

Course Title: Qualitative Methods - PhD and M.Res students only.

MSc students must enrol on SPS5037 (see separate course outline in webpages for SPS5037)

Course Code: SPS5042

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Location: SCCJR, Ivy Lodge, 63 Gibson Street

Office hours: Tuesdays 3.15-5pm

Lectures: Tuesdays 5.00pm – 6.30pm (18th September 2018 – 27th November 2018, 11 consecutive weeks)

VENUE: St Andrew's Building, Room 213

Dissertation Training: *Students only attend ONE of the sessions listed below and should select the one they wish to attend when enrolling in MyCampus. Please note that spaces in each group are allocated on a first come, first served basis.*

Week beginning 24th September – week beginning 26th November (10 consecutive week)

TUT01: ASB, Room 712, Tuesday 6.45pm-7.45pm

TUT02: Gilmorehill Halls, Room 217b, Tuesday 6.45-7.45pm

TUT07: ASB, Room 712, Wednesday 2-3 pm

TUT08: 5 The Square, Room 131, Wednesday 2-3

Introduction

Qualitative methods are those research techniques concerned broadly with non-mathematical, naturally occurring and non-experimental research practices that look to uncover the meanings and significance of the wide variety of evidence that social researchers collect. Qualitative research includes a broad range of approaches and techniques. The purpose of the course is to introduce students to a number of the most commonly used of these approaches and techniques. These tools include in-depth interviews and focus groups as well as the gathering of data based on observation and textual information. The course aims to develop a practical understanding of the philosophical underpinnings, application and analysis of qualitative methodology for those working in the social sciences.

Course Aims

The lectures are designed to give students grounding in why social science researchers use particular qualitative methodologies and how they may fit into a broader examination of society. The lectures are divided into three blocks: Research Design, Strategy, and Practical Skills; Data Collection Methods; and Analysis. The tutorials are designed to give students time to try out, discuss and critically examine how qualitative methods work in practice. The goals of the course are to give students a) robust introductory knowledge of a range of qualitative methods; b) the ability to build a solid research design; c) the skill to find appropriate qualitative methods that relate to their inquiries and d) the tools and experience to start to implement qualitative methods such as interviewing, focus groups, and analysis with skill and confidence. In addition to methods and research design skills, students acquire skills pertaining to the practicalities of the research process, such as structuring a qualitative dissertation, reviewing and using literature in appropriate ways, and meeting ethical standards and procedures.

Intended Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course students will be able to:

- Demonstrate a critical understanding of the different epistemological and ontological positions inherent in different qualitative approaches.
- Recognise the theoretical, political and cultural context of one's research agenda.
- Have a robust knowledge of the different qualitative methods of enquiry and the data collection strategies available.
- Understand the mechanics of sampling and case selection strategies and their implications for the generation of research findings.
- Understand, critically evaluate, and demonstrate the process of constructing a robust research design that uses qualitative methods.
- Understand criteria for evaluating qualitative research and principles of good practice, including credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, reliability, transparency, validity, reflexivity, social responsivity, ethics, and rigour.
- Have a first impression of software solutions for supporting qualitative inquiry.

Summative Assessment

90%: 4,000 word research proposal in response to a given scenario, a development of formative assessment 2 (see 22 below). To be submitted by **4 p.m. on Wednesday 9th January 2019 (submission instructions will be provided during the course).**

10%: participation in formative assessments and peer review.

Formative Assessment

Three 'patches', delivered after each block of the course.

1. Critique of the methodology of a published paper, assessing the quality of the qualitative research reported. (1,000 words)
2. Very brief research design (500 words) and discussion of ethics (500 words) in relation to a given scenario. (1,000 words)
3. Analysis (using software) and write-up of an excerpt of anonymised data, plus write-up (write-up of 1,000 words)

Each of these will be peer-reviewed by two other students using Aropä, a web-based system developed by the University for peer review (to be used repeatedly). Following the peer review, tutors will give feedback on the quality of the peer feedback received by those in their tutorials.

Further details concerning the assessment will be circulated in class during late September/early October 2018.

Course Delivery

The course will be delivered as a weekly 90-minute lecture and one weekly hour-long tutorial.

Students are expected to read the required reading associated with each class before each session (further details will be available towards the beginning of Semester 1).

Enrolment

As with all courses, spaces are limited so it is important that you enrol as soon as you are fully registered. To enrol on this course, ensure that you have completed financial and academic registration on MyCampus and then follow the instructions found here: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/registry/enrolment/#/>
The course code required to enrol in Qualitative Methods is SPS5037 (for MSc students) or SPS5042 (for MRes and PhD students).

SPS5042 is only designed for MRes and PhD students. SPS5037 is designed only for MSc students. Please enrol in the appropriate course for your degree.

Before registering you **must** contact your own Academic Unit to check the status of this course as an accredited option within their research training programme.

Note: Further details concerning the course will be provided during Semester 1.