Qualitative research is an established mode of inquiry in the human and social sciences that seeks in-depth information in a narrative form. At the most general level, it generates in-depth understanding of human behaviour and lived experiences in all their complexity. The qualitative methods aim to elicit the human dimension of social and cultural experiences by paying attention to the meanings, motivations, beliefs, opinions, emotions, and relationships of individuals. The goal is for researchers to elicit the ways in which individuals as members of groups and social institutions, interpret their day to day experiences in the social, cultural and political worlds they inhabit. The data generated are rich and detailed and require the researcher to be a critical instrument of data generation. This requires considerable rapport between researcher and informants as well as a critical self-reflexivity on the part of the researcher.

Course Outline

- The logic of qualitative research inquiry
- Research design in qualitative research
  - Formulating a research problem/questions
  - Sampling issues
  - Critical, self-reflexivity and rapport
  - Generating data
  - Analysis and interpretation
  - Writing up research
  - Research ethics, consent and confidentiality
- Techniques and methods of generating data
  - Observation
  - In-depth interviews
  - Focus group discussions
  - Informants written accounts
  - Audio and Visual material
- Types of Qualitative Research
  - Ethnography
  - Biography
  - Case Analysis
  - Historical Research
  - Phenomenology
  - Grounded Theory

Faculty Member

Professor Vineeta Sinha has been teaching at NUS for almost two decades. Prof. Sinha is currently Head of Department at the South Asian Studies Programme at the National University of Singapore, and also teaches at the Department of Sociology, NUS. Her diverse teaching portfolio straddles undergraduate and graduate courses – which are methodological, theoretical and substantive. In addition to classroom teaching experience, she also has extensive experience of supervising and guiding student research – at Honours, Masters and PhD levels. As a researcher, Prof. Sinha has applied a range of qualitative research methods (ethnography, historical research and case study) in her own inquiries. As a practitioner, she has produced ethnographic knowledge and interpretation of the religious domain in the Diaspora. She obtained her M.Soc.Sci from the National University of Singapore and an M.A and Ph.D in Anthropology from the Johns Hopkins University.
Who Should Attend

Using a combination of readings, discussion and practical exercises, the course aims to introduce a set of research skills and competencies to policymakers, researchers and professionals. This certainly includes master’s and PhD students in tertiary institutions as well as associates in research institutions and think tanks. Additionally the course would also be relevant for and of interest to professionals (in the civil service and in the private sector) in a range of fields – marriage and family, education, religion and inter-faith religious interactions, health and aging sectors, social work and social welfare, urban planning, market design, advertising sector, product design and consumer behaviour, community development.

Prerequisites
There are no prerequisites for this course.

Enquiries
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