

RES320 Qualitative Research (J)

1st and 2nd quarters, Junior

Instructor	ITO ISAMU, TANAKA YUKITAKA
Style of Class	Lecture
Number of Credits	2
Day and Period	To be advised

Course Description

This course involves foundational learning in qualitative data gathering and analysis methods. It covers the characteristics, limitations, and precautions in field use of a number of major methods including semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, participant observation, life history analysis, and document analysis.

ITO ISAMU (10 classes): Students will study the characteristics, limitations, and precautions in field use of the above mentioned methods through examples of well-known studies in the history of sociology.

TANAKA YUKITAKA (5 classes): Using actual examples of participant observation and interview surveys in urban community research, students will learn the essential points in implementation of participant observation and interview surveys, including setting survey items, guidelines for collecting qualitative data, and developing relationships with research participants.

Course Objectives

- Acquire basic knowledge of major qualitative research methods and qualitative data analysis methods.
- Develop the ability to implement qualitative interviews on one's own.

Prerequisites

- Introduction to Research (J)
- Social Research Design and Data Collection Methods
- Introduction to Sociology
- Theory of Urban Communities

Class Materials

Books for reference:

Otani Shinsuke et al., *Shin shakaichosa eno apurochi* (New Approaches to Social Research), Minerva Shobo, 2013.

Tani Fumio and Ashida Tetsuro (eds.), *Yoku wakaruru shitsuteki shakai chosa gihohen* (Easy-to-Understand Qualitative Research Techniques), Minerva Shobo, 2009

Tani Fumio (ed.), *Shinpan raifu hisutorii o manabu hito no tame ni* (For Those Studying Life History, New Edition), Sekai Shisosha, 2008 etc.

Course Method

Classes are conducted in lecture format, but in order to avoid one-way teaching, all students will be required to submit a short memo on their thoughts in each class.

Evaluation/Assessment

Grades will be determined by reference to three types of submissions: (1) memos submitted in each class; (2) mid-term test; (3) final report.

Grading

Attitude to learning (1 above): 20%

Mid-term test (2): 30%

Final report (3): 50%

Course Schedule

Week 1: Orientation and introduction

Explanation of course structure, format, and grading methods

Introduction: Positioning of qualitative research in the field of social research, complementarity of quantitative and qualitative research, types of qualitative research methods and qualitative data analysis methods

Week 2: Qualitative interviews (1)

Basic perspectives on qualitative interviews; semi-structured and unstructured interviews; from topic-setting to research questions; introduction to actual example of research using qualitative interviews (Merton's *Mass Persuasion*)

Week 3: Qualitative interviews (2)

Criteria and methods to subject selection; questions: creating a scenario interview guide; introduction and commentary on actual example of semi-structured interviews (Hosoya Takashi's et al. *Nomin seikatsu ni okeru ko to shudan* (Group and Individual in Agricultural Life))

Week 4: Qualitative interviews (3)

Points to note when conducting interviews; methods for recording interviews; producing and analyzing transcripts

Week 5: Participant observation (1)

Participation and observation; essentials of participant observation; introduction to example of research using participant observation (White's *Street Corner Society*)

Week 6: Participant observation (2)

The problem of relationships with research subjects; basics of field note-taking; deriving insights from field notes; introduction and commentary on examples of research using participant observation (Becker's *Outsiders* and Becker et al.'s *Boys in White*)

Week 7: Life history analysis (1)

Introduction to life history; life histories and life stories; essentials in life history analysis; introduction and commentary on a Classic in life history analysis (Shaw's *Jack-Roller*)

Week 8: Life history analysis (2)

Essentials in the implementation of life history interviews; from interpretation/analysis of life histories to the formation of typologies and hypotheses; introduction to examples of life history analysis in Japan (Nakano Takashi's *Kojutsu no seikatsushi* (A Narrative Life History), Study Group for Life Histories in Ordinary People's *Dojidaijin no seikatsushi* (Life History of Contemporaries), etc.)

Week 9: Document analysis (1)

Introduction to document analysis; private records and public records; focus on and use of private records; introduction and commentary on a Classic in document analysis (Thomas & Znaniecki's *The Polish Peasant*)

Week 10: Document analysis (2)

Attaching subjective meaning to experience; relationship of experience with social context/social structure; introduction and commentary on an example of the use of documentary analysis (Mita Munetsuke's *Gendai ni okeru fuko no shoruikei* (Types of Unhappiness in the Contemporary Era))

Week 11: Qualitative interviews in urban community research (1)

Selecting research topics; approaching research subjects; introduction and commentary on examples of interviews

Week 12: Qualitative interviews in urban community research (2)

Recording, analyzing, and describing about survey content; introduction and commentary on examples of how to confirm content with research subjects

Week 13: Participant observation in urban community research (1)

Accessing sites for participant observation; introduction and commentary on examples of the process of building relationships with stakeholders

Week 14: Participant observation in urban community research (2)

Recording, analyzing, and describing about participant observation; introduction and commentary on examples of how to confirm content with stakeholders

Week 15: Wrap-up and task explanation

Review of the course as a whole; explanation of final report task

Preparation and Follow-up

- Preparation: study the applicable chapters in the textbook and reference materials (approx. 1 hour).
- Follow-up: Revise the class content and identify points requiring clarification (approx. 1 hour).