

RES 720 - Qualitative Research Methods

(3 credit hours)
Course Syllabus

Course Description

Qualitative Research Methods (3 cr. hours) compares qualitative research methods to quantitative research. The student will demonstrate how qualitative research must and can be conducted with the same intellectual and methodological rigor as is quantitative research. Qualitative research content will feature solid epistemological and theoretical foundations in philosophy (phenomenology, hermeneutics) composed of various schools of thought – notably grounded theory and ethnomethodology. This leads to very concrete research methods, such as various forms of interview, participant observation methods, case studies, focus groups, and more. Actual case studies will be used in the course.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills to develop qualitative theoretical models and associated research and interview questions
2. Identify emergent themes and codes based on research results
3. Analyze data based on qualitative research techniques
4. Begin developing a research study based on ethical research standards that advances the field of study and adds to its knowledge base
5. Develop theoretical models and appropriate research design

Required Textbook(s) and Resources

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Be sure to also review the weekly **Explore** sections for additional library or web resources. For access to databases, research help, and writing tips, visit the [Tiffin University Library](#).

Time Commitment

Effective time management is possibly the single most critical element to your academic success. To do well in this class you should plan your time wisely. With our accelerated,

seven-week term, you should reserve roughly **twenty (20) hours per week** to complete readings and assignments. To help plan your time and keep on track toward successful course completion, note the distinctive rhythm of assignment due dates:

1. All times assume Eastern Time (GMT-4).
2. Weeks begin at 12:00 a.m. ET on Monday and end at 11:55 p.m. ET on Sunday.
3. Unless otherwise noted, initial forum discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Wednesdays** and response posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Saturdays**.
4. Major assignments and reflections are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Sundays**.

Learning Activities

All activities, discussions and assignments are designed to give you the opportunity to delve deeply into the essential core competencies required of qualitative research. Key assessments focus on your Course Learning Outcomes listed at the beginning of the syllabus, as well as the Global Leadership and Change Program outcomes. The latter include generating original research findings and advancing knowledge in the field of leadership and change. You will demonstrate your accomplishments by successfully completing the following:

Course Forums (Discussions)

You will participate in course discussions in Weeks 1, 3, 4, 5 and 6. These forums are designed for you to share your thoughts about the week's learning activities and to offer your analysis of the aspects of qualitative research these objectives address. Your initial posts should be 250 words at minimum. In order to make the discussions interactive, you will be required to offer a substantive response to at least two other students. You are encouraged to read all the posts and to respond to more than two. I find most students at this level instinctively do this and are curious about the thoughts of their colleagues.

Observation

In Week 2 you will conduct an observation in a public place, for one-hour where a good amount of activity occurs (fast food restaurant, computer lab in a library, perhaps, a bookstore, etc.). This will give you an opportunity to practice one component of qualitative research.

You will take notes on what you observe and record any patterns that seem to emerge. You will undoubtedly be surprised at how much data you will collect, and how you can organize it (or how it organizes itself!) into patterns of behavior. This is always an activity that students enjoy and find to be valuable in "getting a handle" on qualitative methodology. You will share your results and conclusions with your colleagues in the post for this week.

Case Study

Case study is one of the most prevalent methods of qualitative research. In Week 6, you will read and analyze a case study that deals with a sensitive workplace issue. The title of the study is: “An Office Romance Gone Wrong.” Part of your analysis will be to collect documents that you think might be useful in analyzing this case.

Some workplace issues you might want to consider as they affect or are affected by the events in the case study are: power distance, sexual harassment vs discrimination, team cohesiveness. As you analyze this case study you will be honing your skills for qualitative research in terms of identifying themes and codes and analyzing data based on qualitative research techniques

Assignments and Observation Notes

You have five written assignments in this course and a submission for Week 2 that consists of the notes you took during your observation.

Major Course Projects

Assignment 7, along with the **Observation** and **Case Study** analysis, is one of the major course projects. (See the Grading chart below)

Grading

The chart below identifies the individual contributions from each type of activity, per week.

Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Total
Discussion	75	N/A	75	75	75	--	--	300
Assignment	50	N/A	75	75	75	50	125	450
Observation	--	125	--	--	--	--	--	125
Case Study (Discussion)	--	--	--	--	--	125	--	125
Total	125	125	150	150	150	175	125	1000

Grading Scale

A: 90-100% | B: 80-89% | C: 70-79% | F: <69%

Course Schedule and Weekly Checklist

Topic	Learning Activities (Due by 11:55 p.m. ET on day designated)
<p>Week 1: Defining Qualitative Research Methodology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 1.1 (Forum): Meet Your Peers <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 1.2 (Forum): Value and Challenges of Qualitative Research <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 1.2: Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 1.3: Reflection
<p>Week 2: Describing Qualitative Research Methods</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 2.1: Observation Experience <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 2.2: Reflection on Observation Experience (Not Graded)
<p>Week 3: Developing Qualitative Research Questions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 3.1 (Forum): Reflection on Week 2 Observation <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 3.1: Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 3.2: Research Questions
<p>Week 4: Organizing Interview Questions, Pilot Studies, Expert Reviews, and Documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 4.1 (Forum): Interview Guide <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 4.1 Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 4.2: Documentation and Triangulation
<p>Week 5: Conducting Participant Interviews</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 5.1 (Forum): Utility of Qualitative Research Techniques <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 5.1 Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 5.2: Cultural Differences in International Business
<p>Week 6: Identifying Emergent Themes and Mining Data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 6.1 (Forum): Case Study <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 6.1 Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 6.2: Reflection (Submit in Week 7)

Topic	Learning Activities (Due by 11:55 p.m. ET on day designated)
<p>Week 7: Writing the Qualitative Dissertation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 7.1: Final Paper <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 6.2: Reflection (From Week 6) <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Course Evaluation

Tips for Success

Online learning requires self-discipline and self-direction. As seekers of the truth, we should be willing to challenge one another's academic work in a spirit of respectful comradery. Your course is a place for you to grow as you benefit from the expertise, experience, and diverse perspectives of your instructor and peers. Constructive feedback will challenge you to stretch your own thinking, thereby expanding your knowledge and understanding.

To get the most out of your learning experience, you should actively engage (participate) in **ALL** course activities. Course elements in any given week are arranged chronologically. To complete a week, simply work your way "down the page" through all of the course materials and activities.

For More Information:

Be sure to review the [Support, Policies, and Procedures](#) addendum.