

Course Syllabus

Title of the course	Theory and Methodology of Political Research		
Title of the Academic Programme	Comparative Politics of Eurasia		
Type of the course	Obligatory		
Prerequisites	None		
ECTS workload	6		
Total indicative study hours	Directed Study	Self-directed study	Total
	80	148	228
Course Overview	<p>The goal of this course is to provide a brief introduction to the methodology of political science research. The course consists of two parts.</p> <p>The first part offers an overview of the key quantitative methods used in contemporary political science. This part begins with the introduction to the basic principles of political inquiry. Then we consider the basic concepts of statistics and probability. We also discuss such topics as exploratory data analysis and data visualization, statistical hypothesis testing, linear and generalized linear regression models, and causal inference. R programming language is used as a primary tool for data processing and statistical computations. Students are assumed to be familiar with high school math program, have basic computer literacy and be willing to work hard to learn the essentials of data analysis.</p> <p>The purpose of the second part of the course is to present the fundamentals of qualitative social research, as well as to develop students' skills of using qualitative methods in their own empirical research. Focus will be done on the possibilities of using qualitative methodology in political studies. As part of the course, students will learn what methodological and theoretical ideas compose the basis of qualitative research in the social sciences (and why qualitative researchers demonstrate such a passion for the study of everyday experience and meanings that people have about their lives), what the research design is, which methods of data collection and analysis exist in this methodology (in-depth interviews, participant observation, focus groups, discourse analysis, grounded theory, and others). Students will learn how to plan, to organize and to implement qualitative research; how to collect qualitative interviews, to conduct participant observation and focus groups; how to analyze the qualitative data, including media texts and biographical documents. The research is the process starting with inventing the topic and preparing a research proposal, which includes the development of a research design, continuing with fieldwork and with the</p>		

	analysis of collected data, and ending with the writing of academic text.				
Intended Learning Outcomes (ILO)	<p>Part I: After completing this part of the course, students are expected to be able</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to read (and understand!) most academic PS articles • to speak the language of data fluently, that is, • to understand by yourself and explain to others such words as "variable", "distribution", "regression", "p-value", etc. • to design a quantitative political study • to choose statistical methods appropriate to your substantive research problem • to use R programming language for statistical computations <p>Part II:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand the principles of qualitative research • Know basic strategies and methods of qualitative research • Able to organize and to conduct qualitative research • Able to use qualitative methods for collection and analysis of data 				
Teaching and Learning Methods	<p>The first part of the course consists of lectures (14 hours) and tutorials (26 hours). All course participants also must write a short research paper (10-15 pages) in which they will try to apply some methods of the course to the topic in cross-cultural social research that they are interested in. The most important aspects of the paper to be graded are the creativity of the research idea, the operationalization and proper statement of hypotheses, and the appropriate use of statistical methods covered within the course. Final project paper must be written alone, independent of other student projects.</p> <p>The second part of the course consists of lectures (14 hours) and tutorials (26 hours). The tutorials involve student work in small groups, academic reading, collection of the data with qualitative methods, the analysis and the final assignment (project).</p>				
Content and Structure of the Course					
№	Topic / Course Chapter	Total	Directed Study		Self-directed Study
			Lectures	Tutorials	
PART I					
1	Designing Political Study	18	2	4	12
2	Basic Statistical Concepts	18	2	4	12
3	Exploratory Data Analysis and Visualization	16	2	4	10
4	Inference and Statistical Hypothesis Testing	16	2	4	10
5	Linear Regression	16	2	4	10
6	Generalized Linear Models	16	2	4	10
7	Causal Inference	14	2	2	10

PART II					
8	Introduction of qualitative research. The methodological basis. Design of qualitative research.	16	2	4	10
9	Ethnographic strategy and observation.	16	2	4	10
10	Qualitative interview. Qualitative analysis of interview.	14	2	4	8
11	Biographical method in social sciences.	16	2	4	10
12	Case-study in political studies.	12	2	2	8
13	Grounded theory as the strategy of data collection and analysis.	14	2	2	10
14	Discourse analysis.	12	2	2	8
15	The presentation of qualitative research results.	14	-	4	10
Total study hours		228	28	52	148
Indicative Assessment Methods and Strategy		<p>Part I:</p> <p>Home assignments (cumulative grade - 70%)</p> <p>Final project presentation (30%)</p> <p>Late assignments will be graded down (one point on a 1-10 scale per day of delay).</p> <p>If you plagiarize, you will fail. You may not recycle papers used in other classes.</p> <p>Part II:</p> <p>Students' progress will be measured by students' activities in class (70% of the accumulated grade), 1 home work (30% of accumulated grade). The final grade will compose from the accumulated grade (70%) and a final exam (30%).</p> <p>The final exam will take the form of defense of the project.</p>			
Readings / Indicative Learning Resources		<p>Part I:</p> <p><u>Mandatory</u></p> <p>Field, A., J. Miles, and Z. Field. 2012. <i>Discovering Statistics Using R</i>. SAGE publications ltd.</p> <p><u>Optional</u></p> <p>Fox, J. and S. Weisberg S. 2010. <i>An R Companion to Applied Regression</i>. SAGE publications ltd.</p>			

Field, A. 2016. *An Adventure in Statistics: The Reality Enigma*. SAGE publications Ltd.

Part II:

Mandatory

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2011). *The SAGE handbook of qualitative research*. Sage.

Flick, U. (2009). *An introduction to qualitative research*. Sage.

Silverman, D. (2015). *Interpreting Qualitative Data*. SAGE.

The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research (2014) ed. by Patricia Leavy.

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199811755.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199811755>

Wengraf, Tom. 2001. *Qualitative Research. Interviewing: Biographic Narrative and Semi-Structured Methods*. Routledge.

Optional

Brayda, W. C., & Boyce, T. D. (2014). So You Really Want to Interview Me?: Navigating “Sensitive” Qualitative Research Interviewing. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 13(1), 318–334.

deVolo, L. B., & Schatz, E. (2004). From the inside out: Ethnographic methods in political research. *Political Science and Politics*, 37(2), 267–271.

Goffman, E., & Lofland, L. H. (1989). On fieldwork. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 18(2), 123.

Guillemin, M., & Gillam, L. (2004). Ethics, reflexivity, and “ethically important moments” in research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 10(2), 261–280.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. B. (2010). *Designing Qualitative Research*. SAGE.

Patton, M. Q. (2005). *Qualitative research*. Wiley Online Library.

Pierre, E. A. S., & Jackson, A. Y. (2014). Qualitative Data Analysis After Coding. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 20(6), 715–719.

Schatz, E. (2009). Ethnographic immersion and the study of politics. *Political Ethnography: What Immersion Contributes to the Study of Power*, 1–22.

Seale, C. (1999). *The Quality of Qualitative Research*. SAGE.

Seale, C., Gobo, G., Gubrium, J. F., & Silverman, D. (2004). *Qualitative research practice*. Sage.

Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook*. SAGE.

Indicative Self- Study Strategies	Type	+/-	Hours (Part I/Part II)
	Reading for seminars / tutorials (lecture materials, mandatory and optional resources)	+	18/10
	Assignments for seminars / tutorials / labs	+	16/10
	E-learning / distance learning (MOOC / LMS)	-	
	Fieldwork	+	-/14

	Project work	+	20/20
	Other (please specify)	-	
	Preparation for the exam	+	20/20
Academic Support for the Course	<p>Part I: Academic support for the course is provided via a course Dropbox folder, which contains all recommended readings, presentations of lectures, and replication code and data for empirical examples.</p> <p>Part II: Academic support for this part of the course is provided via LMS, where students can find: guidelines and recommendations for doing the course; guidelines and recommendations for self-study; samples of assessment materials</p>		
Facilities, Equipment and Software	<p>Part I: We will use R programming language as a tool for data processing and statistical computations</p> <p>Part II: Projector, computer, audio system</p>		
Course Instructors	Associate professor Boris Sokolov (Part I); Associate professor Yana Krupets (Part II).		