

Introduction to Research

Code: 42273
ECTS Credits: 10

Degree	Type	Year	Semester
4313335 Political Science	OB	0	1
4317157 Advanced Research in Political Science	OB	1	1

Contact

Name: Carolina Galais Gonzalez
Email: carolina.galais@uab.cat

Use of Languages

Principal working language: english (eng)

Teachers

John Robert Etherington
Eva Anduiza Perea
Sergio Villamayor Tomas

External teachers

Leire Rincón
Sofía Breitenstein

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.

Competences

Political Science

- 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.

Advanced Research in Political Science

- Demonstrate leadership skills.
- Design and carry out a research project which satisfies the criteria for academic rigour and excellence.
- Generate innovative research ideas and proposals.
- Identify the main methodological problems arising from political analysis and be able to address them using existing tools.
- Understand and produce advanced specialised research texts in political science.
- Use acquired knowledge as a basis for originality in the application of ideas, often in a research context.
- Using the appropriate criteria make an individual evaluation of reports, documents and research carried out by third parties.
- Work in international and inter-disciplinary teams.

Learning Outcomes

1. Be aware of the problems which may arise during research and how to deal with them.
2. Be aware of the problems which may arise when defining concepts and how to deal with them.
3. Compare hypotheses using the different methods available.
4. Contrast hypotheses using the different available methods.
5. Define a research problem.
6. Define an appropriate research strategy for a problem.
7. Define concepts.
8. Demonstrate leadership skills.
9. Demonstration reading comprehension for specialist texts in English.
10. Design an appropriate research strategy for the problem.
11. Develop leadership skills.
12. Draw up a theoretical framework.
13. Generate innovate research ideas and proposals.
14. Generative innovative ideas.
15. Propose a research question.
16. 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.
17. Understand and produce advanced specialised research texts in political science.
18. Understand the characteristics of scientific knowledge.
19. Understand the control logic of alternative explanations.
20. Understand the limitations and possibilities of each research strategy.
21. Understand the limitations and potential of each research strategy.
22. Understand the logic of control of alternative explanations.
23. Understand the problems that can emerge when defining a research problem and know how to deal with them.

24. Understand the problems that may emerge when defining concepts and how to deal with them.
25. Use acquired knowledge as a basis for originality in the application of ideas, often in a research context.
26. Using the appropriate criteria make an individual evaluation of reports, documents and research carried out by third parties.
27. Using the appropriate criteria make an individual evaluation of reports, documents and research carried out by third parties.
28. Work in international and inter-disciplinary teams.
29. 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 two 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

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.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Activities

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Lectures and presentations	60	2.4	27, 3, 24, 23, 19, 18, 20, 7, 5, 6, 9, 11, 12, 14, 16, 29
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials	50	2	3, 24, 23, 19, 18, 20, 7, 5, 6, 12
Type: Autonomous			

Assessment

To receive a passing grade, students must have attended at least 80% of all sessions with punctuality. Grading will be based on the following criteria:

- Participation in class discussion (10%).
- Three written assignments (90%), from which:
 - Initial research proposal, Research Question & Hypotheses (20%)
 - Review of qualitative methodologies (20%)
 - Final Assignment: Research proposal (50%)

Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Final assignment	50%	13	0.52	26, 27, 17, 3, 4, 2, 24, 23, 1, 19, 22, 18, 20, 21, 7, 5, 15, 6, 10, 9, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 25, 29, 28
Participation	10%	2	0.08	27, 24, 23, 19, 18, 20, 5, 9, 8, 11, 16, 29
Research proposal outline. Question and hypotheses.	20%	6	0.24	26, 17, 3, 24, 1, 19, 20, 21, 7, 5, 15, 10, 9, 12, 16, 25
Review on qualitative methodologies	20%	6	0.24	26, 27, 17, 24, 23, 19, 20, 7, 5, 6, 9, 14, 16, 29

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Software

No software required.