

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

College of Education

Qualitative Methods Courses 2019-20

Qualitative Research

“Qualitative research is a process of naturalistic inquiry that seeks in-depth understanding of social phenomena within their natural setting. It focuses on the ‘why’ rather than the ‘what’ of social phenomena and relies on the direct experiences of human beings as meaning-making agents in their everyday lives... qualitative researchers use multiple systems of inquiry for the study of human phenomena including biography, case study, historical analysis, discourse analysis, ethnography, grounded theory, and phenomenology.”

“Most simply put, quantitative research is concerned with measurement and numbers, while qualitative research is concerned with understanding and words. Qualitative methods allow the researcher to study selected issues in depth and detail without being constrained by pre-determined categories of analysis.”

Source: University of Utah, Nursing

Other Qualitative Courses at UW

depts.washington.edu/qual

Education faculty offer a range of qualitative methods courses each year. The following courses will be offered during the 2019-20 academic year.

Foundational Qualitative Methods Courses

EDLPS 558A: Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods in Education

(Autumn and Winter, 3 credits): This course is designed to provide a basic overview of qualitative research methods. It is ideal for those who have little familiarity with this genre of inquiry approaches, and who want to understand the purpose, design and conduct of qualitative research. [open to all graduate students]

Qualitative Methods of Educational Research Sequence:

EDPSY 586A (Autumn, 3 credits), EDPSY 581AB (Winter, 4 credits), EDPSY

587A (Spring, 3 credits): This course sequence introduces students to several traditions of qualitative inquiry. Students are guided through a mentored experience in which they design, conduct, analyze, and write-up a small-scale qualitative study. Course Taking Options: Students can choose to take only the Fall course (and not do the year-long project), if they wish; other students who have not done the Fall course may take the Spring course, with instructor’s permission, if they have already collected qualitative data to analyze and have had the equivalent Fall course. Students may take the Fall and Spring courses in different years. [open to doctoral students in 2nd year and beyond]

Specific Modes of Qualitative Inquiry

Design-based Research Methods Sequence:

EDCI 581A (Winter, biennial, 3 credits), EDCI 582A (Fall 2020, biennial, 3 credits): Design-based research (DBR) is a methodology that involves the orchestration and empirical study of innovative and equity-focused learning environments, organizations, and social movements. In contrast to strictly observational methods, DBR transforms and theoretically analyzes learning environments “in the wild.” DBR tends to be heavily qualitative, although mixed methods designs are also common. [open to all graduate students]

"If much of reality is ephemeral and elusive, then we cannot expect single answers. If the world is complex and messy, then at least some of the time we're going to have to give up on simplicities. But one thing is sure: if we want to think about the messes of reality at all then we're going to have to teach ourselves to think, to practice, to relate, and to know in new ways."

— Law, 2004, p. 2

"The ethnographer serves the scientific logic of causal explanation by collecting tightly clustered, finely differentiated cases, each of which can serve to negate and force revision of explanatory ideas."

— Katz, 2001, p. 4

"There is frustration [in the social sciences] over the inability to *recover persons*—to retrieve their individuality—from the matrix of relationships that continue to be established among variables of scientific interest. The absence of a *person focus*, and the continued emphasis on relations among variables, has yielded a body of knowledge in which persons in all of their complexity—actors managing the uncertainties and vicissitudes of daily life—are difficult to discern... 'Our normal methods... attribute causality to the variables... rather than to agents; variables do things, not social actors.'"

— Jessor (summarizing Mishler and Abbott), 1996, p. 4

EDCI 505D: Interviewing and Observation (Winter, biennial, 3 credits): This seminar focuses on using interviews and observations as key methods in qualitative research. We will read texts that explain various approaches to these methods, as well as read and critique research papers that use the methods. Students develop an in-depth understanding of how to choose an appropriate approach given a specific research question and context and how to implement the approach to gather high-quality qualitative data. [open to all graduate students]

EDCI 506B: Classroom and School-Based Research: Practitioner Inquiry (Winter, 3 credits): This course introduces students to action research, a form of self-reflective systematic inquiry by practitioners on their own practice. The goals of action research in education are the improvement of instructional practice, a better understanding of that practice, and ultimately, an improvement in critical student learning outcomes. [open to all graduate students]

EDLPS 535A: Historical Inquiry in Education Research (Winter, 3 credits): The aims of this research methods course are to become acquainted with different approaches to studying the history of education and to practice sound interpretation of historical evidence. Students will practice analyzing the use of historical evidence in exemplary historical works, and will develop preliminary proposals for historical study on topics of their choice. [open to all graduate students]

EDPSY 581F: Visual Research Methods (Winter, 3 credits): This seminar explores diverse visual methods in qualitative inquiry. It provides an understanding of the use of film, still photography, video and non-camera generated images, cultural art practice and storytelling, multimedia, and material culture. It involves lectures, discussions, media/visual screenings, and the creation of visual narratives. [open to graduate students new to visual research methods]

EDPSY 569A: Learning and the Interaction Order (Spring, biennial, 3 credits): This course will be helpful to students already involved in research where inferences are made about understanding, learning, or teaching on the basis of what people say and do together in audio and video recordings. Our readings will focus on method and case studies in the areas of conversation analysis, ethnomethodology, gesture studies, mobility studies, and micro-ethnographies of classroom life. [open to all graduate students]

EDPSY 582A: Ethnography of Human Development, Cognition, and Learning (Spring, 3 credits): Students will learn about the methods and issues associated with different phases of ethnographic research and review different ethnographic traditions focused on the study of learning and development. We explore the practicalities of fieldwork and study modes of ethnographic analysis. We consider ethical and political dimensions of the work and explore ways to disrupt canonical academic knowledge hierarchies and attend to multiple knowledge systems. [open to all doctoral students]

Recommended Qualitative Course Sequences for Specific Academic Traditions & Roles

Learning Scientist: EDPSY 586/581/587 → EDCI 581/582 → EDPSY 569, EDPSY 582

Historian: EDPSY 586/581/587 → EDLPS 535

Researcher-Practitioner: EDLPS 558 → EDCI 506 or EDCI 581/582

Case Study Researcher / Ethnographer: EDLPS 558 or EDPSY 586/581/587 → EDCI 505 or EDPSY 582