
“Introduction to Grounded Theory”

This seminar aims at introducing graduate students to grounded theory, a specific research strategy belonging to the large family of qualitative methods. In particular, the seminar 1) situates grounded theory in the history of qualitative methods and presents its two main traditions, objectivist and constructivist grounded theory; 2) discusses the overall structure and the main steps of qualitative research design in grounded theory, from data gathering and sampling; 3) introduces the practice of coding in grounded theory, including initial coding, axial coding and selective coding; 4) reflects on the role of writing in grounded theory, introducing memos as a powerful analytic tool. Drawing on actual research examples and in-class exercises, the instructor will guide students throughout the main steps of grounded theory, hence also critically considering some common challenges in qualitative methods, like data sampling and coding strategies. For this reason, the seminar might also benefit students who are interested in qualitative methods while not planning to use grounded theory in their research.

About the lecturer

Alice Mattoni is an assistant professor at the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences of the Scuola Normale Superiore in Florence and a research fellow at the Centre on Social Movement Studies, based in the same institution and directed by Prof. Donatella della Porta. She regularly teaches courses and seminars on qualitative data analysis, computer assisted qualitative data analysis, grounded theory and visual analysis for social movement studies. She acted as the co-director of the COSMOS/ECPR of Methods for the Study of Political Participation and Mobilization in 2013 and 2015. She is the principal investigator of PiCME – Political Participation in Complex Media Environments (2015-2018), that compares the use of media for institutional and grassroots politics in Greece, Italy and Spain.