

**Course Outline 2017**  
**INFOSYS 751: RESEARCH METHODS – QUALITATIVE (15 POINTS)**  
**Semester 1 (1173)**

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**Course Prescription**

This course focuses on the conduct and evaluation of qualitative research. It reviews various qualitative research methods and ways of analysing qualitative data and the challenges of writing up qualitative research work for peer-reviewed conferences and academic journals.

**Programme and Course Advice**

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

**Learning Outcomes**

By the end of this course it is expected that the student will be able to:

1. display familiarity with a broad array of qualitative research methods and approaches that are used within the field of information systems;
2. demonstrate competence in critical thinking by presenting and evaluating arguments in an academic fashion;
3. exhibit competence in critiquing the research methods sections of qualitative research articles published in some of the leading academic journals; and
4. know how to write a research proposal using qualitative methods.

## Content Outline

Content	Schedule
Introduction and Overview	Weeks 1-2
Qualitative Research Methods	Weeks 3-7
Qualitative Analysis and Writing Up	Weeks 8-10
Presentation of Research Proposal	Weeks 11-12

## Learning and Teaching

The class will meet for three hours each week. 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. These activities include reading the required and recommended readings of relevance to this course and preparing for assignments and the final exam.

## Teaching Staff

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## Learning Resources

### A. Required Text

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

### B. 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

### A. Overview

Internal assessment	2 @ 25%	50%
Final Exam		50%
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Total		100%

### B. Detail

#### 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. It will also assess students' competence in critical thinking and their ability to evaluate arguments in an academic fashion.

The broad relationship between these assessments and the course learning outcomes is as follows:

Learning Outcome	Assignment 1	Assignment 2	Final Exam
1	X	X	X
2	X	X	X
3	X	X	
4		X	

## **Inclusive Learning**

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

## **Student Feedback**

Student feedback from previous years has been used to improve the course. One notable improvement is the inclusion of more practical exercises illustrating some of the qualitative methods and techniques. Given the very positive student feedback in previous years, this course is only evaluated once in every three years.