## Syllabus: Qualitative Research Studies II– Advanced course (15 hours)

**Course Instructor:**
Dr. Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki, emplak@econ.auth.gr

**Course Description:**
This course builds upon previous research courses, namely Qualitative Research Studies I and Research Methods in Management and Economics. It uses the framework of case study research to provide an in-depth understanding of the issues that qualitative researchers encounter when conducting fieldwork. It seeks a balance between practice and theory, and between action and reflection. In the context of case study research, issues of ontology, epistemology and methodology will be discussed and explained. This course is divided into five main parts focusing on the following topics: (1) the theoretical objectives and motivation of case study research, (2) the sampling processes employed throughout the case study design; (3) the collection of primary and secondary data on the field; and (4) the analysis and synthesis of qualitative data in the writing process; (5) the role of the research in fieldwork.

**Course Objectives:**
By the end of the course doctoral candidates are expected to have an understanding on the following elements:

1. Identify and explain the range of problems addressed by qualitative case study research. What is a case study? What are the different ways it is conceptualized? What are the theoretical objectives that case study research serves? What is the motivation/rationale for embarking on case study project?
2. 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.
3. Develop an understanding on how to collect data from different (conventional and innovative) sources of evidence: conducting interviews, researching the visual, identifying and analysing archival records.
4. Employ different approach to the analysis of qualitative data e.g. content analysis, narrative analysis
5. Understand the notion of contingent criteriology for evaluating case study evidence
6. Examine ethical dilemmas and issues related to the case study research process.
7. Reflect on your own presuppositions of and subjectivities on the case study research processes.
8. Manage fieldwork as a relationship process; reaching closure.

**Topical Outline of the Course:**
Case Studies and different ontological orientations: positivism, critical realism and interpretivism; Case study sampling as a multilevel process: key issues and
misconceptions; Conductive interviews under different ontological orientations; The reflexive interview; Researching visual data; Analysis of qualitative data; Enhancing trustworthiness of case study evidence: contingent criteriology; Dealing with ethics and managing fieldwork.

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<th>Seminars</th>
<th>Key Topics</th>
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| Seminar 1: Case Study Research and its Theoretical Objective | • The case study methodology as a “pluralistic” research methodology.  
• Case study research and different methodological orientations: positivism, critical realism and interpretivism.  
• The theoretical objectives of case study research; the role of theory in case study research; theory building vs. theory testing.  
• Motivation for conducting case study research: characteristics of the research phenomenon and its context |
| Seminar 2: Case Study Sampling                | • Case study sampling: a multilevel process.  
• What to select: Differentiating between the empirical unit and the unit of analysis.  
• How to select: Purposeful sampling and its variations.  
• When to select: temporal and emerging dimensions of case study research.  
• How many cases to select: single vs. multiple case study design; dual track case study design. |
| Seminar 3: Understanding Sources of Evidence  | • Dealing with “conventional” and “innovative” sources of evidence.  
• Types of data associated with sources of evidence.  
• Conducting interviews under different ontological orientations; theorising the interview; the reflexive interview.  
• Researching the visual: two-dimensional, three-dimensional, lived and living visual data.  
• Organising archival research: discovery, access, assessment, sifting and cross-checking of archival records. |
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<th>Seminar 4: Analysing qualitative data</th>
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<td>• Emic and etic approaches to reporting qualitative data.</td>
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<td>• Activities of inference from qualitative data: Analysis and interpretation.</td>
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<td>• Analysis of qualitative data: categorisation; abstraction; comparison; dimensionalisation; integration; iteration; refutation.</td>
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<td>• Interpretation of qualitative data: understand and represent meanings by studying (1) the meanings that others attach to their experiences, and (2) how those meanings cohere and form patterns.</td>
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<td>• Development of narrative accounts from qualitative data: identifying ways in which people make and use stories to interpret the world.</td>
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<td>• Developing “better stories and constructs” from qualitative data.</td>
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<td>• Theorising from qualitative case study: use qualitative case study data to confront theory.</td>
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<th>Seminar 5</th>
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<td>• Contingent criteriology: employing quality criteria under different ontological orientations.</td>
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<td>• Managing fieldwork: a relational approach: negotiating access; conducting fieldwork; exiting the field and reaching closure; re-entering the field.</td>
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<td>• Preparing case study reports.</td>
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<td>• Ethical issues in qualitative research.</td>
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<td>• Reflexivity and qualitative research.</td>
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**Analysis of Course Schedule: Suggested Readings and Class Preparation**

**Seminar 1**

**Suggested Readings:**


**Class Preparation:** Write a 2 page (~1000 words) individual reflection paper, positioning yourself as researcher; your view of the world (objective – subjective); your relationship with the subject of your study (emic/etic) and your proposed methodology for your PhD topic. (the paper will be submitted in Seminar 2)

**Seminar 2**

**Suggested Readings:**


**Class group exercise:**
Select one of the following articles and analyze briefly the sampling decisions taken by the authors:

**Seminar 3**

**Suggested Readings:**

**Class Group exercise:**
1) PhD candidates will be presented with the award winning article of Isabella (1990) published in the Academy of Management Journal, which is a qualitative study based on interviews. Doctoral candidates are invited to deconstruct the methodology of the paper and propose alternative ways of conducting the research.
2) PhD candidates will be presented with an interview guide and invited to comment on its structure and style.

**Seminar 4**

**Suggested Readings:**

**Class Group exercise:**
Doctoral candidates will invited to work in groups and identify key themes in a transcribed interview using the process indicated by Spiggle (1994).

**Suggested Readings:**

**Glass Preparation:**
Doctoral candidates are invited to produce a methodological essay, which builds on the assigned readings and your personal learning during the course. The idea is to apply methodological literature to methodological decisions linked to the PhD thesis. The essay can, hence, address methodological choices and aspects of case study research ranging from the theoretical objective of the case study to reporting case study evidence and reaching closure. The length of essay is 8 pages (~2500 words).

**Suggested Criteria for Evaluation**
- Regular class attendance.
- Mastery of the assigned readings and active participation in classroom activities including satisfactory completion of the written class preparations and group works.
- Satisfactory completion of the final course paper.

**Instructor Profile**
Dr. Emmanuella Plakoyiannaki is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece. She holds a PhD in Marketing from the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. Immediately after her PhD studies, she received a post-doctoral fellowship award by the Economics and Social Research Council (ESRC) in order to pursue further research at the University of Strathclyde, Glasgow. Dr. Plakoyiannaki is a Visiting Professor at the Business School of Aalto University (Mikkeli) and an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Glasgow, UK.
She teaches Qualitative Methods, Case Study Research as well as marketing-related modules including Principles of Marketing, Strategic Marketing, Services Marketing, International Marketing, Advertising and Consumer Behaviour at undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in Greece, Finland and the UK.