

University: Comenius University in Bratislava	
Faculty: Faculty of Natural Sciences UK in Bratislava	
Code:	Title of course: Qualitative methodologies and fieldwork
Form of Study: lectures + seminars	
Number of contact hours: per week: 3 (2 lecture hours + 1 seminar hours) per level/semester: 39	
Method of Study: face-to-face/distance/hybrid mode	
Number of credits: 4	
Semester: S	
Degree/Level: Master	
Prerequisites: -	
Grading (Assessment/Evaluation) During the semester, students work on a separate research project individually or in groups based on an assignment (research design, research fieldwork, written interpretation of results and presentation at the end of the semester) as a necessary part of passing the exam. The assessment of the assignment affects the overall assessment of the subject with a maximum weight of 50%. The weight of a maximum of 50% belongs to the evaluation of 5 ongoing tasks at seminars (10 % for each) during the semester. The course has a standardized grading system which is identified below: A (91-100%): Outstanding, excellent work (exceptional performance with strong evidence of original thinking and obvious capacity to analyze, synthesize and evaluate); B (81 – 90%): Good, competent work; laudable performance with evidence of some original thinking, good problem solving ability, exhibiting a serious, responsible engagement with the course content; C (73 – 80%): Adequate, reasonably satisfactory work; fair performance but infrequent evidence of original thinking or the capacity to analyze, satisfies the minimum requirements of the course; D (66 – 72%): Less acceptable work; relatively weak performance with little evidence of original thinking or ability to analyze or synthesize course material; E (60 – 65%): Minimally acceptable work; very weak performance with little evidence of original thinking, showing an inadequate grasp of some basic elements of the course. Fx (under 60%): Inadequate work; poor performance that indicates a lack of understanding or misunderstanding of essential subject matter.	
Objectives and outcomes: The subject is focused on the theoretical and practical issues of the use of qualitative methods in geographical research. After completing the subject, the student should master the theoretical elements of using qualitative methods and know the possibilities of their use in research. In addition to theoretical training, students will also acquire basic practical skills of qualitative research, during the semester they will design, implement, and present an individual research project using qualitative methodological tools. Part of the subject is practical field research connected with a field trip.	
Brief outline of the course: Introduction to the issue of qualitative methods - basic information about the content of the subject, defining qualitative research, advantages and disadvantages of qualitative research, relationship between qualitative and quantitative research. Qualitative research methods will be Presented on specific examples from practice, we will point out its strengths and weaknesses, subjectivity/objectivity of the researcher. Types of qualitative research - Problems of construction and interpretation of qualitative data, choice of research topics, methods of selecting respondents; students will be introduced to the types of qualitative research (interview, observation, action research, ethnographic research,	

text and photo analysis, questionnaire). The lecture will also be devoted to the practical aspects of data collection (notes from the field research, researcher's diary) and coding.

How to create a research question and project design - Problems of research question will be discussed, formulation of research questions and broader project design. The difference between hypothesis and research question will be explained. Students will be familiar with research project design and structure, its individual parts. Emphasis will also be placed on ethical issues within qualitative research methods. Students will work in groups and formulate research questions on selected topics.

Interview and focus group - The lecture will be devoted to different methods of questioning through interviews and group discussions. Theoretical information about different types of interview (structured, semi-structured interview, oral history) will be defined. The difference between an interview and a group discussion will be explained, the possibilities of their practical use, their advantages and disadvantages will be shown.

Interview – practical questions - The lecture will be devoted to interviews, it will continue with practical questions connected with their creation and interpretation, emphasis will also be placed on observing ethical principles when conducting interviews. Students try to prepare and conduct their own interview; students will acquire basic skills in the field of interview analysis, they will practically try different types of coding of interview transcripts and the possibilities of interpretation from the obtained data.

Observation, action research and ethnographic research - Explanation of the basic characteristics of observation as a research method and pointing out its possibilities of use within research. Action and ethnographic research will be presented on the example of specific researches, basic characteristics, strengths and weaknesses and possibilities of interpretation. The positionality of the researcher in the framework of participant observation will be discussed. Observation in the field - The lecture will take place directly in the field at a selected location, where students will acquire practical skills related to data collection through direct observation of the selected phenomenon (creating photo documentation, notes from the field, keeping a diary, etc.).

Analysis of texts and photographs - The lecture will be devoted to basic issues related to the use of texts (political documents, laws, diaries, newspaper articles, literary works) and photos, students will be familiar with the possibilities of their use in their research, with specific examples and basic issues related to their interpretation. Basic principles for working with text documents will be emphasized.

Questionnaire - its use, creation, analysis and interpretation - basic types of questionnaires, issues of their creation, analysis and interpretation in relation to research questions and hypotheses. The main types and types of questions, the principles of creating questions, and their order within the questionnaire will be presented. Possibilities of analysing questionnaire research, data quantification will be discussed.

Case study - The lecture will summarize the information obtained about specific qualitative methods and practical issues of their use will be discussed on the example of various case studies. The entire research framework will be summarized on a specific case (determination and definition of research questions, selection of cases and determination of data collection and analysis methods, preparation and implementation of data collection, their analysis and evaluation, and preparation of the final report).

Exercises – Lectures will relate to exercises. At the introductory exercises, students will be divided into teams and semester projects will be designed for individual teams. Examples related to the selection of respondents in the context of the chosen topic, creation of research questions in teams for a semester project, planning of a research project, interview in pairs, coding of conducted interviews, work with brought photos, creation of a questionnaire in groups focusing on the possibilities of using different types and types will be practised. questions. There

will also be a discussion on individual areas of problems and techniques based on the literature read. At the end, students will present their research projects, with discussion and evaluation

Recommended literature:

Creswell, John W., and Poth, Cheryl N. 2016. Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches. Sage publications.

Wolcott Harry F. 2009. Writing up Qualitative research. Sage publications.

Piantandia, M., Garman, N.B. 2009. The qualitative dissertation. A guide for students and faculty. Corwin publications.

Rubin, Herbert, J., Rubin, Irene, S. 2012. Qualitative Interviewing. The art of hearing data. Sage.

Silverman, D. 2006. Interpreting Qualitative data. Sage publications.

Hay, I. 2000. Qualitative research methods in human geography. Melbourne: OUP.

Limb, M., Dwyer, C. 2001. Qualitative methodologies for geographers. Issues and debates. London: Arnold.

Language of instruction:

English

Additional information: The course will be conducted in face-to-face or distance (or hybrid) mode according to current conditions.

Course evaluation

Total number of students evaluated:

A	B	C	D	E	FX
a	b	c	d	e	f

Lecturers/Instructors: Mgr. Alena Rochovská, PhD.

Last updated: 21. April 2023

Approved by: prof. RNDr. Ján Buček, CSc.