



Course Title: Qualitative Research Methods - 6 ECTS

Type of course: Compulsory doctoral program course

Year of study: 1st or 2nd study year

Semester: II semester (Spring)

Number of credits allocated: 6 ECTS

Name of lecturer: Professor dr. Paul Hibbert University of St Andrews, ph24@st-andrews.ac.uk

Language of instruction: English

Room: 303

Overview and Purpose

This course is designed to give participants the opportunity to learn about and practice qualitative research methodology as it is formulated and applied in business, management and organization studies.

Course Objectives

Participants will:

- (1) Increase their understanding and knowledge of different approaches to qualitative research methods in organization studies.
- (2) Increase their ability to formulate and conduct all aspects of qualitative research methods (design, data collection, data analysis, theorization).
- (3) Develop their ability to use and demonstrate critical thinking skills, including accounting for their own positionality and reflexivity.
- (4) Understand and apply good qualitative research practice in the development of academic articles.

Learning outcomes

Course learning outcomes (CLO)	Study methods	Evaluation methods
CLO1 Be able to understand different approaches to qualitative research studies in organization studies.	Analyzing pre-assigned readings; participating in seminars.	Participation in class discussions; reflective reviews of literature
CLO2 Be able to formulate and conduct all aspects of qualitative research methods (design, data	Analyzing pre-assigned readings; participating in	Participation in class discussions; reflective reviews of literature; preparation and

collection, data analysis, theorization).	seminars; individual research project.	presentation of a research project.
CLO3 Be able to develop their ability to use and demonstrate critical thinking skills, including accounting for their own positionality and reflexivity.	Analyzing pre-assigned readings; participating in seminars; individual research project.	Participation in class discussions; preparation and presentation of a research project.
CLO4 Be able to understand and apply good qualitative research practice in the development of academic articles.	Analyzing pre-assigned readings; independent reading; participating in seminars; individual research project.	Reflective reviews of literature; preparation and presentation of a research project.

Key Resources

- (1) Myers, M.D. 2019. *Qualitative Research in Business & Management, 3rd Edition*. London: Sage. (The second and first editions are similar)
- (2) Selected articles and chapters as identified in the course syllabus.

Topics for each Day¹

Day	Topic	Required Preparatory Reading	Optional Resources
1	<i>Introduction and research philosophy</i>	Myers (2019), Ch. 2, 4, 5	Cunliffe (2011)
	Study design	Myers (2019), Ch. 3	
	Reflexivity and researcher positionality	Hibbert (2021), Ch. 2	Hibbert et al. (2010)
2	<i>Data collection & analysis</i>		
	Interviews	Myers (2019), Ch. 10	
	Fieldwork/Observation	Myers (2019), Ch. 11	
	Documents	Myers (2019), Ch. 12	
	Analytical techniques	Myers (2019), Ch. 13	Langley (1999)
3	<i>Analytical approaches</i>		
	Grounded Theory	Myers (2019), Ch. 9	Locke (2001)
	Thematic Analysis	Braun & Clarke (2006)	Reay et al (2006)
	Reflexive Analysis	Hibbert et al. (2019)	Hibbert et al (2014)
	Case studies	Smith (2014)	Yin (2009)
	Other approaches	Myers (2019), Ch. 13	

¹ 9:00-10:30 Lecture, 10:30-10:45 Coffee break, 10:45-12:15 Lecture, 12:15-13:15 Lunch break, 13:15-14:45 Lecture

4	<p><i>Display, theorization & writing</i></p> <p>CAQDAS</p> <p>Showing your data</p> <p>Developing Theory</p> <p>Writing</p>	<p>O’Kane et al. (2021)</p> <p>Reay et al. (2019) Gioa et al. (2012)</p> <p>Klag & Langley (2013)</p> <p>Myers (2019), Ch. 17,18 Pratt (2008)</p>	<p>Dalkin et al. (2021)</p> <p>Hibbert et al (2022)</p> <p>Wright et al (2021)</p> <p>Golden-Biddle & Locke (2007) Huff (1999)</p>
5	<p><i>Presenting Qualitative Research</i></p>	<p>Participant Presentations (each presents short version of their paper / proposal; class discussion & feedback on each other’s work)</p>	

Class time: 09:00 to 12:30 - Participant preparation and assignments in the afternoons

Approach

This is a seminar-based course that builds on open discussion among all participants. Everyone should read all required readings and come to class prepared for engaged conversations. Participants are welcome to engage with the optional material and engage in independent reading, although this is not essential for effective engagement in the class.

Course Website

Course materials and other information will be posted through MS Teams where possible; you should access articles and books through the usual library and database systems..

Grading and Assignments

100 total points are allocated for assignments. Each assignment will be assessed on a 1-10 point scale and accumulated to assign your earned grade. The final grade will be assigned based on the ABCDEF grading system, as below:

Required knowledge, %	Grade	Definition	Equivalent in ECTS	Pass/fail system
$95 \leq x < 100$	10	Excellent	A	PASS
$85 \leq x < 95$	9	Very good	A	
$75 \leq x < 85$	8	Good	B	
$65 \leq x < 75$	7	Highly Satisfactory	C	
$55 \leq x < 65$	6	Satisfactory	D	
$50 \leq x < 55$	5	Sufficient	E	
$40 \leq x < 50$	4	Insufficient	FX	FAIL
$30 \leq x < 40$	3	Insufficient	F	
$20 \leq x < 30$	2	Insufficient	F	
$0 \leq x < 20$	1	Insufficient	F	

Assignments must be handed in on time. If unexpected situations arise (such as illness, or other life events) please notify the instructor as soon as possible. Points for missed assignments will be transferred to the final paper.

Grading allocations

Assignment (more detailed explanations below)	Percent Allocated	Due Date
Participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Active input based on reading materials throughout the term. 	20	Ongoing
Reflection Papers (10 points each – best 4 of 5) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2 page reflection paper on each day’s readings 	40	Each day before class starts, by email
Final Paper <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Short journal-standard paper – focus on methodology and presentation of findings 	40	May 23, 2025 by email, or through ISM MS Teams
Total	100	

Explanation of Assignments:

Class Participation (20 percent)

Since this is a seminar class, full participation is required. In addition to attending class, participation includes active input into discussions. Participation points will depend on your contribution quality, e.g. how well you bring in concepts from readings; build on ideas of others; add new insights to readings; offer a different, unique, and relevant perspective on an issue; extend rather than repeat others’ comments; demonstrate reflective thinking; or expand understanding by asking clarifying and/or thought-stimulating questions.

Written Reflection Paper (10 percent each – best 4 out of 5)

Each day, participants must write and hand in a 2-page reflection paper regarding the materials assigned for discussion that day. This is an opportunity to practice using your critical thinking skills. You should write about your thoughts regarding the assigned reading – usually in light of your qualitative research project for this course.

Please email to ph24@st-andrews.ac.uk or upload through MS Teams. Each reflection paper will be marked out of 10. Marks are returned within two weeks of the completion of the course.

Final Paper (40 percent)

Due May 23, 2025.

The object of the assignment is for participants to apply their knowledge about qualitative methodology in writing a short scholarly paper.

Participants will develop a short paper, of around 5000-8000 words, based on qualitative data collected from at least two different sources that inform the same topic. For example, you might write a paper that contributes to the literature on identity work. To do this, you need to collect qualitative data in at least two ways – e.g. interview data, observational data or documents or other texts. This gives you the opportunity to analyze the data in a way that involves triangulation. The final paper should be complete – but the focus is on the methodology section and the presentation of findings.

Participants will present their work in progress – towards the complete paper – in class on April 4, 2025.

We will discuss the expected format and content for this assignment in class, both on the first and last days of the course.

The final paper must be submitted to the instructor by email (ph24@st-andrews.ac.uk) or through MS Teams by **May 23, 2025**. Please convert your document to a pdf before submitting. (Early submissions are very welcome.)

I will acknowledge receipt of your assignments by e-mail, within 2 working days.

References

Please note: Required and optional readings are included in this list.

- Alvesson, M., 2003. Beyond neopositivists, romantics, and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research. *Academy of Management Review*, 28(1): 13-33.
- Cunliffe, A. L. 2011. Crafting Qualitative Research: Morgan and Smircich 30 Years On. *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4): 647-673.
- Cunliffe, A. L. (2022). Must I Grow a Pair of Balls to Theorize about Theory in Organization and Management Studies? *Organization Theory*, 3(3): 1-28.
- Dalkin, S., Forster, N., Hodgson, P., Lhussier, M. & Carr, S. M. 2020. Using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS; NVivo) to assist in the complex process of realist theory generation, refinement and testing. *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 24(1):123–134.
- Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. 2012. Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1): 15-31.
- Gill, M. 2014. The possibilities of phenomenology for Organizational Research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1): 15-31.
- Gill, M. 2015. Elite identity and status anxiety: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of management consultants. *Organization*, 22(3): 306–325.
- Golden-Biddle, K. & Locke, K. 2007 *Composing Qualitative Research*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE
- Hibbert, P. 2021. *How to be a Reflexive Researcher*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Hibbert, P., Beech, N., Callagher, L. & Siedlok, F. 2022. After the pain: Reflexive practice, emotion work and learning. *Organization Studies*, 43(5): 797–817.
- Hibbert, P., Coupland C. & MacIntosh, R. 2010. Reflexivity: recursion and relationality in organizational research processes. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management*, 5(1): 47-62.
- Hibbert, P., Sillince, J., Diefenbach, T. & Cunliffe, A. 2014. Relationally reflexive practice: A generative approach to theory development in qualitative research. *Organizational Research Methods*, 17(3): 278-298.
- Hodder, I. 2000. The interpretation of documents and material culture. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, 2nd edition: 703-716. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

- Huff, A.S., 1999. *Writing for Scholarly Publication*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Jarzabkowski, P., Bednarek, R. & Le, J.K. 2014. Producing persuasive findings: Demystifying ethnographic textwork in strategy and organization research. *Strategic Organization*, 12(4): 274-287.
- Kellogg, K. 2009. Operating room: Relational spaces and microinstitutional change in surgery. *American Journal of Sociology*, 115: 657-711.
- Klag, M. & Langley, A. 2013. Approaching the conceptual leap. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 15: 149-166.
- Langley, A. 1999. Strategies for theorizing from process data. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(4): 691-710.
- Langley, A. & Abdallah, C. 2011. Templates and turns in qualitative studies of strategy and management. *Research Methodology in Strategy and Management*, 6: 201-235.
- Langley, A., Smallman, C., Tsoukas, H. & Van de Ven, A. 2013. Process studies of change in organization and management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1): 1-13.
- Locke, K. 2001. *Grounded theory in management research*. London: Sage.
- Myers, M. 2019. *Qualitative Research in Business & Management, 3rd edition*. London: Sage.
- O’Kane, P, Smith, A., & Lerman, M. 2021. Building Transparency and Trustworthiness in Inductive Research Through Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software. *Organizational Research Methods*, 24(1): 104-139.
- Pratt, M. G. 2008. Fitting oval pegs into round holes: Tensions in evaluating and publishing qualitative research in top-tier North American Journals. *Organizational Research Methods*, 11(3): 481-509.
- Reay, T. 2014. Publishing Qualitative Research. *Family Business Review*, 27: 95-102.
- Reay, T., Zafar, A., Monteiro, P. & Glaser, V. 2019. Presenting Findings from Qualitative Research: One Size Does Not Fit All! Chapter in *Research in the Sociology of Organizations, ‘The Production of Managerial Knowledge and Organizational Theory: New Approaches to Writing, Producing and Consuming Theory’*
- Smith, W. 2014. Dynamic Decision Making: A Model of Senior Leaders Managing Strategic Paradoxes. *Academy of Management Journal*, vol. 57 no. 6 1592-1623
- Stake, R. E. 2006. *Multiple case study analysis*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Yin, R. K. 2009. *Case study research: Design and methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.