

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong
Department of Sociology**

**SOCI 3231 Qualitative Research
Term 2, 2024 – 2025**

Date: On Monday
Time: 04:30 p. m. – 06:15 p. m.
Venue: Yasumoto International Academic Park Lecture Theatre 6 (YIA LT6)
Mode of teaching: Face-to-face

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Course Overview :

This course aims to provide students with a foundation in the fundamental principles and procedures of empirical research in sociology. It will introduce various major types of qualitative research methods. Students will learn about various strategies for collecting (e.g. in-depth interview/focus-group discussion, participant observation/ethnography, visual methods) and analyzing qualitative data (e.g. analyses of narrative, conversation and discourse, as well as grounded theory), They will also familiarize themselves with the ethical issues about conducting research in contemporary times.

Learning outcomes:

Upon the completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:

- (1) understand the logic of scientific inquiry and the steps in social research
- (2) describe and explain the essential characteristics of major qualitative research methods
- (3) compare and evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of major qualitative research methods
- (4) design and implement qualitative research project to address research questions
- (5) evaluate quality of a qualitative research project
- (6) reflect on the ethical issues related to qualitative research

Reading materials

There is no textbook designated for this course. The following are some of the major references on qualitative research methods.

Useful references

- Babbie, E. R. (2021). *The Practice of Social Research* (15th ed.). Boston, Massachusetts: Cengage Learning.
- Clark, T., Foster, L., Sloan, L., & Bryman, A. (2021). *Bryman's social research methods* (6th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2017). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Flick, U. (2022). *An introduction to qualitative research* (7th ed.). Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.
- Hennink, M. M., Hutter, I., & Bailey, A. (2020). *Qualitative research methods* (2nd ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
- Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Brand.
- Ravitch, S. M., & Carl, N. M. (2020). *Qualitative research: Bridging the conceptual, theoretical, and methodological* (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE Publications.
- Tracy, S. J. (2019). *Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact* (2nd ed.). Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.

Assessment Plan

1. Method Exercise (40%)

There are four method exercises which aim to provide an opportunity for students to apply what they have learned in empirical situation. Each exercise will be related to one of the methods covered in the course. For each exercise, students will write no more than 1,600 words in English, or 2,400 words in Chinese. Further details will be announced in the first tutorial session.

2. Tutorial Participation (30%)

In addition to lecture, this course comprises interactive tutorial, which are managed by the Teaching Assistant(s) of the course. Tutorials are an integral part of the learning experience. Students are expected to actively participate in the tutorial. The purpose of the tutorial is to help and guide the students to prepare and complete the method exercises in an interactive and practical manner. This provides a valuable opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback from fellow students and the teaching assistant to enrich the understanding of the various qualitative research methods. Further details will be announced during the first tutorial session.

3. In-class Quiz (20%)

A closed-book quiz will be held in the last lecture. Students will be asked to demonstrate their critical understanding of the materials learned throughout the course. The date of the quiz is **15th April 2024**. Please be informed that alternative arrangement will only be considered on medical ground and/or very special circumstances with relevant supporting document and approval. The detailed format of the quiz will be announced to all students toward the end of the term.

4. Lecture participation (10%)

For the sake of encouraging participation and contribution to creating an interactive learning environment during lecture, participation points will be awarded to those who actively participate and contribute to lecture activity and discussion. Further details will be announced during the first lecture session.

Guide to Grading System

Grade Descriptors

- A Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes
- A- Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
- B Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance
- C Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
- D Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes
- F Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

With each assignment, students will be required to submit a signed declaration that they are aware of these policies, regulations, guidelines and procedures.

- In the case of group projects, all members of the group should be asked to sign the declaration, each of whom is responsible and liable to disciplinary actions, irrespective of whether he/she has signed the declaration and whether he/she has contributed, directly or indirectly, to the problematic contents.
- For assignments in the form of a computer-generated document that is principally text-based and submitted via VeriGuide, the statement, in the form of a receipt, will be issued by the system upon students' uploading of the soft copy of the assignment.
- Students are fully aware that their work may be investigated by AI content detection software to determine originality.
- Students are fully aware of the AI approach(es) adopted in the course. In the case where some AI tools are allowed, students have made proper acknowledgment and citations as suggested by the course teacher.

Assignments without a properly signed declaration will not be graded by teachers.

Only the final version of the assignment should be submitted via VeriGuide.

The submission of a piece of work, or a part of a piece of work, for more than one purpose (e.g. to satisfy the requirements in two different courses) without declaration to this effect shall be regarded as having committed undeclared multiple submissions. It is common and acceptable to reuse a turn of phrase or a sentence or two from one's own work; but wholesale reuse is problematic. In any case, agreement from the course teacher(s) concerned should be obtained prior to the submission of the piece of work.

The copyright of the teaching materials, including lecture notes, assignments and examination questions, etc., produced by staff members/ teachers of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (CUHK) belongs to CUHK. Students may download the teaching materials produced by the staff members/ teachers from the Learning Management Systems, e.g. Blackboard, adopted by CUHK for their own educational use, but shall not distribute/ share/ copy the materials to a third-party without seeking prior permission from the staff members/ teachers concerned.

Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessment

Use of AI tools is allowed with explicit acknowledgement and proper citation

Students may use some AI tools in some class activities and assignments on the condition that they make explicit acknowledgement and proper citations of the input from AI tools.

Acknowledging support from AI tools

Students are required to acknowledge all functional uses of a generative AI tool and cite it when they paraphrase, quote, or incorporate into their own work any content (whether it is text, image, data, or other format) that was created by it.

- i. An example of acknowledgement

'I acknowledge the use of (name of AI tool – e.g. ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/>) to (specify the support, e.g. plan my essay, generate some ideas for the content, ask for examples of data collection instruments, get the dates of historical events, etc.).

- ii. An example of citation

OpenAI. (2023). *ChatGPT* (Mar 20 version). <https://chat.openai.com/chat>

(Students are reminded that due to the rapid developments of generative AI tools, some citation formats may be updated regularly.)

- iii. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool in their work

"The following text was generated by an AI tool / language model (ChatGPT):"
[Insert the text generated by ChatGPT here.]

- iv. An example of including texts generated by an AI tool and the prompts that were used to elicit the text from the AI tool

"[The prompt], as generated by an AI language model (ChatGPT):"
[Insert the text generated by ChatGPT in response to the prompt.]

Students are reminded to learn and use the AI tools responsibly and ethically and be aware of the limitations.

Students are reminded to clarify with the course teacher and obtain permission if necessary when in doubt.

Additional points to note on the use of AI tools in teaching, learning and assessments

Collaborating with AI chatbots (like ChatGPT) on assignment(s) for this course is generally permitted with explicit acknowledgement. Students should refer to the following **APA Citation Style for how to ChatGPT** (<https://apastyle.apa.org/blog/how-to-cite-chatgpt>). However, students must exercise caution when using AI tools and be aware of their limitations. It is the responsibility of students, not the AI tools, to ensure the accuracy of the content submitted. Any errors or inaccuracies in the submitted work will be the sole responsibility of the students. According to the 'Guidelines on the Use of Artificial Intelligence Tools in Teaching, Learning and Assessments', **use of AI tools in coursework without acknowledgement are treated as academic dishonesty case and will be handled by the disciplinary committee accordingly.**

Two **APA** examples are given below:

When prompted with “Is the left brain right brain divide real or a metaphor?” the ChatGPT-generated text indicated that although the two brain hemispheres are somewhat specialized, “the notation that people can be characterized as ‘left-brained’ or ‘right-brained’ is considered to be an oversimplification and a popular myth” (OpenAI, 2023).

Reference

OpenAI. (2023). *ChatGPT* (Mar 14 version) [Large language model].
<https://chat.openai.com/chat>

When given a follow-up prompt of “What is a more accurate representation?” the ChatGPT-generated text indicated that “different brain regions work together to support various cognitive processes” and “the functional specialization of different regions can change in response to experience and environmental factors” (OpenAI, 2023; see Appendix A for the full transcript).

Reference

OpenAI. (2023). *ChatGPT* (Mar 14 version) [Large language model].
<https://chat.openai.com/chat>

Schedule and Topics of Lectures			
Date	Session	Topics and Descriptions	Remark
Jan 06	01	Introduction and overview	
Jan 13	02	Theory and social research	
Jan 20	03	Participant Observation/ethnography	#ME01 instruction
Jan 27	04	Analysis of Fieldnote/Memo	Fieldtrip (Feb 08)
		Lunar New Year Holiday	
Feb 10	05	Qualitative interviewing/Focus group discussion	#ME02 instruction
Feb 17	06	Analysis of interview/focus group discussion	
Feb 24	07	Narrative and Conversation	#ME03 instruction
		Reading Week	
Mar 10	08	Analysis of Narrative and Conversation	
Mar 17	09	Content and Discourse	#ME04 instruction
Mar 24	10	Analysis of Content and Discourse	
Mar 31	11	Ethical issues in qualitative research	
Apr 07	12	Conclusion	
Apr 14	13	In-class quiz	

denotes the tentative dates that further instruction of the Method Exercise (ME) will be released.

Note: If there are any further amendments due to changes in the circumstance, they will be announced to the students as soon as possible. Please pay attention to any future announcements from the university, the department, and the course instructor.