

Seminar 1 - Introducing Qualitative Research

Purpose of the Week

This week will introduce the **concept of qualitative research** and begin to prepare you for the first Assignment. You will also begin to think about a topic, or subject area, for your final research project (Assignment 2).

We will look at the history of qualitative research and discuss the three stages of undertaking qualitative research: designing, data collecting and then analysing and writing up. We will also begin to consider the impact of the position of the researcher and look at the idea of 'belief'. We will also look at observation as a qualitative method.

Tasks for this week

- Listen to the pre-recorded lecture: Introduction to Qualitative Research by Dr Jack Hunter.
- Engage in the required reading and begin to form ideas for your research project.

Reading

You are not expected to read all the reading which is posted for this week. Rather, it is intended to provide a basic library for you so that you can write the 2,500-word essay on two of the provided papers, focused on their approach to qualitative research, and develop a framework for thinking about your research project. You will also find, if you read everything, that it becomes somewhat repetitive. However, the advantage of multiple readings is that you will be exposed to different points of view and have a wider range of citations in the essays.

Required Reading:

Bryman, Alan, *Quantity and Quality in Social Research* (London: Routledge, 2001), chap 5. Note: Bryman is available as an E-Book from the University. See the notes at the top of this module on how to access E-Books.

Hennink, M. M., Hutter, I. & Bailey, A. (2011 or 2nd edition 2020). *Qualitative research methods* (Los Angeles; London, SAGE). Chapters 1 and 2.

Chapter 8 – Reasons for Belief: Campion, N. (2004). *Prophecy, Cosmology and the New Age Movement. The Extent and Nature of Contemporary Belief in Astrology*. PhD, Bath Spa University College. This is available in the MA CAA Online Library.

Optional Reading

Gorard, Stephen, *Quantitative Methods in Social Science* (London: Continuum, 2003). Chapter 5 – this is on Google Books and pp. 90- 115 are focused on designing a questionnaire.

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=HSGaUE8alaQC&pg=PA90&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false

Creswell, C., *Research Design* (London: Sage, 1998). Chapter 7 (available as a PDF on Moodle).

Silverman, David, *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook* (London: Sage Publications, 2002). Chapter 1 ('What is Qualitative Research').

This full chapter is available on Google books:

http://books.google.co.uk/books?id=uooz4p82sDgC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

The following book is a useful companion to the course, particularly for students of the MA in Cultural Astronomy and Astrology. It details the author's qualitative research into beliefs amongst inhabitants of Rio de Janeiro involved with the practice of astrology:

Vilhena, Luis Rodolfo, *The World of Astrology: An Ethnography of Astrology in Contemporary Brazil*, translated by Graham Douglas (Sophia Centre Press, 2014).