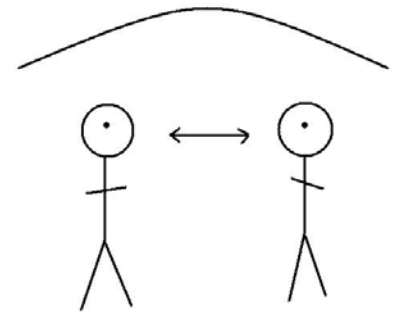


SSA153 Autumn Semester: 3 October to 12 December
Foundations in Qualitative Research Methods
when numbers aren't enough

What do people think about sexism in sports media? Is there a better or worse way to flirt with someone? How do people justify criminal actions? Can those with strong cultural differences ever really understand one another? When is it okay to lie? These are the kinds of questions that demand qualitative research methods: focused, in-depth approaches to understanding the social world based on examining situations in context. In this class we will explore how human identity, culture, behaviour and perspectives can be elicited, observed and analysed in the psychological and social sciences.



	Location	Day/Time	Instructor(s)	Instructor Contact
Lecture	James France CCO11	Mondays, 9-9:50am	Dr. Jessica S. Robles	j.j.robles@lboro.ac.uk +44(0)1509 223371 Brockington Ext. U4:26
Practicals	Brockington 114	Mondays, 10am-12pm	Emily Hofstetter Joe Ford Fabio Ferraz Marc Alexander Kat Connabeer Ann Doehring Mirko Demasi	E.C.Hofstetter@lboro.ac.uk J.Ford@lboro.ac.uk f.ferraz-de-almeida@lboro.ac.uk m.alexander@lboro.ac.uk k.connabeer@lboro.ac.uk A.Doehring@lboro.ac.uk m.a.demasi@lboro.ac.uk
		Mondays, 2pm-4pm		
		Tuesdays, 11am-1pm		
		Wednesdays, 9-11am		
		Thursdays, 9-11am		

Module Guide Contents

- Syllabus (module goals, assessment, policies, resources) page 1
- Schedule (weekly content, readings, coursework) page 4
- Content Overview (introduction to module content) page 6
- References (module readings and suggested readings) page 8

Syllabus

<p style="text-align: center;">Module Goals</p> <p>On completion of this module, students should be able to:</p> <p>A. Knowledge and Understanding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understand, identify and apply appropriate qualitative methods for collecting, analysing and presenting qualitative data in psychological research. <p>B. Skills and Other Attributes</p> <p>Intellectual Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● demonstrate understanding of the basic principles of qualitative methods in psychology through coursework exercises; ● apply qualitative methods to different data types. <p>Subject Practical Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● present analysis of data appropriately; ● use computer software to work with qualitative data. <p>Key / Transferable Skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● present and analyse qualitative data; ● solve problems; ● work in small groups; ● know how to use software to work with qualitative data. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching and Learning</p> <p>Guided independent study: 64 hours Homework, coursework you do on your own time, and out-of-class interactions with instructors or classmates</p> <p>Lecture: 12 hours Weekly time spent in lecture (1 hour per week, 12 weeks)</p> <p>Practical classes and workshops: 24 hours Weekly time spent in tutorials (2 hours per week, 12 weeks)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Assessment</p> <p>Exam 25%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One multiple choice exam (30 questions, 1 point each) ● Cumulative (based on readings and lectures weeks 1-10) ● Takes place during examination period (lasts 1 hour) ● Objective: to assess basic understanding of qualitative methods, including research philosophy and ethics, data collection, data preparation, and coding <p>Coursework 75%</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Qualitative materials and a final analytic essay ● Involves individual and group work taking place in tutorials and as homework
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Readings

- *Doing your Qualitative Psychology Project* by Sullivan, Gibson & Riley (2012) [see Reading List on Learn]
- A series of methodological and research articles posted on the Learn site

Coursework Details

Coursework Details

- Objective: to demonstrate skills in using qualitative methods and develop an analysis based thereon

Description

The coursework involves a series of incremental assignments and assignment preparation that models the process of conducting qualitative research. This work will take place in lecture, in practicals, and on your own time as necessary.

Assignments

Project details: team members, data collection protocols, bibliography

Data collection: observations, observation notes, fieldnotes, recordings, transcripts

Qualitative coding: coded data

Portfolio: all of the above in Google Drive, plus Analysis Essay submitted to Learn (see the *Qualitative Portfolio Instructions* for details)

Marking Information

Exam marking is done mechanically through the printing office on an objective basis, with one point awarded for correct responses and no points awarded for incorrect or missing responses.

The qualitative practical portfolio marking involves incremental assignments that are scored pass/fail and may contribute between one third and one letter grade impact to an overall mark; the essay component is the majority of the mark and is graded using a percentage to determine the mark (see chart below). To obtain at least a passing mark or “third” (40%), the portfolio must include all requisite materials (incremental assignments) and the essay, following all requirements for content, organization, and format. A more detailed rubric is available on the Learn website.

Grade	First			Upper Second			Lower Second			Third			Fail			
Percent	95	85	75	68	65	62	58	55	52	48	45	42	35	25	15	0

Feedback on exam results and coursework will involve some general comments in lecture and/or tutorials and/or via email, individual and peer feedback in tutorials, and written feedback with the final essay (accessible through the Turnitin function, to which you submit your Analysis Essay on the Learn website). Additionally, more specific feedback or follow-up questions may be discussed with module instructors by appointment or over email.

Policies

Assistance

Students with required sports commitments, religious obligations, counseling, or disability service needs, or who experience unexpected emergencies or hardships, should make any necessary requests and notifications within the first week of the term and/or as soon as required (in unforeseen circumstances). Anyone who misses class or needs accommodations for assignments should be prepared for these situations and understand what to do to keep up. Please consult the CDS and student services websites for assistance: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/disabilities/> / <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/sass/>

Conduct

Students are expected to show respect to their instructors and classmates in lecture and in tutorials. This includes giving others a chance to speak, refraining from intolerant speech, providing attention when it is required, and using devices in an appropriate manner. Any students who violate these expectations may be asked to leave the classroom. Outside of the classroom, please respect one another's time and the instructors' time. People may be very busy or experiencing personal challenges, so be kind and give the benefit of the doubt if they cannot always help you immediately.

Communications

If you are forced to disrupt, inconvenience, or not contribute to the class in any way (including arriving late, leaving early, not attending, etc.), please contact those who may be affected by your absence ahead of time if possible (for example, group members or tutorial instructors). You are individually responsible for any work missed, and should consult module materials on Learn, as well as fellow students, before contacting lecture or tutorials instructors with any questions you might have. Please note that when contacting instructors, they may not always be able to respond to your enquiries immediately, and some instructors do not respond to emails over weekends and holidays. Generally, instructors will contact you outside of class through the announcements function on the Learn site (which will also send an email to you).

Resources

Students are expected to use the following resources in this module:

Learn (learn.lboro.ac.uk), the course website, which contains all links and documents associated with this module. Learn also links up to other important websites you are expected to use.

Google Drive (drive.google.com), online collaboration software, through which you will complete group work and incremental coursework leading up to the submission of your portfolio.

University Email (my.lboro.ac.uk), through which you may contact instructors and receive responses.

A range of other software as needed (including Padlet, Word processing, audio playback, video playback/sharing, transcription software, etc.) depending on in-class activities and assignment/personal requirements.

A range of hardware as needed (including computer, headphones, audio recording device, etc.) depending on in-class activities and assignment/personal requirements.

A range of communication tools and/or social media as needed (including Facebook, etc.) if your group selects one of these modes as a primary way of communicating with one another.

Schedule

Week	Self-Study	Lecture	Practicals	Homework
<i>Week 1</i>	Read Sullivan et al. (2012) chs 1-2; Module Guide	Module Introduction Philosophy of Qualitative Research I	Project Team & Research Topic forms (Google Drive)	Finish Project Team & Research Topic forms (Google Drive)
<i>Week 2</i>	Read Howitt (2010); Sullivan et al. (2012) ch 3	Philosophy of Qualitative Research II Research Ethics Reviewing Literature	Research Participants & Protocol form	Research Topic form Bibliography (Google Drive) before next Practicals
<i>Week 3</i>	Read Clarke & Braun (2013); Sullivan et al. (2012) ch 6	Field Observations	Observing & taking notes	Observation Notes (bring to next Practicals)
<i>Week 4</i>	Read Edwards & Holland (2013) chs 1, 3, 6; Opdenakker (2003)	Interviewing	Conducting interviews	Interview Recording (Google Drive) before next Practicals (bring consent forms to Practicals)
<i>Week 5</i>	Read McLellan et al. (2003); Wolfinger (2002)	Transcribing Interviews, Writing up Fieldnotes	Transcription and fieldnotes workshop	Transcripts & Fieldnotes (Google Drive) before next Practicals
<i>Week 6</i>	Read Sullivan et al. (2012) ch 7; Glaser (1965)	Qualitative Coding	Coding data	Coded Data (Google Drive) before week 8 Practicals
<i>Week 7</i>	Read Qualitative Portfolio Instructions & Exam Study Guide	Coursework & Exam Review	No Practicals	Finish coding data, work on Analysis Essay

<i>Week 8</i>	Read Braun & Clarke (2006)	Thematic Analysis (TA)	TA practice	Work on Analysis Essay
<i>Week 9</i>	Read Smith (2004)	Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)	IPA practice	Detailed outline and/or draft of Analysis Essay
<i>Week 10</i>	Read Sullivan et al. (2012) chs 5, 9	Coursework Review Writing Qualitative Research	Revising Peer Review	Qualitative Portfolio, Analysis Essay (due 12/12)
<i>Week 11</i>	Study for exam, consult Study Guide, quizzes	Exam Review	No Practicals	Finish Analysis Essay
Qualitative Portfolio and Analysis Essay due 12/12 Exam takes place during examination period				

Content Overview

The aim of this module is to introduce students to the basic theory, practice, and procedures for using qualitative research methods in psychology. Content includes data collection and data analysis, philosophy of qualitative research, ethics, consent, validity and reliability, interviewing, field observation, transcription, thematic analysis, and interpretive phenomenological analysis. The overview below provides some background for these elements, and defines a few of them; however, all of these will be explicated throughout the module, in accordance with the module goals.

Breaking down the Title

The title of this class is called “Foundations in Qualitative Research Methods.” Let’s take each of those keywords and explain a little about what they mean. By *Foundations* we mean two dimensions: (1) that this will be an introduction to qualitative research methods, involving some simplification or more basic information, to which we will add in subsequent modules; and (2) that this will involve important underlying principles to build on in subsequent modules. In other words, this module is like the foundations of a house: it’s not the whole thing, but it’s a necessary thing on which the rest of the house sits.

By *Qualitative* we mean a focus on “quality”--not so much in the evaluation sense (like “x is better than y”), but more in terms of the technical term “qualia,” which refers to more subjective elements of perception that cannot be precisely measured. This is sometimes put in contrast with “quantitative” methods, which focus on objectively measurable aspects of perception. Qualitative approaches are best used to describe and understand aspects of human life that elude easy measurement or categorization--for instance, complex social behaviour, moral judgments, context-specific situations, and so forth.

By *Research* we mean, primarily, academic research: the systematic investigation of our world. In this module, we focus on the social psychological world, based on human behaviour in society. The tools we will use in this systematic investigation are called *Methods*, by which we mean sets of procedures for collecting, preparing, coding, and analyzing data.

Academic Research

It’s hard to find the exact starting point of academic research. Though the institutional system of universities, students, and professors as we know it is fairly recent, more informal kinds of academic activities have existed for at least 2000 years, going back to famous scholars such as Confucius and Socrates. The system of learning was rather different back then. There was no such thing as separate courses or majors or disciplines--everything pretty much looked like what we’d now call philosophy. But eventually, different elements of the world started to be examined in different ways. Subjects such as philosophy, art, and literature were investigated through reasoning, contemplation, reflection, and creative interpretation (what are now often called hermenutics), while the natural world was inspected scientifically (what we now call the scientific method) through controlled measurements, equations, and devices meant to capture the empirical world in precise ways (for instance, microscopes). A third approach was influenced by both of these, and that’s the area we call *social science*. Because of this variety, you can get quite a range of social science approaches, including those that seem to imitate the natural scientific methods--focused on precise measurements that can be categorized, quantified, correlated, and explained or predicted--while others are more oriented to human interpretation, and the various perspectives that can be taken to different social phenomena.

Quantitative and Qualitative

Scientific approaches, and social science approaches grounded in quantification, seek to remove the human from the equation as much as possible and describe large-scale patterns of social behaviour in an abstract, general way. For example, you might do an experiment in which multiple people come into a laboratory to be observed under a number of controlled scenarios, or you might send off a survey to hundreds of people asking their opinions on something. Then you'd gather up all the data and try to measure it in some way so that you can make a claim like "people with religious beliefs are more likely to vote conservatively" or "30 percent of people rate images of smiling women in magazines as friendlier than non-smiling women or men whether they smile or not."

Interpretive approaches, and social science approaches grounded in *qualitative* descriptions, seek to focus on the human perspective and describe detailed, in-depth, context-specific patterns of social behaviour in particular situations. For example, you might do a critical analysis of representations of race in television media, or you might study hours of video recordings of customer service interactions. You'd be trying to examine the data in context, looking for things like what sorts of arguments people make when they want their money back for a returned product, or what kinds of visual and linguistic practices contribute to depictions of ethnicity in media. Rather than getting a broad, large-scale idea of behaviour in populations, you're trying to understand how social events happen "on the ground" when you use the qualitative approach. Together, qualitative and quantitative methods provide two different but complementary ways of understanding the world and people's experiences within it.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods generally start with some sort of *project of inquiry*--some topic, or question, that you want to explore and understand. Sometimes it's something that's been studied a lot before, but only in one way. For example, for many years psychology was studied exclusively in laboratory experiments, and only fairly recently did people decide we might learn a new angle on human behaviour by watching or talking to people in naturalistic environments and "real" (not scripted) situations. Other times it's something that doesn't have a lot of research about it, and we want to learn more. Qualitative methods are more likely to be *inductive*, meaning instead of starting with a theory that already exists and applying it to see if it works (which *deductive* approaches, usually used in quantitative research, do), they look at the data with a "fresh" eye and try to see what emerges from it. So, this inquiry can be very open-ended at first, before the data is collected.

Once some sort of inquiry has been established, a researcher may start reading up on all the research in that area, trying to understand it and its background as broadly as possible (this is what's called a *literature review*); or, the researcher might dive right into *data collection*, so as to keep as open a mind toward the data as possible. As data is collected, it has to be prepared so that it can be organized and interpreted. *Data preparation* seeks to retain the context of the original data--so, if the data involves interviews, you wouldn't just list a bunch of responses, but would write out everything verbatim (including the questions the interviewer asked)--in order to interpret the interview responses in the context of the interaction within which they occurred. This is known as *transcription*. This is different from quantitative methods in which data would be reduced to single words or phrases, and then ultimately turned into variables to manipulate and count numerically. The data is then coded using interpretive analysis rather than statistical algorithms. *Coding* can involve looking for patterns of opinions, behaviour, language, and so forth.

These patterns are then analysed, but not in a general way to make claims about what large groups of people do, which is the goal of quantitative analysis methods. Instead, **qualitative analysis** methods (such as thematic analysis and interpretative phenomenological analysis) focus on generating focused insights into how and why specific people do certain sorts of things in particular situations. This can generate deeper understanding of other human beings, shed light on various angles of an issue, give a sense of what complications are involved in situations, and so on. Rather than looking for abstract facts about humans in general, qualitative analysis tries to get at what it's like to be a human dealing with society and social situations in day-to-day life.

References

The following is a list of relevant references. The first list includes all of the readings assigned in this module. The second list includes other sources that are suggested for further information.

Module Readings

- Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 77-101.
- Clarke, V. & Braun, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*. London: Sage.
- Edwards, R. & Holland, J. (2013). *What is qualitative interviewing?* (chapters 1, 3, 6). London: Bloomsbury.
- Glaser, B.G. (1965). The constant comparative method of qualitative analysis. *Social Problems*, 12, 436-445.
- Howitt, D. (2010). *Introduction to qualitative methods in psychology*. London: Pearson.
- McLellan, E., MacQueen, K.M. & Neidig J.L. (2003). Beyond the qualitative interview: Data preparation and transcription. *Field Methods*, 5, 63-84.
- Opendakker, R. (2006). Advantages and disadvantages of four interview techniques in qualitative research. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 7.
- Smith, J.A. (2004). Interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 1, 39-54.
- Sullivan, C., Gibson, S. & Riley, S. (2012). *Doing your qualitative psychology project*. London: Sage.
- Wolfinger (2002). On writing fieldnotes: Collection strategies and background expectations. *Qualitative Research*, 2, 85-95.

Suggested Readings

- Bird, C. M. (2005). How I stopped dreading and learned to love transcription. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 11, 226-248.
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- Holt, A. & Wilkins, C. (2014). 'In some eyes it's still ooh, Gloucester, yeah Fred West': Spatial stigma and the impact of a high-profile crime on community identity. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 25, 82-94.

- Howitt, D. & Cramer, D. (2011). *Introduction to Research Methods in Psychology*. Essex: Pearson.
- Larkin, M., Watts, S. & Clifton, E. (2006). Giving voice and making sense in interpretative phenomenological analysis. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3, 102-120.
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- Mulhall, A. (2003) In the field: Notes on observation in qualitative research. *Methodological Issues in Nursing Research*,
- Mulveen, R. & Hepworth, J. (2006). An interpretative phenomenological analysis of participation in a pro-anorexia internet site and its relationship with disordered eating. *Journal of Health Psychology*, 11, 283-296.
- Potter, J. & Hepburn, A. (2005). Qualitative interviews in psychology: Problems and possibilities. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2, 281-307.
- Rapley, T. J. (2001). The art(fulness) of open-ended interviewing: Some considerations on analysing interviews. *Qualitative Research*, 1, 303-323.
- Sav, A., Harris, N., & Sebar, B. (2013). Work-life conflict and facilitation among Australian Muslim men. *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion: An International Journal*, 32, 671-687.
- Schinke, R. J., McGannon, K. R., Battocchio, R. C. & Wells, G. D. (2013). Acculturation in elite sport: A thematic analysis of immigrant athletes and coaches. *Journal of Sports Sciences*, 31, 1676-1686.
- Smith, J. A., Flowers, P., & Larkin, M. (2009). *Interpretative phenomenological analysis: Theory, method and research*. London: Sage.
- Talleyrand, R. M., Gordon, A. D., Daquin, J. V. & Johnson, A. J. (2016). Expanding our understanding of eating practices, body image, and appearance in African American women: A qualitative study. *Journal of Black Psychology*, 1-29.
- Willig, C. (2008). *Introducing Qualitative Research in Psychology*. New York: Open University Press.