

Introduction to Research

Code: 42273
ECTS Credits: 10

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
4313335 Political Science	OB	0	1

Contact

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Use of languages

Principal working language: english (eng)

Teachers

Marc Guinjoan Cesena
Jordi Garcia Muniesa
Sergio Villamayor Tomás

Prerequisites

Students enrolled in this course are expected to have a bachelors degree level in political science or in any other social science discipline.

Remedial readings:

Brians, Wilnat, Manheim & Rich, Empirical Political Analysis, various editions.

Pollock, P. 2009 The essentials of political analysis, Washington: CQ Press, 3rd ed.

Objectives and Contextualisation

The purpose of this module is to provide students with the methodological tools that are required for designing research projects in political science. The module is intended to help students successfully defend their Master Thesis and develop research proposals for PhD applications.

The module overviews the different phases of research, analyzes their potential problems and discusses solutions discussed in the literature. Within the module department professors and researchers present their current and past research projects, with an emphasis in linking relevant research questions to adequate research strategies.

Skills

- Demonstration reading comprehension for specialist texts in English.
- Design a research project that satisfies the criteria of rigour and academic excellence.
- Develop leadership skills.
- Generate innovative ideas.

- Identify the main methodological difficulties that arise in political analysis and know how to deal with them using the existing tools.
- Students should be able to integrate knowledge and face the complexity of making judgements based on information that may be incomplete or limited and includes reflections on the social and ethical responsibilities associated with the application of their knowledge and judgements.
- Using the appropriate criteria make an individual evaluation of reports, documents and research carried out by third parties.
- Work in international and interdisciplinary teams whose members have different origins and backgrounds.

Learning outcomes

1. Compare hypotheses using the different methods available.
2. Define a research problem.
3. Define an appropriate research strategy for a problem.
4. Define concepts.
5. Demonstration reading comprehension for specialist texts in English.
6. Develop leadership skills.
7. Draw up a theoretical framework.
8. Generative innovative ideas.
9. Students should be able to integrate knowledge and face the complexity of making judgements based on information that may be incomplete or limited and includes reflections on the social and ethical responsibilities associated with the application of their knowledge and judgements.
10. Understand the characteristics of scientific knowledge.
11. Understand the control logic of alternative explanations.
12. Understand the limitations and possibilities of each research strategy.
13. Understand the problems that can emerge when defining a research problem and know how to deal with them.
14. Understand the problems that may emerge when defining concepts and how to deal with them.
15. Using the appropriate criteria make an individual evaluation of reports, documents and research carried out by third parties.
16. Work in international and interdisciplinary teams whose members have different origins and backgrounds.

Content

What is scientific knowledge? What is an academic paper?

Quoting, plagiarism and tools to organize your references

How to define a research problem, a theoretical framework and your hypotheses

Conceptualization and operationalization

Conceptualization and measurement through surveys

Research design for hypothesis testing

Comparative research designs

Case studies

Experimental research designs

Methodology

The module is structured in three different kinds of seminars:

- 1) seminars dealing with methodological questions related to the research process
- 2) research in practice seminars, where researchers and professors of the department will present their past or current research projects
- 3) students presentations of their own research process presented in a written assignment

All sessions require previous reading of the indicated texts and an active participation of students. These are necessary conditions to create an informed dialogue and a stimulating environment to discuss the different methodological issues involved in any research process.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures and presentations	60	2.4	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials	50	2	1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14
Type: Autonomous			
Reading and assignment preparation	137.5	5.5	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Evaluation

To be graded students must have **attended at least 80% of all sessions** with punctuality. Grading will be based in the following elements:

- Participation in class discussions 20%
- Exam 50%
- Three written assignments 30%

Evaluation activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Exam	50%	2.5	0.1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

Bibliography

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