



**Curso PSY-03**

**QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGIES**

(45 lecture hours)

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Language: Spanish/English

**Brief Course presentation:**

The focus of this course is on understanding the logic, practice, and relevance of qualitative research for exploring the social world. In a context marked by complex social phenomena, where understanding people's perspectives, meanings, and experiences is crucial, qualitative methodology provides the essential tools. The course guides students through the entire research process, from formulating questions and designing studies to producing and analyzing data. The teachers will provide a comprehensive, hands-on, and critical overview using practical examples, case analyses, and discussions, equipping students to conduct rigorous and meaningful qualitative research.

**Objectives**

The course aims to provide:

- A coherent introduction to the epistemological foundations of qualitative research and its value for understanding social reality.
- A practical understanding of the entire qualitative research process, from formulating relevant questions to communicating final results.
- The ability to design rigorous qualitative studies, selecting appropriate strategies and techniques based on the research problem.
- A critical appreciation of the ethical challenges and criteria for quality and rigor in qualitative inquiry.

**Skills Outcomes:**

Students will develop a knowledge and understanding of:

- The key characteristics, paradigms, and applications of qualitative methodology.
- The main techniques for producing data, including interviews, observation, and discussion groups.
- The fundamental processes of analyzing, interpreting, and presenting qualitative data.



Students have the opportunity to develop the following skills during the course:

- To formulate relevant and well-defined qualitative research questions.
- To design a coherent qualitative research project from sampling to analysis.
- To apply different techniques for generating rich and meaningful data.
- To conduct basic qualitative analysis, including coding and interpretation of textual information.
- To critically evaluate the quality and rigor of published qualitative research.
- To develop reflexivity and a sensitive awareness of the researcher's role in the co-construction of knowledge.

The syllabuses are presented within 10 topics, each based on a broad theme:

**TOPIC 1: FOUNDATIONS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: BEYOND NUMBERS.**

Definition, characteristics, and underlying paradigms (constructivism, interpretivism). Key differences from quantitative methodology: depth vs. breadth, flexibility vs. standardization. Areas of application and types of research problems for which it is most suitable.

**TOPIC 2: FORMULATING THE PROBLEM AND QUALITATIVE RESEARCH QUESTIONS.**

From general interest to a focused and relevant research question. Characteristics of a good qualitative research question (open-ended, exploratory, process-oriented). The importance of the literature review: to contextualize, not to dictate.

**TOPIC 3: QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DESIGN: STRATEGIES AND PLANNING.**

Main types of designs: Case Study, Ethnography, Action Research, Grounded Theory, Narrative. Selecting the design based on the research question. Components of a qualitative research protocol or project proposal.

**TOPIC 4: SAMPLING IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: THE LOGIC OF SELECTION.**

The logic of non-probabilistic sampling: seeking informational richness, not statistical representativeness. Purposive sampling techniques: criterion-based, snowball, typical or extreme cases. Determining sample size: the saturation criterion.

**TOPIC 5: DATA PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES I: THE QUALITATIVE INTERVIEW.**

The interview as a conversational construction of knowledge. Types of interviews (structured, semi-structured, in-depth) and guide design. Interviewer skills: active listening, questioning techniques, and managing rapport.



**TOPIC 6: DATA PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES II: OBSERVATION AND FOCUS GROUPS.**

Observation (participant and non-participant): recording context and the unspoken. The focus group: its operational logic and potential for generating group discourse. Choosing the appropriate technique based on the research design and question.

**TOPIC 7: INTRODUCTION TO DATA ANALYSIS: ORGANIZATION AND FIRST IMMERSIONS.**

Strategies for transcribing and organizing textual data. First readings and analytic memo writing: generating initial ideas. Introduction to using software for qualitative analysis (CAQDAS): advantages and precautions.

**TOPIC 8: IN-DEPTH QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS: CODING AND CATEGORIZATION.**

Coding techniques (open, axial, selective) to break down and conceptualize data. Developing analytical categories and searching for relationships between them. The iterative process: constant movement back and forth between data and analysis.

**TOPIC 9: INTERPRETATION AND SCIENTIFIC RIGOR: CONSTRUCTING VALID MEANING.**

From categories to central themes: weaving the interpretive narrative. Criteria for rigor in qualitative research: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Strategies to strengthen analysis: triangulation, member checking, audits.

**TOPIC 10: WRITING THE REPORT AND COMMUNICATING QUALITATIVE FINDINGS.**

Structure of a qualitative research report: telling a compelling story. Integrating participants' voices: the use of quotations as evidence. Reflexivity: the researcher's presence in the text and final ethical considerations.



### **Assignments: Individual/Group Project**

Based on the course syllabus, the students will undertake a personal or group project with a qualitative methodology. Topics will be presented and decided during the first lectures.

Presentations will take place on the agreed dates. Students should also hand in the presentation file for assessment.

### **Assessment and Grading**

<b>Assessment type</b>	<b>% of formal assessment</b>
Class attendance and participation	20%
Test for continuous evaluation	20%
Midterm exam	20%
Final exam	20%
Group project presentation	20%

### **Bibliography and Learning Resources**

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2013). *Successful qualitative research: A practical guide for beginners*.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage handbook of qualitative research*. sage.

Deroncele-Acosta, Á., Brito-Garcías, J. G., Sánchez-Trujillo, M. D. L. Á., Delgado-Nery, Y. M., & Medina-Zuta, P. (2023). *Método de modelación teórico-práctica en ciencias sociales*. Revista Universidad y Sociedad, 15(3), 366-384.

Lapan, S. D., Quartaroli, M. T., & Riemer, F. J. (Eds.). (2011). *Qualitative research: An introduction to methods and designs*. John Wiley & Sons.

Levitt, H. M. (2020). *Reporting qualitative research in psychology: How to meet APA style journal article reporting standards*. American Psychological Association.

Liamputtong, P. (Ed.). (2023). *How to conduct qualitative research in social science*. Edward Elgar Publishing.

Tisdell, E. J., Merriam, S. B., & Stuckey-Peyrot, H. L. (2025). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. John Wiley & Sons.