



040141 SE Qualitative Research Methods (MA) | 2025WS

Chair of International Business: <https://international-business.univie.ac.at/>

Information about the course:

Course Details

4.00 ECTS (2.00 SWS) | compulsory attendance | continuous assessment | course format: on site | SPL 4 - Wirtschaftswissenschaften | Language: English

Course# 040141 | Start: Tuesday, 14 January, 10:00

Course Instructor: Univ.-Prof. Dr. Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki
Contact: e.plakogiannaki@univie.ac.at

Office hours for students: by appointment only

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Student Assistant on the course: Finlay Lawerentz, Email: finlay.lawerentz@univie.ac.at

Objectives & Content

The aim of this course is to offer Master's students the opportunity to explore qualitative research and understand its academic potential and practical dimensions. This course is particularly useful for students pursuing a Master Thesis that employs qualitative methods. Emphasis will be placed on different qualitative methods including qualitative case study research, qualitative interviews and focus group research. It will also consider analysis of qualitative data drawing on examples of relevant academic research. The course seeks a balance between practice and theory, and between action and reflection.

This course is divided into eight main parts focusing on the following topics:

- (1) Introduction to qualitative research, its uniqueness and theorising potential;
- (2) Different types of qualitative research;
- (3) Qualitative case study;
- (4) Sampling in qualitative research;
- (5) Qualitative interviewing;
- (6) Focus Group research (if time permits);
- (7) Qualitative data analysis;
- (8) Criteriology in qualitative research.

By the end of the course Master's students are expected to:

1. Understand the role of qualitative research in academic research.

2. Define qualitative case study research; consider the theoretical objectives that case study research serves.
3. Understand that case study sampling involves multiple decisions: specify the units of analysis in case study research, select case study sampling strategies and sources of evidence.
4. Develop an understanding on how to collect data from conducting interviews and focus group research.
5. Understand the qualitative data analysis.
6. Understand different criteria for assessing the quality of qualitative research.
7. Develop the structure of the Methodology Chapter of a Master Thesis that employs qualitative methods.

Each part of the course is based on an analysis and discussion of examples as well as relevant pre-readings.

Course Policies

The course has “prüfungsimmanenten Charakter”. Attendance is compulsory throughout the semester. Absence from two course units is possible. A course unit is a 90-minute session. Further absences will automatically result in a “fail” grade. Attendance is compulsory during assessment (e.g. presentations etc.).

Both the course and the assessment are held in English. During the course active participation is required during all lessons.

Students wishing to take this course must register via u:find/u:space (with points) during the registration period. The maximum number of participants is 24.

Registered students who, for whatever reason, are not able to take the course must de-register electronically by the 14th January 2026, 23:59:00. Students who decide to drop the course after this deadline will be graded with 5 (failed).

It is absolutely essential that all registered students attend the first session on 14th January 2026 (Introduction). As failure to do so will result in their exclusion from the course.

Course Structure

Lectures take place from 10.00 am to 17.30 pm on the 14th, 15th, and 20th of January. Please see the course schedule below for the seminar rooms. The lunch break will be given approximately between 13:00 - 14:00. All further information can be found on Moodle.

Assessment

The evaluation is structured as follows:

- **Participation in class discussion (10% of the final grade)**
- **Group presentation (45%):** Present and discuss an empirical article that employs qualitative research. Explain how the selected empirical paper has influenced or will influence the methodological decisions in your Master thesis. Provide a thorough analysis of the methodological choices in the article. The presentation will take place during the last day of the course, namely

20/01/2026. Groups will be announced on the first day of the course. Please select an empirical qualitative article from top tier academic journals (e.g. Academy of Management Journal, Administrative Science Quarterly, Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of International Business Studies, Journal of Management Studies, Organization Studies, Strategic Management Journal.)

Please email your presentation to finlay.lawerentz@univie.ac.at by **19/01/2026, 08:30 am**.

- **Skeleton of the Methodology Chapter of your Master Thesis (45%):** The skeleton should include all sections of the methodology chapter of your Master thesis together with a paragraph discussion of what you intend to discuss in each section. Length 4 pages, excluding references. Deadline **30/01/2026, 12:00 pm** (noon), email to finlay.lawerentz@univie.ac.at.

A minimum of 50 percent of the points needs to be attained overall to pass the course. The grading system is as follows:

88% - 100% | 1

75% - 87% | 2

63% - 74% | 3

50% - 62% | 4

Dates & Content

Session	Date/Time	Room	Agenda	Reference Readings
(1)	14 January 2026 (10:00 – 17:30)	SR 5	Introduction to course What is qualitative research? Types of qualitative data? Qualitative case study research	Doz, 2011 Welch et al, 2011 Class examples: Coviello, 2006 Yousfi, 2014
(2)	15 January 2026 (10:00 – 17:30)	SR 1	Qualitative interviews Analysis of qualitative data Criteriology	Alvesson, 2003 Class examples: Stoian et al, 2018 Welch & Piekkari, 2017
(3)	20 January 2026 (10:00 – 17:30)	SR 6	<i>Class presentations</i> Analysis of qualitative data	Williams et al, 2023

Registration/De-Registration

<https://ufind.univie.ac.at/>

Literature

Qualitative research

- Chidlow, A., Plakoyiannaki, E., & Welch, C., 2014. "Translation in cross-language international business research: Beyond equivalence", *Journal of International Business Studies*, Vol. 45, No. 5, pp. 562-582.
- Doz, Y., 2011. Qualitative research for international business. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42(5), pp. 582–590.
- Plakoyiannaki, E. and Budhwar, P. 2021. "From convention to alternatives rethinking qualitative research in management scholarship", *British Journal of Management*, 32(1), pp. 3-6.
- Welch, C., Plakoyiannaki, E., Piekkari, R., and Paavilainen-Mäntymäki, E., 2013. "Legitimizing diverse uses for qualitative research: A rhetorical analysis of two management journals", *International Journal of Management Reviews*, Vol. 15, No. 2, p. 245-264.
- Welch, C., & Piekkari, R., 2017. "How should we (not) judge the 'quality' of qualitative research? A re-assessment of current evaluative criteria in International Business", *Journal of World Business*, 52(5), pp. 714–725.

Qualitative case study research

- Dyer, W.G. and Wilkins, A.L (1991): "Better stories, not better constructs, to generate better theory: A rejoinder to Eisenhardt", *Academy of Management Review*, 16 (3): pp. 613-619.
- Eisenhardt, K.M. (1989): "Building theories from case study research", *Academy of Management Review*, 14 (4): pp. 532-550.
- Fletcher, M. and Plakoyiannaki, E.: "Case study selection in international business: key issues and common misconceptions", forthcoming in *Piekkari, R. and C. Welch (eds), Case Study Research for International Business*, Edward Elgar.
- Fletcher, M., Zhao, Y., Plakoyiannaki, E., and Buck, T. (2018): "Three pathways to case selection in international business: A twenty-year review, analysis and synthesis", *International Business Review*, Vol. 27, No 4, pp. 755-766.
- Ji, J., Plakoyiannaki, E., Dimitratos P., and Chen, S. (2019): "The qualitative case study research in international entrepreneurship: A state of the art and analysis", *International Marketing Review*, 36(1), pp. 164-187.
- Leppäaho, T., Plakoyiannaki, E., and Dimitratos, P. (2016): "The case study in family business: An analysis of current research practices and recommendations", *Family Business Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2, pp. 159-173.
- Piekkari, R., Plakoyiannaki, E. & Welch, C. (2010): "Good' case research in industrial marketing: Insights from research practice", *Industrial Marketing Management*, 39: pp. 109-117.
- Plakoyiannaki, E., Wei, T., Prashantham, S. (2019): "Rethinking qualitative scholarship in emerging markets: Researching, theorizing, and reporting", *Management and Organization Review*, 15(2): pp. 217-234.
- Poulis K., Poulis, E., and Plakoyiannaki, E. (2013): "The role of context in case selection: an International Business perspective", *International Business Review*, 22 (1), 304-314.

- Stake, R.E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Welch, C. Piekkari, R., Plakoyiannaki E. and Paavilainen-Mantymäki, E. (2011): "Theorising from case studies: Towards a pluralist future for International Business research", *Journal of International Business Studies*, 42 (6), 740-762.
- Welch, C., Piekkari, R., Paavilainen-Mantymäki, E. and Plakoyiannaki, E. (2022): "Reconciling theory and context: How the case study can set a new agenda for IB Research", *Journal of International Business Studies*, 53(1), pp. 1-23.
- Yin, R. (2018): "Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods", Sage Publications: Thousand Oaks, USA.

Qualitative interviews

- Alvesson, M. (2003): "Beyond neopositivists, romantics and localists: A reflexive approach to interviews in organizational research", *Academy of Management Review*, 23(1): pp. 13-33.
- Boje, D. M. (2001): "*Narrative Methods for Organizational & Communication Research*". Sage Publications Ltd: London.
- Coviello, N. E. (2006): "The Network Dynamics of International New Ventures", *Journal of International Business Studies*, 37(5), 713–731.
- Huber, G. P. and Power, D. J. (1985): "Retrospective reports of strategic-level managers: guidelines for increasing their accuracy", *Strategic Management Journal*, 6: pp. 171–80.
- Kumar, N., Stern, N. and Anderson, J (1993): "Conducting interorganizational research using key informants", *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(6): pp. 1633-1651.
- Kvale, S. (1996). *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Interviewing*, Thousand Oaks, Sage.
- Stoian, M.C., Dimitratos, P., and Plakoyiannaki, E. (2018): "SME internationalization beyond exporting: A knowledge-based perspective across managers and advisers", *Journal of World Business*, 53(5): pp. 786-779.
- Welch, C., Marschan-Piekkari, R., Penttinen, H. and Tahvanainen, M. (2002): "Corporate elites as informants in qualitative international business research", *International Business Review*, 11(5): pp. 611-628.
- Williams, N., Plakoyiannaki, E., & Krasniqi, B. A. (2023): "When Forced Migrants Go Home: The Journey of Returnee Entrepreneurs in the Post-conflict Economies of Bosnia & Herzegovina and Kosovo", *Entrepreneurship Theory and Practice*, 47(2): pp. 430–460.
- Yousfi, H. (2014): "Rethinking Hybridity in Postcolonial Contexts: What Changes and What Persists? The Tunisian case of Poulina's managers", *Organization Studies*, 35(3): pp. 393 - 421.

Other Qualitative methods

Archival Data

- Welch, C. (2000): "The archaeology of business networks: The use of archival records in case study research", *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 8: pp. 197-208.

Focus groups

- Calder, B. (1977): "Focus groups and nature of qualitative marketing-research", *Journal of Marketing Research*, 14(3): pp. 353–364
- Kitzinger, J. (1995): "Qualitative Research: Introducing focus groups", *BMJ*, 311 (7000): pp. 299–302.
- Morgan, D. L. (1996): "Focus Groups", *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22(1): pp. 129–152.
- O'Connor, H., & Madge, C. (2003): "Focus groups in cyberspace": using the Internet for qualitative research", *Qualitative Market Research*, 6(2): pp. 133–143.
- Reed, J., & Payton, V. R. (1997): "Focus groups: issues of analysis and interpretation", *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 26(4): pp. 765–771.
- Stewart, D. W., Shamdasani, P. N., & Rook, D. W. (2007): "Conducting the focus group". In *Focus Groups*, 2nd ed., pp. 89-107. SAGE.

Observation

- Spradley, J. (2016): "*Participant Observation*", Waveland Pr Inc; Reissue edition.
- Kathleen M. DeWalt (2010): "*Participant Observation: A Guide for Fieldworkers*", AltaMira Press; Second Edition edition.

Qualitative Data Analysis

- Dubois, A. and Gadde, L-E. (2002): "Systematic Combining: An Abductive approach to case research", *Journal of Business Research*, 55, pp. 553-560.
- Gioia, D., Corley K. G. and Hamilton, A. (2013): "Seeking Qualitative Rigor in Inductive Research", *Organizational Research Methods*, 16 (1), pp. 15-31.
- Sinkovics, R.R., Elfriede, P. and Ghauri, P. (2005): "Analysing textual data in international marketing research", *Qualitative Research and International Journal*, 8 (1): pp. 9-38.
- Spiggle, S. (1994): "Analysis and interpretation of qualitative data in consumer research", *Journal of Consumer Research*, 2: pp. 491-503.