

## Introduction to Research

Code: 42273  
ECTS Credits: 10

**2025/2026**

Degree	Type	Year
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, 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 use of AI

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

Conceptualization and operationalization

Quantitative research designs

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	53	2.12	15, 14, 13, 11, 10, 12, 1, 4, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16
Type: Supervised			
Tutorials	10	0.4	14, 13, 11, 10, 12, 1, 4, 2, 3, 7
Type: Autonomous			
Reading and assignment preparation	107	4.28	15, 14, 13, 11, 10, 12, 1, 4, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16

The module is structured in two different kinds of seminars:

- 1) seminars dealing with methodological questions related to the research process
- 2) students' presentations of their research projects (4 sessions by the end of the course).

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

### Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Final assignment	40%	30	1.2	15, 14, 13, 11, 10, 12, 1, 4, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 16
Participation	10%	10	0.4	15, 14, 13, 11, 10, 12, 2, 5, 6, 9, 16
Research proposal outline. Question and hypotheses.	25%	20	0.8	14, 11, 12, 1, 4, 2, 5, 7, 9
Review on qualitative methodologies	25%	20	0.8	15, 14, 13, 11, 12, 4, 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 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:

The final grade will be based on the following criteria:

- Participation in class debates, especially during peer presentations (10%).
- Two written assignments (50%), consisting of:
  - Initial research proposal (25%)
  - Assignment using qualitative methodology (25%)
- Final research project presentation (40%)

#### Use of Artificial Intelligence and Academic Integrity

In this course, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies is restricted to non-generative functions. Students are allowed to use AI only as a support tool for linguistic and stylistic corrections, code review and optimization, initial idea generation (brainstorming), or occasional summaries of their own texts. The use of AI for writing texts, completing assignments, conducting literature reviews, or automatically solving graded tasks is strictly prohibited. Students must always indicate whether they have used AI tools, specify which ones, and reflect, when required, on how they influenced the final output. Any improper, undeclared, or generative use of AI will be considered a breach of academic integrity and may result in partial or full penalization of the grade, or more serious academic sanctions in severe cases.

According to academic regulations, any irregularity that significantly alters the grade of an assessment (such as plagiarism, cheating, or unauthorized AI use) will result in a 0 for that activity. In case of repeated offenses, the final grade for the course will also be 0.

## Bibliography

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

No software required.

## Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

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

