

GRSC6036 Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods (The Humanities & Related Disciplines)

Content:

This course introduces some of the most fundamental and commonly used qualitative research methods, and explains the value and rationale of this type of research. It is aimed primarily at students who expect to use such methods in their research, as well as students who do not expect to use such methods in the immediate future, but want to understand them better and gain a basic training in them with an eye to their longer-term career. The course will examine the value and rationale of qualitative research methods, looking at various modes of observation, interviewing, and other means of data collection, together with methodological issues involved in using such means. We will also deal with how to record and analyze data. The course is not normally recommended for students in natural sciences or engineering, unless they expect to use social research methods in their research.

Organization:

The module comprises twelve class hours. Additional workshop hours on more specialized and advanced topics may be organized for interested students, but attendance at these will not be necessary for successful completion of the course, nor will they be assessed. The module is offered once per year.

Enrollment:

This course (or GRSC6034/6035/6037/6007) is compulsory for MPhil and 4-year PhD students registered in or after September 2013. There are no prerequisites for this module. Enrollment of each module is limited to 70 students.

Assessment:

Pass/Fail: assessment of coursework, consisting of practical assignments and either a plan for a qualitative research project or an essay. There is no examination.

Outcome:

At the end of the course, students should understand the value and rationale of qualitative research, and should understand some of the methods used in this type of research and the reasons for using these methods. They should also understand some of the pitfalls to beware of when using these methods, and should be able to conduct semi-structured interviews and simple social observations.