

Stockholm University
Department of Sociology
Vanessa Barker

Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences 7.5 credits
HT 2012

Course Plan

1. Decision

The course plan has been approved by the Board of the Department of Sociology, Stockholm University as of June 2012.

2. General Information

The course consists of 7.5 ECTS credits and is at the Advanced Level.

3. Course Code

SO7040

4. Education requirements

Bachelor degree or 3 semesters of Sociology.

5. Course Description

This course aims to introduce advanced students to a range of qualitative methods and techniques for data processing and data analysis. We examine the underlying logic of different qualitative methods and how qualitative researchers approach questions of causality, inference, conceptualization, measurement and social meaning in social science research. Students will become familiar with a range of techniques for data collection and specific methods for interpreting and analyzing data. Students will conduct independent field research and apply a specific qualitative method and technique to data analysis on a selected topic.

6. Intended Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and describe a range of qualitative methods for data processing
- Demonstrate knowledge of the underlying logic of different qualitative methods
- Evaluate different qualitative methods and techniques for data collection
- Evaluate different qualitative methods and techniques for data analysis
- Apply a specific type of qualitative method to data analysis

7. Teaching & Learning Activities

The course is provided at half time basis for 10 weeks. Teaching is conducted through lectures, seminars, and student-centered activities. Students are expected to do the following:

- Complete assigned reading before each class meeting;
- Participate actively in class discussion;
- Conduct independent Field Research;
- Complete written assignments;

8. Assessment

Assessment is based on how well students accomplish the Intended Learning Outcomes (outlined above) as demonstrated in written work and participation. Each assignment is weighted and scaled as follows:

AQM Paper	90%
Participation	10%

Course Work is evaluated according to the following standard reference criteria:

A= This grade is earned when the student demonstrates his/her ability to apply a specific AQM to a particular research problem in a sophisticated, reflexive, coherent, consistent, and logical way. The student can analyze both advantages and limitations of the particular method selected. The student can accurately compare, contrast, and critically evaluate varying qualitative approaches to research design and carry out an independent research project using AQM. The student is engaged in class discussion and actively participates, demonstrating a high level of understanding of core principles of AQM.

B= This grade is earned when the student demonstrates his/her ability to apply a specific AQM to a particular research problem in a coherent and consistent way but may lack a reflexive or sophisticated understanding of the underlying principles. The student can analyze both advantages and limitations of the particular method selected but may place more emphasis on one or the other. The student can accurately compare, contrast, and critically evaluate varying qualitative approaches to research design and carry out an independent research project using AQM. The student is engaged in class discussion and participates, demonstrating a solid level of understanding of core principles of AQM.

C= This grade is earned when the student demonstrates his/her ability to apply a specific AQM to a particular research problem in a coherent way but lacks a reflexive or sophisticated understanding of the underlying principles. The student has some difficulty explaining the advantages and limitations of the particular method selected. The student can accurately compare and contrast varying qualitative approaches to research design but may show difficulty in critical evaluation. The student can carry out an independent research project using AQM but may need substantial guidance. The student is engaged in class discussion and participates, demonstrating a basic level of understanding of core principles of AQM.

D= This grade is earned when the student has some difficulty demonstrating his/her ability to apply a specific AQM to a particular research problem in a coherent way. The student can explain some of the advantages and limitations of the particular method selected but may also include inaccuracies and weak understanding. The student cannot accurately compare and contrast varying qualitative approaches to research design and cannot sufficiently critically evaluate them. The student has difficulty carrying out an independent research project using AQM without substantial guidance. The student is disengaged from class discussion and demonstrates a lower level of understanding of core principles of AQM.

E= This grade is earned when the student some difficulty demonstrating his/her ability to apply a specific AQM to a particular research problem in a coherent way. The student can explain some of the advantages and limitations of the particular method selected but may also include

inaccuracies and weak understanding. The student cannot accurately compare and contrast varying qualitative approaches to research design and cannot sufficiently critically evaluate them. The student has difficulty carrying out an independent research project using AQM without substantial guidance. The student is disengaged from class discussion and demonstrates a very low level of understanding of core principles of AQM.

Fx= This grade is earned when the student cannot complete the work assigned for the course. The student cannot apply a specific AQM to a particular research problem in a coherent way. The student cannot explain the advantages and limitations of the particular method selected without inaccuracies. The student cannot accurately compare and contrast varying qualitative approaches to research design and cannot sufficiently critically evaluate them. The student cannot carry out an independent research project using AQM without substantial guidance. The student is disengaged from class discussion and demonstrates a very low level of understanding of core principles of AQM.

F= This grade is earned when the student cannot complete the work assigned for the course. The student cannot apply a specific AQM to a particular research problem in a coherent way. The student cannot explain the advantages and limitations of the particular method selected without inaccuracies. The student cannot accurately compare and contrast varying qualitative approaches to research design and cannot sufficiently critically evaluate them. The student cannot carry out an independent research project using AQM without substantial guidance. The student has not attended at least half of the class meetings.

Note: E grade is needed to pass the course. Fx indicates that the student is offered the opportunity to upgrade his/her course work as long as the course is provided in order to achieve at least E grade. A student with E grade is not entitled to redo course work to raise his/her grade. Students who receive Fx or F on course work twice from the same instructor can request to be evaluated by another instructor. Such a request should be sent to the Director of Studies. Students can request to have course work according to this syllabus up to three semesters after it ceases to be valid. Such a request should be sent to the Director of Studies.

9. Preliminary schedule of class meetings and location

Schema

Day	Date	Time	Topic	Location
Tuesday	4 Sept	9-10	AQM: Overview	E387
Tuesday	4 Sept	10-12	AQM by PhD thesis: Tiziana Sardiello	E387
Tuesday	4 Sept	13-15	Principles of Qualitative Method	
Tuesday	11 Sept	12-14	Theory & Evidence	F320
Tuesday	18 Sept	8-10	What is a Case?	D299
Wednesday	19 Sept	14-16	Field Research & Narrative Inquiry Elena Bogdanova	F220
Monday	24 Sept	8-10	Data Analysis	D397
Tuesday	25 Sept	9-11	Ethnography: Ethnography Unbound Shahram Khosravi	F397
Wednesday	26 Sept	9-11	Causality: Big Structures, Large Processes and Huge Comparisons	D239
Wednesday	26 Sept	12-14	Interviewing in practice: Mikaela Sundberg	D255
Monday	1 Oct	12-14	Life Course: Adrienne Sörbom	E487
Wednesday	3 Oct	13-15	Analyzing Talk and Text	F299
Monday	8 Oct	11-13	Visual Methodology: Árni Sverrisson	D215
Wednesday	10 Oct	11-13	Comparative & Historical Analysis	A5137
Wednesday	31 Oct	9-13	Presentations	D239
Wednesday	31 Oct	9-13	Presentations	D255

10. Required Literature:

Denzin, Norman and Yvonna Lincoln. 2011. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 4th Edition*

10. Topics and Reading assignments

Denzin, Norman and Yvonna Lincoln. 2011. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research, 4th Edition*

Other articles available online or on Mondo

Ethical Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects in Social Science Research

Nb: Reading Assignments to be finalized

11. Recommended Literature:

Anderson, Elijah. *Code of the Street*.

Becker, Howard. *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While you are Doing it*.

Buraway, Michael. 1991. *Ethnography Unbound: Power and Resistance in the Modern Metropolis*

Creswell, John W. 1998. *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design*

Gerring, John. 2007. *Case Study Research: Principles and Practices*

Gubrium, Jaber and James Holstein. 1997. *The New Language of Qualitative Method*.

Mahoney and Rueschemeyer. 2003. *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*

King, Gary, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*.

Klinenberg, Eric. 2012. *Going Solo: The Extraordinary Rise and Appeal of Living Alone*

Moore, Barrington. *Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy: Lord and Peasant in the Making of the Modern World*.

Ragin, Charles and Howard Becker. 2000. *What is a Case? Exploring the Foundations of Social Inquiry*

Skocpol, Theda. *States and Social Revolutions*.

Strauss and Corbin. 1998. *Basics of Qualitative Research*

Tilly, Charles. *Big Structures, Large Processes and Huge Comparisons*