

# IS6001: Qualitative Methods for IS Research

AY 2022/23 Semester 2

Fri 3 pm - 6 pm

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## Course Objective

This course attempts to provide the foundations of the qualitative traditions, and insight into how they can be relevant for the new computational-qualitative research opportunities presented by the availability of digital trace data and computational tools.

The course will cover the qualitative research philosophies and methods, such as case studies, ethnography, action research, and grounded theory, and data collection procedures (e.g., interviews, participant observation, use of digital trace data). The course will then conclude by guiding students on how to write up their results for publication and how to evaluate qualitative research.

This course is relevant for all those interested in theory development using qualitative methods, whether alone, or in conjunction with other types of methodologies, and for those interested in becoming better consumers of publications based on qualitative data.

At the end of this module, you should be able to:

- Identify the philosophical foundations and value of qualitative approaches for IS research.
- Compare different qualitative research methodologies and apply corresponding methods for data collection and analysis.
- Develop appropriate qualitative research designs and communicate the results to various audiences

#	Date	Topics	Due
1.	13/1/23	Course Introduction and Basics of Theory Development	
2.	20/1/23	Why Qualitative Research?	
3.	27/1/23	Cases I- Single Case	
4.	3/2/23	Cases II- Multiple Case Studies	Initial proposal due 2/2/23 11:59 pm
5.	10/2/23	Ethnography, Netnography, Digital Traces	
6.	17/2/23	Analyzing Qualitative Data and Grounded Theory Method	
	24/2/23	RECESS week	Assignment 1 due 23/2/23 11:59 pm
7.	3/3/23	Analyzing Qualitative Data and Grounded Theory Method II	
8.	10/3/23	No class- Consultations	
9.	17/3/23	Process Theory and Configurational Analysis	Assignment 2 due 19/3/23 11:59 pm
10.	24/3/23	Action Research + Data Deep Dive	[Develop case summary as a group before class]
11.	31/3/23	Mixed Methods	
12.	7/4/23	No Class- Good Friday	Initial manuscript due 10/4/23 11:59 pm
13.	14/4/23	Writing and Evaluating Qualitative Papers	Peer review due 17/4/23 11:59 pm Final manuscript and response letter due 27/4/23 11:59 pm

### Course Website and Communications:

Canvas will be the primary medium for course communications and materials distribution (e.g. announcements, lecture notes, and other supplementary materials).

### Course readings

Students are responsible for getting hold of the required reading from academic journals. They are all available via online databases (e.g. JSTOR) through the NUS library or Google Scholar.

There are no required books for the course, but I would suggest the following text for any serious students of qualitative methods:

- Corbin, J. & Strauss, A., 2008. *Basics of qualitative research, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed.* Thousand Oaks: Sage, Ch. 2, pp. 19-43.
- Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. 1994. *Qualitative data analysis 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.* Thousand Oaks: Sage, Ch. 2, pp. 16-39.
- Yin, R.K., 2017. *Case study research and applications: Design and methods.* Sage publications.
- Saldaña, J., 2015. *The coding manual for qualitative researchers.* Sage.
- Urquhart, C. *Grounded theory for qualitative research: A practical guide.* Sage, 2022.

### Course deliverables

Component	% of the course grade
Class Participation	10%
Article Critiques	15%
1 Discussion Lead	5%
2 Class Assignments	30%
Final Paper	25%
- Initial proposal (ungraded)	
- Updated proposal (ungraded)	
- Initial manuscript submission (ungraded)	
- Final, revised manuscript	
Peer Review	10%
Response letter	5%

#### **Class participation (10%):**

Ph.D. courses are often organized as seminars, which means that you are expected to do all the readings for each session and to come prepared to discuss and comment on the readings. Unexcused absences and unpreparedness are unacceptable unless I have been otherwise notified. During class, I may call upon students to lead off the discussion, answer questions, and comment on the ongoing discussion. Thus, you will need to not only be well-prepared with the readings but should also be listening carefully to what others are saying.

#### **Weekly article critiques and discussions (15%):** (Begins in Week 2)

To help facilitate discussion, students have to submit their comments and questions for the week's topic and readings on the Canvas forum by **8 am every Friday**. Comments can include, e.g. what you liked or did not like about the papers, key takeaways or comparisons with the concepts covered to date. Questions about the topic or paper should also be posted so that they can be answered in class.

The readings have been purposefully chosen to include seminal articles, exemplars, as well as works that suggest the need for changing the research agenda associated with a given area of research.

Therefore, it will be important that you to read the papers carefully, as well as to step back and provide a “big-picture” perspective for the class. It is also important that you learn to synthesize and integrate the readings in order to develop new and important research questions and understanding of research design. To this end, you should discuss how this work is related to other articles assigned for the same class session and from prior sessions.

### **Lead discussions (5%):**

For each empirical article, one student will be responsible for leading the discussion by providing his/her answers to the questions below.

1. **Motivation:** What question is the paper addressing? What is the theoretical gap the paper is trying to fill? What “hook” does the paper use to get you into it?
2. **Summary:** Provide a **BRIEF** summary of the paper
3. **[Key focus] Methods:** What data and methods are used? Do they fit the question?
4. **[Key focus] Creative critique:** What key takeaways or problems, if any, did you find with the paper’s analytical strategy (i.e., methods and analysis)? What could the authors have done to strengthen the article? How could this work be extended or refined? How would you use this analytical strategy in your area of research?

Lead discussion assignment, however, does not mean that you are responsible only for the article assigned to you. Each student should come to class prepared to offer his/her answer or perspectives after the discussion leader. I may also “cold-call” students to provide answers to the questions.

### ***Class assignment (30%):***

Students will complete two individual assignments that will become a part of your final paper. The first assignment is worth 15% and focuses on the problematization and literature review for your final paper. The second assignment, also worth 15%, evaluates your understanding of data coding and memo-writing of the data you have collected.

### ***Final paper (25%):***

Students will be required to write a research paper in teams of no more than 3 using one of the methodologies covered in class. You can also choose to do this paper individually if you prefer. Students are encouraged to tailor this assignment to their research interests and to consider submitting this to ICIS 2023 (Short/full paper) (due date ~ 1<sup>st</sup> week May 2023).

You will embark on a qualitative study on a topic of interest to you. It will involve developing a research question and surveying the relevant literature (individually). You will discuss an appropriate design and methodology as a group. Include the interview protocol. Each member is expected to contribute to the data collection and analysis.

Suggestions for topics:

1. How does AI change creative work (e.g., identity of creatives, AI-human collaboration)?
2. How do incumbents in highly regulated industries make sense of new technology (e.g., banks and regulatory agencies vs cryptocurrency)?
3. How do social media influencers grow from nothing (i.e., focus on the initial period)?

The full manuscript for the class should not exceed 16 pages single-spaced (including Appendix e.g., lit review tables, interview protocols etc.), and should be formatted based on the ICIS style guidelines.

A peer evaluation form will also be distributed for you to evaluate the contribution of each team member to the final paper.

The final paper will be modeled based on the peer-reviewed journal publication process, and is composed of four parts:

*1) Initial Proposal (ungraded)*

The first deliverable is a proposal (2 pages, single-space maximum) that describes your research idea. What is most important for this assignment is to properly motivate your idea, meaning that your proposal should identify a phenomenon of interest and a theoretical gap addressed by the paper. This assignment will not be graded, but I will provide feedback and offer suggestions as you build your proposal into a full manuscript.

*2) Updated Proposal (ungraded)*

The second deliverable is a mid-semester update. This involves producing a short writeup (up to 5 pages) explaining the study's motivation, theoretical gap, proposed research methodology and rationale.

*3) Initial Manuscript (ungraded)*

A central aspect of this course will be to socialize students to the journal submission and review process. You will submit your papers to a hypothetical journal, The SoC Journal of Qualitative Research, where I serve as the Editor-in-Chief. Each student serves as the editorial board. Each manuscript will be sent via "blind review" to a member of the editorial board who will serve as the primary reviewer. While your manuscript will not be a finished product, it should be a complete, polished manuscript that can be read, understood, and properly evaluated by an external reviewer. The reviewer's comments will be sent to you upon completion of the review process.

*4) Final, Revised Manuscript*

As with the journal publication process, you will be expected to revise your manuscript and incorporate the reviewer's comments. The final grade for this assignment will be based on the quality of the revised submitted manuscript. The response letter should specifically detail how you responded to each reviewer's comment within your paper.

***Peer Review (10%):***

"Publish or perish" is a very relevant performance criterion for aspiring academics, and professors spend much of their time writing, revising, or critiquing articles for publication in major journals. Thus, your research paper for this class will be submitted for a double-blind peer review. Each student is responsible for providing a high-quality peer review for **one** manuscript submitted to the blind review process. Students will be graded on the quality of the review provided.

***Response letter (5%):***

In addition to the final manuscript, a response letter to the reviews received should be provided. Points will be awarded based on the quality of the response letter that accompanies the paper. Only 1 response document is needed per group.

## Deadlines

To be fair to everyone in the class and get assignments graded and returned in a timely fashion, we have to have deadlines.

- Deliverables handed in **5 minutes after** the due date/time, but **during the next 24 hours** will get points deducted.
- Deliverables will not be accepted more than 24 hours after the due date.
- PLEASE double-check deliverables submitted through Canvas to make sure your assignment file is attached. If your file is not attached, you will not receive credit for the assignment!
- Re-evaluation of Assignments and Exams: You must do so within ONE WEEK from the day the homework is returned, or grades are posted on Canvas. **After the one-week window, your grade for that assignment is permanent.**

## Class Policies and Ground Rules:

### *Academic integrity and plagiarism:*

Academic integrity is a critical value of the university community. Academic integrity policies and descriptions of unacceptable, prohibited student behaviors in class are listed in <http://www.comp.nus.edu.sg/cug/plagiarism/>.

Individual and group-level plagiarism of submitted class assignments are strictly not tolerated and will be referred to the university for further disciplinary actions. All assignments and project submissions will be submitted for plagiarism checks using [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com). See <http://www.cit.nus.edu.sg/plagiarism-prevention> for more details.

## Other Administrative Details

As the course progresses, I will post information on Canvas. Check the website regularly.