



## College of Social Sciences

<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>Applied Qualitative Methods</b>
<b>Course Code:</b>	SPS5035
<b>Course Co-ordinator:</b>	Dr Jo Ferrie
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<b>Location:</b>	<b>1001</b> , Adam Smith Building
<b>Office hours:</b>	by appointment

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**Workshops: Mondays** 3pm - 5pm from 7th January – 11th March 2019 **Semester Two** (10 weeks)  
**VENUE:** Joseph Black Building, Room C305

**Tutorial/Peer-Learning Space: Tuesdays, Thursdays or Fridays** (attend only the one indicated on your MyCampus timetable) 2pm-3pm. All in 712 of the Adam Smith Building starting week beginning 14<sup>th</sup> January, with the last week starting the 11<sup>th</sup> March.

### Course Description

Applied Qualitative Methods is intended as a lively, challenging and interactive forum for learning and critically thinking about qualitative methods. While it offers advanced learning, it is perhaps better understood as applied as we construct a learning environment that faces the pragmatic barriers to producing strong and credible qualitative research. The course is designed to push students' analytical thinking with respect to the role of qualitative enquiry and the need to pursue rigour in its implementation. The course is designed to follow on from the Qualitative Methods Module, and to suit the training needs of those students for whom qualitative methods and ethnography are likely to be central to their research.

The Applied Qualitative Methods course aims to bring a stronger critical focus to (i) the processes of designing, gathering and analysing qualitative materials and (ii) the socio-political and ethical issues which arise as part of these processes. In particular the course stresses the personal and 'people' skills required to become an adept qualitative researcher, skills that will be developed through exercises during the course and through the course assessment. The course also aims to provide students with hands-on experience of using different approaches in order to both generate and analyse qualitative data and will allow for critical self-reflection on the qualities required for conducting effective qualitative research.

Peer-Learning Spaces are used to critically reflect on the core readings available. This will not be led by a tutor, but by the students themselves, with some guidance on how the session could be structured.

### Learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of the range and potential of qualitative research practice.
- Employ principles of qualitative research design which enable robust approaches and rigour in pursuing qualitative approaches to research.
- Be able to employ widely used techniques for the systematic analysis and interpretation of qualitative materials.
- Recognise the routes through which theory may be developed and linked to the range of techniques used for writing qualitative research.

### Assessment

The sole assessment (100% of the total course mark) will be in the form of a 4000 word essay which reflects critically on the *process* of carrying out qualitative research. This assessment should be submitted by **Tuesday 9th April 2019**. Submission instructions will be given in semester two.

In preparation for this essay students should conduct and analyse a small piece of qualitative research based on one or more of the methods explored during this course and write up a critical analysis of this research experience. Students may for example conduct a small number of interviews, undertake a piece of (participant) observation, or run a small focus group. Findings may be analysed with or without the use of computer software.

The essay itself should take the form of a **reflective research report** and include:

- (i) an introductory section providing context and background for the qualitative work carried out;
- (ii) a theoretically grounded explanation of why the method(s) of both data collection and analysis chosen were the most relevant;

- (iii) a discussion of the processes of data gathering and analysis which is both reflexive and self-critical where appropriate;
- (iv) a discussion of the main findings of the research which is both reflexive and self-critical where appropriate;
- (v) a clearly demonstrated awareness of relevant ethical issues.

It may be advisable to speak to the course co-ordinator or the relevant tutor(s) when deciding how to approach this task and which method(s) to use.

### **Ethics approval**

In order to carry out your small piece of qualitative research you will need to obtain ethical approval. You will submit these to the Course Administrator by 4pm on the 8<sup>th</sup> February 2019.