

RES720 Qualitative Research Methods

(3 credit hours)

Course Syllabus

Course Description

Qualitative Research Methods (3 cr. hours) compares qualitative research methods to quantitative research. The student will demonstrate how qualitative research must and can be conducted with the same intellectual and methodological rigor as is quantitative research. Qualitative research content will feature solid epistemological and theoretical foundations in philosophy (phenomenology, hermeneutics) composed of various schools of thought – notably grounded theory and ethnomethodology. This leads to very concrete research methods, such as various forms of interview, participant observation methods, case studies, focus groups, and more. Actual case studies will be used in the course.

Course Learning Outcomes (CLO)

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

1. Apply critical thinking skills to develop qualitative theoretical models and associated research and interview questions.
2. Identify emergent themes and codes based on research results.
3. Analyze data based on qualitative research techniques.
4. Begin developing a research study based on ethical research standards that advances the field of study and adds to its knowledge base.
5. Develop theoretical models and appropriate research design.

Required Textbook and Resources

For this course you will need to purchase the following materials:

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). John Wiley & Sons.

Be sure to also review the weekly **Explore** sections for additional library or web resources. For access to databases, research help, and writing tips, visit the [Tiffin University Library](#).

Time Commitment

Effective time management is a critical element to your academic success. To do well in this class you should plan your time wisely. With our accelerated, seven-week term, you should reserve roughly **twenty (20) hours per week** to complete readings and assignments.

To help plan your time and keep on track toward successful course completion, note the distinctive rhythm of assignment due dates:

1. All times assume Eastern Time (GMT-4).
2. Weeks begin at 12:00 a.m. ET on Monday and end at 11:55 p.m. ET on Sunday.
3. Initial forum discussion posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Wednesdays** and response posts are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Saturdays** (unless noted otherwise).
4. All other assignments are due by **11:55 p.m. ET on Sundays** (unless noted otherwise).

Learning Activities

All activities, discussions and assignments are designed to give you the opportunity to delve deeply into the essential core competencies required of qualitative research. Key assessments focus on the Course Learning Outcomes listed at the beginning of the syllabus, as well as the broader outcomes for your particular doctoral program. You will demonstrate your accomplishments by successfully completing the following:

Discussion Forums (6)

Each week you will participate in a discussion forum, except for Week 7. You will share your thoughts about the week's learning activities and offer an analysis of the particular aspects of qualitative research covered that week.

The discussion in Week 2 centers around a one-hour **observation** that you conduct in a public place (restaurant, mall, park, etc.). For the discussion, you will share notes on what you observe and record any patterns that seem to emerge. This is usually an activity that students enjoy and find valuable for "getting a handle" on qualitative methodology.

For the Week 6 discussion, you will analyze a **case study**, one of the most prevalent methods of qualitative research. This case deals with a sensitive workplace issue and as part of your analysis you will collect useful documents and identify themes and codes.

Reflection Papers (4)

Reflection is a powerful learning strategy to help you understand how to apply what you have been learning to your future research or career. In this course you will write reflections of your progress and understanding in weeks 1-3 and in Week 7.

Short Reports (3)

Three short reports are due in weeks 4-6.

Final Paper

In addition to the three short reports, you will submit a 6-page final paper in Week 7.

Key Assessment (Taskstream Submission)

This TU course features a “Key Assessment” that provides you the opportunity to demonstrate your program’s core competencies. It also shows how the course fits within the broader curriculum. For this course, *Activity 4.2: Documentation and Triangulation* is the Key Assessment.

Note About Terminology

The three methodology courses in the RES series (RES710, 720, and 722) are required of all doctoral students, regardless of program. For that reason, you may notice the use of generic terminology. That's because not all doctoral programs at TU lead to the same degree or require the same terminal assessment. For example, Global Leadership and Change students write a dissertation to earn a Ph.D., while Criminal Justice students complete an applied research project to graduate with a Doctor of CJ degree (DCJ). Regardless of program, the research methods taught in the RES courses are the same for all doctoral students.

Grading

The chart below identifies the individual contributions from each type of activity, per week.

Activity	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Total
Discussions	50	50	50	50	50	50	--	300
Reflections	75	75	75	--	--	--	75	300
Papers	--	--	--	100	100	100	100	400
Total	125	125	125	150	150	150	175	1000

Grading Scale

A: 90-100% | B: 80-89% | C: 70-79% | F: <70%

Course Schedule and Weekly Checklist

Topic	Learning Activities (Due by 11:55 p.m. ET on day designated)
Week 1: Differences Between Qualitative and Quantitative Research	<input type="checkbox"/> MON: Activity 1.1 (Forum): Meet Your Peers (No Grade) <input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 1.2 (Forum): Value and Challenges of Qualitative Research <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 1.2: Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 1.3: Reflection
Week 2: Direct Observation of Human Subjects	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 2.1 (Forum): Observation Experience (Grid) <input type="checkbox"/> FRI: Activity 2.1 (Forum): Observation Experience (Notes) <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 2.2: Reflection on Observation Experience
Week 3: Developing Qualitative Research Questions	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 3.1 (Forum): Research Questions <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 3.1: Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 3.2: Reflection on Qualitative Research
Week 4: Interview Questions, Pilot Studies, Expert Reviews, and Documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 4.1 (Forum): Interview Guide <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 4.1 Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 4.2: Documentation and Triangulation
Week 5: Conducting Participant Interviews	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 5.1 (Forum): Utility of Qualitative Research Techniques <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 5.1 Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 5.2: Hypothetical Qualitative Interview
Week 6: Identifying Emergent Themes and Mining Data	<input type="checkbox"/> WED: Activity 6.1 (Forum): Case Study <input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 6.1 Forum Responses <input type="checkbox"/> SUN: Activity 6.2: Qualitative Research Design
Week 7:	<input type="checkbox"/> FRI: Activity 7.1: Final Paper

Topic	Learning Activities (Due by 11:55 p.m. ET on day designated)
Credibility, Dependability, Assumptions, and Limitations	<input type="checkbox"/> SAT: Activity 7.2: Final Reflection

Tips for Success

Online learning requires self-discipline and self-direction. As truth seekers, we should be willing to challenge one another's academic work in a spirit of respectful comradery. Your course is a place to benefit from the expertise, experience, and diverse perspectives of your instructor and peers. Constructive feedback will further challenge you to expand your knowledge and understanding.

To get the most out of your learning experience, you should actively engage (participate) in **ALL** course activities. Course elements in any given week are arranged chronologically. To complete a week, simply work your way "down the page" through all course narratives and activities.

For More Information

Be sure to review the [Support, Policies, and Procedures](#) addendum.