

Research methods (Part II): Qualitative methods

Course duration – Eight weeks, term I, 2026

Medium of instruction: Mandarin / English if needed

Course mode – Theory

Class duration: 3 hrs

Venue: 225

Instructor: Dr. CHANG, Shih-Chien (張時健), chang17tw@gmail.com

Course description and specifications

Course description

In social science, qualitative methodology is primarily used to explore meanings, experiences, practices, and social processes that cannot readily be reduced to numerical data. Beyond this operational distinction, qualitative approaches are grounded in ontological and epistemological assumptions that differ from those associated with quantitative research. These differences have generated continuing debates over what constitutes scientific knowledge. Importantly, such debates are fundamental not only to qualitative inquiry but also to the critical evaluation of quantitative research.

For this reason, this eight-week course begins with an introduction to the qualitative research paradigm and its philosophical foundations. It then introduces major research methods, with particular emphasis on fieldwork and qualitative interviewing, to help students develop their own research plans.

Course intended learning outcomes (CILOs)

After completing the lessons, the student shall

1. Understand the epistemological thinking behind qualitative methods.
2. Propose critical questions on phenomenon and discourses for his/her following research process.
3. Employ acceptable qualitative method(s) to collect data.
4. Generate findings and conclusions with qualitative data-analysis tool(s).

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

- Lecture - 60%
 - The lecturer demonstrates the related disciplines, concepts, rules, theories, cases, and operational procedures under each topic.
- Seminar - 40%
 - The students are divided into groups to study related academic materials. Each group will present their study outcome in-class in 30 mins for everybody's advanced learning and reflexive thinking.

Assessment

Attendance 5%

Participation: 15%

Seminar presentation (individual): 30%

Final project (individual): 50%

- Attendance (5%)

- This item is based on the individual's roll call record. Roll call will be done in the beginning of each session. A student will have 1 point if s/he enters classroom before the roll call finishes and 0.5 points after it. S/he shall have 0 due to absence. The sum of the points a student has in the semester represents his/her attendance marks. The student's absence record can be written off when s/he presents acceptable certificate for sick leave or compassionate leave.

- Participation (15%)

- The participation is based on the student's performance in and after class. The more a student delivers feedback to the teaching topics, including asking relevant questions and engaging in discussion, the more marks in this part s/he gets.
- Students are welcomed to have discussions with the lecturer during the office hours when they need further clarification of concepts presented in class, or assistance about the homework assigned. An appointment beforehand via email is necessary for the discussion.
 - Assessment criteria
 - Frequency 70%
 - Relevance 30%

- Seminar presentation (individual) 30%

- Each student has to complete the assigned tasks and present the outcome in class.
- Assessment criteria
 - Performance in beforehand tutorial 40%
 - Organization 40%
 - Presentation expression 10%
 - Reflexive thinking 10%

- Final project (50%)

- There are two parts of final project.
 - To propose a qualitative research proposal which includes background, literature review, research questions, and qualitative method.
 - To conduct pilot study to collect qualitative data, complete initial analysis, and generate first-round findings.
 - To have an in-class presentation in 20 mins to brief the project.

Required and optional texts

Please refer to the list under each topic. The first two materials are required and the others are optional.

- Required textbooks

- Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell.
- Mytton, G., Diem, P., & Dam, P. H. v. (2015). *Media Audience Research: A Guide for Professionals* (3rd ed.). New Delhi: Sage.
- Babbie, E. R. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing.

-Optional textbooks for advanced learning.

- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.
- Gray, P. S., Williamson, J. B., Karp, D. A., & Dalphin, J. R. (2007). *The Research Imagination: An Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Cambridge, UK.: Cambridge University Press.
- Patton, M. Q. (2014). *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods: Integrating Theory and Practice*. London: Sage.
- Peterson, M. A. (2003). *Anthropology & Mass Communication: Media and Myth in the New Millennium*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Rothenbuhler, E. W. (Ed.) (2005). *Media Anthropology*. London: Sage.
- Grimes, R. L. (2014). *The Craft of Ritual Studies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Thornton, P. H., Ocasio, W., & Lounsbury, M. (2012). *The Institutional Logics Perspective: A New Approach to Culture, Structure and Process*. Oxford, UK.: Oxford University Press.

Teaching schedule

9. WHAT IS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH? THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

1. Teaching method: Lecture & tutorial
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. The definitions and development
 2. The theoretical foundations
3. Learning activities
 1. Tutorial
 1. Brief your research proposal in 10 mins.
 2. Grouping
 1. Group with those having similar topics.
4. Home assignment
 1. My questions vs. their questions
 1. List your original research questions from given topic(s)
 2. Locate academic literatures (at least three) which share similar research questions. They shall employ qualitative methods.
 3. Revise your research questions (at least three) based on the references above.

5. Required materials

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. ch. 3.

Babbie, E. R. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing. ch. 1, 2.

6. Optional materials

Zelizer, B. (2004). When facts, truth, and reality are God-terms: on journalism's uneasy place in cultural studies. *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies*, 1(1), 100-119. doi:10.1080/1479142042000180953

Ryfe, D. M. (2018). A practice approach to the study of news production. *Journalism*, 19(2), 217-223.

Cook, T. E. (2006). The news media as a political institution: Looking backward and looking forward. *Political Communication*, 23(2), 159-171. doi:10.1080/10584600600629711

Sparrow, B. H. (2006). A research agenda for an institutional media. *Political Communication*, 23(2), 145-157. doi:10.1080/10584600600629695

10. LITERATURE REVIEW FOR QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: META-SYNTHESIS

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar

2. Key topics and concepts:

1. The purposes of meta-synthesis

2. How meta-synthesis works.

3. Learning activities

1. Seminar: My questions vs. their questions

4. Home assignment

1. Have five **keywords** for your topic

2. Locate the **literatures** relevant to your research, including three (at least) required and three (at least) optional. (six in total and qualitative only)

3. Three key **researchers**

4. Key conceptual / **theoretical frame**

5. Compile the literature reviews to generate two (at least) **research questions** (RQs)

5. Learning materials

Chaffee, S., & Lieberma, D. (2001). The challenge of writing the literature review. In A. Alexander & W. J. Potter (Eds.), *How to Publish Your Communication Research* (pp. 23-46). London: Sage.

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. ch. 3.

Babbie, E. R. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing. ch. 2.

Erwin, E. J., Brotherson, M. J., & Summers, J. A. (2011). Understanding qualitative metasynthesis. *Journal of Early Intervention*, 33(3), 186-200.

Walsh, D., & Downe, S. (2004). Meta-synthesis method for qualitative research: a literature review. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 50(2), 204-211.

11. INTERVIEW PLANNING AND DESIGN (CHECKPOINT-01)

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. The epistemology behind interview
 2. How it works.
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar

1. Presentation: The literature review and RQs

4. Home assignment
 1. Identify the used methods in references.
 2. Describe the method you like to use
5. Learning materials

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. ch. 7

Babbie, E. R. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing. ch. 10.

12. RESEARCH DESIGN: SAMPLING AND PROPOSALS

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. How to justify the sampling strategy
 2. Prepare your proposals for entering a field / accessing data.
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
4. Home assignment
 1. The data source
 2. The strategies for accessing the data
 3. Data analysis method
5. Learning materials

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. ch. 4.

Babbie, E. R. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing. ch. 3

13. FIELD ROLES, NOTES AND FOCUS.

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. The epistemology behind field work
 2. How it works.
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar: Pilot study: What I learned from participants.
4. Home assignment
 1. Pilot study: What I learned from participants.
 1. Conduct one interview (at least)
 2. Complete the transcription
 3. Map the participant's points to your research questions.
 4. The issues of mapping (gap between participant's response and research questions)
5. Learning materials

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. ch. 5, 6.

Babbie, E. R. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing. ch. 10.

林開世. (2016). 什麼是「人類學的田野工作」？知識情境與倫理立場的反省. 考古人類學刊, 84, 77-110.

6. Optional materials

Usher, N. (2014). *Making News at The New York Times*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Gans, H. J. (1979/2004). *Deciding What's News: A Study of CBS Evening News, NBC Nightly News, Newsweek, and Time* (25th Anniversary ed.). Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.

Tuchman, G. (1973). Making news by doing work: Routinizing the unexpected. *American Journal of Sociology*, 79(1), 110-131.

Tuchman, G. (1972). Objectivity as strategic ritual: An examination of newsmen's notions of objectivity. *American Journal of Sociology*, 77(4), 660-679.

14. INTERVIEW PRACTICE (CHECKPOINT-02)

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. The epistemology behind interview
 2. How it works.
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar: My research proposal
 - 1. Presentation: The**
4. Home assignment
 1. More interviews to improve the validity
 1. Fix the gap to improve the validity of interview questions.
 2. Conduct one (at least) more interview
 3. Complete the transcription
 4. Map the participant's points to your research questions.
5. Learning materials

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. ch. 8.

Babbie, E. R. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing. ch. 10.

15. DATA ANALYSIS I: THE GROUND THEORY

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Introduce ground theory
 2. How ground theory applied to qualitative data-analysis.
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar: More interviews to improve the validity
4. Home assignment
 1. Analysis: Comparison for findings
 1. Conduct one (at least) more interview
 2. Complete the transcription

3. Map the participant's points to your research questions.
4. Generate standard points (findings) from the given three interviews
5. Learning materials

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. ch. 9.

Babbie, E. R. (2009). *The Practice of Social Research* (12th ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Publishing. ch. 13.

16. DATA ANALYSIS-II: DISCOURSE/NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

1. Teaching method: Lecture & seminar
2. Key topics and concepts:
 1. Power structure and impact
 2. Subject and object: who are active and who are not.
 3. Role playing and script.
3. Learning activities
 1. Seminar
4. Home assignment
 1. Applying discourse analysis to your data.
5. Learning materials

Gee, J. P. (2010). *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and method*. New York, NY.: Routledge.

Leeuwen, T. v. (2008). *Discourse and Practice: New Tools for Critical Discourse Analysis*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.

17. WRITING YOUR PAPER / PRESENTATION

1. Teaching method: Tutorial
2. Key topics and concepts
 1. Qualitative Q&A via tutorial
3. Learning activities
 1. Tutorial
 1. Research issues for discussion
4. Home assignment
 1. Finalize your research (congratulations!!)
5. Learning materials

Tracy, S. J. (2020). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell. ch. 11.