



London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership

Advanced Research Methods in Social Sciences

Online Course Code & Title	LISS004 Introduction to Qualitative Research: A Practical Workshop		
Convenor	Sarah Jasim		
Tutors	Sarah Jasim, Louise Eley		
Institution	King's College London	Department	LISS DTP
Academic Year	2023-24	Term	Spring 2024
Number of Sessions	8	Length of Session(s)	3 hours
	Day, Date, Times	Start : End	Online Course Link
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Session 1: Monday 5th Feb, 9-12 (SJ) • Session 2: Monday 5th Feb, 1-4pm (SJ) • Session 3: Monday 12th Feb, 9-12 (SJ) • Session 4: Monday 19th Feb, 9-12 (SJ) • Session 5: Monday 19th Feb, 1-4pm (SJ) • Session 6: Wed 21st Feb, 9-12 (LE) • Session 7: Fri 23rd Feb, 9-12 (LE) • Session 8: Thurs 29th Feb, 9-12 (LE) 	Varying times	MS Teams
Enrolment Link:	Available to book on SkillsForge from Tuesday 12th December 2023 . Click to log in and register: https://training.kcl.ac.uk/kcl/#/he/dev/eventDetails;em.providerCode=LISS,providerOrgAlias=kcl,number=004; Maximum number of students: 30 Questions? Visit our Training FAQ here: Frequently Asked Questions - LISS DTP (liss-dtp.ac.uk)		

Online Course Description:

This online course introduces PhD students to key principles and procedures in qualitative research methodology. The required pre-readings for this online course will give students practical guidance on how to use qualitative methodologies from a variety of disciplinary perspectives. It covers a range of methods, with a special focus on data collection and analysis. Each session will include **interactive and participatory small group work** to help further students' own research projects.

Pre-course preparation:

Each session requires mandatory pre-readings and pre-assignments – please see the sessions above for specific guidance on each reading required.



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As the class is **highly interactive and participatory**, students will be expected to participate in the entire course and all the group exercises*, discuss their own research and methods with their peers, engage with the readings, and undertake short assignments before each session aimed at improving their methodological skills. Pre-assignments should be **completed before attending the sessions** as they will be used in breakout sessions, and students should come to class prepared to discuss their work.

As the sessions are consecutive, we strongly encourage students to complete all the pre-assignments and read all required readings **before starting the course**, to enable them to feel adequately prepared for each session.

*Out of respect to all our students if you cannot participate for all four sessions and all the group activities – please e-mail the course convenor in advance to provide reasons. We will be operating a waiting room, so students who are unable to attend within 10 minutes of the start of each session will not be permitted to attend. Courses will **NOT** be recorded.

Eligibility: Due to high demand, this online course is largely restricted to students from small departments that do not offer their own in-house qualitative methods training, or students who are required to undertake this training as a condition of their ESRC funding. Please email liss-dtp@kcl.ac.uk **before signing up** if this online course has not been recommended to you by your department or supervisor. **If unable to attend the entire duration of the session / course please e-mail liss-dtp@kcl.ac.uk before signing up, as there are limited places and high demand.**

You must be a PhD student at either King's College London, Queen Mary University of London, or Imperial College London, using social science methodologies, and be based in a department that does not already offer this training.



Course Outline:

Section A. The fundamentals of qualitative research

Pre-course Preparation: Read through Ritchie & Lewis (2003) before Session 1 to familiarise yourself with the course concepts. Answer the “six questions” from Mason (2018) and identify your potential data sources.

Required readings: Mason, J. (2018). Chapter 1, “Intellectual puzzles and research questions” and Chapter 2, “Choosing methods and planning your approach” in *Qualitative researching*.

Ritchie J. & Lewis J (2003) *Qualitative research practice: a guide for social science students and researchers*. London: Sage

1. Introductions and overview – Sarah Jasim

Arrive for Session 1 prepared to answer Mason’s “six questions” outlined in chapter one, and to identify your potential data sources.

Session 1 introduces students to the overall aims and requirements of the online course and provides an opportunity for students to discuss their own research questions, methods, and desired outcomes. The session will introduce students to a range of approaches to qualitative methodology, briefly outline qualitative software packages, and the basic question of how and why to choose a research method.

2. Knowledge and ethics - Sarah Jasim

Pre-Assignment: After completing the pre-reading for Session 2, write one short statement identifying what kind of knowledge you are interested in producing, and another short statement describing any ethical issues you will have to address in your research.

Required readings: Rossman, G. B., and Rallis, S. F. (2017). Chapter 2, “The researcher as learner” and Chapter 3, “The researcher as competent and ethical” in *An introduction to qualitative research: learning in the field*.

Session 2 introduces students to foundational questions about the nature of knowledge production and the ethics of conducting social scientific research. Subjects covered include reflexivity, epistemology / ontology, research paradigms, and a discussion of research ethics and methodological rigour. We will also cover the issues of consent and researcher safety when undertaking qualitative research.



Section B. Data Collection

3. Ethnography - Sarah Jasim

Pre-Assignment: After completing the pre-reading for Session 3, use your own research question (or choose a neutral example research question of your choice) to conduct an ethnographic observation of a place or phenomenon of your choosing. This can include online spaces, public / outdoor spaces (please observe social distancing measures if in place) or intimate sites (within your household). Observe and take notes for 20 minutes, following this write a short reflection afterwards about the experience to draw upon during Session 3.

Required readings: Emerson, R., Fretz, R., and Shaw, L. (2011). Chapter 1, "Fieldnotes in ethnographic research" and Chapter 2, "In the field: Participating, observing, and jotting notes" in *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*.

Session 3 introduces students to the practical aspects of conducting ethnography, with a focus on non-participant observation and notetaking, and the nature of ethnographic knowledge.

We will also cover some additional topics not covered in the readings, including participatory action research, and documentary analysis.

4. Interviews - Sarah Jasim

Pre-Assignment: After completing the readings for Session 4, develop an interview plan and a list of questions. (If you will not be using interview methodology please develop an interview plan and a list of questions based on a neutral topic of your choice so you can participate in the group exercise). Students who have already received approval from their university's ethics committee have the option to conduct a brief practice interview, which can take place in person, over the phone, or via Zoom / MS Teams / another online platform.

Required readings: King, N., Horrocks, C., and Brooks, J. (2018). Chapter 4, "Designing an interview study" and Chapter 5, "Carrying out qualitative interviews" in *Interviews in qualitative research*.

This session covers the basics of interview design, including defining the sample, recruiting participants, structured and semi-structured interviews, designing research questions and topic guides, building rapport, audio and video recording (during social distancing), and the importance of listening.

5. Focus Groups – Sarah Jasim

Pre-Assignment: After completing the pre-readings for Session 5, write a brief statement to identify any possibilities where you might (or not) use focus groups for your research, specifically thinking about what kinds of participants and settings you might choose and why.

Required readings: Liamputtong, P. (2012). Chapter 4, "Focus Groups" in *Qualitative research methods* pp. 74-97

Session 5 covers the basics of planning and conducting focus groups. We will briefly cover the main differences between using interviews and focus groups as qualitative data collection approaches. We will also conduct an online group exercise at the end of the session of facilitating / observing / participating in focus groups in online breakout sessions.

The last 30-min of this session will be Q&A to offer students the opportunity to ask any in-depth questions from Sessions 1-5 before moving to the latter part of the course.



Section C. Data Analysis & Writing Up

6. Content analysis - Louise Eley

Pre-Assignment: After completing the readings for next time, conduct a content analysis of some material you have collected for your own research. This can include the field notes you developed for session three or the interview for session four (if you conducted one). Identify any overarching themes in the text/s and what they might reveal about the object of your research.

Required readings: Bazeley, P. (2013). Chapter 4, "Read, reflect, and connect: Initial explorations of data" and Chapter 5, "Codes and coding, principles and practice" in *Qualitative data analysis: Practical strategies*. (If you're short of time, please prioritise pages 101-106 in Chapter 4 and all of Chapter 5)

This session covers the basics of content analysis, including becoming familiar with the data, conducting preliminary explorations, coding and memo writing. In class, we will undertake small group work in which we examine extracts from interview data, using the techniques we discuss to come up with a set of codes and a provisional interpretation. We will also discuss narrative analysis and grounded theory.

7. Discourse analysis - Louise Eley

Pre-Assignment: Choose an original text—perhaps a text you have already collected for your own research project, such as a news item, government document, or digital source—and conduct a discourse analysis of the material, analysing what the language reveals about the object of your study.

Required readings: Jørgensen, M. W., and Phillips, L. J. (2002). Chapter 1, "The field of discourse analysis" and Chapter 3, "Critical discourse analysis" in *Discourse analysis as theory and method*. (If you're short of time, please prioritise pages 1-9 in Chapter 1 and all of Chapter 3)

This session covers the basics of discourse analysis, including distinct approaches to the concept of discourse and relations between discourse, ideology, power, and the shaping of social relationships. We will consider the role of the analyst and spend some time focusing in on critical discourse analysis. In class, we will undertake small group work in which we critically examine a text to identify what it might reveal about its larger discursive field and about society.

8. Writing as method – Louise Eley

Pre-Assignment: After you have read, choose a favourite piece of qualitative social science writing and reflect on its writing style. How is it organised? Does it use metaphor, anecdote, or other creative techniques? How do the authors approach the literature review and theoretical argumentation? Write your own creative anecdote based on your research.

Required readings: Anzul, M., Downing, M., Ely, M., and Vinz, R. (2003). Chapter 2, "What is there about writing?" and excerpt on anecdote from Chapter 3, "Creating forms: Informing understanding" in *On writing qualitative research: Living by words*.

This session covers the basics of qualitative social science writing, including writing as an act of interpretation and knowledge production, writing and reflexivity, writing strategies, and narrative forms. In class, we will try out a writing exercise, discuss writing examples, and discuss students' own writing style and process.

This session will conclude with a 30-min Q&A to offer students the opportunity for Q&A on Sessions 6-8.