



Department of Conflict Analysis and Resolution

Qualifying Examination- Part III Research Methods January 28, 2008

Format:

The Qualifying Exam is in a three-day, non-proctored format. During each of the three days, students will be able to access the exam at 9:00 am East Coast time. We previously advised that you would have eight hours to complete each section. The DCAR faculty members do not believe it will take you longer than eight hours to complete each day's questions. However, we have agreed to permit the assignment box to remain open until 8:59 am East Coast time, the following day. This will enable you to plan your time, prepare a draft, edit, and submit your final responses. You may use whatever materials you choose, but you are expected to work alone. You are expected to write the exam answers *in your own words* and to support your analysis with appropriate references.

Students will answer one question from this section, either the Qualitative Methods question or the Quantitative Methods question. The decision must be based on the primary or sole methodology you expect to use in your dissertation study.

Faculty members wish to remind students sitting for the exam that the exam is not designed to replicate a final exam in any particular course or courses. The questions draw from a variety of areas within the program and it is anticipated that by now, you are able to present a critical analysis integrating material from across the program. For example, Theories questions and responses are not limited to only Theories I and II material. You have studied theories and theorists in other courses as well, such as Public Policy, Culture and Conflict, Foundations, and so on. Therefore, you are expected to draw from these areas as appropriate.

Students are also reminded to support their analysis by referencing theory, theorists, models, and other academic material. All material used must be referenced and all references must be properly cited. Moreover, the exam is to be in your own words. Therefore, you may not extract information, even if properly cited, and simply place it into your answer. An occasional brief quote may be acceptable, anything more is not. Answers will be subject to submission to Turnitin.com. All references cited in your answer must appear in the reference pages. You should include a reference page in addition to citing within the body of your answers. You may use either APA or Chicago citation styles, but you must be consistent and choose only one style.

Exam answers should be well thought out, clear, and well written. The analysis should be

supported with appropriate references. Answers should be between seven and ten pages per question, excluding reference pages. Please be certain you are answering *each section* of the question you select.

You will notice that attached to the question is a grading rubric. The grading rubric will show you the expectations of the faculty graders. Please review the rubric carefully. It will assist you in planning and executing your answer. The grading rubric will also be used by the faculty graders in assessing your answer. The department believes the addition of the rubric will provide you with even more clarity about expectations and how your answer will be graded.

It is your responsibility to submit the responses each day prior to the assignment box closing. The assignment box will open at 9:00 am (East coast time) and will close at 8:59 am the next day (East coast time). If you miss the deadline, your responses will not be considered. Therefore, please plan accordingly. We suggest you do not wait until the last few minutes to submit your answers.

We all wish you good luck.

Below are 2 research methods questions (1 qualitative and 1 quantitative). You are required to choose 1 question only based on the primary or sole research methodology you expect to use in your dissertation study.

QUALITATIVE METHODS

Total points: 100 points

Passing Percentage: 70%

1. You are designing a qualitative study, and you have a specific research topic in mind. Now you must decide which qualitative approach to use for your topic. You must choose 3 from among the following qualitative traditions: phenomenology, grounded theory, case studies, the narrative/ethnographies, biographical/life histories, historical/comparative analyses, and the narrative.

- a. Name the 3 traditions that best suite your research topic. Discuss (1) how they differ from each other, (2) when would it be appropriate or inappropriate to use each of the traditions, (3) what school of thought contributes to each tradition, and (4) describe each tradition in terms of its research techniques, data collection, and process of analysis. (40 points)
- b. Discuss (1) the strengths and weaknesses of each tradition as it relates to your topic, and incorporate issues of reliability, validity and transferability for each, research timeline and budgetary considerations. (30 points)

- c. Compare the three traditions in terms of your research topic, focusing on epistemological issues (what would be the nature of your relationship to those you are researching) and explain any ethical considerations while performing the research. (10 points)
- d. Knowing that qualitative studies are, on occasion, not viewed as “scientific” by some government agencies and academics, how would you defend the findings of your three chosen traditions against the charge of being little more than subjective interpretations of events with no real scientific significance? (10 points)
- e. Cite correctly and provide a list of references. (10 points)

GRADING RUBRIC

Total Possible Points: 100 points

Passing Percentage: 70%

Exam Rubric,	Point Total	Comments
<p>a. Name the 3 traditions that best suit your research topic. Discuss (1) how they differ from each other, (2) when would it be appropriate or inappropriate to use each of the traditions, (3) what school of thought contributes to each tradition, and (4) describe each tradition in terms of its research techniques, data collection, and process of analysis. (40 points)</p>	<p>40 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comparative explanation of 3 traditions. (10 points) • Description of appropriate use for each. (10 points) • Exposition of theoretical school of thought for each. (10 points) • Description of each tradition’s research techniques, data collections, process of analysis and interpretation. (10 points)
<p>b. Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each tradition as it relates to your topic, and incorporate issues of reliability, validity and transferability for each, research timeline and budgetary considerations. (30 points)</p>	<p>30 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of strength & weaknesses of each approach. (10 points) • Discussion of reliability, validity and transferability. (10 points) • Discussion of research timeline and budgetary considerations. (10 points)

<p>c. Compare the three traditions in terms of your research topic, focusing on epistemological issues (what would be the nature of your relationship to those you are researching) and explain any ethical considerations while performing the research. (10 points)</p>	<p>10 points</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion of epistemological issues. (5 points) • Discussion of ethical issues. (5 points)
<p>d. Knowing that qualitative studies are, on occasion, not viewed as “scientific” by some government agencies and academics, how would you defend the findings of your three chosen traditions against the charge of being little more than subjective interpretations of events with no real scientific significance? (10 points)</p>	<p>10 points</p>	<p>Argument for using qualitative approach. (10 points)</p>
<p>f. Overall Quality of Response: Does the response/writing sufficiently address the immediate concerns for the intent of the question? Cite correctly and provide a list of references. (10 points)</p>	<p>10 points</p>	<p>Quality of writing, content and organization. (5 points) Proper citation, mechanics and grammar. (5 points)</p>
<p>Total Score:</p>	<p>100 points</p>	

QUANTITATIVE METHODS

Quantitative Methods courses in DCAR explore the application of the scientific method to the social sciences. The knowledge and skills learned in quantitative courses are essential for social science researchers. This question gives you the opportunity to demonstrate your knowledge, emphasizing your quantitative and statistical research skills.

You are going to engage on a research project in an area related to Conflict Analysis and Resolution (CAR). Select one topic within CAR field to focus your research project. Describe the area or topic and its relevance to CAR field. Then, narrow your search stating a researchable question.

Describe how you would operationalize this research. Start by formulating at least two hypotheses based on your research question. Identify at least one dependent and one independent variable associated with each hypothesis. Choose the unit of analysis you would use for your research and explain your selection. At this point it is very important to identify correctly the level of measurement for each variable. Selecting the correct level of measurement will determine what type of descriptive measures you will use to describe and analyze your data. Explain what measures of central tendency, dispersion and association you would use for each variable and why.

Finally, briefly explain the steps you would take to conclude your research and report your research findings.

GRADING RUBRIC

Question	%	To get full percentage
Select one topic within CAR field to focus your research project. Describe the area or topic and its relevance to CAR field.	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the topic.• Explain topic's relevance to the field of CAR and,• Justify the need for research in the specific area.
	5	
	5	
State a researchable question	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Not all questions are researchable. Your question must be answered by conducting empirical research.
Formulate at least two hypotheses based on your research question. Identify at least one dependent and one independent variables	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two hypothesis• Two independent variables• Two dependent variables
	5	
	5	

associated with each hypothesis.		
Choose the unit of analysis you would use for your research and explain your selection.	5 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select appropriate unit of analysis • Explain why you made that selection
Identify correctly the level of measurement for each variable	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List levels of measurement for each variable (4 variables)
List measures of central tendency, dispersion and association you would use for each variable and why.	10 10 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List the appropriate measure of central tendency for each variable and justify your answer. • List the appropriate measure of dispersion for each variable and justify your answer. • List the appropriate measure of association for each variable and justify your answer.
Briefly explain the steps you would take to conclude your research and report your research findings.	4 3 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mention additional tests or statistical analyses you would perform. • List 3 observations regarding the interpretation of data from statistical analyses. • Identify 3 potential journals where you would publish your findings
Total	100 %	The passing grade is 70%

For your reference the text book used in Quantitative Methods Classes in DCAR is:
 Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava and Anna Leon-Guerrero. 2006. *Social Statistics for a Diverse Society with Student Version of SPSS*, 4thrd edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press.