



ARTS2852

Qualitative Research for Political and Social Problems

Term Two // 2021

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Fengshi Wu	fengshi.wu@unsw.edu.au	by appointment	133 Morven Brown Bldg	9385-3619

School Contact Information

School of Social Sciences

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

What is qualitative research and how is it carried out to address questions concerning political and social life? What are the methods and methodologies that have been developed in and across Politics and International Relations to allow researchers to ask questions, and make claims, about the 'political' and the 'social' world? Through the analysis of key scholarly texts centred on pressing global issues, you will be introduced to a range of qualitative methods deployed in political science, and often adapted from other disciplinary contexts. You will ask how these inform and shape research practice in and across Politics and International Relations, using particular examples of qualitative research to think through philosophical, political and economic dilemmas, such as peace and conflict, economic crisis, global social justice and environmental protection. You will be challenged to evaluate the strengths and limitations of particular qualitative methods for certain tasks, and to reflect on the appropriateness of particular methods for the investigation of pressing political and social problems. You will design a qualitative research project with the knowledge learned from the course and discuss the challenges and solutions of the research during weekly seminars.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Explain the circumstances under which the deployment of qualitative methods is useful and appropriate in social and political science research.
2. Distinguish between and evaluate the utility of various qualitative methods for the investigation of pressing political, economic and social problems.
3. Compare appropriate qualitative methods to address a clear research question.
4. Explain the purpose of human research ethics approval procedures and complete relevant forms according to the specific research topic and needs.

Teaching Strategies

The course is taught through a two-hour seminar plus a one-hour tutorial per week. The weekly seminar is project-based, exposing you to various qualitative methods in order for you to prepare and design a research question and research project, in reference to appropriate and useful scholarly sources. Preparation for seminars consists of the completion of weekly web-based online learning activities, reading print materials, including peer-reviewed scholarly texts such as books and journal articles, and independent research. You must complete all essential readings and online learning activities every week in preparation for seminars. You should also engage in further reading from relevant sources of research.

The weekly online learning activity must be completed prior to attendance at seminars and is a prerequisite preparation activity for participation in the course. The specifics of the online learning activity may vary by weekly topic, but all activities are research-based and are designed to enhance your research skills and seminar contributions. Preparation for your weekly online learning activity requires you to read print materials, including peer-reviewed scholarly texts such as books and journal articles, to view online resources, such as public debates, short and documentary films, and to engage directly with contemporary cultural artefacts, such as news media. You should supplement your preparation at all points of the course with appropriate and relevant independent research.

The design of the teaching mode and contact hours reflect both a commitment to face to face teaching and engagement with various aspects of blended learning, as outlined in the UNSW 2025 Strategy Theme A2: Educational Excellence.

Assessment

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Research Question	20%	19/06/2021 05:00 PM	1
Literature Review	40%	24/07/2021 05:00 PM	1, 2, 3
Research Ethics	40%	11/08/2021 05:00 PM	1, 2, 3, 4

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Research Question

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 500 words

Details:

Students should identify an empirical area of interest and devise an appropriate research question. In 500 words, they should describe the rationale for choosing the question, their research aims in answering the question and how this relates to qualitative research in Politics and International Relations. Written feedback, will be provided within two weeks of submission. Students are strongly encouraged to have an individualized discussion with the instructor about their topics.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Literature Review

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 1500

Details:

Students should identify at least five academic sources relevant to a proposed area of qualitative research. They should produce an literature review of 1500 words outlining the contribution that each of these sources will make to the development of their argument. Of the five sources, at least one could be used as a model for the application of qualitative method in one's own research. Written feedback, will be provided within two weeks of submission.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Research Ethics

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 2000

Details:

Completion of the UNSW human research ethics form (Length 1500 to 2000 words)

Managing risk and ethics-related issues is a critical part of qualitative research in social and political sciences. Students will complete the necessary human research ethics forms and approval requirements. Different forms are required according to the level of risk. A decision on the appropriate forms to complete is part of the assessment task.

Written feedback, including a rubric and numerical grade, will be provided within two weeks of submission. Students will be provided with guidelines on assessment expectations, made available through the course's LMS.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Attendance Requirements

Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and review lecture recordings.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 31 May - 4 June	Lecture	What is qualitative research in social and political sciences?
Week 2: 7 June - 11 June	Lecture	Research ethics
Week 3: 15 June - 18 June	Lecture	Qualitative research, research ethics and the Australian context
Week 4: 21 June - 25 June	Lecture	Basic skills 1: Interviews
Week 5: 28 June - 2 July	Lecture	Basic skills 2: Focus group
Week 6: 5 July - 9 July		flexible week
Week 7: 12 July - 16 July	Lecture	Basic skills 3: field work and participatory observation
Week 8: 19 July - 23 July	Lecture	Advanced skills 1: Foreign lands
Week 9: 26 July - 30 July	Lecture	Advanced skills 2: complex positionalities
Week 10: 2 August - 6 August	Lecture	Advanced skills 3: Participatory action research

Resources

Prescribed Resources

All resources are available via course Moodle page.

Recommended Resources

Not available

Course Evaluation and Development

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle>

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (<http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.

<http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise>

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/>

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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.