1-4), pp. 1-39.

Elo, S. & Kynga, S H. 2008. The qualitative content analysis process. *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 62(1), pp. 107–115.

Knoblauch, Hubert; Schnettler, Bernt. 2012. “Videography: analysing video data as a ‘focused’ ethnographic and hermeneutical exercise”. *Qualitative Research*, 12 (3), pp. 334-356

Rose, Gillian. 2013. Chapters 1 and 2: “Researching with Visual Materials: A Brief Survey” and “Towards a Critical Visual Methodology”, in *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to Researching with Visual Materials (3rd Edition)*, pp. 1-40. See complementary resources here: <https://studysites.uk.sagepub.com/rose/home.htm>

Wodak, R., & Meyer, M. (Eds.). 2009. *Methods for critical discourse analysis*. Sage. Chapter 1.

**LECTURE #7**  
**Grounded Theory** (Greti-Iulia Ivana)

Date: 17 May 2018

Time: 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ENG/2-1026 Torgny Segerstedt-rummet

Contents

- Original assumptions and recent developments.
- Inductive approach and generalisation.
- How to implement GT in empirical research?

Compulsory readings

Glaser, Barney G. and Strauss, Anselm L. 2017 [1967]. The Discovery of Grounded Theory, in *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. Routledge, pp. 1-21.

Strauss, L. Anselm and Corbin, Juliet. 1994. Grounded Theory Methodology: an Overview. In Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp.273-85.

Strauss, L. Anselm and Corbin, Juliet. 1990. Grounded Theory Research: Procedures, Canons, and Evaluative Criteria, *Qualitative Sociology*, 13 (1), pp. 3-21.

Supplementary readings

Dey, Ian. 2007. Grounding Categories. In A. Bryman and K. Charmaz(eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory*. London: Sage, pp. 167-191.

Bryant, Anthony; Charmaz, Kathy (Eds). 2007. *The Sage Handbook of Grounded Theory*. Sage Publications.

Timmermans Stefan and Iddo Tavory. 2012. Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis. *Sociological Theory*, 30 (3), pp. 167-186.

**LECTURE #8**  
**In-Depth Personal Interviews** (Greti-Iulia Ivana)

Date: 29 May 2018

Time: 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ENG/2-1026 Torgny Segerstedt-rummet

Contents

- Types according to the structure of questionnaires and the researcher's role.
- How to facilitate an interpersonal conversation for research purposes?
- Non-theoretical formulation of questions.
- Follow-up questions.
- Implicit communication and body language.

Compulsory readings

Song, Miri; Parker, David. 1995. Commonality, difference and the dynamics of disclosure in in-depth interviewing. *Sociology*, 29(2), pp. 241–56.

Jacobsson, Katarina; Åkerström, Malin. 2012. Interviewees with an agenda: learning from a 'failed' interview. *Qualitative Research*, 13 (6), pp. 717-734.

Supplementary readings

Legard, R., Keegan, J., & Ward, K. 2003. In-depth interviews. In Jane Ritchie and Jane Lewis (eds.) *Qualitative research practice: A guide for social science students and researchers*, London; Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, pp. 138-169.

Morris, A. 2015. *A Practical Introduction to In-Depth Interviewing*. London: Sage. (Chapter 1)

Silverman, D. 2017. How was it for you? The Interview Society and the irresistible rise of the (poorly analyzed) interview. *Qualitative Research*, 17 (2): 144-158.

Weston, C., Gandell, T., Beauchamp, J. et al. 2001. Analyzing Interview Data: The Development and Evolution of a Coding System, *Qualitative Sociology*, 24: 381.

**LECTURE #9**  
**Case Studies and Comparisons (Greti-Iulia Ivana)**

Date: 1 June 2018

Time: 10:15 – 12:00

Venue: ENG/2-1026 Torgny Segerstedt-rummet

Contents

- What is actually a case?
- Where is the line of a case to be drawn?
- How many cases do I need?
- How can I compare cases?
- Is it possible to generalise from one case?

Compulsory readings

Ragin, Charles C. 1992. "Introduction: Case of "What is a Case? In Ragin, Ch. and Becker (Eds.) *What Is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*. Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1, pp. 1-17.

Small Mario L. 2009. "How many Cases do I Need?" On Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research. *Ethnography* 10(1), pp. 5–38.

Bengtsson, B. & Hertting, N. 2014. 'Generalization by Mechanism: Thin Rationality and Ideal-Type Analysis in Case Study Research', *Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 44, no. 6, pp. 707–32.

Supplementary readings

Thomas, Garry. 2016. *How to do your case study* (2nd Edition), Chapter 2- Case study and research design.

Gagnon, Yves C. 2010. *The Case Study as Research Method*. Presses de l'universite du Quebec. Stages 1 (Assessing Appropriateness and Usefulness) and 4 (Selecting Cases).

Elman, Colin; John Gerring and James Mahoney. 2016. Case Study Research. Putting the Quant Into the Qual. *Sociological Methods and Research*, 45 (3), pp. 375-391.

Date	Time	Venue	Activity	Professor
22 March 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	<b>Lecture 1: Overview on Quali. Methods</b>	Miguel A. Martínez
29 March 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	<b>Lecture 2: Ethics</b>	Stina Bergman Blix
5 April 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	<b>Lecture 3: Participatory-Action Research</b>	Miguel A. Martínez
10 April 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	<b>Lecture 4: Participant Observation / Ethnography</b>	Stina Bergman Blix
17 April 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	Seminar 1. Participant Observation / Ethnography	Stina Bergman Blix
19 April 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	<b>Lecture 5: Focus Groups</b>	Miguel A. Martínez
26 April 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	Seminar 2. Focus Groups	Miguel A. Martínez
3 May 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	<b>Lecture 6: Quali. Discourse Analysis</b>	Miguel A. Martínez
11 May 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	Seminar 3. Quali. Discourse Analysis	Miguel A. Martínez
15 May 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	Seminar 4. Visual Analysis	Greti-Iulia Ivana
17 May 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	<b>Lecture 7: Grounded Theory</b>	Greti-Iulia Ivana
24 May 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	Seminar 5. Grounded Theory	Greti-Iulia Ivana
29 May 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	<b>Lecture 8: In-depth Interviews</b>	Greti-Iulia Ivana
1 June 2018	10:15-12:00	ENG/2-1026	<b>Lecture 9: Case Studies / Comparisons</b>	Greti-Iulia Ivana