

## **Qualitative Methods in Human Geography and Social Science – Critical and Reflective Practices, 7,5 credits**

### *Kvalitativa metoder i kulturgeografi och samhällsvetenskap – kritisk och reflekterande forskarpraktik, 7,5 hp*

|   |                   |
|---|-------------------|
| <b>Course Code/Codes</b>                          |                   |
| <b>Subject Area</b>                               | Human Geography   |
| <b>School/equivalent</b>                          | HumES             |
| <b>Valid from</b>                                 | Spring 2025       |
| <b>Approved</b>                                   | 2025-01-15        |
| <b>Revised</b>                                    |                   |
| <b>Approved by</b>                                | Head of School    |
| <b>Translation to English, date and signature</b> | 2025-01-15<br>SHL |

## **1 Course content**

The purpose with this course is to introduce and discuss theories and practices of qualitative methods in Human Geography and Social Science. It will provide both theoretical conceptualizations and hands on practical experience concerning the use and understanding of different qualitative methods and their implication for knowledge creation and advancement of research.

The course covers on the one hand a broad overview of methods to familiarize the participants with the variety and complexity of qualitative methods and on the other the course gives opportunities to reflect on and practice specific methods and discuss benefits and challenges of particular methodological choices. The course aims to include discussions of diverse theories and practices of qualitative methods including, but not limited to, queer methods, feminist methods and non-representational methods. Through the course the PhD-students will develop knowledge about the different steps in the research process; from selection of study field to a particular case; to selection of participants, conversations or visualization; through to collection of empirical material and finally coding interpretation, analysis and presentation.

## **2 Outcomes**

### **2.1 The course in relation to the doctoral programme**

The course shall primarily refer to the following intended learning outcomes for third-cycle courses and study programmes as described in the Higher Education Ordinance, i.e. the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

### *Knowledge and understanding*

- advanced and up-to-date specialised knowledge in a limited area of this field (part of outcome 1)
- familiarity with research methodology in general (part of outcome 2)
- familiarity with the methods of the specific field of research in particular (part of outcome 2)

### *Competence and skills*

- the capacity for scholarly analysis and synthesis (part of outcome 3)
- the ability to plan and use appropriate methods to undertake research and other qualified tasks within predetermined time frames (part of outcome 4)
- the ability to identify the need for further knowledge (outcome 7)

### *Judgement and approach*

- intellectual autonomy and disciplinary rectitude (part of outcome 9)
- the ability to make assessments of research ethics (part of outcome 9)
- specialised insight into the possibilities and limitations of research, its role in society and the responsibility of the individual for how it is used (outcome 10)

The intended learning outcomes are listed in the same order as in the general syllabus for the programme.

## **2.2 Intended course learning outcomes**

To obtain a passing grade, the doctoral student shall demonstrate:

- acquired in-depth knowledge of how the choice of qualitative research methods relates to scientific, philosophical and ethical grounds.
- in-depth knowledge of a variety of qualitative methods and materials linked to analysing practices (e.g. discourse analysis, narrative analysis)
- ability to critically reflect upon central aspects of collecting, organising, analysing, and presenting qualitative data in relation to human geography.
- be well oriented in hands-on practice and application of qualitative methods.
- be able to discuss rigour, trustworthiness, credibility and validity in relation to qualitative research.

## **3 Reading list and other teaching material**

The following course readings and teaching material will be used on the course:

Billo, E., & Hiemstra, N. (2013). Mediating messiness: expanding ideas of flexibility, reflexivity, and embodiment in fieldwork. *Gender, Place & Culture*, 20(3), 313–328. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2012.674929>

Browne, K., & Nash, C. J. (2010). *Queer methods and methodologies: Intersecting queer theories and social science research*. Taylor & Francis.

Caretta, M. A. (2015). Situated knowledge in cross-cultural, cross-language research: a collaborative reflexive analysis of researcher, assistant and participant subjectivities. *Qualitative Research*, 15(4), 489-505. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794114543404>

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2017). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research (5th Ed)*. Sage.

Drozdewski, D. and Dominey-Howes, D. (2016). Research and trauma: Understanding the impact of traumatic content and places on the researcher, *Emotion, Space and Society*, 17, 17 -2 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2015.09.001>.

Ellingson, L.L., & Sotirin, P. (2020). *Making Data in Qualitative Research: Engagements, Ethics, and Entanglements (1st ed.)*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429058240>

- Hitchings, R., & Latham, A. (2020). Qualitative methods I: On current conventions in interview research. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(2), 389-398. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519856412>
- Hitchings, R., & Latham, A. (2020). Qualitative methods II: On the presentation of ‘geographical ethnography’. *Progress in Human Geography*, 44(5), 972-980. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132519879986>
- Hitchings, R., & Latham, A. (2021). Qualitative methods III: On different ways of describing our work. *Progress in Human Geography*, 45(2), 394-403. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132520901753>
- Katz, Cindi. 1994. “Playing the field: Questions of feminist fieldwork.” *The Professional Geographer* 46 (1): 67-72.
- McMorran, C. (2012), Practising workplace geographies: embodied labour as method in human geography. *Area*, 44: 489-495. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2012.01101.x>
- Olson, E. (2016). Geography and ethics II: Emotions and morality. *Progress in Human Geography*, 40(6), 830-838. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0309132515601766>
- Peake, L. (2017). Feminist methodologies. *The AAG International Encyclopaedia of Geography*, edited by Doug Richardson, Noel Castree, Michael F. Goodchild, Audrey Kobayashi, Weidong Liu, and Richard A. Marston, John Wiley and Sons, Ltd, 2331-2340.
- Radcliffe, S. A. (2022). *Decolonizing geography: An introduction*. John Wiley & Sons. (specifically chapter 6).
- Riaño, Y. (2016). Minga biographic workshops with highly skilled migrant women: enhancing spaces of inclusion. *Qualitative Research*, 16(3), 267-279. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794115614884>
- Rose, G. (2022). *Visual methodologies: An introduction to researching with visual materials*. Sage.
- Spinney, J. (2015). Close encounters? Mobile methods,(post) phenomenology and affect. *Cultural geographies*, 22(2), 231-246.
- Vannini, P. (2015). *Non-representational methodologies*. New York: Taylor & Francis.
- Wilcock, A. (2024). Shifting consciousness: Challenges to ontological assumptions in feminist research, *Emotion, Space and Society*, Volume 50, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.emospa.2024.101004>
- Wilson, H. F., & Darling, J. (Eds.). (2020). *Research ethics for human geography: A handbook for students*. Sage.

## 4 Teaching formats

Teaching on the course takes the following format:

The course will be organized through lectures and reading of literature followed by own assignments and workshops where different methods are discussed. The literature is a mix of classics in the field and new papers. The course will take place during two separate meetings. In the course program, lectures will be mixed with seminar discussions, work-shops and paper sessions.

## **5 Examination**

The course is assessed through an examination in the format of

A written assignment, a course paper that summarizes the literature and ties it to your own thesis work

## **6 Grades**

Examinations on third-cycle courses and study programmes are to be assessed according to a two-grade scale with either of the grades 'fail' or 'pass' (local regulations).

The grade shall be determined by a teacher specifically nominated by the higher education institution (the examiner) (Higher Education Ordinance).

To obtain a passing grade on examinations included in the course, the doctoral student is required to demonstrate that he/she attains the intended course learning outcomes as described in section 2.2. Alternatively, if the course consists of multiple examinations generating credit, the doctoral student is required to demonstrate that he/she attains the outcomes that the examination in question refers to in accordance with section 5.

A student who has failed an examination is entitled to a retake.

If an examination consists of several examination components, and a student fails an examination component, the examiner may, as an alternative to a retake, set a make-up assignment with regard to the examination component in question.

A doctoral student who has failed an examination twice for a specific course or course element is entitled, upon his/her request, to have another examiner appointed to determine the grade.

## **7 Admission to the course**

### **7.1 Admission requirements**

To gain access to the course and complete the examinations included in the course, the applicant must be admitted to a doctoral programme at Örebro University.

### **7.2 Selection**

Selection between applicants who have been admitted to doctoral programmes at Örebro University and who otherwise meet the admission requirements as listed above is made according to the following order of precedence:

Preference is given to doctoral students who are enrolled at a higher education institution that is part of the national network for doctoral courses in Human Geography at universities in Sweden. Other doctoral students are admitted subject to space availability.

If no other selection criteria are specified in this section, priority shall be given to applicants with a lower number of course credits left before the award of their degree over applicants with a higher number of remaining course credits. Should two or more students have equal number of credits, selection will be done through the drawing of lots. This also applies within any selection groups listed unless otherwise stated.

### 7.3 Other applicants than doctoral students admitted at Örebro University

Other applicants than doctoral students admitted at Örebro University may be given access to the course on the grounds of provisions for and/or agreements regarding contracted courses, joint degrees, national graduate schools or cooperation in other respects with other universities.

Any decisions on what such other applicants may be given access to the course are made separately and on the basis of the provisions and/or agreements that occasion the student to apply for the course.

For participation in the course in other respects, the same provisions shall apply as for doctoral students admitted to Örebro University.

## **8 Transfer of credits for courses, study programmes and other experience**

Provisions on the transfer of credits can be found in the Higher Education Ordinance and on the university's webpage.

## **9 Other information**

The course is given in English.

## **Transitional provisions**