Course Outline

# INFOSYS 751: Research Methods – Qualitative (15 points)

Semester 1 2018

## Course prescription

Focus is on the conduct and evaluation of qualitative research. Reviews various qualitative research methods and ways of analysing qualitative data and the challenges of writing up qualitative research work for conferences and peer-reviewed academic journals.

## Prerequisites, restrictions and advice

*Restriction: MKTG 703, 704*

*The course is one of the required research methods courses for all postgraduate students enrolled in the BCom (Hons) or MCom in ISOM.*

## Goals of the course

The purpose of this course is to provide advanced education and training in qualitative research methods for postgraduate students. The general goals of this course are:

1) Philosophy and Research Design: Students will know the underlying research philosophies and possible qualitative research designs in business and management

2) Research Methods: Students will understand how a variety of qualitative research methods, including action research, case study research, ethnographic research and grounded theory, can be used in business and management

3) Critical Thinking Skills: Students will analyse and critically evaluate published examples of qualitative research in information systems

4) Communication Skills: Students will write and present a research proposal and they will develop an appreciation of the challenges of writing up qualitative research work for a thesis, conference paper and journal article

## Course learning outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

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| **Course Learning outcome**  | **Related Graduate Profile Capability\*** | **Related Assessment** |
| 1. Display familiarity with a broad array of qualitative research methods and approaches that are used within information systems and operations management
 | 1. KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE | Final Exam |
| 1. Demonstrate competence in critical thinking by presenting and evaluating arguments in an academic fashion
 | 1. KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE2. CRITICAL THINKING3. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT | Final ExamAssignments 1 and 2 |
| 1. Exhibit competence in critiquing the research methods sections of qualitative research articles published in some of the leading academic journals
 | 1. KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE2. CRITICAL THINKING | Assignment 1 |
| 1. Demonstrate the effective writing and presenting of a research proposal using qualitative methods
 | 1. KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE2. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT | Assignment 2 |

## Weekly content outline

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| Week | Topic | Relevant learning resources/activities\* | Assessment due this week |
| Week 1 | Introduction | Chapters 1 and 2 |  |
| Week 2 | Fundamental Concepts of Research | Chapters 3-5 |  |
| Week 3 | Qualitative Research Methods 1: Action Research and Case Study Research | Chapter 6 and 7 |  |
| Week 4 | Design Science Research | See Canvas |  |
| Week 5 | Qualitative Research Methods 2: Ethnographic Research | Chapter 8 |  |
| Week 6 | Qualitative Research Methods 3: Grounded theory | Chapter 9 | Assignment 1 |
| Week 7 | Qualitative data collection | Chapters 10-12 |  |
| Week 8 | Qualitative interpretation and data analysis 1: Overview and Hermeneutics | Chapters 13-14 |  |
| Week 9 | Qualitative interpretation and data analysis 2: Semiotics, Narrative and Metaphor | Chapters 15-16 |  |
| Week 10 | Writing up and publishing qualitative research | Chapters 17-19 |  |
| Week 11 | Presentation of Research Proposals  |  | Assignment 2 |
| Week 12 | Presentation of Research Proposals |  | Assignment 2 |

\* The chapter numbers are from the required textbook. Additional required and recommended readings from journal articles will be listed on Canvas.

## Learning and teaching

The class will meet for three hours each week (36 hours over the semester). Class time will be used for a combination of lectures, discussions of qualitative research articles and practical exercises. In addition to attending classes, students should be prepared to spend about another six hours per week on activities related to this course. To succeed, students need to read the required and recommended readings for the course before class and come prepared to discuss them during class. The lectures, class discussions and in-class exercise will help them to prepare for assignments and the final exam.

## Teaching staff

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## Learning resources

Required textbook:

Myers, Michael D. *Qualitative Research in Business & Management*. Sage Publications, 2nd edition, 2013.

Recommended readings:

1. Lee, A.S., Liebenau, J. and DeGross, J.I. (eds.). *Information Systems and Qualitative Research*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1997.
2. Myers, Michael D. "Qualitative Research in Information Systems”, *AISWorld Section on Qualitative Research,* [www.qual.auckland.ac.nz](http://www.qual.auckland.ac.nz)
3. Myers, Michael D., and David Avison (eds.). *Qualitative Research in Information Systems: A Reader.* Sage Publications, 2002.
4. Urquhart, C. 2012. *Grounded Theory for Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide*. London: Sage Publications.
5. Walsham, G. *Interpreting Information Systems in Organizations.* John Wiley and Sons, Chichester, 1993.
6. Wolcott, H. *Writing up Qualitative Research.* Third edition. Sage Publications, Thousands Oaks, CA, 2009.
7. Yin, Robert K. *Case Study Research: Design and methods*. Fourth edition. Sage Publications, 2009.

As well as the textbook, students are required to read the articles that are listed in the course schedule for each lecture. Additionally, students are expected to read more widely including articles from any recognised journal in IS or OM. Many useful citations can be obtained from the AIS E-Library, the ACM Digital Library, Google Scholar, and other bibliographic databases such as ABI/Inform, Science Direct or the Emerald Library. Most of these libraries and databases are available online from the University of Auckland Library.

## Assessment information

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| **Assessment Task** | **Weight %** | **Related CLO** | **Group/ individual** | **Submission**  |
| **ASSIGNMENT 1**  | 25 % | CLO2, CLO3 | Individual  | Canvas |
| **ASSIGNMENT 2** | 25 % | CLO2, CLO4 | Group | In class  |
| **FINAL EXAM**  | 50 % | CLO1, CLO2 | Individual | Exam venue |

*Description of assessment tasks (more details are available in Canvas)*

Assignment 1

The first assignment involves writing a comprehensive review of a published piece of research that uses one or more qualitative research methods. The review should address the following issues, amongst others: The assumptions which informed the research; the research question(s) being addressed; the unit(s) of analysis; the appropriateness of the research method; the quality of the research method adopted; the validity and usefulness of the results obtained; the overall contribution of the article.

Assignment 2

The second assignment involves developing and presenting a research proposal. Students develop a proposal and then make an oral presentation to the class.

Final Exam

The final exam will test students’ knowledge and understanding of some of the qualitative research methods that are used within the fields of information systems and operations management. It will also assess students’ competence in critical thinking and their ability to evaluate arguments in an academic fashion.

*Pass requirements*

To pass the course students need to obtain an overall grade for the assignments and final exam of more than 50%.

## Inclusive learning

Students are urged to discuss privately any impairment-related requirements face-to-face and/or in written form with the course convenor/lecturer and/or tutor.

## Academic integrity

The University of Auckland will not tolerate cheating, or assisting others to cheat, and views cheating in coursework as a serious academic offence. The work that a student submits for grading must be the student’s own work, reflecting his or her learning. Where work from other sources is used, it must be properly acknowledged and referenced. This requirement also applies to sources on the world-wide web. A student’s assessed work may be reviewed against electronic source material using computerised detection to provide an electronic version of their work for computerised review.

## Student feedback

[We regularly seek feedback from students in order to shape and improve this and all courses on the programme. Students will be asked to complete formative fast feedback early in the semester, and course and teaching evaluations at the end of the course. In addition, each course will seek volunteers to serve as class reps.]

## In the event of an unexpected disruption

We undertake to maintain the continuity and standard of teaching and learning in all your courses throughout the year. If there are unexpected disruptions, the University has contingency plans to ensure that access to your course continues and your assessment is fair, and not compromised. Some adjustments may need to be made in emergencies. In the event of a disruption, the University and your course coordinators will make every effort to provide you with up to date information via Canvas and the University website.

## Appendix: Bachelor of Commerce Graduate Profile

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| **Graduate Profile Capability** |
| **KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICE**Graduates will be able to demonstrate global awareness and specialist knowledge in one or more fields within the discipline of Business and Economics |
| **CRITICAL THINKING**Graduate will be able to analyse and critique theory and practice within and across their disciplines |
| **SOLUTION SEEKING**Graduates will be able to recognise and frame a problem and use research skills, creativity and persistence to identify innovative solutions |
| **COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT**Graduates will be able to collaborate with others, demonstrate effective written and oral communication, use communication technologies and communicate across cultures |
| **INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRITY**Graduates will be able to respond professionally and ethically in complex and ambiguous business situations |
| **SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY**Graduates will embrace ethical obligations towards sustainability, whilst displaying constructive approaches to diversity and recognising the significance of the Treaty of Waitangi |