

Qualitative Social Research Methods

Code: 101147
ECTS Credits: 6

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
2500262 Sociology	OB	2	1

The proposed teaching and assessment methodology that appear in the guide may be subject to changes as a result of the restrictions to face-to-face class attendance imposed by the health authorities.

Contact

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Use of Languages

Principal working language: catalan (cat)
Some groups entirely in English: No
Some groups entirely in Catalan: Yes
Some groups entirely in Spanish: No

Teachers

Joan Rodriguez Soler
Oriol Barranco Font

Prerequisites

It is highly recommended that students have passed the credits corresponding to the 1st years' course on Methodology and Research Design

Objectives and Contextualisation

This subject is considered a continuation of the course on Methodology and Research Design Methodology taught in the first year of the degree on Sociology. As well as in Methodology and Research Design, the primary interest of the subject is to provide the students with the theoretical and methodological grounding and the technical instruments to carry out the applied aspects of their future professional career.

The main objective of the subject is offering the students the information and the development of the abilities for the application of qualitative methods in the fieldwork stage of a research project. The course will focus especially on the qualitative methods and techniques for gathering information: interview, group discussions, biographical methods and the use of documents.

The fact of dealing in the subject exclusively with qualitative methods is only for pedagogical reasons. It should be kept in mind that it is not appropriate to understand sociological research in terms of a quantitative / qualitative dichotomy.

Competences

- Applying the main quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques of social research to a specific topic.

- Describing social phenomena in a theoretically relevant way, bearing in mind the complexity of the involved factors, its causes and its effects.
- Designing a social research project by defining a comprehensive theoretical framework with clearly defined concepts, formulating consistent and significant hypothesis, choosing suitable investigation techniques for the adopted concepts, and analysing the empirical results obtained with those techniques.
- Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
- Developing self-learning strategies.
- Enumerating the methodology and investigation techniques that support the main hypothesis about social relationships, the positions and practices of individuals in a social structure and the social changes.
- Searching for documentary sources starting from concepts.
- Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
- Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.
- Working in teams and networking in different situations.

Learning Outcomes

1. Defining concepts of analysis.
2. Developing critical thinking and reasoning and communicating them effectively both in your own and other languages.
3. Developing self-learning strategies.
4. Explaining the methodological basis of these quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques.
5. Formulating a hypothesis with these concepts.
6. Identifying the main quantitative and qualitative methods and techniques.
7. Indicating their dimensions, their possible quantitative indicators and the significant qualitative evidence in order to empirically observe them.
8. Mentioning the main concepts of sociology.
9. Obtaining conclusions from the information obtained with this tool.
10. Preparing a script for an interview or a discussion group.
11. Preparing an analytical tool that is significant to this hypothesis.
12. Producing an observation plan.
13. Relating them with the different approaches of sociology.
14. Searching for documentary sources starting from concepts.
15. Students must be capable of assessing the quality of their own work.
16. Students must be capable of managing their own time, planning their own study, managing the relationship with their tutor or adviser, as well as setting and meeting deadlines for a work project.
17. Working in teams and networking in different situations.

Content

1. Introduction. General characteristics of qualitative research methods
 - 1.1. The genesis and development of qualitative research.
 - 1.2. Methodological characteristics of the qualitative approach in social sciences
 - 1.3. Paradigms and perspectives in qualitative research.
 - 1.4. The qualitative / quantitative debate. Towards the complementarity of perspectives.
 - 1.5. Qualitative methods and techniques for collecting and analyzing information: an overview.
 2. Researching with qualitative methods
 - 2.1. Methodological strategies in qualitative research. The objectives of the research.
 - 2.2. The process of qualitative research and its stages.
 - 2.3. From the construction of the object of study to the planning of the strategies of empirical verification.
- Design in qualitative research
- 2.4. The selection of information units: the research domain and the sample.

3. The interview method
 - 3.1. Definition and uses of the interview
 - 3.2. The design and conduct of interviews: field and collection of information.
 - 3.3. Advantages and limitations of interviews
4. The methods of group discussion
 - 4.1. Definition and uses of group discussions
 - 4.2. The design and development of the group discussions: field and collection of information
 - 4.3. Advantages and limitations of group discussion methods
5. The narrative-biographical methods
 - 5.1. Definition and uses of narrative-biographical methods
 - 5.2. The design and application of biographical methods: field, collection of information and presentation of biographical data
 - 5.3. Advantages and limitations of narrative-biographical methods
6. The use of documents in qualitative research
 - 6.1. Definition and uses of documents in qualitative research
 - 6.2. The field design in the use of documents
 - 6.3. Advantages and limitations of the use of documents

Methodology

The work of the students during this course is divided into different types of activities, each of them with a specific amount of working hours. This diversity of formats is reflected in the use of different working methodologies during the course. The course has 6 ECTS credits, therefore it is expected that the students devote 150 working hours for this course.

The teaching methodology of the course place the students at the centre of the training activities and of the teaching-learning process. This is so because the course has a particularly practical character as far as the objective is that students learn how to use research methods to obtain qualitative information. Thus, the teaching methodology will combine: expositive sessions (40 hours), classroom workshops that allow to apply the concepts acquired and the techniques and methods explained (12 hours),), follow-up sessions (15 hours) autonomous work (83 hours).

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Classroom workshops	12	0.48	15, 14, 1, 3, 10, 12, 5, 16, 17
Expositive sessions	40	1.6	1, 2, 11, 8, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13
Type: Supervised			
Follow-up sessions	15	0.6	1, 3, 10, 11, 12, 5, 16, 7

Type: Autonomous

Group work	25	1	1, 10, 12, 5, 16, 9, 17
Preparing written exams	15	0.6	6, 7, 13
Reading compulsory texts	23	0.92	2, 8, 4, 6, 7, 13
Studying and understanding of transmitted knowledge	20	0.8	14, 2, 8, 6, 13

Assessment

The course will be evaluated in three different ways:

1. Continuous Evaluation during the semester (15% of the final grade) based on the exercises and assistance to the classroom workshops programmed in advance.
2. A Group Research Project that will be done along the semester (50% of the final grade). This Research Project will be based on the use of interviews and a group discussion. Each member of the group will develop an individual interview and will participate in the design and development of one group discussion (only one per project). There will be four dates in which students will hand the work related to their ongoing research project, which will be announced at the beginning of the course.
3. Two individual written exams that will assess the acquisition of concepts and applied knowledge transmitted along the course (35% of the grade). The exact dates of these exams will be announced at the beginning of the course.

The course will be passed if the final grade of the evaluation activities as a whole reaches at least a grade of 5/10. Moreover, in order to pass the course both the average grading of the written exams and of the group research project will have to reach a minimum grade of 4/10.

All the assignments will have to be submitted on the dates established by the teacher. If this is not the case the teacher will specify the penalty for these exercises. The cases of plagiarism or other irregular acts (copy, for example) will be graded with a zero (0) in the related activity. If you have doubts about what constitutes plagiarism you may check the *Guide on How to Cite and How to Avoid Plagiarism*, which you have in the Campus Virtual.

Those students who during the course have adequately followed the subject and do not pass the group assessment (that is, do not pass the evaluation of the research project) may opt for the recovery of this part, which is equivalent to 50% of the subject. The part related to the individual written exams and the practices in the classroom CAN NOT BE RECOVERED.

Only the students that do not submit the evaluation activities corresponding to 50% of the final grade will have the grade of "not-presented" (No Presentat).

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Continuous Evaluation during the semester based on the exercises and assistance to the classroom workshops programmed in advance.	15%	0	0	15, 1, 10, 12, 5, 7
Group Research Project that will be done along the semester	50%	0	0	15, 14, 1, 3, 2, 10, 11, 12, 5, 16, 9, 17

Individual written exams that will assess the acquisition of concepts and applied knowledge transmitted along the course	35%	0	0	1, 2, 8, 4, 6, 13
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Bibliography

The basic textbook of the course will be:

VERD, Joan M.; LOZARES, Carlos (2016) *Introducción a la investigación cualitativa. Fases métodos y técnicas*. Madrid: Síntesis.

Additional bibliography (used in some parts of the course):

ALONSO, Luis Enrique (1998) *La mirada cualitativa en sociología. Una aproximación interpretativa*. Madrid: Fundamentos.

BERTAUX, Daniel (2005) *Los relatos de vida. Perspectiva etnosociológica*. Barcelona: Edicions Bellaterra.

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BORRÀS V.; LÓPEZ P.; LOZARES C. (1999) "La articulación entre lo cuantitativo y lo cualitativo: de las grandes encuestas a la recogida de datos intensiva". *Qüestió*, 23 (3): 525-541.

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CICOUREL, Aaron (2011[1964]) *Método y medida en sociología*. Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones sociológicas. Capítulos 1 y 2.

CRESWELL, J. W. (2013) *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing among five approaches*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage. Capítulos 2 y 3. 3ª edición.

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- IBAÑEZ, Jesús (1994) *El regreso del sujeto. La investigación social de segundo orden*. Madrid: Siglo XXI.
- KRUEGER, Richard A. (1991) *El grupo de discusión. Guía práctica para la investigación aplicada*. Madrid: Pirámide.
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