

**Department of Sociology
Faculty of Social Sciences
South Asian University**

**Qualitative Research Methods
(M.Phil. Compulsory Course)**

Total Credits: 4

Objectives of the Course

This course offers a general introduction to the qualitative methods in social research. As a general course, it covers a number of issues including philosophical traditions, research design, fieldwork, data collection, data analysis, and reporting. There are several ways of doing qualitative research and we will have moments when we reflect on them, but this course particularly focuses on the field research tradition. This course emphasizes student involvement in a series of research projects including research proposal development, data collection, data analysis, and reporting. At the end of the semester, it is expected that students will have a good idea about the types of questions suitable for qualitative research, will be able to develop a qualitative research proposal, and will be able to independently conduct their field research.

Unit I: Philosophical Traditions

This unit grounds contemporary qualitative research practices in philosophical traditions. This unit, in particular, examines the questions such as the notion of science and the relationship between epistemology, theory, methodology, and methods.

Suggested Readings:

Bourdieu, P. 1989. "Social Space and Symbolic Power." *Sociological Theory* 7:14-25.

Bourdieu, P. 1990. *The logic of practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press [Chapters I, II and III].

Crotty, Michael. 1998. *The foundations of social research: Meaning and perspective in the research process*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Das, V. 1993. "Sociological Research in India: The State of Crisis." *Economic and political Weekly* 28:1159-1161.

Denzin, N and Y Lincoln. 2005. *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. CA: Sage [selected chapters].

Maxwell, Joseph A. 2004. "Using Qualitative Methods for Causal Explanation." *Field Methods* 16:243-264.

Unit II: Field Research and Subjectivity in Qualitative Research

The role of values and subjectivity in the research process is a controversial issue. Social researchers come from particular backgrounds and in addition, they have their own formal and informal theories and "biasness" that they bring to bear on their research practice. This unit examines the dilemmas and possibilities of handling subjectivities and values in relation to qualitative field research.

Suggested Readings:

Beoku-Betts, Josephine. 1994. "When Black Is Not Enough: Doing Field Research among Gullah Women." *NWSA Journal* 6:413-433.

Beteille, A. 1996. *Caste, Class and Power*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press [Appendix II]

Denzin, N and Y Lincoln. 2005. *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. CA: Sage [selected chapters].

Fine, Gary Alan. 1993. "Ten lies of ethnography: Moral Dilemmas of Field Research." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 22:267-294.

Glaser, B.G. and A. L. Strauss. 1967. *Discovery of grounded theory*. New Brunswick: Transaction [Chapter I and II].

Glassner, Barry and Rosanna Hertz. 2003. *Our studies, ourselves: sociologists' lives and work*. New York: Oxford University Press [Selected chapters].

May, Rabin and M Pattillo-McCoy. 2000. "Do you see what I see? Examining a collaborative ethnography." *Qualitative Inquiry* 6:65-87.

Peshkin, A. 1988. "In Search of Subjectivity One's Own." *Educational Researcher* 17:17-21.

Unit III: Design of Qualitative Research

This unit is an introduction to subsequent units and basically focuses on the principle of qualitative research design. Major themes covered in the unit include the components of an academic research proposal including the interplay between the research question, literature review, methods and validity issues.

Suggested Readings:

Maxwell, J. A. 2005. *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Coyne, I. T. 1997. "Sampling in qualitative research. Purposeful and theoretical sampling; merging or clear boundaries?" *Journal of Advanced Nursing* 26:623-630.

Singleton, R. A. and B.C. Straits. 1999. "Elements of Research Design" in *Approaches to Social Research*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999

Davis, S. 1990. "Men as success objects and women as sex objects: A study of personal advertisements." *Sex Roles* 23:43-50.

Unit IV: Qualitative Data Collection

Unit IV focuses on qualitative data collection techniques with particular references to observation, interview, focus group discussion, and textual data.

Readings

Andrea Fontana and James H. Frey. 1998. "Interviewing: The Art of Science" in *Handbook of Qualitative Sociology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage

Adler, P. A. and P. Adler. 1994. "Observational techniques." in *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Linders, Annulla. 2008. "Documents, Texts, and Archives" in Holstein, J.A. and J.F. Gubrium. *Handbook of constructionist research*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Berg, B.L. and H. Lune. 2004. *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*. MA: Pearson.

Rubin, Herbert J and Irene S Rubin. 2011. *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. CA: SAGE Publications.

Strauss, AL and JM Corbin. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. CA: Sage Publications. [Selected Chapters]

Anderson, Leon. 2006. "Analytic Autoethnography." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 35:373-395.

Unit V: Data Analysis

This unit introduces data analysis technique. We will chiefly focus on grounded theory both as a theory generation technique as well as a general data analysis tool.

Readings

Charmaz, Kathy. 2006. *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide through Qualitative Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE [selected chapters].

Denzin, N and Y Lincoln. 2005. "The Handbook of Qualitative Research." CA: Sage [selected chapters].

Grbich, Carol. 2007. *Qualitative Data Analysis: An Introduction*. London: Sage [Part I and II]

Gubrium, Jaber F and James A Holstein. 2002. *Handbook of interview research: Context and method*. CA: SAGE Publications [selected chapters].

LaRossa, Ralph. 2005. "Grounded Theory Methods and Qualitative Family Research." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 67:837-857.

Strauss, AL and JM Corbin. 1998. *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory*. CA: Sage Publications [Selected Chapters]

Unit VI: Writing Research

This unit focuses on processes of writing qualitative research. This unit also revisits the issues of subjectivities and art and politics of representation.

Readings

Becker, H.S. 2007. *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Denzin, N and Y Lincoln. 2005. *The Handbook of Qualitative Research*. CA: Sage [selected chapters].

Glassner, Barry and Rosanna Hertz. 2003. *Our studies, ourselves: sociologists' lives and work*. New York: Oxford University Press [Selected chapters].

Richardson, Laurel. 1994. "Writing: A Method of Inquiry" in *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. edited by E. G. a. Y. S. L. Guba. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Zerubavel, Eviatar. 1999. *The clockwork muse: A practical guide to writing theses, dissertations*. MA: Harvard University Press.