



Syllabus

Qualitative research Methods - 59535

Last update 25-10-2015

HU Credits: 2

Responsible Department: *global community development studies*

Academic year: 0

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Dr. Amelia Weinreb

Coordinator Email: Amy.Weinreb@huji.mail.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Mondays and Tuesdays

Teaching Staff:
Ms. Amelia Weinreb

Course/Module description:
Course Description

This course explores qualitative social science research, characterized as inductive, non-statistical, interpretive and exploratory. Qualitative research is considered valuable in that it can reveal unexpected and profound insights into individuals, cultures, societies, and the human condition at large. It can often uncover information that would otherwise be concealed. Yet, how can narratives, confessions, ethnographic observations, conversations, informal interviews, artifacts and archives--the "stuff" of qualitative research--constitute sources of valid, empirical data? In order to answer this question, the course walks students through the steps of academic research with a qualitative focus: How to identify a good research question, choose an appropriate data collection method and research design, address research bias, gain first-hand experience applying methods during a unique, two-day, off-campus research practicum, and finally, transform field data into academic text through preliminary analysis. Although the focus is on qualitative research, the course also contains short units on sampling and surveys, presented by a specialist in quantitative research methods. A particular emphasis throughout the course is anticipating and solving research problems that may emerge in developing world fieldwork settings.

Course/Module aims:

The course walks students through the steps of academic research with a qualitative focus: How to identify a good research question, choose an appropriate data collection method and research design, address research bias, gain first-hand experience applying methods during a unique, two-day, off-campus research practicum, and finally, transform field data into academic text through preliminary analysis. Although the focus is on qualitative research, the course also contains short units on sampling and surveys, presented by a specialist in quantitative research methods. A particular emphasis throughout the course is anticipating and solving research problems that may emerge in developing world fieldwork settings.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, students will have developed the skills to:

- Transform a general topic of interest into a strong, specific research question*
- Design a basic research project*
- Gain first-hand experience implementing qualitative research methods*
- Practice preliminary steps of data analysis and argumentation*
- Conceptualize the importance of the unexpected in qualitative research*

Attendance requirements(%):

80%

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Course Format

This seminar is designed to be series of lively, interactive meetings in which students are encouraged to participate through articulating and synthesizing ideas with clarity, accuracy and thoughtfulness, and defending their positions through evidence based on our common reading list. Each meeting, the course is divided three segments:

- A brief, instructor-led discussion establishes the context and background for the readings and outlines their key arguments and ideas in the reading (15 mins).*
- Two student discussion leaders, designated in advance, will raise questions, stimulate debate, and integrate ideas from the readings and course core concepts into our collective analysis (20 mins).*
- A workshop enables students to engage interactively with core elements of the reading as applied to a project or activity (30 mins).*

Course/Module Content:

Date

Main Topics

Readings to be completed before class

Evaluation, due dates, work to do at home

Week 1

Oct. 20 Opening Day of Class

-Introduction to the class; its structure, and expectations.

In-class workshop: induction and deduction

No No assigned reading prior to opening day

Week 2

Oct. 27 The Foundations of Social Research

-Variables

-Measurement and Concepts

-Units of Analysis

-Validity and Reliability

In-class workshop on operational definitions and units of analysis. Ber Bernard, Chapter 2: pp. 23-54

B

Due: Syllabus Response Read the syllabus carefully, and write a paragraph-long response explaining what surprises you, what captures your attention; what you look forward to; and what you most dread on the syllabus?

Student leaders: 1- page papers due electronically 5pm, evening before class

Week 3

Nov. 3 Preparing for Research

- Research topics*
- Literature search*
- Building theory*

In-class workshop: transforming topics in to research questions

Bernard, chapter 3: pp. 54-82 Student leaders: 1-page papers due 5pm, evening before class

Week 4

Nov. 10 Qualitative Research Design

- Project Scope*
- Designing for Validity*
- Project Pacing*

In-class workshop: preliminary design for practicum Richards, chapter 4: pp. 76-103

Student leaders: 1- page papers due 5pm, evening before class

Week 5

Nov. 17 Interviewing 1: Unstructured and Semi-Structured

- Types of probes*
- Presentation of the self*
- Recording*

In-class workshop: testing out types of probes

Bernard, chapter 8: pp. 156-186 Student leaders: 1- page papers due 5pm, evening before class

Week 6

Nov. 24 Participant observation

- Entering the field*
- Skills of a participant observer*
- Rapid assessment, rapid ethnographic assessment*

In-class workshop: Building memory, note-taking strategies Bernard, chapter 12: pp. 256-290

Student leaders: 2- page papers due 5pm, evening before class

DUE: Proposals for fieldwork practicum

Week 7

Dec. 1 Field Notes and Data Base Management

In-class workshop: Jottings, descriptive notes, and analytic notes

Bernard, Chapter 13: pp. 291-305

Student leaders: 2- page papers due 5pm, evening before class

Week 8

Dec. 8 FEILDWORK PRACTICUM :SOUTH TEL-AVIV

(TUE. DECEMBER 8-WED. DECEMBER 9)

Week 9

Dec. 15 Qualitative Data Analysis

In class workshop: A second, deeper look at our collective data from South Tel-Aviv

O'Connor and Gibson, pp. 64-90 Student leaders: 2- page papers due 9pm, night before class

Week 10

Dec. 22 Quantitative Research I: Sampling Basics, Nonprobability Samples, and Choosing Informants

Visiting guest lecturer, Dr. Alex Weinreb

Bernard, pp. 113-119; 127-129, 201-209;

Week 11

Dec. 29 Quantitative Research II: Questionnaires

Visiting guest lecturer, Dr. Alex Weinreb

In-class workshop: writing questions Bernard, pp. 199-209

Week 12

Jan. 5 The Nature of Mixed Methods Research

In-class workshop: Pros, cons and feasibility of mixed methods in various real-life circumstances.

Cresswell and Clark, pp. 1-18

Week 13

Jan. 12 Quiz: core concepts of qualitative research

Week 14

Jan. 19 Final party:

International food and drink, student presentations, course assessment and feedback as group DUE: Final Analysis paper

Required Reading:

Course Readings

Our readings are largely comprised of selections from H. Russel I Bernard's *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (fifth edition, 2011), along with some supplementary online readings. This course, however, requires the purchase of a "coursepack," a bound, hard copy of all course readings. I ask that students bring the coursepack with them to each class meeting, and I expect that each student will have evidence of a close and thorough reading: i.e. having marked important segments of the text, written notes and comments in the margins, and highlighted the author's argument.

Additional Reading Material:

Course/Module evaluation:

End of year written/oral examination 0 %
Presentation 0 %
Participation in Tutorials 0 %
Project work 55 %
Assignments 0 %
Reports 0 %
Research project 0 %
Quizzes 25 %
Other 20 %
Participation

Additional information:

Course Requirements and Grading

20%: Seminar participation, engagement with readings, discussion leadership and attendance

Regular attendance is not only the key to individual student success as a student in this course, but also for the quality of the course as a dynamic whole. Arriving late and leaving early disrupt class flow, so make every effort to arrive to class on time with your materials prepared, and phones off. This is a highly interpersonal and interactive seminar, and while students may take notes on their computers if they are accustomed to doing so, there will be times I will ask students to shut down all electronics and interact without them. Since this is an afternoon course and we will all need an energy boost, coffee, tea and light refreshments will be served, and all students will be asked to help keep our refreshment supplies stocked.

5% Discussion leadership paper : When you lead discussion (with a partner), each individual in that pair will write their own 500-word, double spaced paper that poses a question, and then answers that question based on the reading for that day. These questions should be designed to be engaging, thought provoking and informative, stimulate discussion and debate, and will help you navigate the course. Be sure the 500-word paper:

- a) States your question clearly in bold font*
- b) Includes an answer*

The answer can be creative, and include reflections, reactions, critical commentaries or overviews. However, the short papers will be graded on their writing quality, attention to facts, examples and details that appear in the assigned reading for the day reading as well your thoughtfulness. The 500-word typed responses are due to me as an email attachment by 5pm the evening before your student group leads discussion, and I recommend bringing a printed copy for your own reference on the day that you lead.

20%: Proposal of research question, research design, and work-plan for final project Groups of 3-5 students will select a case study on gender and development and submit a three-page mini-proposal. I will provide a rubric that may serve as both the guide for constructing the project in advance and that will also serve as the scorecard for grading the proposals, which require the following elements:

- a) Presents a clear research question that begins with "how" or "why"*
- b) Establishes the historical, political and cultural context to explore the question*
- c) Summarizes the debates surrounding the question, based on a literature review*
- d) Summarizes theories that help frame answers to the question*
- e) Provides a description of the interventions that attempted to address the problem, if any*
- f) Offers an analysis of why the intervention succeeded and failed, why, and by what measures*
- g) Describes the nature of the secondary data to be collected for the project*
- h) Outlines a flexible but thorough six-week work plan describing how each group member will carry out their project as a team.*

30% Final Collaborative Project:

The Student groups will present a final project based on their research proposal. I will provide a rubric that may serve as both the guide for constructing the final project in advance and that will also serve as a scorecard for grading. The final project will be composed of a maximum of 20 presentation slides