Political Science Research Methods

Academic Year 2021-22

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 by requiring that you submit a written sample with your application. Since research and writing skills are highly transferable, they will also be useful in your professional life to write documents like policy papers and other kinds of reports.

The course is organised in a 'winter school' three-day format. Each day will start with a one-hour introduction, followed by three lectures.

Principles

- This course is **pluralist:** it covers a wide range of methods and analytical strategies, which is reflected in the fact that its sessions are taught by a diverse team of ESPOL researchers who themselves use different methods in their own research work.

  At no point during this course will you be told to adopt such or such theoretical or methodological perspective in your own dissertation: you will have to determine that yourself, possibly after consulting with your research supervisor.

- 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]."

  You will receive detailed readings on various methods and analytical strategies as the course goes. Those readings will likely contribute to the write-up of the methods section of your dissertation.

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

  While the final exam for this course will be in English, the compulsory readings on which it will be based are also in both languages.

Schedule

Day 1	*Designing your research*	Monday 10 January 2022

9am–10am **Introduction to the day**

10am–noon **1. Research Design**
by Felix von Nostitz

1pm–3pm **2. Theoretical Frameworks**
by Andrew Glencross

3pm–5pm **3. Literature Reviews**[1]
by François Briatte

Day 2	*Collecting and analyzing data*	Tuesday 11 January, 2022

9am–10am **Introduction to the day**

10am–noon **4. Documents, Text, Numbers**
by François Briatte

1pm–3pm **5. Conducting Interviews**
by Camille Kelbel

3pm–5pm **6. Qualitative and Quantitative Methods**
by Giulia Sandri

Day 3	*Working with specific methods*	Wednesday 12 January 2022

9am–10am **Introduction to the day**

10am–noon **7. History of Ideas and Political Theory**
by Pierre-Yves Néron

1pm–3pm **8. Case Studies and Comparative Analysis**
by Sabine Weiland

3pm–5pm **9. Public Policy Analysis**
by François Briatte

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[1] This session will include a guest talk by Quentin Sene, from the Vauban Academic Library.

Exam

The final exam for this course is an English-language **2-hour quiz** based on the contents of the compulsory readings listed below, as well as on some of the course lectures and on additional documents featured in the exam. You will receive a copy of the compulsory readings one month prior to the course. 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.

Please refer to your student schedule for the date and time of the exam, which will happen online via Moodle. If you need technical assistance with Moodle, please contact the relevant IT service as soon as possible. No technical assistance will be provided during the course.

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.

European Commission. 2018. *Ethics in Social Science and Humanities*. H2020 report to DG Research and Innovation, Brussels: European Commission.

Jupp, V. 2006. "Documents and Critical Research," in Sapsford, R. and Jupp, V. (eds), *Data Collection and Analysis*, 2nd ed., pp. 272–90.

Knopf. J.W. 2006. "Doing a Literature Review," *PS: Political Science & Politics* 39(1): 127–32.

McCauley, A. and Ruggeri, A. 2020. "From Questions and Puzzles to Research Project," in Curini, L. and Franzese, R. (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Research Methods In Political Science and International Relations*, London: Sage, pp. 26–43.

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.

Guides

- ESPOL Guide to Academic Writing
- ESPOL Referencing and Plagiarism Avoidance Guide
- Listes indicatives de revues scientifiques