

Welcome to Qualitative Data Analysis and Theorization!

Very brief description

This course focuses on the craft of analyzing qualitative data. The aim is to assist the students in their hands-on analytical work. This is done in two steps. First we read and discuss literature on theory, theorization and qualitative data analysis at literature seminars. Then the students use this knowledge to analyze a piece of their own data, which is presented and discussed in-depth at analytic seminars. The format of the course is small and intimate (max 8 students) and substantial time is dedicated for each student's project.

Rationale of the course

The course focuses on theorization and qualitative data analysis and is thereby a complement to courses on theory. Learning theory is different from learning theorization. The former focuses on learning what others have said, while the latter focuses on learning how to make theory yourself. In an academic context, we need theory to theorize, but only learning what others have said does not necessarily teach a student how to theorize. Against this background, the aim of this course is to improve the students' analytical and theorization skills. In addition, since learning theorization implies learning how to think independently in light of other theorists, a secondary aim of the course is to assist the students in their process of becoming independent analysts.

Course design

The teaching consists of an introductory lecture, two literature seminars and two analytic seminars (as noted in the brief description above). The aim of the *lecture* is to introduce the idea of the course, to communicate the pre-understandings of the students, and to prepare the students for the seminars.

At the *literature seminars*, we discuss all the course literature, aiming to introduce the students theoretically to the practical analytical process. We read texts on what theory is, what theorization is, and how data analysis may be conducted. There are two seminars, one on the books and one on the articles. This means that we read all the course literature in the beginning of the course (please prepare for this!), and then focus on using it as support for crafting analyses.

The analyses are crafted individually by the students and presented at the *analytic seminars*, which make up the core of the course. There are two analytic seminars, which means that we discuss each student's data twice. At the first seminar, the students will present a draft (1500-2000 words) with empirical material from their

thesis projects and describe, in writing and orally, how they have analyzed the data, and how they intend to use it to argue for a theoretical point. Based on this presentation, the students get feedback from the other students and the teacher. This feedback is then used to improve the text, which will eventually be the course paper.

At the second analytic seminar the student's text - which should now have developed to a draft for a full course paper (3500-4500 words) - is discussed again. The student will present her/his revised and extended paper and receive feedback from the other students and the teacher. Broadly, the paper should resemble a "real" paper, albeit in an abbreviated format:

- A brief introduction with some references to relevant literature on the student's topic.
- A method section, with emphasis on accounting for the data analysis (less on data collection), including references to the course literature.
- An empirical section presenting the findings in a crafted format (i.e. not just raw data or tables but presented as an argument for the main points)
- A very brief discussion of how the findings relate to the relevant literature.

At both analytic seminars, the feedback from the other students and the teacher should focus on how well and convincingly the student has analyzed his/her data, aiming to assist the student to produce a basis for a paper or a chapter in her/his thesis.

Assessment

The revised paper from the analytic seminars is also the course paper. The final course paper shall comprise 3500-4500 words (reference list excluded) and contain the elements pointed out above. The students' examination task is thus to analyze, which includes theorize, a piece of their own data, and account for how they did it. The analysis should make knowledgeable use of the course literature, as well as other relevant sources.

All the best,

Jens Rennstam