

- Faculté des sciences économiques
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Qualitative Methods in the Social Sciences (5TS2001)

Filières concernées	Nombre d'heures	Validation	Crédits ECTS
Doctorat en travail social	Séminaire: 1 pg	Voir ci-dessous	3

ph=période hebdomadaire, pg=période globale, j=jour, dj=demi-jour, h=heure, min=minute

Période d'enseignement:

- Semestre Printemps

Equipe enseignante

Lisa Marie Borrelli, Professor ITTS, UniNE

Contenu

This course provides a practical and critical introduction to qualitative research methods in social work and the social sciences. It combines methodological reflection with hands-on exercises in different forms of interviewing and observation, including individual and collaborative approaches. Participants will engage with questions of access to the field, research design, data generation, and the methodological assumptions that shape qualitative inquiry.

The first two sessions focus on core qualitative methods and their practical application, with particular attention to interviewing and observation. The third session introduces mixed-methods approaches and considers how qualitative methods can be combined with other forms of data and research design. The final session focuses on coding, qualitative data analysis, interpretation, and writing, drawing in particular on different traditions of qualitative analysis and on Van Maanen's work on ethnographic writing. Throughout the course, participants will be encouraged to reflect critically on methodological choices, including issues such as methodological nationalism, and to relate the methods discussed to their own doctoral research.

Forme de l'évaluation

The evaluation will take place within the course, via a threefold structure:

- 1) Questions and comments need to be sent BEFORE the class on the texts that are discussed in the respective session.
- 2) Practical exercises need to be noted down (explanation in class) and collected.
- 3) Application of methods onto the own research (practical exercises in class and as small homework).

Exams and retake exams are organized by the ITTS. The relevant procedures will be explained in class or communicated separately where necessary

Modalités de rattrapage

In case of a first failed attempt to pass the course the retake will include a longer written assignment that reflects on a relevant method for the PhD student (5 pages).

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Documentation

Mandatory reading (selection):

Feldman, M. S. (mit Bell, J., & Berger, M. T.). (2003). Gaining Access: A Practical and Theoretical Guide for Qualitative Researchers (1st ed). AltaMira Press. (selected chapters)

Flick, U. (2009). An Introduction to Qualitative Research (4. Aufl.). SAGE Publications. (selected chapters)

Flick, U. (Hrsg.). (2018). The SAGE qualitative research kit (Second edition). SAGE. (selected chapters)

Flick, U., von Kardoff, E., & Steineke, I. (2004). Flick, U., von Kardoff, E. and I. Steineke A Companion to Qualitative Research. SAGE Publications Ltd. (selected chapters)

Maanen, J. V. (2011). Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography, Second Edition. University of Chicago Press. (selected chapters)

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Wertz, F., & Charmaz, K. (2011). Five Ways of Doing Qualitative Analysis: Phenomenological Psychology, Grounded Theory, Discourse Analysis, Narrative Research, and Intuitive. Guilford Press. (selected chapters)

Wimmer, A., & Schiller, N. G. (2002). Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation–state building, migration and the social sciences. *Global Networks*, 2(4), 301–334. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1471-0374.00043>

(Flick has also published in German, for those of you who wish to read it in another language).

All additional documentation will be available on Moodle.

Pré-requis

Registration as a PhD student at the ITTS, a Swiss university or as auditor in the perspective of being a future PhD student of the ITTS.

Registration at messagerie.itts@unine.ch until 15 January 2027.

The lecturer will reach out to you for a specific assignment to be done during/before the first session.

Forme de l'enseignement

Teaching periods

- Thursday 11.03.2027; 09:15 – 17:15
- Friday 12.03.2027; 09:15 – 17:15
- Thursday 22.04.2027; 09:15 – 17:15 (Intervention – Mixed Methods)
- Friday 23.04.2027; 09:15 – 17:15

Venue

Room B29, Av. du 1er-Mars 26, University of Neuchâtel

Objectifs d'apprentissage

Au terme de la formation l'étudiant-e doit être capable de :

- Apply and practice different forms of qualitative interviewing and observation.
- Analyse and interpret qualitative data using different analytical approaches.
- Describe and distinguish key qualitative research approaches in social work and the social sciences.
- Identify and select appropriate qualitative methods in relation to specific research questions.
- Evaluate and justify methodological choices and critically examine underlying assumptions and biases.
- Develop and present coherent qualitative analyses that connect empirical material, methodology and theoretical argumentation.

Compétences transférables

- Analyse, synthesise and communicate complex empirical material clearly and critically.
- Transfer and adapt qualitative research skills to different research, professional and interdisciplinary contexts.
- Formulate and justify methodological choices in relation to their own research projects.