Political Science Research Methods

Academic Year 2020-21

This course is intended to teach you basic **research design** and show you some of the **research methods** available to social scientists.

You will need to use those skills to write up your undergraduate dissertation, and several Masters programmes will ask for evidence that you have trained in them.

Because research and writing skills are highly transferable, they will also be useful in your professional life to write things like policy papers and country reports.

Approach

- The course is **pluralist:** it contains a presentation of general research design as well as a wide range of methods and analytical strategies.

- The course is **practical:** its sessions answer questions of the form "if you want to write a dissertation on [topic] using [method], then you should do [steps]."

- The course is **bilingual:** it will be taught either in English or in French, depending on the session lecturer.

Mechanics

This course is composed of **9 sessions** taught by a team of ESPOL lecturers. Attendance to all sessions, which are to be taught remotely via Zoom this year, is compulsory.

This course runs over a **'winter school' three-day format**. Each day will start with a one-hour introduction, followed by three lectures.

The final exam for this course is a **60-minute quiz** covering the contents of the entire course, as well as the contents of the five compulsory readings listed on the next page.

Readings

Abbott, A. 2004. "Explanation," in *Methods of Discovery. Heuristics for the Social Sciences*, New York: W.W. Norton, pp. 3–40.

Coman, R. *et al*. 2016. "Les entretiens," in *Méthodes de la science politique. De la question de départ à l'analyse des données*, Brussels: De Boeck, pp. 107–33.

Dupuy, C. and Pollard, J. 2012. *À quoi servent les rapports administratifs d'expertise ? Retour sur une source écrite centrale pour l'analyse des politiques publiques*. Working paper, *Travaux de Science Politique* 53, Université de Lausanne.

Surel, Y. 2015. "Faire une recherche en science politique," in *La science politique et ses méthodes*, Paris: Armand Colin, pp. 131–70.

Toshkov, D. 2018. "Research Design," in Lowndes, V., Marsh D. and Stoker G. (eds), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 4th ed., pp. 219–36.

Schedule

Day 1	*Designing your research*	January 11, 2021
9am–10am	**Introduction to the day** by François Briatte	
10am–noon	**Research Questions** by Elisa Greco	
1pm–3pm	**Theoretical Frameworks** by Janis Grzybowski	
3pm–5pm	**Literature Reviews** by François Briatte	
Day 2	*Collecting and analyzing data*	January 12, 2021
9am–10am	**Introduction to the day** by François Briatte	
10am–noon	**Documents, Text, Numbers** by François Briatte	

| 1pm–3pm | **Conducting Interviews** |
| | by Brendan Coolsaet |

| 3pm–5pm | **Qualitative and Quantitative Methods** |
| | by Camille Kelbel |

| *Day 3* | *Working with specific methods* | January 13, 2021 |

| 9am–10am | **Introduction to the day** |
| | by François Briatte |

| 10am–noon | **History of Ideas and Political Theory** |
| | by Thierry Chopin and Pierre-Yves Néron |

| 1pm–3pm | **Comparative Case Studies** |
| | by Sabine Weiland |

| 3pm–5pm | **Public Policy Analysis** |
| | by Oriane Calligaro |

Exam

The exam for this course will take place on Friday 15 January 2021 from 9am to 10am, at which time you will need to connect to Moodle ('iCampus') in order to complete the quiz announced on the first page of this syllabus.

Further details on what to expect on the quiz will be provided during the introductory sessions of the course, which will include some Q & A time. If you need technical assistance with Moodle, please ask IT services as soon as possible.