



UNIVERSITY OF  
GOTHENBURG

## DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND WORK SCIENCE

### **SF2322 Applied Qualitative Research Methods, 15 credits**

Tillämpade kvalitativa forskningsmetoder, 15 högskolepoäng

Second Cycle

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#### **Confirmation**

This course syllabus was confirmed by Faculty of Social Sciences on 2010-06-16 and was last revised on 2021-05-27 by Department of Sociology and Work Science to be valid from 2021-08-30, autumn semester of 2021.

*Field of education:* Social Sciences 100%

*Department:* Department of Sociology and Work Science

#### **Position in the educational system**

The course Applied Qualitative Research Methods is a method course in the second cycle. The course Applied Qualitative Research Methods is given as either a free-standing course or as part of a Master Programme within the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The course can be part of the following programmes: 1) Master's Programme in Political Science (S2PSC), 2) Programme for Master in Sociology (S2SOC), 3) Master's Programme in Criminology (S2KRI), 4) Master's Programme in European Studies (S2EUS), 5) Master's programme in political communication (S2MKG) and 6) Master's Programme in International Administration and Global Governance (S2IAG)

<i>Main field of studies</i>	<i>Specialization</i>
Criminology	A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Political Science	A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements
Sociology	A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements
European Studies	A1F, Second cycle, has second-cycle course/s as entry requirements

**Entry requirements**

To be eligible for the course the student should have obtained a pass grade for a first cycle social sciences research methods course (at least 15 credits) and have obtained 15 credits from a second cycle core course in the social sciences, or the equivalent. English 6/English B or the equivalent level of an internationally recognized test, for example TOEFL, IELTS.

**Learning outcomes**

After completing the course the student is expected to be able to:

*Knowledge and understanding*

- Demonstrate general methodological knowledge about, and understanding of, the major steps in the research process: problem formulation, design and data collection, analysis as well as validation and evaluation.
- Demonstrate advanced methodological knowledge and understanding of one (or more) of the specialisations: discourse analysis, ethnographic methods and case study analysis.
- Display such knowledge of the practice of qualitative methods so as to be able to independently conduct a study for a master's thesis, participate in a research project and other types of qualified work, such as commissioned investigation-, development- or evaluation work.

*Competence and skills*

- Demonstrate an advanced ability to analyse, interpret and evaluate interviews, observations and texts, in appropriate ways according to standards of social science methodology.
- Independently apply and argue for ways of generalization, in appropriate ways with respect to different methodological approaches, problem formulations and the design of the research process.

*Judgement and approach*

- Independently and critically assess and evaluate the scientific relevance and quality of research that is conducted with qualitative methods.

- Independently and critically assess and evaluate the importance of epistemological approaches for qualitative methods.
- Independently and critically identify and assess the ethical issues associated with social science research.

### **Course content**

Initially, theoretical starting points, ethical issues, and the applicability of qualitative methods are presented and discussed. Issues of problem formulation and research design are presented and discussed in general terms as well as with reference to the course specializations of case study analysis, discourse analysis and ethnographic methods.

The second module deals with various empirical materials and problems of sampling, with particular emphasis on methods for collecting and processing data as texts, interviews and observations.

The third part focuses on processing and analysis. Starting from a discussion of general problems connected with various phases of qualitative analysis, the discussions and training elements focus on the characteristics of the three specializations: case study analysis, discourse analysis and ethnographic methods.

The final module deals with problems related to validation and evaluation of research processes and research conclusions. Particular emphasis is placed on issues of quality criteria for qualitative methods as well as historical and contemporary views concerning levels of generalization and matters of intersubjectivity. This module also includes the preparation of a final course paper, where the assignment is to write a methods section equivalent to that used in a finished master thesis.

### **Form of teaching**

*Language of instruction:* English

### **Assessment**

The four modules of the course are examined by written and oral presentations, given by the students at obligatory examination seminars, including solved exercises and comments on the work of fellow students. All elements - written documentation and oral presentation and comments – are considered in course assessment and grading.

In two assignments students work individually, and in two exercises students work in pairs. The final course assignment is more extensive and of a more comprehensive

character as compared to the seminar assignments.

If a student due to reasonable causes (e.g. illness, care of sick children, or other personal circumstances) is unable to submit a written course paper, notice of this should be given as early as possible and an individual solution designed to resolve the situation. If a student due to reasonable causes (see above) is unable to participate in an examination seminar, the student may instead submit a written comment on a fellow student's paper.

Students who fail the exam are entitled to be examined in order to receive a passing grade.

A student who has failed an assignment twice has the right to request for a change of examiners, if it is possible. A written application should be sent to the coordinating Department.

### **Grades**

The grading scale comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).

The grading scale for assignment 1-3 comprises: Pass (G) and Fail (U). The grading scale for assignment 4 (Individual course paper) comprises: Pass with Distinction (VG), Pass (G) and Fail (U).

To get the Pass with Distinction (VG) for the entire course, all of the assignments 1-3 must have been graded Pass (G) and assignment 4 (Individual course paper) must be graded Pass with Distinction (VG).

### **Course evaluation**

The course will be evaluated by students each time it is given, and the results and actions taken should be reported at the start of the course the next time it is given.

### **Additional information**

The course is taught in English. Students who work with empirical materials in Swedish, regardless of the type and condition of the material, can use it and refer to it with quotes and exemplifications in Swedish. Written and oral presentations of work that comprises such elements in Swedish, as well as discussions of them, should be voiced in English.