

# QUALITATIVE TOOLS FOR STUDYING PEOPLE

## Grado en Comportamiento y Ciencias Sociales BBSS SEP- 2023 QLTSP-BS.2.M.A

Area Human Resources and Organisational Behaviour

Number of sessions: 30

Academic year: 23-24

Degree course: SECOND

Number of credits: 6.0

Semester: 1º

Category: COMPULSORY

Language: English

Professor: **VINCENT DOYLE**

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### VINCENT DOYLE

The relationships among media, society, culture, politics, social movements and public discourse have long fascinated Vincent Doyle. Originally from Ottawa, Canada, he began his university studies in political science, but soon gravitated towards communication, media studies, and cultural studies because of his interdisciplinary interests. "I study communication," he says, "because it helps me to understand how we are all products of history, language, and the institutions that shape our realities." With knowledge and understanding, Prof. Doyle believes, we develop the capacity to make better decisions and acquire a sense of belonging and accountability to an intellectual community that nourishes our human desire to improve our lives and the world around us.

Prof. Doyle is a Fellow of the Sexuality Research Fellowship Program of the U.S. Social Science Research Council, the recipient of two top paper awards from the International Communication Association (ICA), and a member of the editorial board of the ICA journal, *Communication, Culture & Critique*. He is the author of *Making Out in the Mainstream: GLAAD and the Politics of Respectability*, a critical, ethnographic study of LGBT media activism in the United States (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016). Prior to his appointment at IE University, he was Visiting Assistant Professor of Media and Cultural Studies and Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Post-Doctoral Fellow at Macalester College, in St Paul, Minnesota (USA).

#### Academic Training

- Ph.D. in Communication, 2005, University of Massachusetts, Amherst
- M.A. in Communication, 1997, McGill University, Montreal
- B.A. with Specialization in Communication, 1991, Concordia University, Montreal

#### Other Courses Taught at IE University:

- Visual and Digital Media Culture (Bachelor in Communication and Digital Media)
- Consumer Culture (Bachelor in Communication)
- Globalization (Master in Corporate Communication)
- Creative Work in the Cultural Industries (Master in Visual and Digital Media)
- Cultural Industries and New Technologies (Master in Corporate Communication)

- Diversity, Culture and Media (Master in International Relations)
- Culture, Literature, Art and Image (Bachelor in Communication)
- Globalization (Bachelor in Communication)
- Sociology and Culture of Consumption (Bachelor in Communication)
- Cross-Cultural Communication (Bachelor in Communication)
- Intellectual Underpinnings of Visual Culture (IE Humanities Module)
- Sociology of Consumption (Bachelor in Communication)

[vdoyle@faculty.ie.edu](mailto:vdoyle@faculty.ie.edu). Office hours will also be scheduled as part of asynchronous sessions.

## **SUBJECT DESCRIPTION**

*"I want to understand the world from your point of view. I want to know what you know in the way you know it. I want to understand the meaning of your experience, to walk in your shoes, to feel things as you feel them, to explain things as you explain them. Will you become my teacher and help me understand?" - James P. Spradley*

Qualitative Tools for Studying People is an intermediate course on qualitative research methods used in the behavioral and social sciences. The course is designed to provide students with an understanding of the theoretical, methodological and applied approaches to qualitative research. In this class, students will explore the limits and possibilities of conducting and analyzing qualitative research. They will examine different approaches to the study of social life using methods such as ethnography, in-depth interviewing and focus groups. The course will not only provide students with necessary skills to create a qualitative research project from start to finish but also to evaluate examples of qualitative research and recognize the challenges and complexities of the qualitative study of human behavior. This course forms a critical part of developing the necessary skills to be better researchers, colleagues and human behavior experts. After this course, students will have a clear understanding of why and how qualitative research is key to helping social scientists, companies, policy makers, and organizations better understand the people and customers around them.

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

Through regular attendance and active participation in the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the principles of qualitative social science research and how it differs from quantitative research methods such as surveys and experiments.
2. Recognize the ethical implications of using people in data collection and qualitative research.
3. Design and conduct their own original qualitative research project.
4. Apply theoretical and methodological tools of qualitative research design to better understand the world around them.
5. Critically analyze qualitative research data and write up a research report.

## TEACHING METHODOLOGY

IE University teaching method is defined by its collaborative, active, and applied nature. Students actively participate in the whole process to build their knowledge and sharpen their skills. Professor's main role is to lead and guide students to achieve the learning objectives of the course. This is done by engaging in a diverse range of teaching techniques and different types of learning activities such as the following:

Learning Activity	Weighting	Estimated time a student should dedicate to prepare for and participate in
Lectures	10.0 %	15.0 hours
Discussions	20.0 %	30.0 hours
Exercises in class, Asynchronous sessions, Field Work	30.0 %	45.0 hours
Group work	13.33 %	20.0 hours
Individual studying	26.67 %	40.0 hours
TOTAL	100.0 %	150.0 hours

## PROGRAM

The following program is tentative. Although we will cover all of the listed topics, the selected readings, activities and pace of the class depends on group performance. Additionally, we may have to rearrange some sessions in order to accommodate guest speakers or special activities. Unless otherwise noted, you are expected to complete all corresponding reading **BEFORE** attending the session. SRM is shorthand for *Bryman's Social Research Methods* (6th edition), the primary textbook for the course.

### SESSION 1 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

#### **Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

*Topic(s):* Course Overview. Expectations. Evaluation Criteria. Qualitative Research in the Social Sciences. Fundamentals of Qualitative Research.

*Activities:* Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity.

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters:* SRM Chapter 16

### SESSION 2 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

#### **Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

*Topics:* Types of Qualitative Research Design.

*Activities:* Lecture. In-Class Debate. Discussion.

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters:* SRM Chapter 3

### **SESSION 3 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

*Topic(s): Ethics in Qualitative Research.*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 6*

### **SESSION 4 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

*Topic(s): Research Questions.*

*Activities: Lecture. In class-activity. Introduce Individual Final Research Proposal.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 4*

### **SESSION 5 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

**Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

*Topic(s): How to come up with a good qualitative research question.*

*Activities: Guided individual brainstorming assignment and professor feedback. Detailed instructions will be posted on the day the session appears on the schedule.*

### **SESSION 6 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

*Topic(s): The literature review.*

*Activities: Lecture. In class-activity.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 5*

### **SESSION 7 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

**Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

*Topic(s): Researching the literature*

*Activities: Annotated bibliography exercise. Detailed instructions will be posted on the day the session appears on the schedule.*

No additional reading is assigned to this session.

### **SESSION 8 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

*Topic(s): Reliability, Validity and Generalizability in Qualitative Research.*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 16*

## **SESSION 9 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

*Topic(s): Sampling.*

Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity.

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 17*

## **SESSION 10 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods.**

Activities: In-class examination on Module 1

## **SESSION 11 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 2: Data as Observation.**

*Topic(s): Introduction to Ethnography. Participant observation. Field notes.*

Activities: Lecture. Discussion. Introduce Ethnography Group Project.

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 18*

## **SESSION 12 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 2: Data as Observation.**

*Topic(s): Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*

Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity.

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: Writing ethnographic fieldnotes. Excerpts from Chapter 2 - Jottings (CED)*

## **SESSION 13 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 2: Data as Observation.**

*Topic(s): Ethnographic research exemplar. Possible class visit.*

Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity

*Reading: TBA*

## **SESSION 14 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

**Module 2: Data as Observation.**

*Topic(s): Participant observation*

*Activities:* Group participant observation exercise. Detailed instructions will be posted on the day the session appears on the schedule.

*Reading: no additional reading assigned to this session*

## **SESSION 15 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 3: Data as Talk.**

*Topic(s): Introduction to Interviews.*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 19*

## **SESSION 16 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 3: Data as Talk.**

*Topic(s): Example of interview-based research*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. Potential guest speaker.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: TBA*

## **SESSION 17 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

**Module 3: Data as Talk.**

*Topic(s): Preparing an interview guide*

*Activities: Individual interview guide exercise. Detailed instructions will be posted on the day the session appears on the schedule.*

*Reading: N/A*

## **SESSION 18 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 3: Data as Talk.**

*Topic(s): Introduction to Focus Groups.*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 20*

## **SESSIONS 19 - 20 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 3: Data as Talk.**

*Topic(s): Focus Groups.*

*Activities: Focus group demonstration*

*Reading: TBA*

## **SESSION 21 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

**Module 3: Data as Talk.**

*Topic(s): Conducting an interview.*

*Activities: Individual interview exercise. Detailed instructions will be posted on the day the session appears on the schedule.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: TBA*

## **SESSION 22 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 4: Data as Text.**

*Topic(s): Discourse Analysis*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 21*

**SESSION 23 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 4: Data as Text.**

*Topic(s): What is Materials Based Research (MBR)? Archival Research. Content Analysis.*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class activity*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 22*

**SESSION 24 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 4: Data as Text.**

*Topic(s): Example of text-based research*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. Potential guest speaker.*

*Reading: TBA*

**SESSION 25 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 5: Data Analysis and the Research Report.**

*Topic(s): Coding and Analysis*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. In-class Coding Exercise.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 23*

**SESSION 26 (ASYNCHRONOUS)**

**Module 5: Data Analysis and the Research Report**

*Topic(s): Transcribing and coding interviews*

*Activities: Transcription and coding exercise. Detailed instructions will be posted on the day the session appears on the schedule.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: TBA*

**SESSION 27 (LIVE IN-PERSON)**

**Module 5: Data Analysis and the Research Report**

*Topic(s): Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion. Potential Guest Speaker.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: TBA*

## SESSION 28 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

### **Module 5: Data Analysis and the Research Report.**

*Topic(s): The Pieces of Academic Writing.*

*Activities: Lecture. Discussion.*

*Reading:*

*Book Chapters: SRM Chapter 25*

## SESSIONS 29 - 30 (LIVE IN-PERSON)

### **Module 5: Data Analysis and the Research Report.**

*Topic(s): Ethnographic research*

*Activities: Final presentations of group ethnographies*

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

**Exam on Module 1 (15%):** An in-class exam testing student comprehension of the key concepts from Module 1.

**Midterm literature review (20%):** Students will write a mini-literature review on a topic of their interest. This will serve as the basis for the individual research proposal due at the end of the course.

**Final Research Proposal (30%):** Students will develop a qualitative research proposal using the tools of qualitative research applied to their own research idea. The final proposal will be due at the end of the course and must be submitted via Turnitin.

**Group Ethnography Presentations (15%):** Students will develop a peer-evaluated ethnographic group project. The assignment will consist of four parts: participant observation periods, individual fieldnotes and reflection, data coding and analysis, and a group presentation summarizing the group's findings.

**Class Preparation and Participation (20%):** Class preparation and engagement will be evaluated based on the quality of your participation in class discussion and other activities that take place during synchronous and asynchronous sessions. Students will have several in-class and asynchronous assignments in which they will work as individuals and in groups to apply the tools and methodologies that they are learning in various assignments. These assignments will complement the theoretical components of the course and help students gain a broader understanding of how to conduct qualitative research. They will also form a core part of your participation and engagement grade. You will share your assignments in a Google Portfolio. I will explain the Google Portfolio during session 1.

The most important component of your participation is the content of what you are saying. A high quality comment reveals depth of insight, rigorous use of case evidence, consistency of argument, and realism. People who speak often but whose comments lack substance will not be rewarded in the same way that people who speak less frequently but with rich content that furthers the class discussion. That said, your attempts at participation should not be such that the instructor has to "go looking for you". You should be attempting to get into the debate on a regular basis. Listening is an equally important component of class participation. Please be mindful of how much you are speaking versus listening and ensure that this class is an environment in which all of us are encouraged to do both. Students who are disruptive or disrespectful will be asked to leave the classroom and will be counted as absent for that day. **No exceptions.**

Class participation and engagement will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

A: 90-100



Demonstrates excellent preparation: not only has the student done the assigned reading/viewing, but evidently has spent time analyzing and evaluating the materials.

Offers exceptionally strong analysis and synthesis to the class, e.g. connects pieces of the discussion to develop new approaches that take the class further.

Contributes in a very significant way to ongoing discussion: keeps analysis focused, responds very thoughtfully to other students' comments, contributes to cooperative argument-building, suggests alternative ways of approaching material and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate, etc.

Demonstrates ongoing very active involvement.

B: 75-89

Demonstrates good preparation: knows reading facts well, has thought through implications of them.

Offers interpretations and analysis of reading material (more than just facts) to class.

Contributes well to discussion in an ongoing way: responds to other students' points, thinks through own points, questions others in a constructive way, offers and supports opinions that may be counter to the majority view.

Demonstrates consistent ongoing involvement.

C: 60-74

Demonstrates adequate preparation: knows basic reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them.

Offers straightforward information (e.g., straight from the reading), without elaboration or very infrequently.

Contributes to discussion sporadically, if at all.

Demonstrates only occasional involvement.

D: 50-59

Present, not disruptive.

Shows little evidence of having prepared for class.

Tries to respond when called on but does not offer much.

Demonstrates very infrequent involvement in discussion.

F: 0

Shows no evidence of having prepared for class.

No apparent involvement in discussion.

criteria	percentage	Learning Objectives	Comments
Module 1 Exam	15 %		
Literature Review	20 %		
Final Research Proposal	30 %		
Group Ethnography Presentation	15 %		
Class Participation	20 %		

### RE-SIT / RE-TAKE POLICY

Each student has four (4) chances to pass any given course distributed over two (2) consecutive academic years. Each academic year consists of two calls: one (1) ordinary call (during the semester when the course is taking place); and one (1) extraordinary call (or "re-sit") in June/July. Students who do not comply with the 70% attendance requirement in each subject during the semester will automatically fail both calls (ordinary and extraordinary) for that Academic Year and have to re-take the course (i.e., re-enroll) during the next Academic Year.

The Extraordinary Call Evaluation criteria will be subject to the following rules: Students failing the course in the ordinary call (during the semester) will have to re-sit evaluation for the course in June / July (except those students who do not comply with the attendance rule, and therefore will not have that opportunity, since they will fail both calls and must directly re-enroll in the course during the next Academic Year). It is not permitted to change the format nor the date of the extraordinary call exams or deadlines under any circumstance. All extraordinary call evaluation dates will be announced in advance and must be taken into consideration before planning the summer (e.g. internships, trips, holidays, etc.) The June/July re-sit will consist of a comprehensive evaluation of the course. Your final grade for the course will depend on the performance in this exam or evaluation only. I.e., continuous evaluation over the semester (e.g. participation, quizzes, projects and/or other grade components over the semester) will not be taken into consideration on the extraordinary call. Students will have to achieve the minimum passing grade of 5 and the maximum grade will be capped at 8.0 (out of 10.0) – i.e., “notable” in the extraordinary call. Re-takers: Students who failed the subject on a previous Academic Year and are now re-enrolled as re-takers in a course will need to check the syllabus of the assigned professor, as well as contact the professor individually, regarding the specific evaluation criteria for them as re-takers in the course during that semester (ordinary call of that Academic Year). The maximum grade that may be obtained as a retaker during the ordinary call (i.e., the 3rd call) is 10.0 (out of 10.0). After exams and other assessments are graded by the professor (on either the ordinary or extraordinary call), students will have a possibility to attend a review session (whether it be a final exam, a final project, or the final overall grade in a given course). Please be available to attend the session in order to clarify any concerns you might have regarding your grade. Your professor will inform you about the time and place of the review session. Students failing more than 18 ECTS credits after the June/July re-sits will be asked to leave the Program. Please, make sure to prepare yourself well for the exams in order to pass your failed subjects. In case you decide to skip the opportunity to re-sit for an exam or evaluation during the June/July extraordinary call, you will need to enroll in that course again for the next Academic Year as a re-taker, and pay the corresponding tuition fees. As you know, students have a total of four (4) allowed calls to pass a given subject or course, in order to remain in the program.

#### COURSE-SPECIFIC PROCEDURES FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD CALLS

You will be required to hand in (by the scheduled date of the re-sit examination) any and all work on major assignments that you have not previously submitted. You may also be required to hand in some additional exercises at the professor's discretion.

In the case of work for which you did not receive a passing grade, you are expected to hand in extensively revised work. Any missing or failed group work will be replaced by an individual assignment meeting the same course objectives.

In addition to the above, you may be required to sit for a written and/or oral exam on the scheduled day and time of the re-sit examination.

Students who are retaking the course (third call) are expected to contact me at the start of the semester to draw up an attendance and evaluation plan.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Compulsory

- Alan Bryman. (2021). *Social Research Methods*. 6th Edition. Oxford University Press. ISBN 9780198796053 (Printed)

\*\* With each module, there is a corresponding section of reading materials from the course textbook, marked SRM in the syllabus. Any additional assigned reading will be posted to Campus Online. For all assigned readings, students will know what the readings are prior to each session are expected to come to class having already read the corresponding chapter(s) in order to engage in class conversation and activities.

**Recommended**

- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L.. (2011). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. 2nd edition. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 9780226206837 (Printed)

**BEHAVIOR RULES**

Please, check the University's Code of Conduct [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Please, check the University's Attendance Policy [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.

**ETHICAL POLICY**

Please, check the University's Ethics Code [here](#). The Program Director may provide further indications.