



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2023

4,307: Qualitative Methods

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

Central - Written examination (100%, 90 mins.)

Examination time: inter-term break

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[4,307,1.00 Qualitative Methods](#) -- Englisch -- [Dingwerth Klaus](#)

[4,307,2.00 Qualitative Methods: Exercises](#) -- Englisch -- [Eckl Julian](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

The lecture is a compulsory course in the BIA programme and mainly targets students enrolled in that programme.

Learning objectives

- Students know and understand key differences between quantitative and qualitative research designs as well as their respective advantages and disadvantages.
- Students know and understand different types of case studies as well as the methodological requirements of each type.
- When reading qualitative studies, students recognize the methodological approach authors follow, and they can evaluate how well a study adheres to the main quality standards demanded by that approach.

Course content

The course makes students familiar with key features of social science perspectives that prioritize a closer analysis of a few cases ("small-N research") over the statistical analysis of for many cases ("large-N research"). Central questions include: What is a case study? How does one conduct a case study? What are case studies good for? And what criteria exist to distinguish a "good" case study from one in whose results we should not trust? Substantially, the lecture will cover three main parts: description, interpretation, and explanation. At the end of the term, students will (a) know and understand different qualitative research designs and be able to recognize them when they see them. In addition, students will (b) practice their competence to evaluate qualitative studies from a methodological point of view. Finally, our overview of different types of case studies is meant to (c) broaden the range of options from which students can choose in their efforts to write their own studies, for instance in their Spring Project papers or in their bachelor's theses. The aim of this course is to make students familiar with the fundamentals of social science research. In particular, the course introduces students to the motivations, possibilities and limitations of so-called 'qualitative' research designs and methods, with the help of which researchers seek to generate knowledge through studying one or a few cases in depth. To achieve these aims, the course is structured into three major parts: description, explanation, and interpretation. At the end of the term, students will know different qualitative research designs (as well as their potentials and limitations) and be familiar with standard challenges of doing qualitative research. Moreover, they will be able to think critically about designing their own studies, e.g. when writing their bachelor's theses.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course consists of nine lectures and three tutorials. The lectures serve to introduce and discuss the different types of case studies, their methodological foundations, and their specific requirements. In the tutorials, we will read studies that work with these approaches. Students will learn to identify the key methodological decisions the authors had to take in their studies and to "ask the right questions" in view of such choices. The final exam will follow the model of the tutorial sessions, i.e., students will



answer methodological questions in relation to a study which we will send around one week before the central exam. The required reading for this lecture will be made available via Canvas/StudyNet. Students are expected to carefully read the material before each session. The final exam is a centralized exam. It encompasses the material dealt with in the lectures and as well as the required reading assigned for the lectures. The course consists of nine lectures and three tutorials. The fundamental challenges of 'small-n' research designs will be discussed as a part of the lectures. Their understanding will be further deepened in the tutorials where we examine the methodological approaches of specific qualitative studies. The required reading for this lecture will be made available via Canvas/StudyNet and should be prepared by the students before each session. The final exam is a centralized exam. The exam encompasses the material dealt with in the lectures, the tutorials and the required reading. Its aim is to test whether students have adequately understood the fundamental problems, themes and debates in relation to causal inference and interpretation, specifically the challenges of 'small-n' research designs and whether they are able to apply this knowledge to the qualitative studies they read.

Course literature

The required reading for this course will be made available via Canvas/StudyNet. In general, I recommend Joachim Blatter and Markus Haverland's textbook *Designing Case Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

Additional course information

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Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/1)

Examination time and form

Central - Written examination (100%, 90 mins.)

Examination time: inter-term break

Remark

BYOD-Exam on Campus

Examination-aid rule

Closed Book

The use of aids is prohibited as a matter of principle, with the exception of pocket calculator models of the Texas Instruments TI-30 series and, in case of non-language exams, bilingual dictionaries without any handwritten notes. Any other aids that are admissible must be explicitly listed by faculty members in the paragraph entitled "Supplementary aids" of the course and examination fact sheet; this list is exhaustive.

Procuring any aids, as well as ensuring their working order, is the exclusive responsibility of students.

Supplementary aids

The examination will be conducted as a digital exam using the following aids:

- **private Notebook**(binding) - no tablets!
- **battery charging cable** (binding)
- external computer mouse (optional)
- external computer keyboard (optional)

We expressly point out that the exam cannot be taken with tablets/iPads.

For the exam you will need:

- Operating system Windows oder MacOS



- Software: Minimum Office 2016 or Office 365
- Special software: [LockDown Browser](#)
- HSG login incl. access modalities
- WLAN - functioning access to Eduroam

Please note that,

- Technical tests (mock exams without grades) will be conducted before the central exam. Participation is strongly recommended!
- All updates are up to date before the exam.
- Screen privacy filters are not permitted.
- You are responsible for the proper functioning of your device.

During the entire test, the use of additional equipment not listed above is strictly prohibited.

Any necessary actions with other software or additional devices require prior approval of the examination administration and are only permitted under supervision.

Any violation of these rules of conduct may be punished as a violation of the University's regulations.

Nature of examination

digital

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Examination content

The final exam includes a centralized written exam. The written exam encompasses the material dealt with in the lectures, the tutorials and the readings assigned as required reading for the lectures and tutorials. The aim of the exam is to test whether students know and understand the fundamental problems, themes and debates in relation to explanatory and interpretive "small-n" research designs, and whether they are able to independently apply them to the social science studies they read.

Examination relevant literature

All texts designated as required reading for this course on Canvas/StudyNet until the final week of the course are relevant for the written exam.



Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 12 are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 26 January 2023);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 20 March 2023);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 20 March 2023);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before the end of the de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 10 April 2023).