



# SOCI701

## Qualitative Methods: Issues and Practices

S2 Evening 2019

*Dept of Sociology*

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## General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

Tobia Fattore

[tobia.fattore@mq.edu.au](mailto:tobia.fattore@mq.edu.au)

Contact via [tobia.fattore@mq.edu.au](mailto:tobia.fattore@mq.edu.au)

Australian Hearing Hub, Level 2 South Wing

By appointment

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

SOC831: Qualitative Methods

Unit description

This unit explores the potentials and limits of qualitative methods in the social sciences. As well as exploring the theoretical issues of this approach, students will develop practical skills collecting, analysing and presenting data to address essential research questions. The unit adopts a hands-on approach to provide an opportunity to develop research skills and a critical perspective of the research process itself.

## Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

## Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.

Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.

Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.

Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including

observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.

Develop an ability to apply the techniques of 'grounded theory' in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.

Develop a range of more 'generic skills' including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

## Assessment Tasks

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
<a href="#"><u>Research Proposal</u></a>	25%	No	End of Week 5
<a href="#"><u>Research Report</u></a>	40%	No	End of Week 14
<a href="#"><u>Research Methods Presentation</u></a>	20%	No	Week 12 and 13 Seminars
<a href="#"><u>Seminar Participation</u></a>	15%	No	Ongoing

### Research Proposal

Due: **End of Week 5**

Weighting: **25%**

Students will be required to undertake a research project involving qualitative methods for this unit. This research will form the basis of the major assignment for the unit - the individual research report. As part of this process students are required to submit a research proposal for their intended research. The proposal will outline the research question and summarise the intended research methods that will be used to address the question. Proposals will be assessed on whether the project is suitable for a qualitative approach, is feasible and uses the strengths of qualitative methods.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Develop a range of more 'generic skills' including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

## Research Report

Due: **End of Week 14**

Weighting: **40%**

Students will prepare a qualitative research report based on fieldwork they have undertaken throughout the semester. The research report will focus on presenting the research question, study rationale, analysis and presentation of the themes.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of 'grounded theory' in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.
- Develop a range of more 'generic skills' including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

## Research Methods Presentation

Due: **Week 12 and 13 Seminars**

Weighting: **20%**

Students will give a short presentation outlining the research project they have undertaken throughout the semester. The focus of the presentation will be on the research question, aims and objectives, research methodology and critical evaluation of the research experience.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.

- Develop a range of more 'generic skills' including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

## Seminar Participation

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **15%**

Many of the seminars revolve around practical demonstration of qualitative research skills. From week to week students will be required to engage in these practical tasks to develop their skills as qualitative researchers. Students will be assessed on their participation in these activities and ongoing contributions to the seminars based on the quality of their participation.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of 'grounded theory' in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.
- Develop a range of more 'generic skills' including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

## Delivery and Resources

The course is offered in a three-hour seminar format, comprising a lecture, group discussion and practice based workshop each week. Later in the session the third hour will be devoted to workshops and laboratories on NVivo for students to develop their qualitative analysis skills.

There are no required texts for this course. The readings for each week can be accessed through the Macquarie University library (Unit Readings function) and via the Leganto portal on the unit iLearn page.

However the following texts are recommended, that you may find useful for this course and as a resource for social research more generally.

- Alan Bryman (2015) *Social Research Methods* (Fifth Edition) Oxford University Press
- Kathy Charmaz (2014) *Constructing Grounded Theory* (2nd Edition) Sage Publishing
- Alan Morris (2015) *A Practical Introduction to In-depth Interviewing* Sage Publications

## Unit Schedule

<i>Week</i>	<i>Topic</i>
Week 1	Introduction to Qualitative Research
Week 2	Is Qualitative Research a Science?
Week 3	Designing Qualitative Research
Week 4	Research Ethics and Politics
Week 5	Ethnography and Observation
Week 6	The Interview Technique
Week 7	Focus Groups
Week 8	Introduction to Qualitative Analysis
Week 9	Grounded Theory
Week 10	Discourse Analysis
Week 11	Writing Qualitative Research
Week 12	Research Method Presentations (I)
Week 13	Research Method Presentations (II) and Wrapping Up

## Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)

- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note:** *The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.*)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway) (<https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway>). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central](http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central) (<http://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central>).

## Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

## Results

Results published on platform other than [eStudent](#), (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au) or if you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

### **Late Submission Penalty**

*“Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.”*

## Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

## Learning Skills

Learning Skills ([mq.edu.au/learningskills](http://mq.edu.au/learningskills)) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

## Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

## Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at [ask.mq.edu.au](http://ask.mq.edu.au)

If you are a Global MBA student contact [globalmba.support@mq.edu.au](mailto:globalmba.support@mq.edu.au)

## IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit [http://www.mq.edu.au/about\\_us/offices\\_and\\_units/information\\_technology/help/](http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/).

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

## Graduate Capabilities

### PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

#### Learning outcomes

- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop a range of more 'generic skills' including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

#### Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Research Report
- Research Methods Presentation
- Seminar Participation



## PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of 'grounded theory' in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.

### Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Research Report
- Research Methods Presentation
- Seminar Participation

## PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

### Learning outcomes

- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of 'grounded theory' in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.
- Develop a range of more 'generic skills' including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work

together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

## Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Research Report
- Research Methods Presentation
- Seminar Participation

## PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Understand the nature of qualitative research procedures and what makes them distinctive.
- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of 'grounded theory' in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.

## Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Research Report
- Seminar Participation

## PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop an ability to apply the techniques of 'grounded theory' in qualitative data analysis and to collect and analyse qualitative research data.
- Develop a range of more 'generic skills' including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

## Assessment tasks

- Research Proposal
- Research Report
- Research Methods Presentation
- Seminar Participation

## PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

## Learning outcomes

- Understand when qualitative research methods should be used and when they are unsuitable.
- Develop a critical appreciation of the ethical dimensions of research practice.
- Obtain first hand experience in using qualitative research techniques, including observation, in-depth interviewing and focus group interviewing.
- Develop a range of more 'generic skills' including how to read critically; how to locate and retrieve information; how to solve problems and develop concepts; how to work together with others; and how to communicate your own ideas simply and directly.

## Assessment task

- Research Report

