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American Public University System  
American Military University | American Public University

# PSYC601

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## Course Summary

**Course :** PSYC601 **Title :** Qualitative Methods in Social Science Research

**Length of Course :** 8 **Faculty :**

**Prerequisites :** N/A **Credit Hours :** 3

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## Description

### Course Description:

This course provides an overview of the cross-section of research methods that fall under the rubric of qualitative methodology. In examining these multiple approaches to qualitative methods, this course will discuss issues of research ethics, interviewing methods, conversation and discourse analyses, content analyses, and unobtrusive measures. The completion of this course will have applications in pure research, as well as in clinical assessments.

### Course Scope:

This course provides an overview of the cross-section of research methods that fall under the rubric of qualitative methodology. In examining these multiple approaches to qualitative methods, we will discuss research ethics, interviewing methods, conversation and discourse analyses, content analyses, and unobtrusive measures. The completion of this course will have applications in pure research as well as in clinical assessments.

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## Objectives

1. Students will be able to define the key characteristics of qualitative research methods.
  2. Students will be able to apply ethical frameworks to the achievement of qualitative research outcomes.
  3. Students will be able to apply semi-structured interview methodology to the collection of qualitative data.
  4. Students will be able to evaluate the effectiveness of different qualitative analytical frameworks given the type of research being conducted.
  5. Students will be able to analyze the key differences between major qualitative approaches.
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## Outline

### Week 1: Introduction to Qualitative Methods

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Learning Outcomes

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Students will be able to define the key characteristics of qualitative research methods.

Apply theoretical understandings of reliability and validity to qualitative methods.

#### Required Readings

Required resources for your course are provided in a course eReserve. Please click here (<https://apus.libguides.com/er.php>), enter your course number in the 'Search for course eReserves' box, click Go, and then select the course when it appears below the search box. Information included in LibAnswers (<https://apus.libanswers.com/>) provides download and print options for offline reading of Library ebooks.

#### Assignments

Week One Discussion

### **Week 2: Ethics in Qualitative Research**

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#### Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to apply ethical frameworks to the achievement of qualitative research outcomes.

Apply theoretical understandings of reliability and validity to qualitative methods.

#### Required Readings

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#### Assignments

Week Two Discussion

### **Week 3: Interviewing as Structured, Creative Conversation**

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#### Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to apply semi-structured interview methodology to the collection of qualitative data.

Students will be able to define the key characteristics of qualitative research methods.

#### Required Readings

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#### Assignments

Week Three Discussion

Week 3 Paper on Ethics in Qualitative Research

### **Week 4: Content and Media Analysis**

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## Learning Outcomes

Evaluate the effectiveness of different qualitative research approaches, given the type of research being conducted.

Apply theoretical understandings of reliability and validity to qualitative methods.

## Required Readings

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## Assignments

Week Four Discussion

## Week 5: Narrative and Conversation Analysis

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### Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to define the key characteristics of qualitative research methods.

Apply theoretical understandings of reliability and validity to qualitative methods.

### Required Readings

Required resources for your course are provided in a course eReserve. Please click here (<https://apus.libguides.com/er.php>), enter your course number in the 'Search for course eReserves' box, click Go, and then select the course when it appears below the search box. Information included in LibAnswers (<https://apus.libanswers.com/>) provides download and print options for offline reading of Library ebooks.

### Assignments

Week 5 Paper on Qualitative Content Analysis

## Week 6: Explorations in Analytical Frameworks

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### Learning Outcomes

Evaluate the effectiveness of different qualitative research approaches, given the type of research being conducted.

Analyze the key differences in research findings between respective qualitative approaches.

### Required Readings

Required resources for your course are provided in a course eReserve. Please click here (<https://apus.libguides.com/er.php>), enter your course number in the 'Search for course eReserves' box, click Go, and then select the course when it appears below the search box. Information included in LibAnswers (<https://apus.libanswers.com/>) provides download and print options for offline reading of Library ebooks.

### Assignments

Week Six Discussion

## Week 7: Understanding Ethnography and Field Research

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## Learning Outcomes

Analyze the key differences in research findings between respective qualitative approaches.

Apply the principles of qualitative research to field research.

## Required Readings

Required resources for your course are provided in a course eReserve. Please click here (<https://apus.libguides.com/er.php>), enter your course number in the 'Search for course eReserves' box, click Go, and then select the course when it appears below the search box. Information included in LibAnswers (<https://apus.libanswers.com/>) provides download and print options for offline reading of Library ebooks.

## Assignments

Week 7 Paper on Ethnographic Research

## **Week 8: Participant Observation**

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## Learning Outcomes

Evaluate the effectiveness of different qualitative research approaches, given the type of research being conducted.

Apply the principles of qualitative research to field research.

## Required Readings

Required resources for your course are provided in a course eReserve. Please click here (<https://apus.libguides.com/er.php>), enter your course number in the 'Search for course eReserves' box, click Go, and then select the course when it appears below the search box. Information included in LibAnswers (<https://apus.libanswers.com/>) provides download and print options for offline reading of Library ebooks.

## Assignments

Week Eight Discussion

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# Evaluation

## **Written Assignments\***

Paper One: Construct an 5-7 page paper that: a) details the ethical considerations in embarking upon a qualitative research project; b) proposes a qualitative project via two well-written research questions (RQ) and 2-3 semi-structured interview questions for each (RQ); and c) identifies the target populations, as well as any ethical challenges you might expect to encounter where completing such a project is concerned. Your paper should utilize sound critical thought, liberally refer to and cite course materials, and be written in APA-format (to include a title page, abstract, properly formatted in-text citations and a reference page). (This assignment is worth 100 pts; due at the end of Week 3. See additional guidance attached to the assignment link.)

Paper Two: Construct a 7-9 page paper that: a) situates the field of content analysis within the broader framework of qualitative methods; b) provides a detailed content analysis of a particular form of popular media; and c) recommends further research in the content analysis area based upon the findings of your analysis. Your paper should utilize sound critical thought, refer to course materials, and be written in APA-format (to include a title page, abstract, appropriate in-text citations and a reference page). (This assignment is worth 100 pts; due at the end of Week 5. See additional guidance attached to the assignment link.)

**Paper Three:** Construct a 9-11-page paper that: a) demonstrates proficiency in setting up an ethnographic research project; b) describes a strategic site for ethnographic research; and c) conducts ethnographic research and presents some preliminary findings. Your paper should utilize sound critical thought, refer to course materials and lessons, and be written in APA-format (to include a title page, abstract, appropriate in-text citations and a reference page). (This assignment is worth 100 pts; due at the end of Week 7. See additional guidance attached to the assignment link.)

\*The written assignments will contribute 68% to the course grade.

## Weekly Discussions

One discussion each week **except for Weeks 5 and 7**. Weighted at 32% of the course grade – 5.33% per discussion.

## Grading Scale

Assignment	Grade Percentage
Discussion Topics	32% of Total Grade
Written Assignments	68% of Total Grade

## Grading:

Name	Grade %
Discussions	32.00 %
Week 1: Introductions and Introduction to Qualitative Methods	5.33 %
Week 2: Ethics in Qualitative Research	5.33 %
Week 3: Interviewing as Structured Creative Conversation	5.33 %
Week 4: Content and Media Analysis	5.33 %
Week 6: Explorations in Analytical Frameworks	5.33 %
Week 8: Participant Observation and Course Reflection	5.33 %
Assignments	68.00 %
Week Three: Ethics in Qualitative Research	22.67 %
Week Five: Content Analysis	22.67 %
Week Seven: Ethnographic Research	22.67 %

## Materials

**Book Title:** Various resources from the APUS Library & the Open Web are used. Links provided inside the classroom.

**Author:** No Author Specified

**Publication Info:**

**ISBN:** N/A

**Book Title:** The Handbook of Narrative Analysis -eBook available through the APUS Online Library

**Author:** De Fina and Alexandra Georgakopoulou

**Publication Info: Wiley Lib**

**ISBN:** 9781118458150

**Book Title:** Participant Observation : A Guide for Fieldworkers - eBook available through the APUS Online Library

**Author:** DeWalt and DeWalt

**Publication Info:** AltaMira Press Lib

**ISBN:** 9780759119260

**Book Title:** Qualitative inquiry in everyday life (Ebook available through the APUS Online Library)

**Author:** Brinkmann, Svend

**Publication Info:** Sage Lib

**ISBN:** 9780857024763

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**Book Title:** Various resources from the APUS Library & the Open Web are used. Links provided inside the classroom in the Lessons section.

**Author:** No Author Specified

**Publication Info:**

**ISBN:** N/A

Required Readings in the course are taken from a variety Open Educational Resources (OER). See the course outline section of the syllabus for a complete listing.

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## Course Guidelines

### Citation and Reference Style

- Students will follow APA format as the sole citation and reference style used in written assignments submitted as part of coursework in the Psychology Department.
- Please note that no formal citation style is graded on forum assignments in the School of Arts & Humanities—only attribution of sources (please see details regarding forum communication below).

### Tutoring

[Tutor.com](#) offers online homework help and learning resources by connecting students to certified tutors for one-on-one help. AMU and APU students are eligible for 10 free hours of tutoring provided by APUS. Tutors are available 24/7 unless otherwise noted. Tutor.com also has a SkillCenter Resource Library offering educational resources, worksheets, videos, websites and career help. Accessing these resources does not count against tutoring hours and is also available 24/7. Please visit the APUS Library and search for 'Tutor' to create an account.

### Late Assignments – APUS Late Policy

Students are expected to submit assignments by the due dates listed in the classroom. Late assignments, including but not limited to Assignments, Discussions, posts and responses, quizzes, and exams, may or may not be accepted after the course end date. Submitting an assignment after the due date may result in a penalty of up to 10% of the grade per day late, not to exceed a maximum 50% of the grade. The amount of the penalty is at the faculty member's discretion. Faculty recognize that students have limited time and may be more flexible if potential delays are communicated ahead of time.\*

\*Doctoral and Programs with specialty accreditation may have different late policies.

\*\*Students with DSA accommodations may have different late policies applied. For more information

## Turn It In

Assignments are automatically submitted to Turnitin.com within the course. Turnitin.com will analyze an assignment submission and report a similarity score. Your assignment submission is automatically processed through the assignments area of the course when you submit your work.

## Academic Dishonesty

Academic Dishonesty incorporates more than plagiarism, which is using the work of others without citation. Academic dishonesty includes any use of content purchased or retrieved from web services such as CourseHero.com or Scribd. Additionally, allowing your work to be placed on such web services is academic dishonesty, as it is enabling the dishonesty of others. The copy and pasting of content from any web page, without citation as a direct quote, is academic dishonesty. When in doubt, do not copy/paste, and always cite.

## Submission Guidelines

Some assignments may have very specific requirements for formatting (such as font, margins, etc.) and submission file type (such as .docx, .pdf, etc.). See the assignment instructions for details. In general, standard file types such as those associated with Microsoft Office are preferred, unless otherwise specified.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure the all submitted work can be accessed and opened by the instructor.

## Disclaimer Statement

Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of a particular group or class.

## Communicating on the Forum

- Forums are the heart of the interaction in this course. The more engaged and lively the exchanges, the more interesting and fun the course will be. Only substantive comments will receive credit. Although there is a final posting day/time after which the instructor will grade and provide feedback, you are strongly discouraged from waiting until the due date to contribute your comments/questions on the forum. The purpose of the forums is to actively participate in an on-going discussion about the assigned content.
- "Substantive" means comments that contribute something new and important to the discussion. Thus a message that simply says "I agree", even if wordy and thus, meets the length requirement, is not substantive. A substantive comment contributes a new idea or perspective, a good follow-up question to a point made, offers a response to a question, provides an example or illustration of a key point, points out an inconsistency in an argument, etc.
- As a class, if we run into conflicting view points, we must respect each other as colleagues. Hateful, aggressive, or hurtful comments towards other individuals, students, groups, peoples, and/or societies will not be tolerated.
- Students must post a response to the weekly forums prompt and post the required number of replies to other students – refer to the grading rubric and/or forum instructions for specific expectations on number of replies and word count requirements.

## Quizzes and Exams

Quizzes and exams may consist of true/false, multiple choice, and short essay questions. Each quiz/exam is accessible only once. Once a quiz/exam is accessed, you will not be able to access it again if you disconnect. Therefore, allocate time to complete your assessments.

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# Communications

## Student Communication

To reach the instructor, please communicate through the MyClassroom email function accessible from the Classlist of the Course Tools menu, where the instructor and students email addresses are listed, or via the Office 365 tool on the Course homepage.

- In emails to instructors, it's important to note the specific course in which you are enrolled. The name of the course is at the top center of all pages.
- Students and instructors communicate in Discussion posts and other learning activities.
- All interactions should follow APUS guidelines, as noted in the [Student Handbook](#), and maintain a professional, courteous tone.
- Students should review writing for spelling and grammar.
- [Tips on Using the Office 365 Email Tool](#)

## Instructor Communication

The instructor will post announcements on communications preferences involving email and Instant Messaging and any changes in the class schedule or activities.

- Instructors will periodically post information on the expectations of students and will provide feedback on assignments, Discussion posts, quizzes, and exams.
- Instructors will respond to student communications within 48 hours, except in unusual circumstances (e.g., illness).
- The APUS standard for grading of all assessments (assignments, Discussions, quizzes, exams) is five days or fewer from the due date.
- Final course grades are submitted by faculty no later than seven days after the end date of the course or the end of the extension period.

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## University Policies

Consult the [Student Handbook](#) for processes and policies at APUS. Notable policies:

- [Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)
- [Extension Requests](#)
- [Academic Probation](#)
- [Appeals](#)
- [Academic Dishonesty / Plagiarism](#)
- [Disability Accommodations](#)
- [Student Deadlines](#)
- [Video Conference Policy](#)

## Mission

The [mission of American Public University System](#) is to provide high quality higher education with emphasis on educating the nation's military and public service communities by offering respected, relevant, accessible, affordable, and student-focused online programs that prepare students for service and leadership in a diverse, global society.

## Minimum Technology Requirements

- Please consult the catalog for the minimum hardware and software required for [undergraduate](#) and [graduate](#) courses.
- Although students are encouraged to use the [Pulse mobile app](#) with any course, please note that not all course work can be completed via a mobile device.

## Disclaimers

- Please note that course content – and, thus, the syllabus – may change between when a student registers for a course and when the course starts.
- Course content may vary from the syllabus' schedule to meet the needs of a particular group.