

Course Code	HP4002
Course Title	Qualitative Methods in Psychology
Pre-requisites	HP1000 Introduction to Psychology HP1100 Fundamentals of Social Science Research
No of AUs	4 AUs

Course Aims

The main purpose of this course is for students to acquire a thorough understanding of the theoretical foundations of qualitative methodology. The secondary goal is for students to obtain an empirical skillset for conducting qualitative research including those concerning study design, data collection, data analysis, report write-up, research presentation and dissemination. The course focuses on practical application with weekly opportunities to apply the theory and practice the techniques introduced in class.

Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Describe the philosophical foundations of empirical qualitative investigations
- 2) Identify and discuss major traditions of qualitative research in psychology
- 3) Discuss ethical considerations and researcher reflexivity of qualitative methodology
- 4) Explain and apply the criteria for assessing quality in qualitative research
- 5) Develop a qualitative research design and implement it
- 6) Identify and develop appropriate facilitation skills and moderation skills in conducting qualitative interviews and focus groups
- 7) Conduct qualitative interviews and/or focus group in the real world context
- 8) Discuss various coding frameworks and procedures for data analysis
- 9) Conduct qualitative content analysis
- 10) Write up and present qualitative results

Course Content

This course introduces the nature and logic of qualitative scientific inquiry, emphasizing the fundamental concepts of knowledge, reality, paradigm, ontology and epistemology. The theoretical underpinning and basic techniques of qualitative methodology for psychological research are covered, which include practical skills for conducting individual interviews and focus groups, grounded theory research and analysis, content analysis, domain analysis, as well as approaches for assimilating and presenting qualitative findings. Students are expected to complete weekly readings and weekly skill development tasks both in and out of the classroom, to carry out data collection, data analysis and dissemination presentations based on the methods and techniques covered in the course.

Assessment (includes both continuous and summative assessment)

Component	ILO Tested	Related Programme LO or Graduate Attributes	Weighting	Team/ Individual
1. Final Research Project	The final paper and presentation aims to test all 10 learning objectives	This component aims to enhance all 5 Graduate Attributes of the NTU framework, including communication, creativity, character,	50%	Team & Individual

		<p>competence and civic-mindedness.</p> <p>Communication is a significant aspect of the assignment as students will develop their writing skills and oral presentation skills.</p> <p>Creativity is encouraged as students synthesize and think critically about theories, concepts and empirical research relevant to any topic of their choice that is related to obtaining an in-depth understanding of a pressing social phenomenon using qualitative research methods.</p> <p>Character is nurtured through a team-based learning approach which requires self-initiation, determination, leadership, as well as respect and appreciation of diversity.</p> <p>Competence is enhanced through setting self-imposed deadlines, as well as the processes of appraising current literature relevant to a pressing social phenomenon, identifying gaps in research, and developing a pilot research programme to understand it.</p>		
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		Civic-mindedness is nurtured through developing a deeper understanding of a specific social problems faced by humankind in the 21 st centuries, while engaging in a pilot research study to illuminate it.		
2. Continuous Assessment 1 (CA1): In-Class Quiz 1 & 2	1, 2, 3, 4	Competence	20%	Individual
3. CA3: Critique of a Qualitative Research Paper	1,2, 3, 4	Competence	20%	Individual
4. CA2: Class Participation	5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10	Competence & Communication	10%	Individual
Total			100%	

Formative feedback

Feedback is central to this course. Students will receive verbal feedbacks from the course instructor about their class participation in the experimental activities immediately upon the conclusion of each activity. Students will also be provided with feedbacks and advice on their chosen topic for their final group project through recurrent meetings and discussions with the instructor throughout the academic semester, while as both written and verbal feedbacks will be provided for both the final group project written reports and oral presentations. Finally, students will receive written feedbacks for their critique assignment of qualitative research paper.

Learning and Teaching approach

Approach	How does this approach support you in achieving the learning outcomes?
Interactive Seminars	The course will be conducted in a manner that combines elements of both a lecture and seminar. This approach supports you in achieving the learning outcomes by encouraging individual learning as well as interactive, team-based learning involving debates, discussions, and experiential activities to develop specific qualitative research skills. The lecture materials, discussions and skills training activities aim to encourage you to think critically about issues concerning qualitative research, the practice and application of qualitative methods, while scrutinizing both the contributions and limitations of existing research paradigms and practices.

Reading and References

Students are required to purchase the following textbook:

Howitt, D. (2016). *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology*. (3rd ed.) NY: Prentice Hall.

Students are required to complete additional readings via books and academic journals that reflect the themes covered in class. All course materials are accessible through NTULearn.

Course Policies and Student Responsibilities

Students are expected to complete all assigned pre-class readings and activities, attend all classes punctually and complete all scheduled assignments and tests by due dates. Students are expected to take responsibility to follow up with course notes, assignments, and course related announcements for classes they have missed. Participation is expected in all discussions and activities. No make-up exam or extension will be given without a signed letter from a doctor or head of a university-sponsored extra-curricular program documenting illness. All exams missed will have a zero grade. As Psychology students, the guidelines of the American Psychological Association on referencing and citation are expected to be followed (see APA Publication Manual, 6th Edition).

Academic Integrity

Good academic work depends on honesty and ethical behaviour. The quality of your work as a student relies on adhering to the principles of academic integrity and to the NTU Honour Code, a set of values shared by the whole university community. Truth, Trust and Justice are at the core of NTU's shared values.

As a student, it is important that you recognize your responsibilities in understanding and applying the principles of academic integrity in all the work you do at NTU. Not knowing what is involved in maintaining academic integrity does not excuse academic dishonesty. You need to actively equip yourself with strategies to avoid all forms of academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, academic fraud, collusion and cheating. If you are uncertain of the definitions of any of these terms, you should go to the [academic integrity website](#) for more information. Consult your instructor(s) if you need any clarification about the requirements of academic integrity in the course.

Planned Weekly Schedule

Week	Topic	ILO	Readings/ Activities
1	<u>Introduction and Overview</u> 1. Class guidelines and review of syllabus 2. Discussion of required assignment activities	1	NA
2	<u>What is Qualitative Research</u> 1. Nature of Scientific Inquiry 2. Paradigms, Ontology and Epistemology 3. Choosing Qualitative or Quantitative Methods 4. Major Approaches to Qualitative Research	1, 2	• Chapter 1 of Required Textbook
3	<u>How to Begin Qualitative Research</u> 1. Structuring Research Questions: Inductive and deductive approach to qualitative inquiry, linear and spiral methods, and methods triangulations 2. Choosing Research Strategies: Conducting literature reviews, identifying valid sources of	2, 3, 5	• Chapter 2 of Required Textbook • Finalization of Student groups for Final Research Project

	<p>empirical data via appropriate sampling strategy</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Finding Objectivity within Subjectivity: The navigation of sensory reality, cognitive reality, and interpretive reality in research 4. Methodology Specificity: Accuracy and replicability of research methods, mixing methods 		
4	<p><u>Research Ethics & Research Rigor</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Institutional Review Board (IRB): Maintaining Ethical Boundaries in Research 2. Informed Consent and Participant Debriefing 3. Issues of Power and Researcher Reflectivity 4. Research Rigor: Issues of Trustworthiness and Quality 	3, 4, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 16 & 17 of Required Textbook • <i>Additional Reading:</i> Morrow, S.L. (2005). Quality and Trustworthiness in Qualitative Research in Counseling Psychology. <i>Journal of Counseling Psychology, 22</i>, 250-260.
5	<p><u>Qualitative Interview</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Interview Performance: Role-Taking, Deference Rituals, and Establishing Rapport 2. Structuring an Interview: Questions and Methods 3. Establishing Flow: Interviewing techniques 4. Staying Organized: Managing interview data 	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 3 of Required Textbook
6	<p><u>Focus Groups</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Background and typical use of focus group: Commonality and Uniqueness compared to other qualitative techniques 2. Role of group facilitators: Strategies to navigate sensitive topics in focus group 3. Group Composition and Dynamics: Understand the populations and scenarios for which focus groups are most effective 4. Staying Organized: Managing focus group data 	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 4 of Required Textbook • Film for Flipped Classroom Presentation: Big Fish [2004]
7	In-class Quiz 1 & Course Review	-	-
8	<p><u>Critical Ethnography & Participatory Action Research</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Critical Ethnography versus Neutrality: Finding the Middle Ground between Sterile Objectivity and Researcher Involvement 	4, 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 5 of Required Textbook

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Key Players: Identifying and Winning Over a Gatekeeper, Guide, and Star 3. Translating Data: Intersection between objective observer and active researcher 4. Community Partnership: Research Participants as expert to foster social change 		
9	<u>Qualitative Data Analysis 1</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Using Interviewing and Personal Documents to Illuminate the Social World 2. Create Objectivity and Generalizability in a Subjective, Individualized World 3. Transcription and Determining Unit of Analysis 4. Thematic/Content Analysis and Grounded Theory 	8, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chapter 6, 7, 8 of Required Textbook • <i>Additional Reading:</i> Hsieh, H.F., & Shannon, S.E. (2005). Three Approaches to Qualitative Content Analysis. <i>Qualitative Health Research</i>, 15, 1277-1288.
10	<u>Qualitative Data Analysis 2</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coding: Using narratives for finding patterns 2. Model Building: Connecting and elaborating patterns 3. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis 4. Domain/Framework Analysis 	8, 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Assignment: Chapter 12 & 13 of Required Textbook • <i>Additional Reading:</i> Gale, N., Heath, G., Cameron, E., Rashild, S., & Redwood, S. (2013). Using the framework method for the analysis of qualitative data in multi-disciplinary health research. <i>BMC Medical Research Methodology</i>, 13, 117.
11	<u>Assimilation & Reporting Qualitative Research</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Presenting Qualitative Data 2. Writing Qualitative Reports 3. Ensuring Quality in Qualitative Research 	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading Assignment: Chapter 15 & 18 of Required Textbook
12	In-class Quiz 1 & Research Consultation for Final Research Project	8, 9, 10	-
13	Group Presentation for Final Research Project	5-10	