University of St.Gallen

Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2025

8,033: IC: Exploring IT User Engagement

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)
decentral - Presentation, Analog, Group work group grade (20%)
Examination time: Term time
decentral - Written work, Digital, Group work group grade (50%)
Examination time: Term time
decentral - Presentation, Analog, Group work group grade (30%)
Examination time: Term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer
8,033,1.00 IC: Exploring IT User Engagement -- English -- Kurihara Fumi , Baumöl Ulrike

Course information

Course prerequisites

Students must be willing and able to attend all course elements. There are no other specific pre-requirements.
This course is assigned to the profile «Digital Channel & Customer Relationship Management» but can also be taken without selecting a specialisation.

Learning objectives

- Understand the value of qualitative methods, specifically conducting and analyzing interviews, and learn how to apply them in practice.
- Better understand IT user engagement and their theoretical and practical relevance today.
- Generate scientific contributions and write papers at conference publication level.

Course content

There are various methodological approaches to studying and understanding IT user engagement. One way is through qualitative methods, namely, by conducting interviews with users and listening to how they use technologies. A detailed and nuanced understanding of IT user engagement not only promises academically relevant insights, but also provides the basis to design and improve products and services that resonate with users.

In this course, you will discover the value of qualitative methods and learn how to apply them in unraveling the intricacies of IT user engagement. In small groups, you will choose a specific app (e.g., Bumble, Duolingo, Calm, or beyond!), conduct interviews with users of the chosen app, and analyze the interviews to gain profound insights into how people interact with the app. By identifying the ways in which people engage with the app, you will not only be able to answer academically relevant research questions on IT user engagement, but also develop your methodological skills that can be applied to other research projects. Furthermore, you will learn novel ways to provide practical recommendations for developers that allow them to improve certain features and/or elements of their apps.

Through this course, your primary focus will be on acquiring and honing your qualitative methodological skills which are valuable for your empirical master's thesis and other academic works. You will learn how to conduct interviews and interpret the rich narratives you will obtain from your interviewees. Furthermore, you will develop practical skills in independent research planning, data collection, rigorous analysis, and presentation. These skills transcend academic boundaries and are highly transferable in various professional contexts. For example, by conducting interviews, you will hone your communication and listening skills, both important in any professional role. In analyzing interviews, you will become

proficient in distilling meaningful insights and delivering them in a compelling way, essential skills for anyone tasked with incorporating client or customer interviews into reports, briefings, or product development processes.

Whether you aspire to work in research, development, or any role requiring effective communication and data analysis, this course will equip you with the tools you may need after your studies.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

This course counts 4 credits. Accordingly, the total workload for students is 120 hours. This includes self-study, campus time, and all examinations.

The course will be held in a blended learning format, encompassing five synchronous sessions as well as independent preparation, study, and working phases. In between the sessions, you may schedule individual feedback meetings with the lecturer.

In sessions 1 and 2, you will acquire theoretical and methodological basics of IT user engagement and qualitative methods. You will then start working on the group projects. In session 3 you will learn the basics of ATLAS.ti and have the space for peer mentoring for the data analysis. In session 4, we will be holding the midterm presentations where you will further receive input for developing your projects. In the last meeting, you will present your findings. There, you will receive final suggestions for wrapping up the term paper.

- Session 1: Input module 1 (IT user engagement)
- Session 2: Input module 2 (qualitative methods)
- Session 3: Data analysis/Coding & Peer mentoring
- Session 4: Midterm presentations
- Session 5: Poster session (final presentation)

(Note: Due to the interactive course format, personal attendance is expected for all sessions.)

Course literature

Students will be required to read a collection of general texts on user engagement and qualitative research (with a focus on interviews and thematic analysis), as well as sample papers applying these approaches. In addition to the texts below, students are expected to identify relevant literature for their independent group work.

The final reading list will be provided in the kick-off session.

Literature on user engagement

- Hollebeek, L. (2011). Demystifying Customer Brand Management: Exploring the Loyalty Nexus. Journal of Marketing Management, 27(7-8), 785-807.
- O'brien, H. and P. Cairns. (2016). Why User Engagement Matters: Cross-disciplinary Perspectives of User Engagement in Digital Media. Springer International Publishing. [See chapters 1 ("Theoretical perspectives on user engagement") and 4 ("Engagement in digital games")]

Literature on qualitative methods (focus on interviews and thematic data analysis)

- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006). Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology. Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3(2), 77-101.
- Gephart, R.P. (2004). From the Editors: Qualitative Research and the Academy of Management Journal. Academy of Management Journal, 47(4), 454-462.
- Myers, M. (1997). Qualitative Research in Information Systems. MIS Quarterly, 21(2).

Sample papers applying user engagement and thematic analysis

- Constantiou, I., Mukkamala, A., Sjöklint, M., and Trier, M. (2023). Engaging with Self-Tracking Applications: How Do Users Respond to Their Performance Data? European Journal of Information Systems, 32(6), 941-961.
- Morlok, T., Constantiou, I., and Hess, T. (2018). Gone For Better or For Worse? Exploring the Dual Nature of Ephemerality on Social media Platforms. AIS Electronic Library (AISeL).

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Additional course information

N/A

Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/3)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Presentation
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Oral examination
Examination mode	Analog
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	20%
Duration	--

Examination languages
Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark
Midterm presentation

Examination-aid rule
Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

Practical examination.

No regulations on aids are required for this examination. The rules and regulations of the University of St. Gallen apply subsidiarily.

2. Examination sub part (2/3)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	50%

Duration --

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark
Academic paper

Examination-aid rule
Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids
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3. Examination sub part (3/3)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Presentation
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Oral examination
Examination mode	Analog
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	30%
Duration	--

Examination languages
Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark
Final presentation

Examination-aid rule
Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

Practical examination.

No regulations on aids are required for this examination. The rules and regulations of the University of St. Gallen apply subsidiarily.

Examination content

Examinations will be held in small groups and include the following:

- Midterm presentation (research proposal)
- Final presentation (completed research project)
- Term paper on the completed research

Examination relevant literature

Basic reading listed above and scholarly articles to be identified in the literature review.

Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.
Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2025) are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 23 January 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 17 March 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 14 (Monday, 31 March 2025);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 07 April 2025).