

Discipline: übergreifend

1. Language

English

2. Title

Qualitative Research Methods

3. Lecturer / Referent

Jana Costas is Professor of Business Administration, in particular People, Work and Management at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder). She holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge, and has been awarded a EU Marie Curie Fellowship. The fellowship she conducted at the Copenhagen Business School. Jana has also been Assistant Professor (Juniorprofessorin) for Qualitative Methods in Management Research at Freie Universität Berlin. Her research interests lie in the area of organization studies, in particular secrecy, creativity, control, identity, culture, leadership, violence, and new work and organizational arrangements. She has published in and reviews for various journals, such as *Organization Studies*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Human Relations*. Jana is Associate Editor of *Organization* and acts on the Editorial Board of *Organization Theory*. She is the author of the monographs "Secrecy at Work: The Hidden Architecture of Organizational Life" (with Chris Grey), Stanford University Press, "Dramas of Dignity – Cleaners in the Corporate Underworld of Berlin", Cambridge University Press (EGOS Book Award 2023, Distinguished Award for Responsible Research in Management 2024) and "Im Minus-Bereich – Reinigungskräfte und ihr Kampf um Würde", Suhrkamp (Kurt Rothschild Preis für Wirtschaftspublizistik).

Markus Reihlen is Professor of Strategic Management and Entrepreneurship at Leuphana University of Lüneburg. He received his doctorate and post-doctorate qualification degree at the University of Cologne. Before joining Leuphana University of Lüneburg, he held various visiting professor and guest researcher positions, including the University of St. Gallen, the University of Mannheim, the University of Technology Aachen, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, the University of Oxford, the Copenhagen Business School, and McGill University. He has received awards in research and teaching, including eight Best Paper Awards from the Academy of Management, the Strategic Management Society, the Academy of Marketing, and the Gold Star Teaching Award from the University of Wisconsin. Markus Reihlen is the author and co-editor of ten books and over 80 articles and book chapters. Together with Cristina Neesham and Dennis Schoeneborn, he edited the *Handbook on the Philosophy of Management* (over 1,000 p.). His academic work has appeared in such journals as *Accounting, Organization and Society*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organizational Research Methods*, and *Industrial Marketing Management*. He serves on the editorial board of the *Journal of Management Studies*, the *Journal of Professions and Organization*, *Schmalenbach Journal of Business Research*, and regularly reviews for a number of international journals.

4. Date and Location

10.-13.03.2026

Victor's Residenz-Hotel Berlin Mitte
Am Friedrichshain 17
10407 Berlin

5. Course Description

5.1 Abstract and Learning Objectives

This course is designed for doctorate students in business administration who want to use qualitative methods in their research. The basic goal of this course is to provide participants with the methodological foundations and advanced knowledge in qualitative research in business. After attending the course, participants should be able to

- understand the philosophical and methodological foundations of qualitative research and to classify, differentiate and choose different qualitative research methods;
- assess goals and purposes, as well as strengths and weaknesses of qualitative research;
- understand and raise key questions for planning and preparing a qualitative research design, data collection and analysis;
- identify, analyze and manage core issues during the planning, execution, analysis and writing of qualitative studies;
- to differentiate rigorous from non-rigorous qualitative management research.

5.2 Content

Qualitative research is a research strategy that emphasizes large bodies of unstructured data (textual, graphical, audio, and video data) that cannot be meaningfully analyzed by formal, statistical approaches. Since each particular research method is informed by different philosophical traditions, this course will first introduce different perspectives on the business research process like positivism, interpretivism, and realism. Students will then learn how to set up a qualitative research project with particular emphasis on the case study approach. The course will provide insights on different qualitative data collection and data analysis methods. An emphasis will be placed on interviews as well as the coding of qualitative data, also with the help of software programs. Different evaluation criteria for how to assess qualitative research will be discussed.

5.3 Schedule (including start and end time)

I. Day 1	M. Reihlen
1. Getting Started: Crafting Good Research Questions	10.03.2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Good research questions ▪ Gap-spotting ▪ Problematization 	9.00 – 10.30
– coffee break –	10.30 – 11.00
2. Philosophical Foundations of Qualitative Research I	11.00 – 12.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The philosophy research link ▪ The Fact-appearance-fiction triad ▪ Ontological perspectives and research design 	
– lunch break –	12.30 – 13.30
3. Philosophical Foundations of Qualitative Research II	13.30 – 15.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Positivism and qualitative research ▪ Realism and qualitative research ▪ Interpretivism and qualitative research 	
– coffee break –	15.00 -15.30
4. Qualitative Research: Design and Approaches	15.30 – 17.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Components of a qualitative research design ▪ Qualitative research approaches ▪ Approaches to theory building 	

II. Day 2	M. Reihlen
5. Design and Method of Case Study Research	11.03.2026
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Case study research design ▪ Process of case research ▪ Generalization from cases 	9.00 – 10.30
– coffee break –	10.30-11.00
6. Grounded Theory	11.00 – 12.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Fundamental tenets of Grounded Theory ▪ Evaluating the quality of GT studies ▪ Different versions of grounded theory 	
– lunch break –	12.30-13.30
7. Research Synthesis: From Literature Reviews to Qualitative Meta-Analysis	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ From systematic to problematizing reviews ▪ Foundations of qualitative meta-analysis ▪ Explorative and confirmative qualitative meta-studies 	13.30-15.00
– coffee break –	15.00-15.30
8. Workshop: Learning from Best-Practice Examples	15.30 – 17.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group 1: Phenomenon-driven case research ▪ Group 2: Theory-driven case research ▪ Group 3: Discourse oriented research ▪ Group 4: Qualitative meta-studies 	

III. Day 3 Qualitative Data Collection Methods	J. Costas
	12.03.2026
Welcome and short overview of PhD projects	9.00 – 10.30
Qualitative Research Designs and Data Collection	
Range of Qualitative Data Collection Methods	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethnography/ participants observation ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews 	
– coffee break –	10.30 – 11.00
Range of Qualitative Data Collection Methods (continued)	11.00 – 12.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethnography/ participants observation ▪ Document analysis ▪ Interviews 	
- lunch break –	12.30 – 13.30
In-depth Session on Interviews	13.30 – 15.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different approaches ▪ Creating an interview guide ▪ Conducting interviews 	
– coffee break –	15.00 – 15.30
Practical Applications	15.30 – 17.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating an interview guide ▪ Performing a role play 	
Discussing articles with respect to their qualitative data collection methods	

IV. Day 4 Qualitative Data Analysis	J. Costas
	13.03.2026
Overview of the data analysis process	9.00 – 10.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Procedures for transcription ▪ Data quality, data reduction, focus ▪ Different approaches to data analysis ▪ Illustrating qualitative data 	
– coffee break –	10.30 -11.00
Data Analysis with the Help of Qualitative Data Analysis Software	11.00 – 12.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coding of data ▪ Advantages and disadvantages of von CAQDAS ▪ Short introduction to Atlas.ti 	
– lunch break –	12.30-13.30
Group exercise	13.30 – 15.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Coding qualitative data to develop a systematic coding scheme 	
– coffee break –	15.00-15.30
Group exercise (continued)	15.30- 17.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation and discussion of created coding schemes 	
Discussing and reviewing articles with respect to their data analysis approaches	
Evaluation criteria of qualitative research	

5.4 Course format

The course is designed as a doctorate workshop. Throughout the course, initiative, creativity, and critical thinking on part of the students will be appreciated and encouraged. Please have read the essential readings before coming to class!

6. Preparation and Literature

6.1 Essential Reading Material / Pflichtlektüre

Essential Readings (Day I)

1. Getting Started: Crafting Good Research Questions

! Watch introductory video "[How to develop a good research question](#)"

Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2011). Generating research questions through problematization. *Academy of Management Review*, 36(2), 247-271.

2. Philosophical Foundations of Qualitative Research I

Neesham, C. (2017). Philosophical foundations of qualitative organizational research, in: Mir, R.; Jain, S. (Eds.) *The Routledge companion to qualitative research in organization studies*, Routledge: New York: 21-39.

Reihlen, M. (2025). The Individualism-Holism Debate, the Systemic Turn and its Dissenters. Manuscript for the 2nd edition of the *Handbook of Philosophy of Management* edited by Cristina Neesham, Markus Reihlen, and Dennis Schoeneborn.

3. Philosophical Foundations of Qualitative Research II

Blagoev, B., Costas, J. (2022) Interpretive Inquiry: Constructivist Foundations and Epistemological Consequences, in: M. Reihlen & D. Schoenborn (Eds.), *The Springer Handbook of the philosophy of management; section: epistemology of management*, 79-97.

Crotty, M. (1998): The foundations of social research. Meaning and perspective in the research process, Sage: London, chap. 1.

Cunliffe, A. L. (2011). Crafting qualitative research: Morgan and Smircich 30 years on. *Organizational Research Methods*, 14(4), 647-673.

Reihlen, M., Habersang, S., Nikolova, N. (2022) Realist Inquiry, in: M. Reihlen & D. Schoenborn (Eds.), *The Springer Handbook of the philosophy of management; section: epistemology of management*, 55-77.

4. Qualitative Research: Design and Approaches

! Watch introductory video "[Theorizing from qualitative data](#)"

Locke, K. and Golden-Biddle, K. (2004): An introduction to qualitative research: its potential for industrial and organizational psychology, in: *Handbook of research methods in industrial and organizational psychology*, edited by S. G. Rogelberg, S. G., Blackwell: Oxford: 99-118.

Maxwell, Joseph A. (2008) Designing a Qualitative Study, in: *The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods*, 2, edited by Leonard Bickman and Debra J. Rog, Sage: Los Angeles, 214-253.

Examples for different forms of theorizing:

Causal Models: Whetten, D. A. (2009). Modeling theoretic propositions., in: Huff, A., Designing research for publication. Los Angeles, CA: Sage, 217-250.

Configurations: Meyer, A. D., Tsui, A. S., & Hinings, C. R. 1993. Configurational approaches to organizational analysis. *Academy of Management Journal*, 36(6): 1175-1195.

Process Theories: Langley, A. N. N., Smallman, C., Tsoukas, H., & Van de Ven, A. H. (2013). Process studies of change in organization and management: unveiling temporality, activity, and flow. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1), 1-13.

Paradoxes and Dialectical Theories: Farjoun, M. (2017). Contradictions, dialectics, and paradoxes, in: Tsoukas, H.; Langley, A. (Eds.) *The Sage handbook of process organization studies*, Sage: Thousand Oaks, 87-109.

Essential Readings (Day II)

5. Design and Method of Case Study Research

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989), Building theories from case study research, *Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 14, No. 4, S. 532–550.

Yin, K.R. (2003): Case study research: Design and Methods – Third Edition, Thousand Oaks, pp. 1-56.

Example: Reihlen, M., Schlapfner, J. F., Seeger, M., & Trittin-Ulbrich, H. (2022). Strategic venturing as legitimacy creation: The case of sustainability. *Journal of Management Studies*, 59(2), 417-459.

6. Grounded Theory

Corbin, J. M., & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Zeitschrift für Soziologie*, 19(6), 418-427.

Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15-31.

Suddaby, R. (2006) What grounded theory is not. *Academy of Management Journal*, 49(4), 633-642.

7. Research Synthesis: From Literature Reviews to Qualitative Meta-Analysis

Alvesson, M., & Sandberg, J. (2020). The problematizing review: A counterpoint to Elsbach and Van Knippenberg's argument for integrative reviews. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57(6), 1290-1304.

Elsbach, K. D., & van Knippenberg, D. (2020). Creating high-impact literature reviews: An argument for 'integrative reviews'. *Journal of Management Studies*, 57(6), 1277-1289.

Tranfield, D., Denyer, D., & Smart, P. (2003). Towards a methodology for developing evidence-informed management knowledge by means of systematic review. *British Journal of Management*, 14(3), 207-222.

Habersang, Stefanie; Reihlen, Markus (2025) Advancing Qualitative Meta-Studies (QMS): Current Practices and Reflective Guidelines for Synthesizing Qualitative Research, *Organizational Research Methods*, 28(2), 210-244.

- *Example of an exploratory QMS:* Habersang, S., Küberling-Jost, J., Reihlen, M., & Seckler, C. (2019). A process perspective on organizational failure: A qualitative meta-analysis. *Journal of Management Studies*, 56(1), 19-56.
- *Example of a confirmatory QMS:* Berente, N., Lyytinen, K., Yoo, Y., & Maurer, C. (2019). Institutional logics and pluralistic responses to enterprise system implementation: a qualitative meta-analysis. *MIS Quarterly*, 43(3), 873–890.

8. Workshop: Learning from Best-Practice Examples

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). Qualitative research design: An interactive approach. Sage publications, chap. 7
-> chap. 7 offers good examples of how to structure a research proposal

Bansal, P. and Corley, K. (2011). From the editors: The coming of age for qualitative research, *Academy of Management Journal*, 2011, 54(2), 233-237

Ragins, B. R. (2012). Reflections on the craft of clear writing. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(4), 493-501.

Group 1: Phenomena-driven research

- Zuzul, T., & Edmondson, A. C. (2017). The advocacy trap: When legitimacy building inhibits organizational learning. *Academy of Management Discoveries*, 3(3), 302-321.

Group 2: Theory-driven research

- Smets, M., Morris, T. I. M., & Greenwood, R. (2012). From practice to field: A multilevel model of practice-driven institutional change. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(4), 877-90

Group 3: Discourse-oriented research

- Maguire, S., & Hardy, C. (2013). Organizing processes and the construction of risk: A discursive approach. *Academy of Management Journal*, 56(1), 231-255.

Group 4: Ethnographic research

- Michel, A. (2011). Transcending socialization: A nine-year ethnography of the body's role in organizational control and knowledge workers' transformation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 56(3), 325-368.

Essential Reading (Day III)

Costas, J. (2022). *Dramas of Dignity: Cleaners in the Corporate Underworld of Berlin*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, ch. 5

Dumont, G. (2022). Immersion in Organizational Ethnography: Four Methodological Requirements to Immerse Oneself in the Field. *Organizational Research Methods*, 26(3), 441-458. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10944281221075365>

Hafermalz, E. (2020). Out of the Panopticon and into Exile: Visibility and control in distributed new culture organizations. *Organization Studies*, 42(5), 697-717. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0170840620909962>

Jiménez, T. R., & Orozco, M. (2023). Correction to: Prompts, Not Questions: Four Techniques for Crafting Better Interview Protocols. *Qualitative Sociology*, 46, 457. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11133-023-09543-9>

Essential Reading (Day IV)

Alvesson, M. & Kärreman, D. (2007). Constructing mystery: Empirical matters in theory development. *Academy of Management Review*, 32(4), 1265-1281.

Dacin, M. T., Munir, K. & Tracey, P. (2010). Formal Dining at Cambridge Colleges: Linking Ritual Performance and Institutional Maintenance. *Academy of Management Journal*, 53(6), 1393–1418.

Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2013). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 16(1), 15-31.

Mees-Buss, J., Welch, C., & Piekkari, R. (2022). From Templates to Heuristics: How and Why to Move Beyond the Gioia Methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, 25(2), 405–429.

7. Administration

7.1 Max. number of participants

The number of participants is limited to 20.

7.2 Assignments

Approximately two weeks before the start of the workshop, we will assign students to groups via e-mail and allocate specific preparation tasks to the groups (for day I & II).

7.3 Exam

This course is designed as a seminar, which requires preparation by students before each session and dynamic interaction in the classroom. Students are encouraged to debate their particular views, methodological problems, and research issues in class. In order to get a VHB-ProDok certificate, you have to hand in an essay of approx. six pages by e-mail to Prof. Reihlen & Costas two weeks after the course finished. Drawing on existing literature on qualitative research, the essay shall focus on the following:

- Please develop a qualitative research design based on a research topic of your choice (preferably from your own research field)
- Discuss your philosophy of science approach as well as the different elements of your research design
- Outline evaluation criteria for qualitative research and discuss to what extent your research design fulfills them

7.4 Credits

The course corresponds to a scope of 6 LP/ECTS

8. Arbeitszeitaufwand / Working Hours

Working Hours	Stunden
<i>Preparations</i>	60 h
<i>Active participation</i>	30 h
<i>Preparation for exam</i>	50 h
<i>Exam</i>	40 h
SUMME	180 h