

Observation and Field-research

Aim of the course

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The course will provide an overview as to what has led to the rise of qualitative research, examine the influence of other disciplines' research methodology and the current place of qualitative research in psychology. In practical terms, we will analyse what can constitute qualitative data, how qualitative data can be processed, and how can qualitative research results be linked to quantitative research. At the seminars, students will learn about key qualitative research methods (interviews, focus groups, content analysis, observation, field study). The aim is that through practical tasks students can acquire competences which will enable them to put these methods to use: to realize which questions can be answered with the help of this method, to plan a qualitative investigation, to proceed with the collection of data, analyse the data, and interpret the results. In addition, the course will enable the students to recognise the special ethical issues associated with these methods.

This subject is available in two (optional) courses:

- Interview, focus groups and content analysis
- Observation and field study

Learning outcomes, competences

knowledge:

- Know the general principles of qualitative and quantitative approaches, and the differences between them.
- Know the ethical issues related to the different research methods.
- Know the methods used research methodological aspects, application possibilities and the steps of preparing to carry out.

attitude:

- The student should be committed to the professional principles of qualitative research, adhere to them.
- It is important for the student to carefully prepare, plan and flexibly implement research.
- The student should be open to new knowledge and novel ideas.
- The student is expected to be cooperative towards the course instructor and other course participants.
- The student should take confidentiality (if the course session /eg. during classroom exercises/ sensitive information will be given) seriously.

skills:

- The student should be capable of professional self-reflection and self-correct their decisions.
- Students are expected to be able to plan and execute qualitative research.
- Students are expected to present their research results in an ethically sound and professional manner.

Content of the course

Observation and field study

Topics of the course

- The place of qualitative research in psychology: the crisis of the methods and attempts of renewal in a historical perspective; the present challenges: falsification, replicability
- What is the subject of qualitative research? The example of ethnomethodology

- The issue of quality in qualitative and quantitative research, qualitative research data, sampling procedures, the number of elements in qualitative research
- Qualitative data beyond words: visual data, photo, film, and field observations
- Observation in practice. Fields of application, planning and investigation
- Photo and movie making during research
- Content analysis using pictures – movies
- Thick description
- Definition of a field study
- Planning a field study
- Publishing qualitative research results

Learning activities, learning methods

- independent study of relevant literature
- presentation – case studies
- keeping records
- conducting interviews/observations
- seminar paper

Evaluation of outcomes

Learning requirements, mode of evaluation, criteria of evaluation: requirements

- To obtain a valid mark for the course, students are expected to attend classes and actively participate in discussions.
- Deadlines set by the instructor must be met.
- Student must take and pass the end-term test. If they receive a failing grade on the test and the re-take, the student cannot obtain a valid mark for the course.

mode of evaluation: seminar grade

criteria of evaluation:

- active participation
- obtaining a passing grade on the end-term test
- submitting all assignments on time and keeping deadlines

ATTENTION! Certain performance criteria and their weight as part of the final mark is determined by the course tutor (of a given semester). (See the course syllabus.)

Reading list

Compulsory reading list

- Bailey, C. A (2007) *Guide to Qualitative Field Research, 2nd edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA. Sage/Pine Forge Press
- Berg B. L. (200) *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences*, Allyn and Bacon, Boston
- Stenius et al (2006) How to write publishable qualitative research CH6. In: *Publishing Addiction Science. A guide for the perplexed*. 2nd Edition., ISAJE & SSA: London , 2008, 82-97 p.