K795: Qualitative Methods in Information Systems Research
Fall 2022 Course Outline

Information Systems Area
DeGroote School of Business
McMaster University

COURSE OBJECTIVE

The objective of this course is to present and discuss *Qualitative Methods in Information Systems Research*. Quantitative research methods are by far the predominant and prevalent research methods used by Information Systems (IS) scholars. Qualitative research methods are rather "new" to the IS field, and have garnered recent attention and interest among IS scholars. This course provides students with a working knowledge of a range of qualitative methods and approaches. The course covers key qualitative IS research papers and common qualitative data collection and analysis methods used in the IS field. Students will obtain hands-on experience coding and analysing qualitative data, using qualitative analysis software, and discussing qualitative research issues.

INSTRUCTOR AND CONTACT INFORMATION

Dr. Brian Detlor
detlorb@mcmaster.ca
Tel: (905) 525-9140 x23949
DSB-A201

Office Hours: By Appointment Only

Course Website: http://avenue.mcmaster.ca. The course website will be the primary mode of information dissemination and communication. Please check this website regularly for posts concerning the course.

Course Meeting Time & Location: Mondays 8:30 am – 11:30 am in Room DSB-321.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course focuses on developing a working knowledge of a range of qualitative methods and methodological approaches in Information Systems (IS) research. This includes not only reading key qualitative information systems research papers and learning about common qualitative research approaches used in the IS field, but also getting hands-on experience coding and analysing qualitative data.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Upon completion of this course, students will:

➢ Understand and appreciate the role of qualitative methods in Information Systems research.

➢ Possess a working knowledge of a range of qualitative methodologies and methods used in Information Systems research.

COURSE MATERIALS AND READINGS

*** REQUIRED READING***

Myers, M.D. **Qualitative Research in Business & Management**. Sage Publications, London, 2020. Third Edition. Print ISBN: 9781473912335, 1473912334; eText ISBN: 9781526418302, 1526418304

- Purchase online (e.g., via Amazon.ca)
- Students should purchase this book and read Week 1's assigned readings PRIOR to the first day of class.
- The instructor recommends purchasing the digital (Kindle edition) version as access is instantaneous and the cheapest (approximately $50 CAD). Hardcopy versions of the book will take weeks to ship from the UK.
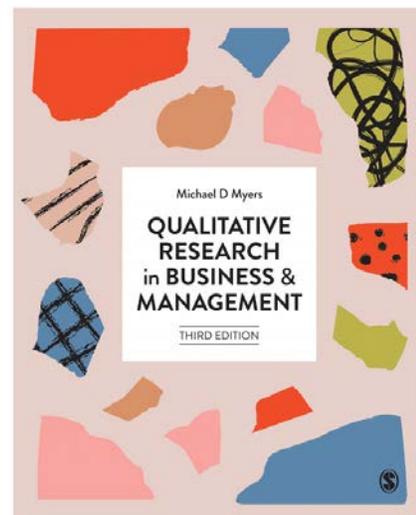
*** OPTIONAL READING ***

Salmona, M., Lieber, E., & Kaczynski. **Qualitative and Mixed Methods Data Analysis using Dedoose: A Practical Approach for Research across the Social Sciences.** Sage Publications, London (2019). ISBNs: 1506397808, 9781506397801

- Purchase online (e.g., via Amazon.ca)
- The instructor recommends purchasing the digital (Kindle edition) version as access is instantaneous and the cheapest (approximately $55 CAD).
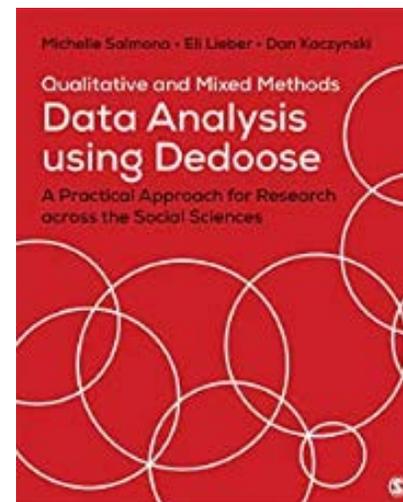
EVALUATION

Learning in this course primarily results from attending lectures, completing assigned readings, participating in class, and carrying out student assignments. All work will be evaluated on an individual basis. Final grades will be calculated as follows:

1)	Participation	40%
2)	Presentation	30%
3)	Term Paper	30%
	Total:	**100%**

Participation

It is vital that students attend and take part in each and every one of these classes. It is assumed that students will do more than just attend, but will be active participants through adequate reading, preparation, and contribution to class discussions. Specifically, for each class, students are expected to read the assigned readings for that week, make notes on those readings, and actively contribute their ideas to class discussions. Students are encouraged to find other related readings pertaining to that week's topic and share their thoughts on those readings.

Participation marks will be assigned across three separate time periods throughout the term: Weeks 1-4; Weeks 5-9; and Weeks 10-13. The average of these three marks will constitute a total participation mark worth 40% of the final grade.

Presentation

Students are asked to compare and contrast two journal articles in the Information Systems field of their own choosing that utilize one of the four common IS research methods discussed in class (action research, case study, ethnography, grounded theory) and provide an in-class presentation of their analysis. In **Week 3**, the instructor will assign each student with a particular IS research method to ensure that all four common IS research methods are sufficiently covered. If students have a preference for a particular IS research method to work on, they are encouraged to inform the instructor prior to **Week 3**. The instructor will try his best to honour student preferences, but please note that such requests cannot be guaranteed. Prior to starting this assignment, students will be required to submit a short proposal outlining the selection of their two journal articles. This is to ensure that the same journal article is not covered by more than one student, and that all students can be told which journal articles will be covered so students can read them well in advance of the in-class presentations.

More details about this assignment will be given in class in Week 3.

Term Paper – Critique of a Qualitative Information Systems Research Dissertation

Students are asked to read and provide a written critical analysis of the following dissertation:

- Lobana, J. (2021). *The Governance of AI-based Information Technologies within Corporate Environments*. PhD dissertation. McMaster University.

The dissertation is available at http://hdl.handle.net/11375/26685. A PDF copy will also be posted on Avenue.

In the analysis of this dissertation, students are expected to utilize concepts discussed in class and in the assigned readings for the course to strengthen and justify their arguments that form the basis of their critical analysis.

More details on this assignment will be given in class in Week 3*. *Term papers are due at the start of class in Week 13.

Late penalty: Term papers handed in late will receive a reduction equivalent to one letter grade each day that the paper is late. For example, an "A" paper would receive an "A-" if it were one day late, a "B+" if it were two days late, etc.

GRADE CONVERSION

At the end of the course your overall percentage grade will be converted to your letter grade in accordance with the following conversion scheme.

LETTER GRADE	PERCENT	POINTS
A+	90 - 100	12
A	85 - 89	11
A-	80 - 84	10
B+	77 - 79	9
B	73 - 76	8
B-	70 - 72	7
F	00 - 69	0

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

You are expected to exhibit honesty and use ethical behaviour in all aspects of the learning process. Academic credentials you earn are rooted in principles of honesty and academic integrity.

Academic dishonesty is to knowingly act or fail to act in a way that results or could result in unearned academic credit or advantage. This behaviour can result in serious consequences, e.g. the grade of zero on an assignment, loss of credit with a notation on the transcript (notation reads:

"Grade of F assigned for academic dishonesty"), and/or suspension or expulsion from the university.

It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes academic dishonesty. For information on the various types of academic dishonesty please refer to the Academic Integrity Policy, located at: www.mcmaster.ca/academicintegrity.

The following illustrates only three forms of academic dishonesty:
- plagiarism, e.g. the submission of work that is not one's own or for which other credit has been obtained.
- improper collaboration in group work.
- copying or using unauthorized aids in tests and examinations.

MISSED ACADEMIC WORK

Late assignments will be accepted according to late penalties applied to each assignment as described above. However, extensions are available under extraordinary circumstances. Please discuss any extenuating situation with your instructor at the earliest possible opportunity.

STUDENT ACCESSIBILITY SERVICES

Students who require academic accommodation must contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS) to make arrangements with a Program Coordinator. Academic accommodations must be arranged for each term of study. Student Accessibility Services can be contacted by phone 905-525-9140 ext. 28652 or e-mail sas@mcmaster.ca. For further information, consult McMaster University's Policy for Academic Accommodation of Students with Disabilities: http://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Students-AcademicStudies/AcademicAccommodation-StudentsWithDisabilities.pdf

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS, INDIGNEOUS OR SPIRITUAL OBSERVANCES (RISO)

Students requiring academic accommodation based on religious, indigenous or spiritual observances should follow the procedures set out in the RISO policy. Students requiring a RISO accommodation should submit their request, including the dates/times needing to be accommodated and the courses which will be impacted, to their Program Office normally within 10 days of the beginning of term. Students should also contact their instructors as soon as possible to make alternative arrangements for classes, assignments, and tests.

POTENTIAL MODIFICATIONS TO THE COURSE

The instructor reserves the right to modify elements of the course during the term. There may be changes to the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances. If either type of modification becomes necessary, reasonable notice and communication with the students will be given with explanation and the opportunity to comment on changes. It is the responsibility of

the student to check their McMaster email and course websites weekly during the term and to note any changes.

The University reserves the right to change the dates and deadlines for any or all courses in extreme circumstances (e.g., severe weather, labour disruptions, etc.). Changes will be communicated through regular McMaster communication channels, such as McMaster Daily News, A2L and/or McMaster email.

COURSE SCHEDULE

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WEEK	DATE	ARTICLES AND ASSIGNMENTS
1	Sept 12	**Introducing Qualitative Information Systems Research** Read: • Course Outline • *Myers, Chapter 2: "Overview of Qualitative Research"*
2	Sept 19	**Research Design and Philosophical Perspectives in Qualitative Information Systems Research** Read: • *Myers, Chapter 3: "Research Design"* • *Myers, Chapter 4: "Philosophical Perspectives"* • Orlikowski & Baroudi (1991). Studying information technology in organizations: Research approaches and assumptions, *Information Systems Research*, 2(1), 1-28. • Goldkuhl (2012). Pragmatism vs interpretivism in qualitative information systems research, *European Journal of Information Systems*, 21(2), 135-146. • Cecez-Keemanovic et al. (2020). Advancing qualitative IS research methodologies: Expanding horizons and seeking new paths. *Journal of the Association of Information Systems, 21*(1), 246-263.
3	Sept 26	**Guiding Principles in Qualitative Information Systems Research**

		Details of the requirements of both the in-class presentation and the term paper will be given in this lecture. Read: • Venkatesh et al. (2013). Bridging the qualitative-quantitative divide: Guidelines for conducting mixed methods research in information systems, *MIS Quarterly, 37*(1), 21-54. • Venkatesh et al. (2016). Guidelines for Conducting Mixed-methods Research: An Extension and Illustration, *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 17*(7), 435 – 494. • Sarker et al. (2013). Qualitative Studies in Information Systems: A Critical Review and Some Guiding Principles, *MIS Quarterly*, 37(4), iii-xviii. • Galliers & Huang (2012). The teaching of qualitative research methods in information systems: an explorative study utilizing learning theory, *European Journal of Information Systems*, 21(2), 119-134.
4	Oct 3	**Ethics in Qualitative Information Systems Research / Action Research in Information Systems** Read: • *Myers, Chapter 5: "Ethics"* • Chapter 10, "Qualitative Research", TCPS 2 (2018), Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (https://ethics.gc.ca/eng/tcps2-eptc2_2018_chapter10-chapitre10.html) • *Myers, Chapter 6: "Action Research"* • Kock et al. (2017). Positivist information systems action research: Methodological issues, *Journal of Management Information Systems, 34*(3), 754-767. • Braa et al. (2004). Networks of action: Sustainable health information systems across developing countries, *MIS Quarterly, 28*(3), 337-362. • Yang, S.O., Hsu, C., Sarker, S., & Lee, A. (2017). Enabling effective operational risk management in a financial

		institution: An action research study, *Journal of Management Information Systems, 34*(3), 727-753.
5	To be re-scheduled online sometime this week due to Thanksgiving on Oct 10	**Case Study Research in Information Systems / Ethnographic Research in Information Systems** Read: • *Myers, Chapter 7: "Case Study Research"* • Benbasat et al. (1987). The case research strategy in studies of information systems, *MIS Quarterly, 11*(3). 369-386. • Dubé & Paré (2003). Rigor in information systems positivist case research: Current practices, trends, and recommendations, *MIS Quarterly, 27*(4), 597-636. • Eisenhardt (1989). Building theories from case study research, *Academy of Management Review, 14*(4), 532-50. • *Myers, Chapter 8: "Ethnographic Research"* • Myers & Young (1997). Hidden agendas, power, and managerial assumptions in information systems development: An ethnographic study, *Information Technology & People, 10*(3), 224-240. • Schultze (2000). A confessional account of an ethnography about knowledge work, *MIS Quarterly, 24*(1), 3-41.
6	Oct 17	**Grounded Theory in Information Systems Research** Read: • *Myers, Chapter 9: "Grounded Theory"* • Orlikowski (1993). CASE tools are organizational change: Investigating incremental and radical changes in systems development," *MIS Quarterly, 17*(3), 309-340. • Urquhart and Fernández (2013). Using grounded theory method in information systems: The researcher as blank slate and other myths," *Journal of Information Technology* (28), pp. 224-236.

		• Urquhart et al. (2010). Putting the theory back into grounded theory: Guidelines for grounded theory studies in information systems, *Information Systems Journal, 20*(4), 357-381. • Charmaz, K. (2014). Reconstructing Theorizing in Grounded Theory Studies. In *Constructing Grounded Theory*, 2nd edition, Chapter 9, 225-260. Sage Publications: Los Angeles. • Wiesche, M. et al. (2017). Grounded theory methodology in Information Systems Research, *MIS Quarterly, 41*(3), 685-701.
7	Oct 24	**Student In-Class Presentations -** Action Research; Case Study Research; Ethnographic Research; Grounded Theory Read: • Sarker et al. (2018). Learning from First-Generation Qualitative Approaches in the IS Discipline: An Evolutionary View and Some Implications for Authors and Evaluators (Part 1/2), *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 19*(8), 752-774. • Sarker et al. (2018). Learning from First-Generation Qualitative Approaches in the IS Discipline: An Evolutionary View and Some Implications for Authors and Evaluators (Part 2/2), *Journal of the Association for Information Systems, 19*(9), 909-923.
8	Oct 31	**No class**
9	Nov 7	**Qualitative Data Collection Techniques** Read: • *Myers – Chapters 10, 11, & 12* • Goldkuhl, G. (2019). The Generation of Qualitative Data in Information Systems Research: The Diversity of Empirical Methods. *Communications of the Association of Information Systems, 44*, 572-599.
10	Nov 14	**Analysing Qualitative Data – Part 1**

Guest Lecturer: Dr. Fariba Nosrati. Fariba will share her experience with using Dedoose, carrying out a qualitative dissertation, and her thoughts of turning a qualitative dissertation into publications.

Read:
- *Myers – Chapter 13*

- Gioia, D.A., Corley, K.G., & Hamilton, A.L. (2012). Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research: Notes on the Gioia Methodology. *Organisational Research Methods, 16*(1), 15-31.

Review (i.e., skim):
- Detlor, B., Julien, H., Willson, R., Serenko, A. & Lavallee, M. (2011). Learning outcomes of information literacy instruction at business schools. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *62*(3), 572–585.

- Serenko, A. (2006). The use of interface agents for email notification in critical incidents. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies. 64*(11), 1084–1098.

- Detlor et al. (2003). Pre-purchase online information seeking: Search versus browse. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research, 4*(2), 72-84.

- Detlor, B., & Ball, K. (2015). Getting More Value from the LibQUAL+® Survey: The Merits of Qualitative Analysis and Importance-Satisfaction Matrices in Assessing Library Patron Comments. *College & Research Libraries, 76*(6), 796-810.

- Detlor, B. (2017). *Digital Storytelling and City Cultural Organizations: A Case Study Investigation of the "Love Your City, Share Your Stories" Digital Storytelling Initiative in Hamilton, Canada*. Working Paper #101, McMaster University, Available at: https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/21317.

- Detlor, B., Hupfer, M., & Smith, D.H. (2018). Digital Storytelling: An Opportunity for Libraries to Engage and Lead Their Communities. *Canadian Journal of Library and Information Science, 42*(1-2).

		• Nosrati, F. (2019). *The Use of Digital Storytelling for Impression Management by City Cultural Organizations,* PhD Dissertation, McMaster University. PDF of the thesis is available at http://hdl.handle.net/11375/24670 • Nosrati, F., & Detlor, B. (2021). The power of stories for impression management: Evidence from a city cultural digital storytelling initiative. *Information Technology & People*. Accepted July 5, 2021. First published online on July 28th @ https://www.emerald.com/insight/content/doi/10.1108/ITP-06-2020-0400/full/html.
11	Nov 21	**Analysing Qualitative Data – Part 2** <mark>**Students will participate in hands-on use of Dedoose software during class-time.**</mark>
12	Nov 28	**Analysing Qualitative Data – Part 3** <mark>**Students will participate in hands-on use of Dedoose software during class-time.**</mark> Guest Lecturer: Jodie Lobana, PhD Candidate will share her experience with grounded theory, using NVivo, and carrying out a qualitative dissertation.
13	Dec 5	**Final Lecture** <mark>**Student Term Papers Are Due Prior To the Start of Class**</mark> • Discussion on student term papers: re: the Lobana (2021) dissertation. • Discussion on Dr. Detlor's recent qualitative research projects on community-led digital literacy training Read: • Lobana, J. (2021). *The Governance of AI-based Information Technologies within Corporate Environments.* PhD dissertation. McMaster University. Review (i.e., skim): • Detlor, B., Julien, H., La Rose, T. & Serenko, A. (2020*). Local Community Digital Literacy Training: An Exploratory Investigation of Digital Literacy Training Programs Led by*

Public Libraries and Other Local Community Organizations. Working Paper #102, McMaster Digital Transformation Research Centre, McMaster University. Available @ https://macsphere.mcmaster.ca/handle/11375/25935.

- Detlor, B., Julien, H., La Rose, T., & Serenko, A. (2022). Community-led digital literacy training: Toward a conceptual model, *Journal of the Association of Information Science and Technology*, 1-14. Paper accepted March 1, 2022. Published online March 10, 2022. Available at http://doi.org/10.1002/asi.24639.

- Julien, H., Gerstle D., Detlor, B., La Rose, T., & Serenko, A. (2022). Digital literacy training for Canadians. Part II: Defining and measuring success, *Library Quarterly*, *92*(1), 87-100.

- Julien, H., Gerstle D., Detlor, B., La Rose, T., & Serenko, A. (2021). Digital literacy training for Canadians. Part I: It's just core public works, *Library Quarterly*, *91*(4), 437-456.

- Barrie, H., La Rose, T., Detlor, B., Julien, H., & Serenko, A. (2021). Because I'm old: The role of ageism in older adults' experiences of digital literacy training in public libraries, *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 39(4), 379-404.

- National Surveys – Ethics Protocol – Main Form.

- National Surveys – Ethics Protocol – Supporting Documents.