

Research Methods

Code: 42277
ECTS Credits: 10

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
4313335 Political Science	OB	0	2

Contact

Name: Guillem Rico Camps
Email: Guillem.Rico@uab.cat

Use of languages

Principal working language: english (eng)

Teachers

Eva Ostergaard-Nielsen
Carolina Galais Gonzalez
Joan Miro Artigas
Lara Ivana Maestriperi
Míriam Acebillo Baqué

External teachers

Federico Todeschini

Prerequisites

This course assumes no prior knowledge other than a minimal mathematical background.

Objectives and Contextualisation

Aim of course

The aim of this course is for the students to be familiar with and know how to apply a series of the main social science research techniques of collecting and analysing data. In order to meet these objectives we include both quantitative and qualitative techniques. We cannot cover all the research techniques of the social sciences, but centre on those that can be found in the main social science journals. We prioritize issues of practical training and interpretation over very mathematical questions.

ACQUIRED SKILLS

Specific skills

- To identify and know how to affront the main methodological difficulties that occur in a political science analysis
- To work with a complex and diverse set of data and sources of information
- To design a research project that satisfies criteria of excellence and rigorous analysis.

- To apply those qualitative and quantitative research techniques which are necessary for a systematic and rigorous analysis of political reality.

Transversal skills

- To be able to evaluate applied or academic research with relevant criteria.
- To be able to design academic and applied research projects in an independent manner and using the relevant terminology, argumentation and analytical framework.
- Demonstrate the ability to read and understand specialized texts in English.

Skills

- Apply the qualitative and quantitative techniques necessary for the systematic and rigorous analysis of specific aspects of politics today.
- Demonstration reading comprehension for specialist texts in English.
- Design a research project that satisfies the criteria of rigour and academic excellence.
- Design and write projects and technical and academic reports autonomously using the appropriate terminology, arguments and analytical tools in each case.
- Identify the main methodological difficulties that arise in political analysis and know how to deal with them using the existing tools.
- Manage a set of political science data and specific sources, such as statistics, surveys or other documents.
- Using the appropriate criteria make an individual evaluation of reports, documents and research carried out by third parties.

Learning outcomes

1. Access data sources appropriate for the analysis of political science.
2. Demonstration reading comprehension for specialist texts in English.
3. Design and write projects and technical and academic reports autonomously using the appropriate terminology, arguments and analytical tools in each case.
4. Identify appropriate to answer a research question and analyze qualitative data using the main techniques of analysis and appropriate software coding qualitative techniques.
5. Identify the main advantages and difficulties with respect to the validity and reliability of the techniques selected.
6. Identify the most appropriate statistical method to respond to a research question with the data available and analyse quantitative data using the appropriate statistical software.
7. Make socio-political phenomena observable and/or quantifiable.
8. Process and prepare data collected for analysis using the corresponding software.
9. Relate one of more quantitative and/or qualitative techniques to a research question and justify why this was the most appropriate selection.
10. Understand the current debates and challenges of the main quantitative and qualitative research techniques.
11. Understand the main qualitative and quantitative research techniques.
12. Using the appropriate criteria make an individual evaluation of reports, documents and research carried out by third parties.

Content

QUALITATIVE METHODS (Convenor: Eva Østergaard-Nielsen with Lara Maestriperi, Joan Miró Artigas and Miriam Acebillo)

Introduction:

Session 1. Introduction to qualitative research techniques (Eva Østergaard-Nielsen)

What are the main characteristics of qualitative research? How to assess validity and reliability in qualitative research? What kind of research questions can we ask using qualitative research techniques? Which types of qualitative techniques can best be combined and how may they be triangulated?

Data collection:

Session 2. Field research (Eva Østergaard-Nielsen)

This class will examine methodological and practical issues of ethnographic research. It will cover: typologies of field research, the fieldwork entry, the (participant) observation, the collection of information, and the analyses of qualitative evidence.

Session 3. Interviews I (Lara Maestriperi)

What are the characteristics and differences between structured, semi-structured and open-ended/narrative interviews? How may the researcher sample the interviewees in a qualitative research project?

Session 4. Interviews II - (Lara Maestriperi)

Session 5. Interviews III - Focus Group (Lara Maestriperi)

In this class, there will be an introduction to focus group, taking into account conceptual considerations, best practices and how to design it.

Session 6. Further issues in Qualitative Research (Eva Østergaard-Nielsen)

We will cover ethical issues, sensitive topics, and transparency in qualitative research (active citation and archiving).

Data analysis:

Session 7. Discourse analysis (Joan Miró Artigas)

This session will clarify what discourses are, how they function and how we can analyse them. In addition, we will deal with the types of discourse analysis and we will reflect upon the kinds of data we can examine discursively.

Sessions 8, 9, and 10. Analysis of Interviews: Introduction to CAQDAS and ATLAS.ti (Míriam Acebillo),

The main aim of these sessions is to introduce the CAQDAS and ATLAS.ti software applications' basic elements to analyse qualitative interviews. By doing so, other goals will be reached: on one hand Grounded Theory's methodological approach to data analysis is presented. On the other, we will reflect upon the process of qualitative (inductive or deductive) coding and its link to the research design.

QUANTITATIVE METHODS (Convenor: Guillem Rico with Carol Galais and Federico Todeschini)

Pre-course Session A: Introduction to data analysis

Pre-course Session B: Descriptive statistics

Session 1: Basic bivariate analysis

Session 2: Introduction to statistical inference

Session 3: Bivariate hypothesis testing

Session 4: Correlation and bivariate regression

Session 5: Making controlled comparisons

Session 6: Multiple regression (I)

Session 7: Multiple regression (II): Categorical independent variables

Session 8: MIDTERM EXAM

Session 9: Multiple regression (III): Interactions

Session 10: Logistic regression (I)

Session 12: Regression model extensions

Sessions 13 and 14: Limits and alternatives to regression for causal inference

Session 15: FINAL EXAM

Methodology

The sessions on quantitative and qualitative research techniques will be taught in parallel over the 8 weeks of the course. The classes combine theoretical lectures with seminars and sessions of practicing different techniques. An important part of the course takes place outside of the classroom in order to consolidate the use of a selection of the research techniques.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Type: Directed			
Collective tutoring/discussion of projects	5	0.2	5, 9, 11, 12
In-class practice	25	1	1, 6, 8, 11, 12
Lecture	30	1.2	5, 6, 10, 11
Type: Supervised			
Individual tutoring	10	0.4	3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11
Type: Autonomous			
Qualitative data analysis	30	1.2	3
Qualitative data collection/generation	30	1.2	3, 8, 11
Quantitative data analysis	30	1.2	3, 5, 6, 8, 11
Readings	30	1.2	2, 5, 10, 11, 12
Writing essays/reports	30	1.2	2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12

Evaluation

The major part of the evaluation of this module is through continuous practice and feedback on the understanding and use of various research techniques. The evaluation consists of:

- Participation in class (it is obligatory to attend at least at 80% of the sessions in order to pass this module).
- Exercises related to the different qualitative and quantitative research techniques.
- Exams related to the quantitative sessions.

The evaluation on qualitative techniques represents 40% of the final grade: The students will hand in 4 exercises during the course:

- Exercise 1: Practice of Interview (25%)
- Exercise 2: Practice of Field research (25%)
- Exercise 3: Practice of Discourse Analysis (25%)
- Exercise 4: Practice on the main Atlas.ti functions to support the analysis of qualitative interviews (25%). An Atlas.ti "bundled" project

The evaluation on quantitative techniques represents 60% of the final grade: The students will write two essays during the course:

- Essay 1 (20%)
- Essay 2 (30%)

They will also complete two exams:

- Midterm exam (20%)
- Final exam (30%)

IMPORTANT: In order to pass the course, it is required for students to obtain a grade of at least 5 over 10 in each of its two parts--qualitative and quantitative.

Evaluation activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning outcomes
Practice of discourse analysis	10%	2	0.08	1, 3, 4, 8
Practice of field research	10%	2	0.08	1, 2, 4, 8
Practice of interviews	10%	3	0.12	3, 4, 5, 9, 10, 11
Practice on the main Atlas.ti functions of support for analysis of qualitative interviews	10%	3	0.12	1, 2, 4, 8
Quantitative final exam	18%	5	0.2	2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 12
Quantitative home assignment 1	12%	5	0.2	1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
Quantitative home assignment 2	18%	7	0.28	1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11
Quantitative midterm exam	12%	3	0.12	2, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12

Bibliography

Core readings

Qualitative

Bryman, A. 2001. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press

Creswell, J. 2007. *Qualitative Inquiry and research design. Choosing Among Five Approaches*

Della Porta, D. & M. Keating, M. 2008. *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kapiszewski, Diana, MacLean, Lauren M., Read, Benjamin L. 2015. *Field Research in Political Science: Practices and Principles*. Cambridge. Cambridge University Press.

Hesse-Biber, S. And Leavy, P. 2004. *Approaches to Qualitative Research. A reader on theory and practice*. Oxford. Oxford University Press

Hesse-Biber, S. And Leavy, P. 2006. *The practice of qualitative research*. Sage.

Denzin, N. K., & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.). 2012. *Strategies of Qualitative Inquiry*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sarantakos, S. 2005. *Social Research* (third edition). Palgrave Macmillan

Relevant Journals:

International Journal of Qualitative methods

<http://www.sagepub.in/journals/Journal202499#tabview=manuscriptSubmission>

Qualitative Research Journal <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/toc/qrj/15/4>

Quantitative

Acock, A. C. 2014. *A Gentle Introduction to Stata*, 4th ed. College Station, TX: Stata Press.

Agresti, A. 2009. *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences*, 4th ed. Pearson Prentice Hall.

Kellstedt, P. M. & G. D. Whitten. 2013. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*, 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lewis-Beck, M. (1980) *Applied regression: An introduction*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

Long, J. S. & J. Freese. 2014. *Regression Models for Categorical Dependent Variables Using Stata*, Third Edition. College Station, TX: Stata Press.

Pollock, P. H. 2016. *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 5th ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Pollock, P. H. 2015. *A Stata Companion to Political Analysis*, 3rd ed. Washington, DC: CQ Press.