



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2025

4,307: Qualitative Methods

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

central - Written examination, Digital, Individual work individual grade (100%, 90 mins.)

Examination time: Lecture-free period

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[4,307,1.00 Qualitative Methods](#) -- English -- [Eckl Julian](#) , [Dingwerth Klaus](#)

[4,307,2.01 Qualitative Methods: Exercises Group 1](#) -- English -- [Plappert Sebastian](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

The lecture is designed for students in the BIA programme.

Learning objectives

- Students know, recognise, and understand fundamental qualitative approaches and research designs.
- Students categorise qualitative studies with regard to their methodological characteristics and evaluate them on the basis of established quality criteria.
- Students are able to assess which qualitative research design is appropriate for which questions and they are able to make their own research decisions against this background.

Course content

Qualitative research is generally characterised by the detailed analysis of a small number of cases. At the same time, there are different approaches and research designs within qualitative research. The course provides an overview of qualitative research, focussing in particular on the key characteristics and quality features of five selected research designs (ethnography, discourse analysis, co-variational analysis, causal process-tracing, and congruence analysis).

Central questions include: What characterises qualitative research? What research designs are there? What are case studies? How and for what purposes are case studies conducted? And what criteria are there to differentiate good studies from those whose results should not be trusted?

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course consists of nine lectures and three tutorials. The lectures serve to introduce fundamental concepts and research designs. In the tutorials, students will among other things read studies that work with these research designs. Students will learn to recognise the most important methodological decisions that the authors had to make in their studies and to ask the right questions in order to assess the quality of the studies.

The compulsory readings for this course will be made available via Canvas/StudyNet. More specifically, the literature provided is always among the compulsory readings, unless it is labelled as additional literature. Students are expected to read the material carefully before each session. In the sessions, the content is illustrated using examples and exercises.



The final exam is a central exam. The first part of the final exam asks questions about the lecture and the readings. The second part follows the tutorial model, i.e. students answer applied questions on the methodological aspects of a study. This study will be announced one week before the exam.

Course literature

As previously mentioned, the compulsory readings for this course will be made available via Canvas/StudyNet. Students are expected to read the material carefully before each session.

The following textbooks are recommended for thorough familiarisation with key issues:

- Joachim Blatter und Markus Haverland (2012) *Designing Case Studies* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).
- Joachim Blatter, Phil C. Langer und Claudius Wagemann (2018) *Qualitative Methoden in der Politikwissenschaft: Eine Einführung* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS).

Additional course information

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Examination information

Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/1)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written examination
Responsible for organisation	central
Examination form	Written exam
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Lecture-free period
Examination execution	Synchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	100%
Duration	90 mins.

Examination languages

Question language: English

Answer language: English

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Closed Book

The use of aids is prohibited as a matter of principle, with the exception of pocket calculator models of the Texas Instruments TI-30 series and, in case of non-language exams, bilingual dictionaries without any handwritten notes. Any other aids that are admissible must be explicitly listed by faculty members in the paragraph entitled "Supplementary aids" of the course and examination fact sheet; this list is exhaustive.

Procuring any aids, as well as ensuring their working order, is the exclusive responsibility of students.



Supplementary aids

The examination will be conducted as a digital examination with the following admissible media:

- **Private notebook** (compulsory) – no tablets!
- **Mains adapter** (compulsory)
- External computer mouse (optional)
- External computer keyboard (optional)

We would like to point out explicitly that the examination cannot be taken with tablets/iPads.

You will need the following for the examination:

- Appliance and system requirements: [cf. StudentWeb](#)
- Special software: [LockDown Browser](#)
- HSG log-in including access modalities
- WLAN – operational access to Eduroam

Please make sure that

- all the updates have been carried out before the examination.
- In the run-up to digitally conducted examinations, technical tests (mock examinations without grades) are carried out. Participation is urgently required!
- You yourself are responsible for the perfect working order of your appliance, [cf. also StudentWeb](#).
- Keyboard stickers in the language in which the examination is conducted (such as English, German, as well as Arabic, Chinese, Russian, Japanese, etc. in language examinations) are permitted. The stickers must be identical with the original characters of the language concerned.
- Any use of additional appliances that are not listed above will be strictly prohibited throughout the examination.

Any necessary actions with another software or additional appliances require the express prior approval of the persons in charge of the examination and are only permitted under supervision.

Any infringement of these rules of conduct may be sanctioned as an infringement of the rules of the University.

Examination content

The final exam is a digital written exam in the examination block. (See also the note on the two parts of the exam above.) It encompasses the material covered in the context of the lectures and tutorials as well as the content of the compulsory readings. The aim of the exam is to determine whether students have understood the fundamental characteristics and requirements of qualitative research as well as the central themes in discussions about qualitative research. Building on this, the second aim of the exam is to determine whether students have acquired the competences to apply these insights independently to social science studies. The study to be analyzed in the exam will be announced one week before the exam.

Examination relevant literature

All texts listed on Canvas/Studynet as compulsory readings for the course until the last lecture date are relevant for the exam. In addition, the study for the second part of the exam will be announced one week before the exam.



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).