

## Mandatory assignments for IN5000/9000 Spring 2023

### Introduction

In this course, there are five mandatory assignments to be submitted. The first three assignments (1-3) will be carried out in groups and are an opportunity to practice different qualitative methods for data gathering, and to reflect on them in discussions with your group and course teachers. The last two assignments (4-5) are iterations on writing a research proposal. It is a possibility to build on assignments 1-3 in your research proposals. We try to combine working in groups with working with your master topic and aim to form groups of students with something in common in their master topic.

### Deadlines and feedback sessions

Assignment	Delivery	Feedback
1: Observation	Wed February 8 <sup>th</sup> , 12 noon	Feb 14th
2: Interview	Wed March 8 <sup>th</sup> , 12 noon	March 14th
3: Reflections on qualitative research methods	Wed March 22 <sup>nd</sup> , 12 noon	March 28th
4: First draft of RP	To be decided	To be decided
5: Final draft of RP	To be decided	To be decided

The text describes the first mandatory assignment. In the group, you can choose to relate the observations to your master projects if they are somehow similar or related. Observing users of some technology can be relevant for many topics. The group submit a common assignment report.

## **Assignment 1 — Observation**

The purpose of this assignment is to practice observation and note-taking, and to reflect on observation as a research method. You are free to choose which type of observation you want to conduct, i.e., passive or participant observation.

### **a) Fieldwork**

Go to a setting you agree upon (a public setting or a place relevant for your master projects) and carry out a one-hour observation. You can choose to carry out the observation together in the group or individually. You can go to any place where information and communication technology of some kind is present (e.g., ticket machines, cell phones, computers, digital artefacts). Observe and record movements, interactions, sights, sounds, spatial arrangements, and anything else that strikes you. Take notes of what you see and write as much as you can about the setting. If you take pictures take care to avoid capturing people.

Each group member takes notes during the observation. If someone asks you what you are doing, tell him or her that it is an assignment in a course about field research.

### **b) Individual reflection**

Immediately after ending the observation, write up your notes in a longer, more coherent document. Do this individually. You should spend at least twice as long writing up fieldnotes as you did observing. You will be surprised at the amount of detail you can record in one hour.

### **c) Writing it up**

Meet with the group and write up a report from the fieldnotes of all group members. The fieldnotes should include the type of setting, the date and time of your observations, why you chose this setting, and a rough map and detailed description of the setting. Further, your notes should include a description of what you saw, heard, or otherwise noticed. Pay attention to differences within the group. Did everyone notice the same? Did you interpret what you saw in the same way? Conclude with a brief analysis: What patterns do you see? Do you see any deviations from the pattern? Are some people acting differently or being treated differently?

You can structure your assignment in two sections where the first is the description and analysis and the second is a brief discussion of possible differences in the group members observations and interpretations.

### **d) Delivery**

The document should be approximately 1000 – 1500 words (between 2 and 3 pages of text) and should include minimum one reference from the curriculum.

Take care to write the group nr on the assignment document.

Submit one paper per group in email to guribv@ifi.uio.no.

To document that all group members have participated, you will write a group log to be handed in with the assignment. The group log will contain information about the dates of group meetings, who was present, and the content of the meetings (e.g., “conducting observation” or “writing assignment”).