

# *MNGT-E1011 Qualitative Research (3 ECTS)*

## **SYLLABUS**

Version Feb 26, 2024

Instructor's contact information	Course information
Name: Kathrin Sele Email: kathrin.sele@aalto.fi	Status of the course: Advanced Academic Year 2023-24, Period: IV Location: on campus Language of Instruction: English Course Website: MyCourses
Office hours: Thursday, 9-10 (send email to book time)	

### 1. LEARNING OUTCOMES

#### **Students will demonstrate knowledge of:**

- The basic epistemological underpinnings of qualitative research.
- A range of qualitative methodologies (ethnography, case study, etc.).
- A range of qualitative methods of data collection (interview, field notes, etc.) and analysis (thematic analysis, narrative analysis, etc.).
- The practical challenges of undertaking fieldwork.

#### **Students will develop the following skills:**

- The ability to design qualitative research and make an informed choice about the appropriate use of qualitative research methodologies and methods.
- The competence to collect qualitative data 'in the field'.
- The aptitude to analyze qualitative data manually.
- The capacity to critically reflect on both the content and process of a research project and to identify potential ethical issues.
- The proficiency to discuss and write about qualitative research in a clear and concise manner.

### 2. COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENT

- To pass the course, the participants are required to contribute actively to the different learning activities. Attendance and active participation in **4/6** lectures.
- Readings (come to class prepared i.e., read the chapters that are assigned to each class) and if available lecture recordings.
- Assignments and evaluation
- Assignment 1 – 2, 20% of course work.
  - Evaluation: pass/failed. No possibility of redoing them.
  - Note: All the assignments must be done on time even if you do not attend class.
- Final Paper, 30% of course work, **100% of the course grade.**
- To pass the course, the student will have to gain a **'pass' from all assignments**. Acknowledging the possibility of unexpected network problems, traffic jams, power outages, computer failures, etc. a 1-hour grace period is granted. Assignments submitted within this 1 hour will be graded for full credit. **All late submissions beyond the grace period are failed**, apart from those that are due to sickness.

- In case of sickness, please **send a medical certificate to [pia.lahti@aalto.fi](mailto:pia.lahti@aalto.fi)** and inform the course teacher about it. You can get as many extra days to finish your assignment as your medical certificate states. Please send the late submission to the course teacher via email.
- **NOTE:** None of the completed assignments nor attendance can be transferred from one course to the next in case you drop out or fail the course. Make sure you finish the course in one go.

### 3. CONTENT AND TIMETABLE

Time	Topic	Readings and Assignments
Mo 26.02 09.15-12.00 U3 – U141 (Undergrad Center)	Joint lecture between the Qualitative Research and Quantitative Research courses  What is research?  Difference between qualitative and quantitative research	Required readings: Coursebook Introduction (chapter 1), Research Philosophy (chapter 2)
We 28.02 14.15-17.00 V001- Jenny ja Antti Wihurin Rahasto (BIZ)	Qualitative research  Finding topics, asking questions  Qualitative research process  <i>Exercise: Developing RQs</i>	Required readings: Coursebook Research Design and Process (chapter 3), Research Question and Literature Review (chapter 4), Introduction to Qualitative Data (chapter 7)
Mo 04.03 09.15-12.00 U006 (BIZ)	Qualitative data  Interviewing  Ethnography (and action research)  <i>Exercise: Taking fieldnotes</i>	Video lectures: Coursebook Access and Relationships (chapter 5) and Ethics in Research (chapter 6)  Required readings: Coursebook Interviews and Observations (chapters 8) and Ethnographic Research (chapter 12)  <b>Turn in Assignment 1 by 08.00 in MyCourses and be prepared to share your RQs with peers.</b>
Mo 11.03 09.15-12.00 U006 (BIZ)	Discourse analysis  Case study research  <i>Exercise: Designing a case study</i>	Video lecture: Action Research, Netnography and Autoethnography (CB chapter 13) and Narrative Research (CB chapter 16)  Required readings: Coursebook Case Study Research (chapter 11), and Discourse Theoretical Research (chapter 17)  Paper reading tba
Mo 18.03 09.15-12.00 U006 (BIZ)	Analyzing qualitative data  <i>Exercise: Coding in action</i>	Required readings: tba  <b>Download and read the data set for the analysis before the lecture.</b>  <b>Turn in Assignment 2 by 08.00 in MyCourses and be prepared to share your interview guide with peers in class.</b>

Mo 25.03 09.15-12.00 U006 (BIZ)	Writing and assessing qualitative research (incl. research ethics)  <i>Exercise: Improving interview guides</i>	Required readings: Coursebook Writing Process (chapters 21) and Evaluation (chapter 22)
We 27.03 9.00-17.00 2 <sup>nd</sup> floor BIZ / Zoom	Tutoring meetings	Possibility to discuss your final paper. Please reserve a time (15 min/student)
<b>THU 12.04</b>	<b>Final paper</b>	<b>Turn in the final paper in MyCourses by 23.59.</b>

#### 4. ASSIGNMENTS

##### **Assignment 1 – Introduction to your research** (max. 500 words in English)

Explicate the title of your research (If you are not yet working on your thesis pick an imaginary topic that interests you and work on it throughout the course). Write a short introduction to the topic by elaborating why the topic is important (to you, society, and research). Explicate the research literature you will be drawing upon in your research. Please make sure that you support all your arguments and literature choices with references. Write down your research question and remember to make it focused and contextualized.

##### **Assignment 2 – Interview guide**

Make a prompt interview guide to your planned/imaginary research. Start by telling 1) what is your research question(s)? (If you are not doing an interview research, find a topic of your interest and formulate a research question) and 2) what kind of interviews you are going to make (structured, semi-structured, open, narrative, focus group) and why? Then 3) make a prompt interview guide to your planned/imaginary research – keep the questions qualitative & make sure that you cover the main themes of your thesis (if you know what they are). It is important that the interview guide reflects the type of research you are doing (processual, narrative, etc.).

Remember this is not a survey, so keep your questions qualitative. Also, pay attention to the clarity and language of your questions i.e., do not use language that is too theoretical and/or not familiar to your interviewees. Please, read lecture slides and course readings before you start making the guide.

##### **Technical instructions for the assignments 1-2**

- Times New Roman 12 cpi; all margins 2,5; spacing 1.
- No cover page. On top of each paper write your name and student number & the number of the assignment and the word count.
- Make references according to the APA style.

##### **Declaring the use of AI**

- Add a disclaimer at the end of your submission (not counted toward word count) wherein you specify whether and how you used AI to produce the assignment. Be as transparent as possible.

### Assignment 3 – Final paper (1500-2000 words in English) excluding references.

Write a methodology chapter of your ongoing/upcoming/imaginary thesis. The text should not be a general introduction to a certain method. Instead, focus on how the methodological choices made can assist you in answering your research question. Start with:

- A brief introduction and motivation for the study that ends with your research question(s) & a brief positioning of the study i.e., what is the research literature you will converse with. **Use references when positioning your study!** (max 2/3 page)
- Describe why you have chosen a qualitative approach and what is specific about it;
- What is the general qualitative tradition you will follow in your research (ethnography, narrative research, discourse analysis, an interview study without any specific tradition, etc.); what is specific about it; why it will be a good approach for your study?
- Describe the research context briefly (External: country, industry, size, competition, etc.; Internal: organizational culture, the position of the unit studies within the organization, etc.) (max ½ page)
- Describe your data collection methods: What kind of data you will collect and why (type of interviews, documents, observations, etc.)? Clearly separate primary and secondary data and explicate for which purposes are they used.
- Sample: Describe the number and nature of participants/texts/videos you intend to collect and why. For example, the number of interviewees of particular age, gender, and occupational background; why they were chosen and how you gained access to the organization/interviewees/material.
- Provide a brief description of what kind of analysis method(s) you will use and why, and an overview of the basic analysis steps.
- Evaluate your study using evaluation criteria and discuss. Discuss ethical concerns of your study throughout the text wherever needed.
- Base the essay on appropriate methodological literature and use academic references = NO slides or YouTube videos! In addition to the course book, you need additional references connected to the chosen methodology and methods.
- Please use headings to structure your paper and make sure that you proceed in a logical order. Order of presentation is critical for the clarity of the paper and thus has a major impact on grading. Your writing style can be reflective and personal. Demonstrate that you have made informed choices.
- Add the list of references.
- NOTE: This assignment may be the draft of your thesis methodology chapter, but the text needs to be edited for the final thesis.

#### **Technical instructions**

- Times New Roman 12 pts; all margins 2,5; line spacing 1,5
- Cover page with the title describing your research and method & your name, student number & word count.
- Make references according to APA:  
[http://library.uws.edu.au/uws\\_library/sites/default/files/cite\\_APA.pdf](http://library.uws.edu.au/uws_library/sites/default/files/cite_APA.pdf)

#### **Declaring the use of AI**

- Add a disclaimer at the end of your submission (not counted toward word count) wherein you specify whether and how you used AI to produce the assignment. Be as transparent as possible.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

#### 1) Length

- Follow the length requirements. **Papers that fail to meet the minimum length are directly failed.**

#### 2) Question

- Does the paper address a clear research question?

#### 3) Design

- What is the study design and is it appropriate in answering the research question?
- Is the chosen approach sufficiently explicated and adjusted for the study at hand?

#### 4) Context

- Is the context of the study adequately described so that the findings can be related to other settings?

#### 5) Data collection methods

- Are the chosen methods suitable for the study at hand, are they clearly explained and argued for?

#### 6) Sampling and data collection

- Does the study include sufficient cases/settings/interviews/observations/texts so that conceptual generalizations (not statistical) could be done?
- Is the data collection plan/process systematic, thorough, auditable, and appropriate to the research question?

#### 7) Data analysis (plan/process)

- Is the chosen analysis strategy suitable for the study at hand; Is it sufficiently explicated?

#### 8) Reflexivity

- Are the authors' decisions, positions, and roles clearly explained and are the resulting biases considered?

#### 9) Evaluation and Ethics

- How is the research process evaluated using qualitative evaluation criteria and how are ethical considerations dealt with in different parts of the research process? Is the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) reflected upon?

#### 10) Writing

- Is the text argumentative or merely referencing literature without reference to the study at hand?
- Is the paper well-structured, does the text proceed logically within and across paragraphs and sections, are paragraphs well transitioned?
- Are claims supported by references, are concepts defined using references?
- Are references made according to academic practice?
- NOTE: **papers that fail to reference methodology sources or fail to follow ethical academic referencing practices are directly failed.**

## 5. READINGS

### **Coursebook:**

- Eriksson, P. & Kovalainen, A. (2008 or newer) *Qualitative Methods in Business Research*. London: Sage. (in Library)

### **Valuable resources:**

- Saaranen-Kauppinen, Anita & Puusniekka, Anna (2009) *Menetelmäopetuksen tietovaranto. KvaliMOTV. Kvalitatiivisten menetelmien verkko-oppikirja. Yhteiskuntatieteellisen tietoarkiston julkaisuja 2009*. Tampere. [http://www.fsd.uta.fi/fi/julkaisut/motv\\_pdf/kvalimotv.html](http://www.fsd.uta.fi/fi/julkaisut/motv_pdf/kvalimotv.html)
- Online Qualitative Research Resources: <http://www.antiochne.edu/clinical-psychology/qr/>

- Ethnography Atelier: <https://www.ethnographyatelier.org/blog> (check out the guide with tutorials and recommended literature); <https://www.ethnographyatelier.org/podcast> (podcasts on a variety of topics)

**Additional readings:**

- tba

## 6. COURSE WORKLOAD

Classroom hours	18h
Class preparation (readings and videos for lectures)	22h
Assignment 1	8h
Assignment 2	8h
Final paper	24h
<b>Total</b>	<b>80h (3 ECTS)</b>

## 7. ETHICAL RULES

<https://www.aalto.fi/en/services/personal-data-and-research-ethics>

Aalto University Code of Academic Integrity and Handling Thereof

<https://into.aalto.fi/pages/viewpage.action?pageId=3772443>