UAB
Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona

Introduction to Research

Code: 42273
ECTS Credits: 10

2024/2025

Degree	Type	Year
4313335 Political Science	OB	0

Contact

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this
document.

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

- 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

Activities and Methodology

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	113	4.52	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

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 serminars, 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.

Assessment

Continous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Final assignment	50%	13	0.52	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
Participation	10%	2	0.08	2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16
Research proposal outline. Question and hypotheses.	20%	6	0.24	1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14
Review on qualitative methodologies	20%	6	0.24	2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16

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%)

Bibliography

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Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2(1): 131-150.

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Gerber, A.S. and Green, D.P., 2012. *Field experiments: Design, analysis, and interpretation*. WW Norton

Gerring, J. 2004, "What is a Case Study and what is it good for" *American Political Science Review*, 98: 2. An easier version can be found in the Oxford Handbook of Comparative Politics (edited by C. Boix and S. Stokes)

Hancké, B. 2009, *Intelligent research design: a guide for beginning researchers in the social sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Katzer, J. 1998, *Evaluating Information. A Guide for Users of Social Science Research*, Boston: MacGraw Hill, ch 9.

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King, G., R. O. Keohane and S. Verba 1999, *Designing Social Enquiry*, Princeton: Princeton University Press. Can be accessed here: https://sites.duke.edu/niou/files/2014/06/king94book.pdf

Klingemann, H. D. (1998). Mapping political support in the 1990s: A global analysis (No. FS III 98-202). WZB Discussion Paper.

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McDermott, Rose. "The Ten Commandments of Experiments." *PS: Political Science & Politics*. 46:3 (July 2013), pp.605-610.

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Toshkov, D. (2016). *Research design in political science*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

Software

No software required.

Language list

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(TEm) Theory (master)	1	English	first semester	morning-mixed