Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences
Kvalitativa metoder för samhällsvetenskaperna

Credit points: 7,5 CTS credits
Course code: 
Responsible department: Department of Sociology
Main field of study: Social sciences
Level: PhD studies
Specialisation in relation to degree requirements: Licentiate of Philosophy or Doctor of Philosophy
Subject area: Social Sciences
Grading scale: Fail/Pass

Confirmation
The course syllabus is established by the board of the Faculty of Social Sciences’ Executive Committee on 2009-09-21. The course syllabus is valid from 2009-09-21.

Contents
The course is divided in three modules:
Module 1: Qualitative Methods – History and Paradigm, 1,5 ECTS credits
Module 2: Practices of Qualitative Research, 2,0 ECTS credits
Module 3: Optional exercises and elaboration of research paper, 4 ECTS credits

Module 1: Qualitative Methods – History and Paradigm
During the first part of the course the participants are introduced to the historical background and recent developments within the broad field of qualitative research methods in the social sciences. The practices of qualitative research within different paradigms and theoretical perspectives are discussed. During the introduction participants will be assigned specific reading/preparation tasks for each of the subsequent seminars. Every participant will be required to prepare questions to at least one of the sessions, which means that on each seminar there will be a group of participants responsible for questions and for initiating discussions. Instructions for the examination paper will also be given during the introductory part.

Module 2: Practices of Qualitative Research
During the second part of the course focus will be on certain methodological specializations in order to gain more in-depth understandings of different practices of qualitative research. These specializations will depend on the participating lecturers who will represent different fields such as for example narrative analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory etc. Each specialization will thus be presented by researchers who use them in their own work at the faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities at Umeå University. During each thematic seminar a group of students will be responsible for questions and for initiating discussions.

Module 3: Optional exercises and elaboration of research paper
The third part of the course is dedicated to optional exercises and elaboration of examination papers to be presented and discussed at the final seminar. Students will be required to reflect on methodological choices and/or to practice qualitative analyses in a written exercise related to one
or more of the specializations that have been presented during the course. Participants will be able to work independently with optional exercises provided to them by the lecturers. The examination will consist in a written paper (5-10 pages) which may either a) discuss and compare two or more of the different approaches presented during the course; b) describe and motivate the design of a qualitative research approach applied to the participant's own research interest; or c) present and discuss one of the qualitative research approaches together with a practical exercise using the approach. During the third part of the course participants are required to present their papers in a final seminar. Each participant is also required to be discussant on one of the examination papers at the final seminar.

**Expected learning outcomes**
Upon successful completion of the course, the student is expected to:

- Have knowledge of the historical background and recent developments within the field of qualitative research methods
- Have knowledge of the terminology within qualitative research
- Have knowledge of how qualitative research methods have been practiced within different paradigms and theoretical perspectives
- Be able to understand differences between major methodological traditions within qualitative research
- Be able to understand and critically evaluate different approaches within qualitative research
- Be able to practice an optional qualitative analysis in accordance with one of the specializations presented during the course
- Be able to present a written examination paper in the final seminar
- Be able to be discussant on an examination paper.

**Required knowledge**
Applicants are required to be registered at a PhD program at Umeå University.

**Form of instruction**
Focus of instruction will be lectures and seminars (see Content section above). All teaching will be in English.

**Examination modes**
Participants are required to present and submit a written examination paper at the final seminar. Examination also includes responsibility for questions and discussion at one of the thematic sessions and to be discussant on a paper at the final seminar.

**Academic credit transfer**
Academic credit transfers are reviewed individually. For more information, please see the University's set of rules and academic credit transfer regulations.

**Course literature**


Provisional regulations

Other regulations