

Course information

Social Research Methodology

Credits ECTS: 6.0

Teaching language: EN

Scientific area: Social Research Methods

Hours:

Theoretical (T): 0.0 h
Theoretical and practical (TP): 24.0 h
Practical and laboratorial (PL): 0.0 h
Seminar (S): 0.0 h
Field work (TC): 0.0 h
Training (E) : 0.0 h
Tutorial (OT): 1.0 h
Other (O): 0.0 h

Contact hours (total): 25.0 h / semester

Total hours: 150.0 h / semester

Pre-requisites:

Not applicable

Objectives:

This course provides a broad overview of the methodology of social research. It aims at providing students with information and skills that will allow them to: a) address the variety of research strategies and its combination in social scientific research; b) design a consistent research project through the discussion of a wide range of issues, including theory building and conceptualization, operationalization and measurement, case selection, data collection, analysis and interpretation. All the topics will be developed resorting to a variety of concrete research examples and practical exercises.

Learning outcomes:

Students are supposed to train their ability to

- identify and discuss the characteristics of various methodological strategies;
- adequately recognise and use the main procedures and tools of these various strategies;
- critically examine the conditions under which certain methodological choices fit research questions;
- design coherent research projects.

Syllabus:

1. What is social research? Problems, objectives and methodological strategies
 - 1.1 Case oriented vs variable oriented research; intensive, extensive and comparative strategies
 - 1.2 Combining research strategies and tools: triangulation in social research
 2. Research design in the social sciences
 - 2.1 The cycle of research
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- 2.2 How to formulate research questions
- 2.3 Conceptualization, operationalization and measurement
- 2.4 Mapping the empirical field: units of analysis; population and sampling; case selection

3. Collecting and analysing quantitative data

- 3.1 Designing a quantitative study
- 3.2 Conducting a quantitative study
- 3.3 Analysing and presenting quantitative data

4. Collecting and analysing qualitative data

- 4.1 What is qualitative research?
- 4.2. Planning and conducting interviews
- 4.2 Using documents in social research
- 4.3 Analysing qualitative data

Demonstration of the syllabus coherence with the curricular unit's objectives:

Objective a) is developed in sections 1 and 2 of the program
Objective b) e developed in sections 2, 3 and 4 of the program

Assessment:

Besides an active participation in group discussions and in-class exercises (50%), students should complete a short written assignment consisting of a 4-6 pages empirical research project proposal, including identification of a research problem/puzzle; theoretical framework and methodological choices (research design and research techniques), arguing for its relevance and appropriateness (50%).

Teaching methodology:

The learning process includes theoretical-practical sessions, research exercises, tutorial sessions and students' autonomous work.

Demonstration of the coherence between the teaching methodologies and the learning outcomes:

The identification, discussion and ability to use different research strategies is promoted by theoretical-practical sessions, always resorting to empirical illustration and exercises. The ability to conceive consistent research projects is additionally fulfilled by the final essay and tutorial support.

Observations:

Essential readings:

- *Babbie, Earl (2013), *The practice of Social Research*, Belmont, California Wadsworth Publishing Company (13th ed.).
- *Bryman, Alan (2012) *Social Research Methods*, Oxford, Oxford University Press,
- Della Porta, Donatella e Michael Keating (eds.) *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences. A Pluralist Perspective*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Ragin, Charles (1994) *Constructing Social Research. The Unity and Diversity of Method*, Thousand Oaks, Pine Forge

Additional readings:

- Brannen, Julia (1995), *Mixing Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Research*, London, Ashgate.
- Brannen, Julia (2005), "Mixed Methods research: a discussion paper", Economic & Social Research Council, National Centre for Research Methods. URL: <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/89/1/MethodsReviewPaperNCRM-005.pdf>
- Bryman, Alan (2006), "Integrating quantitative and qualitative research: how is it done?" *Qualitative Research*, 6, pp.97-113
- Bucchi, Massimiano (2002), *Science in Society. An Introduction to Social Studies of Science*, London, Routledge.
- Burgess, Robert (1984). *In the field*, London, Routledge.
- Foddy, William (1993), *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires. Theory and Practice In Social Research*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.
- Holstein, James A. e Jaber F. Gubrium, (2002), "Active interviewing", in Darin Weinberg (ed.), *Qualitative Research Methods*, Blackwell publishers, pp.112-126.
- Krippendorff, K. (1980), *Content Analysis. An Introduction to its Methodology*, London, Sage.
- Kvale, S. (1996), *Interviews: an introduction to qualitative research interviewing*, Thousand oaks, Sage.

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- May, Tim (2001), *Social Research. Issues, Methods and Processes*, Berkshire, Open University Press.
- Merton, Robert K. (1996), *On Social Structure and Science* (Piotr Sztompka, ed.), Chicago, The University of Chicago Press.
- Turner, Jonathan (2005), "A new approach for theoretically integrating micro and macro analysis", in Craig Calhoun, C. Rojek, B. Turner (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Sociology*, London, Sage Publications, pp. 405-422.
- William Foote Whyte(1982),"Interviewing in Field Research", in *Field Research: A Sourcebook and Field Manual*, Boston: George Allen & Unwin, pp. 111-122.
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