UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

SYLLABUS DEL CORSO

Metodologie Qualitative

2627-1-F5112P005

Learning area

Fundamentals and research methods in social and economic psychology

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- The theoretical and epistemological basis of the qualitative paradigm
- The methods to collect qualitative data
- The models of qualitative data analysis
- The utility of the software in the qualitative research process

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Critical analysis of qualitative research articles
- Development of a qualitative research project

Making judgements

The development of students' ability to critically analyse the epistemological foundations and methodological framework of qualitative research studies conducted in the psychosocial field is facilitated by classroom discussions. These discussions also encourage students to consider the results and limitations of the research itself. Group work carried out in the classroom also enables students to hone their skills in designing and conducting qualitative interviews. The examination format, which consists solely of open-ended questions, encourages independent judgement and reflective thinking about the course content.

Communication skills

The course has been designed to promote the development of communication skills through classroom discussion of research and group work, as previously indicated. The examination method necessitates the employment of suitable specialist language and the capacity to summarise the subject content in a succinct, lucid and cogent manner.

Learning skills

The course provides a comprehensive foundation for understanding the theoretical and methodological underpinnings of qualitative research in psychology. This foundation is instrumental not only for successful completion of the parallel Methodology Laboratory's qualitative module, but also for subsequent courses that focus on specialisation. Furthermore, the knowledge and skills acquired through this course are transferable to future professional and research endeavours.

Contents

The course is structured in three thematic areas.

The first area introduces the epistemological foundations underlying the main qualitative research methods, highlighting their development and current approaches.

The second thematic area presents the main qualitative research methodologies and the most commonly used techniques for qualitative data collection (interview, focus group, observation, archive data) discussing the potentials and the limits of each method in relation to the research's aims.

The third thematic area focuses on the most widely used methods for qualitative data analysis strategies and explores the advantages and limitations of the main software tools used for qualitative data analysis.

Detailed program

- **Qualitative and quantitative research in psychology**: the qualitative–quantitative debate in psychological research; characteristics, differences, strengths, and limitations of the two approaches; criteria for selecting the most appropriate research approach according to the research objectives and research question.
- **Qualitative research methodologies and their epistemological foundations**: introduction to the main epistemological paradigms underlying qualitative research and their implications for knowledge construction; overview of the main qualitative research methodologies and criteria for developing a research design that is consistent with the research question and objectives.
- **Individual qualitative interviews**: characteristics and purposes of qualitative interviews; participant selection and recruitment; development of the interview guide and formulation of questions; interview conduct; role, styles, and strategies of the interviewer.
- **Focus groups and group interviews**: characteristics and purposes of group-based data collection techniques; group composition and management; development of the discussion guide and use of prompts to facilitate discussion; roles and functions of the moderator and observer; strengths and limitations of group-based techniques.
- **Observation in qualitative research**: characteristics and purposes of observational methods; selection of the setting and definition of the observational field; participant and non-participant observation; role of the researcher; development and use of observation grids and field notes.
- **Qualitative data analysis**: general principles and stages of the analytical process; preparation and organization of qualitative data; data coding and categorization; inductive and deductive approaches to analysis.

- **Main methods of qualitative data analysis**: qualitative content analysis, thematic analysis, and discourse analysis; characteristics, procedures, fields of application, strengths, and limitations of the different approaches.
- **Software for qualitative data analysis**: characteristics and functions of the main software tools for managing and analysing qualitative data; use of software to support data coding, categorization, organization, and interpretation.

Prerequisites

Nothing specific.

Teaching methods

The course includes both lectures and interactive sessions, in which theoretical content is combined with guided discussions of scientific articles, case studies, and audiovisual materials, as well as practical exercises.

Students will also have the opportunity to participate in an optional practical activity designed to provide hands-on experience with the main stages of qualitative research. The activity will involve developing an interview guide on a topic defined during the course, conducting an interview with one or more participants, transcribing the collected data, and subsequently carrying out a qualitative data analysis exercise.

All teaching materials used during the course (slides, supplementary materials, scientific articles and, where possible, audiovisual materials) will be made available on the course e-learning platform.

Assessment methods

The exam is based on a written test that the students will perform on the computer.

The exam focuses on the entire program of the course and it consists of open questions (the attending students who decide to participate to the activity indicated in the Teaching methods section can skip one of the questions of their choice). The questions aim at ascertaining the acquisition of the theoretical knowledge and the language of the discipline.

The answers will be evaluated in relation to the correctness of the contents, the capacity to synthesize, to argue, and to identify the connections between the different areas, to the development of skills concerning a critical reading of the problems under discussion.

Although this course is held in Italian, for Erasmus students, course material can also be available in English, and students can take the exam in English if they wish to do so.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

The bibliography will be available when the Course starts on the Course page in the e-learning websit

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES