

Syllabus

for course at advanced level

Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences
Kvalitativ samhällsvetenskaplig metod

**7.5 Higher Education
Credits**
7.5 ECTS credits

Course code:	SO7042
Valid from:	Autumn 2017
Date of approval:	2016-04-26
Department	Department of Sociology
Main field:	Sociology
Specialisation:	A1N - Second cycle, has only first-cycle course/s as entry requirements

Decision

The syllabus is approved by the Board of the Department of Sociology as of April 26, 2016.

Prerequisites and special admittance requirements

Bachelor's degree, English 6

Course structure

Examination code	Name	Higher Education Credits
1M14	Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences	7.5

Course content

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 in order to better understand which tools are best suited to answer which types of research questions and what their limitations are. We also explore how qualitative researchers approach questions of quality, selection, causality, inference, conceptualization, measurement and social meaning in social science research. Students will become familiar with a range of techniques for data collection such as ethnographic field studies, case studies, interviews, 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, motivate the choice of method and interpret the outcome. Students will become familiar with ethical guidelines for social science research, practical ethical research in the pilot study, and account for the ethics in their final report.

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

Education

Teaching is in the form of lectures, seminars, and practical exercises. Students are to perform the following:

- read the prescribed literature before each lecture

- actively participate in classroom discussions
- perform independent field work
- complete written assignments.

Forms of examination

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

- AQM Paper 80
- Presentation 10
- Participation 10

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

A = Excellent. 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 = Very good. 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 = Good. 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 = Satisfactory. 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 = Sufficient. 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 very low level of understanding of core principles of AQM.

Fx = Not sufficient. 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 = Fail. 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 on the next occasion. Such a request should be sent to the Director of Studies.

Plagiarism, cheating and unauthorized collaboration (collusion)

As a student, you are responsible for knowing the regulations in relation to examinations and similar situations. Extensive information is available at the website of the Department of Sociology as well as the Stockholm University website (www.su.se/rules). Teachers are obliged to report suspected cheating or plagiarism. If suspicions can be confirmed it will be brought before the Disciplinary Committee and may lead to suspension. Example of plagiarism is to copy a text or sentences, word by word or close to, without referring to the source. This applies also to text of your own previous writing. Cheating includes bringing unauthorized aids to a sit-in exam, such as mobile phones. To form study groups together with fellow students is enriching and time saving, but when it comes to examinations you need to be meticulous about working independently (if not otherwise instructed) to avoid collusion.

Interim

Students can request to be examined according to this syllabus up to three semesters after it has ceased to be valid. Such request shall be directed to the Director of Studies.

Limitations

No admission is possible for anyone who has passed the course SO7040 Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences 7.5 credits.

Required reading

Creswell, John. 2013. *Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (SAGE).
Klinenberg, Eric. 2002. *Heat Wave: A Social Autopsy of Disaster in Chicago* (University of Chicago Press)
Additional texts as specified in the course description of each term.