

Seminar: Intermediate Qualitative Methods

1st Term, Academic Year 2024-2025

Mondays, 9.00-11.00 (Seminar Rooms 2 & 4, Badia Fiesolana)

First Seminar Session: 30.09.24

Last Seminar Session: 09.12.24

Instructor: [Jeffrey T. Checkel](#)

Office: Villa Sanfelice, SF-02

E-Mail: jeffrey.checkel@eui.eu

Office Hours: Mondays, 12:00-14:00

Contact: Pia Dittmar (pia.dittmar@eui.eu)

Description

This seminar is an intermediate/advanced class on qualitative methods; it builds upon but goes beyond the SPS introductory qualitative methods course. We begin – Part I - with three sessions on foundational issues: philosophy and ethics. Philosophically, the action in recent years has been more at the level of ontology than epistemology; we thus consider the widespread adoption of relational ontologies and their implications for the theory and practice of qualitative methods. For research ethics, we explore both its multiple meta-theoretical foundations (de-ontological / consequentialist / feminist / post-colonial) and its varying practice across qualitative and quantitative-computational methods and experimental designs.

In Part II – the seminar’s core – we drill down and explore the contours and debates over a selection of key qualitative methods. These include sessions on field work and multi-sited approaches; interpretive interview methods (relational, life history, ethnographic); discourse textual methods (genealogical, critical, post-structural); and advanced process methods (Bayesian process tracing, practice tracing, following methods).

We conclude – Part III – by zooming back out from particular methods. One session thus explores the debate over research transparency and its implications for all qualitative methods. Our last meeting then zooms out to the level of practice, with researchers debating their operationalization of a qualitative method/topic in a half-day workshop.

The seminar is worth 20 credits.

Learning Outcomes

- An understanding of the varying links among philosophy, research ethics and your choice and ethical use of a particular method/design.
- For the key qualitative methods – field work and multi-sited approaches; interpretive interview methods; discourse textual methods; advanced process methods - an appreciation of

the method's content, its strengths and weaknesses, and its philosophical and ethical foundations.

- An understanding of the central – and growing – importance of transparency in qualitative methods, and the trade-offs necessary to attain this goal.

Format

The class will be run as a seminar, where debate and discussion are the norm. For Sessions 2 - 9, response memos – prepared by 1-2 researchers for each session – will inform and guide our debates. At the beginning of each session, we will use these memos, as well as input from other seminar participants to craft a 'bottom up' agenda for that day's topic and readings.

For session 10 – our brainstorming workshop - researchers take ownership of a particular qualitative method (post-structural discourse analysis, say) or topic (the ethics of on-line ethnography, for example), which are then debated and critiqued in 30-minute slots. The raw material for the workshop will be an 8-10 page essay – which is typically an elaboration of an earlier response memo.

Syllabus

A full syllabus will be posted by 31 August 2024.