



23E80101 Qualitative Business Research Methods

# Introduction to course

*Ilona Mikkonen, DSc.*

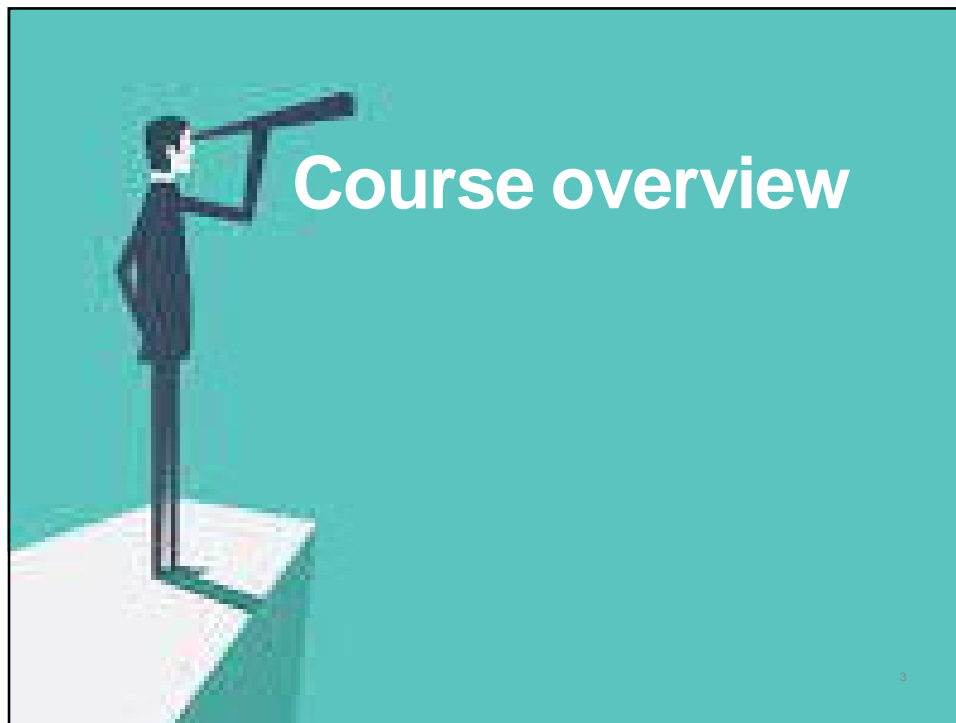
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## Today's agenda

- Introducing the course and learning goals
- Practicalities (assignments, deadlines, schedule, communication policy)
- A **very short** intro to qualitative research



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## Who am I



**Ilona Mikkonen**  
**DSc (PhD) Marketing**

**Teaching:**  
Consumer Research (Bachelor level)  
Bachelor Seminars  
QBRM (Master level)  
Academic reading and writing (DBA)

**Research interests:**  
Gender studies  
Consumer resistance  
"The Dark Side" of  
consumer behavior and culture

**A!** Aalto University  
School of Business

Laitoksen nimi  
11.1.2022  
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# What are your expectations for this course?

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## Things you need to know about this course

This course is **very labor intensive** →  
**a lot of work** to do!

However, on the flip-side.. You'll gain a lot 😊

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## Students will gain...

1. Understanding the **theoretical underpinnings** of qualitative research
2. Ability to **formulate research questions** based on previous literature and identifying appropriate contexts for qualitative research
3. Experience in **qualitative data gathering** (in-depth interviewing, ethnography, digital methods)
4. Experience in **analysis of qualitative data**
5. Understanding of **evaluative criteria** for qualitative research
6. Experience in **writing qualitative research reports**

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## THESIS TIP

- Pay attention to these Thesis-tip slides!



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## Key changes to the previous course

- No group work – individual assignments around own thesis topic and co-op assignments (Perusall readings)
- Fewer Perusall readings, but they carry more weight towards your final grade
- Reflective assignments (3-2-1 quizzes)

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## Schedule

Date	Lecture
11.1.	Practicalities and introduction
13.1.	What is qualitative research; theoretical underpinnings
18.1.	Research contexts and questions
20.1.	Doing interviews
25.1.	Ethnographic methods
27.1.	Qualitative research in digital spaces & naturally occurring data
1.2.	Qualitative data analysis 1
3.2.	Qualitative data analysis 2
8.2.	Tools and theorizing
10.2.	Qualitative research for managers (guest lecturer Hannu Uotila from Sailer)
15.2.	Presenting research results

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## Deliverables

1. Five 3-2-1 quizzes, 3 points each (15 total, 15%)
2. Eight Perusall readings, 3 points each (24 total, 24%)
3. Assignment 1: Research question and context, 11 points (11%)
4. Assignment 2: Interview 25 points (25%)
5. Assignment 3: Final report 25 points (25%)

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## Assessment

POINTS (PERCENTAGE)	GRADE
90 points and over	5
80 to 89 points	4
70 to 79 points	3
60 to 69 points	2
50 to 59 points	1
49 points and under	Fail

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## 3-2-1 quizzes (15%)

The 3-2-1 is a reflective activity that encourages students to reflect on a course experience and organize their thoughts and identify areas of confusion or concern.



In each 3-2-1 quiz you are asked to write down

- Three **things you have learned** that week
- **Two questions** for clarification/discussion
- One piece of **feedback** regarding the lectures and/or readings that week

Please see MyCourses for an example and the grading rubric

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## Perusall (24%)

Perusall is a **collaborative** e-reader platform

- As you read the assigned texts, you annotate the text, i.e. leave comments and questions
  - You collaborate by responding to posts by others
- Ideally you start meaningful discussions and/or debates



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## Perusall instructions

1. Create an account on Perusall.com
2. Join the course by inserting the course code: **MIKKONEN-2JXHT**
3. Complete the assignments before the deadline

**Your Perusall score depends on (in the order of importance):**

1. **Posing thoughtful questions** and comments that **elicit responses from classmates**
2. **Answering questions/comments from others**
3. **Getting upvoted**
4. **Upvoting** thoughtful questions and helpful answers
5. Reading **all the way to the end** of the assigned reading

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## Perusall

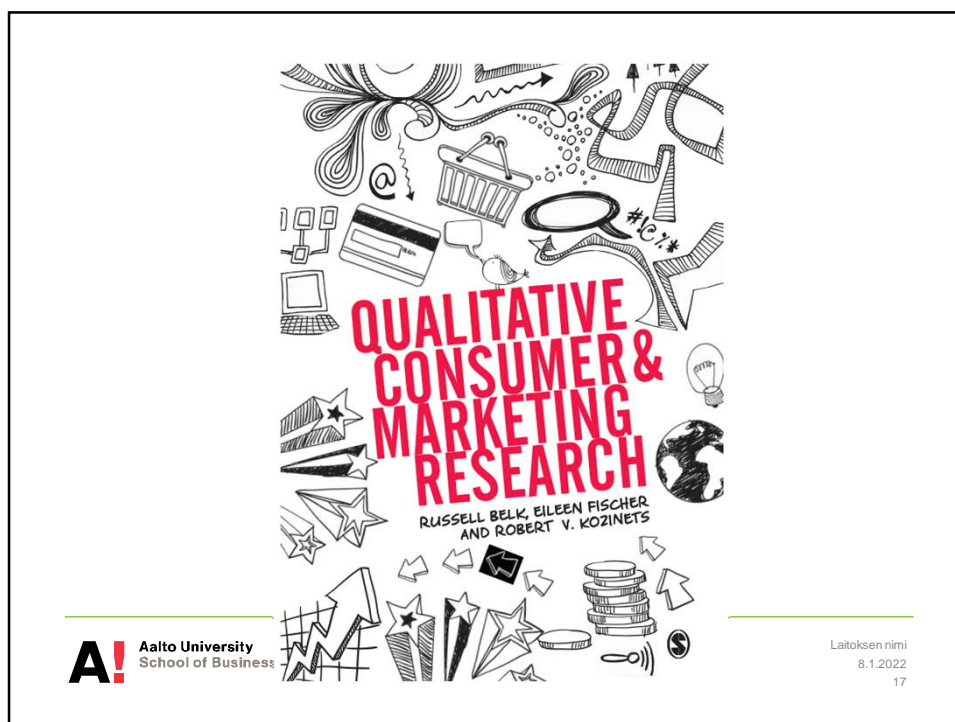
**Note! Comments such as and similar to...**

***"I agree!"***  
***"Great point!"***  
***"So true!"***

**do not constitute meaningful  
contributions and will be deleted!**

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Date	Assignment
13.1	Persusall 1
16.1.	3-2-1 quiz 1
18.1.	Perusall 2
20.1.	Perusall 3
23.1.	3-2-1 quiz 2
24.1.	Assignment 1: Research question & context
25.1.	Perusall 4
27.1.	Perusall 5
30.1.	3-2-1 quiz 3
1.2.	Perusall 6
6.2.	3-2-1 quiz 4
7.2.	Assignment 2: In-depth interview
8.2.	Perusall 7
13.2.	3-2-1 quiz 5
<b>A</b> 21.2.	Assignment 3: Final research report

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## Communication policy

- **Communication will take place through MyCourses**
  - Please use the Discussion forum for all questions regarding course practicalities, readings, assignments etc. → do not email me!
  - Only use my personal email for **personal** communication
  - Official announcements etc. will be posted in the News forum. Make sure you check it periodically

Piled Higher and Deeper by Jorge Cham

www.phdcomics.com



# IT'S IN THE SYLLABUS

This message brought to you by every instructor that ever lived.

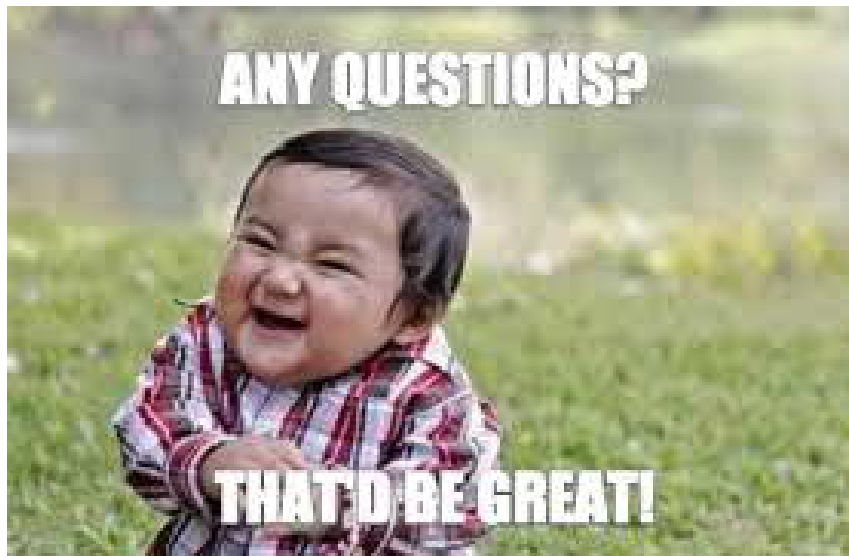
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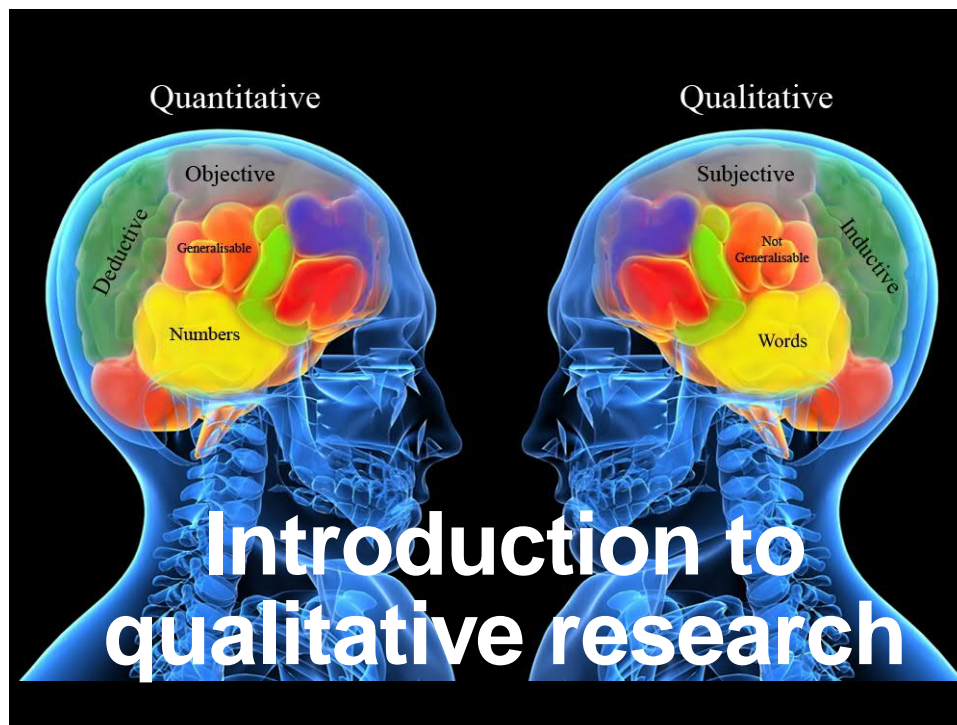
## On activity and contribution

**Be active in class!** Participate in discussion; ask/raise questions, debate, suggest an alternative view, etc. ect.

Active participation can earn you 5 extra points

You keep track of your activity with Class activity sheet





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## Introduction to qualitative research

- Common misconceptions of qualitative research  
→ **what qualitative research is not**
- Basic characteristics of qualitative research  
→ **what qualitative research is**
- Benefits of qualitative research  
→ **why and when qualitative research is useful**

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## Misconception #1

Qualitative research is easy!

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## Reality?

**Bad qual research** is easy; good qual research is really difficult, requires systematic discipline, and a lot of creativity!

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## Misconception #2

Qualitative research =  
interviews

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## Reality?

- Interviewing is “**only**” a method or technique  
→ a “tool in a toolbox”
  - **Interviews are often utilized** – but there are **many other ways** to collect qualitative data!
  - There are many different modes on interviewing, and some can also be utilized in quantitative research

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### Misconception #3

Doing qualitative research means you don't have to collect a lot of data – it's quick to do!

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### Reality?

- **Sometimes** collecting qualitative data can be quick, and one can get by with relatively little data, but..

Oftentimes, qualitative research is **very** time consuming

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### Example of fieldwork data (Peñaloza, 1994: 38)

“The output of data collection efforts consisted of

- maps of the field sites,
- **300 photographs,**
- **50 artifacts** (brochures, business cards, flyers, and local newspapers)
- and **839 pages of text.**
  - This included a set of field notes (**311 handwritten pages compiled from 223 hours of field observation**),
  - transcriptions of the tape-recorded interviews (**141 pages typed**),
  - and a journal of personal reflections (**387 handwritten pages**).”

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## Misconception #4

Anything goes in qualitative research – it's haphazard and unscientific

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## Reality?

- Qualitative research answers different kind of questions than quantitative, and is (most often) based on different kind of paradigm → rigor is there, but it is different!

First-rate qualitative research requires  
**a highly systematic and meticulous approach**  
in planning and implementation

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## So... what *is* it then??

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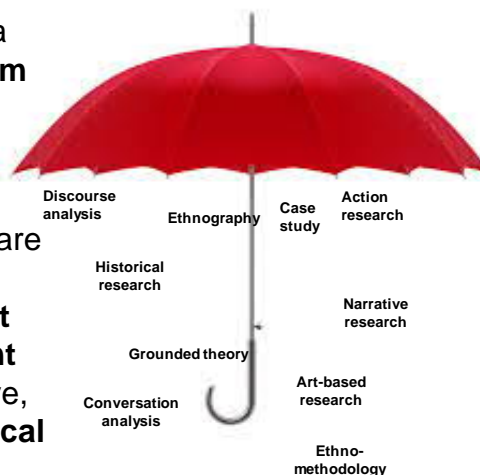
Let's start with you 😊

## Breakout rooms: What is qualitative research?

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- “Qualitative research” is a **very broad umbrella term**

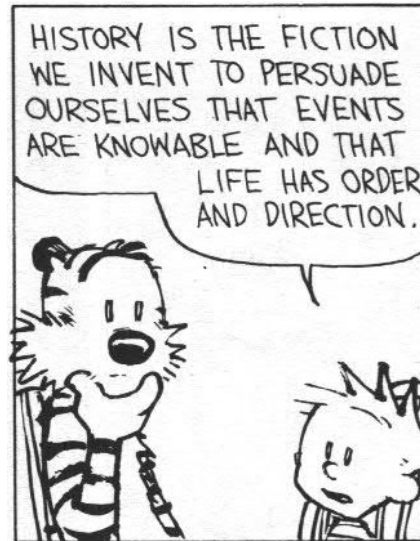
→ There are a **number of research traditions** that belong under the label that are interested in **different phenomena**, used **different methods**, focus on **different levels of analysis**, and have, **different set of philosophical assumptions**



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## Similarities between all approaches

- Interest in forming **in-depth understandings** of **social phenomena**
- Interest in (cultural) meanings
- **Reality** is seen (to some extent) as **socially constructed**
- **Information and knowledge are seen contextual**  
→ *No attempts to form universal theories*



## What are the benefits?

- How many of you would rely on standardized tests as the sole method of choosing your life partner?

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- Can provide **rich and detailed descriptions about phenomena**



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- Qualitative research allows us to study **abstract phenomena that are not easily quantifiable**



- Qualitative research allows us to study **new phenomena that we know little about**



## "All research ultimately has a qualitative grounding."

Donald Campbell

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## Next steps

1. If you haven't already, read the syllabus and the assignment instructions in MyCourses
2. Create an account in Perusall and sign up for this course using the code **MIKKONEN-2JXHT**
3. Read and comment on the first compulsory reading:

Belk, R., Fischer, E., & Kozinets, R. V. (2012). Introduction: What is qualitative research? *Qualitative consumer and marketing research* (pp 1-15). Sage.

(Suggested readings:

Goulding, C. (2005). Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology: A comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research. *European journal of Marketing*.

Gummesson, E. (2005). Qualitative research in marketing: Road-map for a wilderness of complexity and unpredictability. *European journal of marketing*.)

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