

HGO4010 – Qualitative method

Course content

The course will present a variety of common and cutting-edge qualitative research methods in human geography and beyond. It aims to give you the skills to design your research in a way that is analytically powerful and practically feasible. The course aims to increase your understanding of the choices involved in conducting qualitative research, including the assessment of what methods are suited to deal with different research questions.

Learning outcome

You will be acquainted with the most important qualitative research methods, including interviews, focus groups, document analysis and ethnography. The techniques will be critically assessed and their potential and limitation will be discussed. In addition to introducing you to the different methods, the lectures will focus on how different methods suit different designs and research questions, and how they can be the starting point for tailor-made research designs, triangulation and experimentation. You will also learn how to analyze qualitative data, by using different strategies of qualitative analysis, and reflect on how your study can inform others through empirical and theoretical generalization.

Through an interactive learning philosophy, the course will provide you with the chance to reflect on your own choices, and to get feedback from students and facilitators on your research design. You will also participate in practical exercises and role play making you better prepared for a fieldwork setting.

Knowledge

You will be able to obtain:

- An understanding of qualitative research methodologies and their possibilities.

- An understanding of how different methods and techniques can be used to generate different types of qualitative data, and learn about the ethical dilemmas and strategic limitations associated with these.
- An insight into strategies for qualitative data interpretation and analysis, their possibilities and limitations.

Skills

The course will prepare you for selecting the appropriate methods for your research, and for conducting interviews and other qualitative data collection techniques.

You should be able to:

- Design a qualitative study in the form of a research proposal, where you present an appropriate methodology for your research questions.
- Design an interview guide, which translates your research questions into a suitable set of interview guides.
- Analyze qualitative data in a rigorous manner, with or without software aids.
- Reflect on and assess your own role (including your way of dealing with ethical dilemmas) in qualitative data collection and analysis.
- Discuss findings from case studies and other intensive research strategies in a broader empirical and theoretical perspective.

Competences

The course provides the students with an awareness of the advantages and limitations of qualitative research. They will attain an ability to adapt qualitative research techniques to specific research objectives and contexts.

You should have gained:

- Sufficient knowledge to select a suitable method and research techniques relevant for your master thesis.
- An ability to critically assess a broad range of qualitative research methods in theory and in practice.

- An understanding of practical and ethical aspects in all the different stages of the qualitative research process.

Admission

Students who are admitted to study programmes at UiO must each semester register which courses and exams they wish to sign up for [in Studentweb](#).

If you are not already enrolled as a student at UiO, please see our information about [admission requirements and procedures](#).

This course is a part of the master's degree programme in Human Geography.

Students in other master programs may apply to be accepted as [guest students](#). Please note that the following special restrictions apply:

- applicant must be admitted to a master program.
- this course will be taken as a part of their Master's degree. A confirmation from the student's student adviser must be attached to the application.
- there are available places in this course.

Overlapping courses

- 10 credits overlap with [SGO4010 – Qualitative method \(continued\)](#)
- 10 credits overlap with [SGO4910 – Kvalitativ metode \(discontinued\)](#)
- 10 credits overlap with SGO302

Teaching

The teaching for this course is organized as a series of learning sessions. You are required to attend these sessions well-prepared, through a reading list and a set of video lectures.

Compulsory instruction and coursework

The course sessions are based on a mix of learning techniques, including group exercises, plenary discussions, role play and quiz. You will be an active contributor through conducting exercises and writing papers ahead of seminars. As a course participant, you will be expected to present your own exercises and participate actively in role play and discussions.

Unless you have attended 80% of the course sessions, you will not be eligible for the course assessment.

Absence from compulsory tuition activities

If you are ill or have another valid reason for being absent from compulsory tuition activities, your absence may be approved or the compulsory activity may be postponed.

- [Report absence from or the need for a postponed deadline on a compulsory tuition activity](#)

Access to teaching

A student who has completed compulsory instruction and coursework and has had these approved, is not entitled to repeat that instruction and coursework. A student who has been admitted to a course, but who has not completed compulsory instruction and coursework or had these approved, is entitled to repeat that instruction and coursework, depending on available capacity.

Examination

Assessment is based on a portfolio assessment that consists of two parts: one research proposal which you are encouraged to prepare throughout the course semester, and one case problem which is only revealed to you at the start of the 10-day home exam period. The research proposal cannot exceed ~~3000 words~~ 2000 with the exception of students collaborating on an MA project writing their proposal in pairs, in which case the word limit is ~~4500~~ 3500 words. The length of the case problem is maximum ~~3-000~~ 2000 words, and the portfolio assessment must be written in Times New Roman, font size 12 and spacing 1.5.

A brief written explanation of the grade is given in Inspera at the time of the announcement of examination results for HGO4040. Students will not need to request this separately.

~~Automatisk begrunnelse~~

Previous exams

Submit assignments in Inspera

You submit your assignment in the digital examination system Inspera. [Read about how to submit your assignment.](#)

Use of sources and citation

You should familiarize yourself with the rules that apply to [the use of sources and citations](#). If you violate the rules, you may be suspected of [cheating/attempted cheating](#).

Language of examination

The examination text is given in English. You may submit your response in Norwegian, Swedish, Danish or English.

Grading scale

Grades are awarded on a scale from A to F, where A is the best grade and F is a fail. Read more about [the grading system](#).

Explanations and appeals

- [Explanation of grades and appeals](#)

Resit an examination

- [Illness at exams / postponed exams](#)
- [Resitting an examination](#)

Special examination arrangements

Application form, deadline and requirements for [special examination arrangements](#).

Evaluation

The course is subject to continuous evaluation. At regular intervals we also ask students to participate in a more comprehensive evaluation.