

SOCIAL RESEARCH METHODS

Course code	<i>FUN108</i>
Compulsory in the programmes	<i>Economics and Politics, Economics</i>
Level of studies	<i>Undergraduate</i>
Number of credits	<i>6 ECTS (48 in-class hours + 6 consultation hours + 2 exam hours, 104 individual work hours)</i>
Course coordinator (title and name)	<i>Senior Lecturer Dr. Eglė Verseckaitė-Grzeskowiak</i>
Prerequisites	<i>None</i>
Language of instruction	<i>English</i>

THE AIM OF THE COURSE:

The main goal of this course is to impart knowledge and skills necessary for conducting and evaluating social science research. The course will begin with the introduction to the basic concepts and fundamental principles that underlie approaches to research and the practical implications of these principles, including formulation of research questions, concepts of validity and reliability, and issues of research ethics. Students will learn to review literature and conduct secondary and primary research. We will especially focus on the main qualitative and quantitative methods of primary data collection used in social science research. Students will be required to conduct their own research projects within a provided larger framework, which will help develop students' practical research skills, and analysis of published research and other students' research projects will sharpen their ability to critically evaluate the information coming from research conducted by others. Presentation of their own research findings and discussion of others' research will also serve to refine the students' presentation and communication skills. Students who have successfully completed the course and all its assignments will be able to define a research question, formulate the research design, choose the appropriate methods for data collection and analysis, present and interpret their findings, and critically evaluate other researchers' output. Finally, the skills and knowledge gained in this course will also be employable during the preparation of BA theses.

MAPPING OF COURSE LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES) WITH DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES (See Annex), ASSESMENT AND TEACHING METHODS

Course level learning outcomes (objectives)	Degree level learning objectives (Number of LO)	Assessment methods	Teaching methods
CLO1. The student is able to understand the purpose and scope of empirical research.	ELO1.1	Exam, midterm project, paper	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO2. The student can identify and understand potential ethical, empirical and analytical problems plaguing the research process and ways to overcome them.	ELO1.1, ELO1.2, ELO2.1.	Exam, midterm project, paper	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO3. The student is able to identify a politically relevant issue, translate it into a research question, and design an appropriate way to answer it.	ELO1.1, ELO1.2	Exam, midterm project, paper	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project

CLO4. The student is able to formulate empirically testable hypotheses and choose the most appropriate tools for testing them.	ELO1.2, ELO3.1, ELO3.2	Exam, midterm project, paper	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO5. The student is able to identify and understand the main qualitative and quantitative methods of social research, their advantages and disadvantages and appropriate application areas.	ELO1.1, ELO1.2	Exam, midterm project, paper	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO6. The student develops skills in choosing suitable case studies, sampling, measurement, questionnaire and interview guide design, conducting interviews and surveys, leading focus groups, processing and analyzing collected data.	ELO1.1, ELO1.2, ELO3.1, ELO3.2	Exam, midterm project, paper	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO7. The student is able to communicate research findings and their implications in a clear and well organized way, both orally and in writing.	ELO1.2, ELO4.1, ELO4.2, ELO4.3	Exam, midterm project, paper, presentation	Lectures, individual study based on readings, reporting on the research project in written form and orally
CLO8. The student is able to critically evaluate the quality of own and other people's research findings and the process used to obtain them.	ELO1.1, ELO2.1	Exam, midterm project, paper, presentation, participation scorecard	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO9. The student is able to work as a member of a research team, communicate, share tasks, and keep themselves and teammates accountable for their performance throughout the process of conducting research.	ELO2.1, ELO4.1	Exam, midterm project, paper, presentation, participation scorecard	Working on the research project

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

The ISM University of Management and Economics Code of Ethics, including cheating and plagiarism, as well as the official policy regarding AI usage, are fully applicable and will be strictly enforced in the course. Academic dishonesty and cheating can and will lead to a report to the ISM Committee of Ethics. With regard to remote learning, ISM reminds students that they are expected to adhere and maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting.

COURSE OUTLINE

Topic	In-class hours	Readings
Introduction to the course. Research problem, research question, research design, research ethics	4	Van Thiel, Chs.1, 2, pp.1-11, 12-23. McNabb, Chs.3, 4, pp.29-39, 40-56. Brians et al., Ch.1, pp.1-15.
Literature review	4	"Writing a Literature Review" by the Language Center, Asian Institute of Technology, February 17 th , 2005.

		Van Thiel, Ch.3, pp.24-42.
Operationalization	4	Babbie, Chs.5, 6, pp.118-177. Van Thiel, Ch.5, pp.54-60.
Sampling	4	Babbie, Ch.7, pp.178-217.
Survey research	4	Van Thiel, Ch.7, pp.74-85.
Interviewing	4	Brians et al., Chs.19, 20, 21, p.324-376. Babbie, Ch.9, pp.242-280. Van Thiel, Chs.6, 8, 9, pp.61-73, 86-101, 102-117.
Midterm	4	(Note: the midterm is the project progress report instead of an in-class midterm exam)
Observation	2	TBD
Data processing	4	TBD
Data analysis	6	Carver & Nash, Section 1 & Appendix, pp.1-12, 309-314. Elliott & Woodward, Chs.1, 3, 4, pp.20, 47-75, 77-112. McNabb, Ch.21, pp.287-302. Van Thiel, Chs.10, 11, pp.118-137, 138-152.
Preparing research reports	4	Van Thiel, Ch.12, pp.153-168.
Presentations	2	
Review of the course.	2	
	Total: 48 hours	
CONSULTATIONS	6	
FINAL EXAM	2	

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

Type of assignment	%
<i>Group Components 50%</i>	
Research paper (includes an individual contribution dimension)	30%
Midterm project and progress report (includes an individual contribution dimension)	10%
Presentation (includes an individual contribution dimension)	10%
<i>Individual Components 50%</i>	

Participation (includes a group dimension)	30%
Exam	20%
Total:	100%

DESCRIPTION AND GRADING CRITERIA OF EACH ASSIGNMENT

(Provide short descriptions and grading criteria of each assignment)

1. Participation

Participation is the foundation of your success in this course. It is imperative for students to have done the assigned homework on time and to actively participate in the class and in their team's work on the research project. Since most of the work is focused on the team's research project, all team members must be present in class and in team consultations. Without completing the seminar participation tasks and homework assignments, the student cannot be allowed to take the exam. During online classes, students are expected to observe the etiquette of when to mute/unmute their microphones and when to turn on their cameras.

Participation scorecard will include points for presence and active participation in class and in team consultations, for timely completion of homework tasks and their quality (including proper referencing and formatting of each submission), as well as the grades received for in-class activities, such as quizzes, and will count towards 30% of the final grade. It is worth emphasizing that the seminar grade greatly depends on the students' work on the research project in a timely manner and thus reflects the centrality of the research project in the evaluation of this course. Each student's participation grade will be adjusted based on his/her teammates' peer review regarding his/her contribution to the research project during the course of the semester, hence teammates' grades are likely to differ from each other. The participation grade cannot be substituted with a retake.

2. Research paper

This is the pivotal part of the course that affects all the other parts of evaluation and helps you master the craft of research. The research projects will be conducted in teams of 4-5 students (the size of teams will be determined by the total number of students in class). The students are all equally responsible for each part of the homework and for the whole research project. Labour division does not equal knowledge division, therefore each member of the team has to know everything about the research project, be able to explain and justify any choices of methods and information, and defend any part of the research project, such as the literature review, data measurement scales, interview guide and data analysis results, and be competent to answer any questions the lecturer may ask. Saying things like „I don't know what this means because my teammate did this part“, or „this part is not done because my teammate was supposed to do it“, is not a valid excuse and will merely give you penalty points. Working and learning as a team is an important part of the educational process. The relative quality of each team-member's contribution will be evaluated at the end of the semester and their individual participation grades will be adjusted accordingly, but the research project grade is shared between the team members except in the cases of freeriding, therefore each member is fully responsible for all of it.

Each team has to choose a research question within the suggested framework, formulate the research design, analyze the relevant literature, choose the appropriate methodology, gather and analyze data, and present their findings. The steps of the preparation of the research project will be part of the seminar homework.

Please make sure that any written assignment you submit is formatted according to ISM requirements, that the surnames of the team members are indicated on the title page, and that the team code is clearly identified in the running head and included in the file name.

It is crucial to meet the deadlines in order for the students to get proper feedback and to not jeopardize both their participation grade and the quality of the research project. Taking into account the number of students whose research is being supervised by the lecturer, any kind of delay or not fitting into the pre-arranged schedule causes a chain reaction of problems for others – please be considerate!

The lecturer will provide feedback during the process. Repeating the mistakes that have already been pointed out earlier would result in penalty points, so please pay close attention to all comments and apply them without delay, as each step of your research builds on the preceding ones.

At specified times, the students will have to submit their research projects for evaluation. The more detailed instructions for the research project will be provided during lectures. Your final paper should be approximately 30 000 characters long (not counting spaces or the bibliography) and formatted according to the official ISM/APA7 requirements. Papers that are shorter than 25 000 or longer than 35 000 may be downgraded. The point, however, is not to focus on the amount of characters mechanically, but rather to ensure that all necessary material is covered without excessive wordiness or repetitiveness.

Late submissions of research reports will not get feedback and will be given a grade of 0. Papers that have plagiarism issues, unreported AI usage, or misrepresent the research process/data will also be given a 0 and reported to the administration for disciplinary measures. The evaluation of the research project will count towards 30% of the final grade and cannot be substituted with a retake. (Keep in mind that a large part of the seminar participation grade is also directly dependent on your

ongoing work on the research project, and the same applies to the midterm progress report and the presentation, thus its weight in the final grade is effectively larger.)

3. Midterm project and progress report

Instead of having an in-class midterm exam, the midterms period will be used for the evaluation of the midterm project progress report. The students will have to submit the interim version of their research paper (including the title page, table of contents, list of figures/tables, the Introduction, Ch.1, Ch.2, the methodology part of Ch.3, the references and the appendices) by a specified date, everything in it must be fixed based on the feedback provided during classes. The progress report that will need to be submitted during the midterms period will include the fixed project and the collected data. The grade for the midterm evaluation will be based on completion and quality of fulfilling the requirements that will be provided during class. It will count towards 10% of the overall course grade and cannot be substituted by a retake.

4. Presentation.

At the end of the class, students will prepare presentations on their research projects. Detailed guidelines will be provided during the lectures. The presentation is graded based on the visual quality of the slides, the quality of the speech, the precision of terminology usage, the coverage of all relevant material, the quality and legibility of the visual aids, fitting into the time limits, the smoothness of transitions, and the quality of the Q&A. Some presentations may take place elsewhere than on campus or online.

The presentation grade counts for 10% of the final grade and cannot be substituted with a retake. This part of the grade is closely related to your research project, thus again emphasizing its centrality in this course.

5. Final exam.

The final exam will be based on the whole course material and count towards 20% of the final grade. It will include closed and open questions. It will last 2 academic hours and take place in the computer class or online, depending on the conditions. Students must have completed the seminar participation tasks and homework assignments and submitted the research report on time to be allowed to take the final exam. It is the students' responsibility to keep track of their deadlines, the teacher only calculates the results afterwards and informs the students who are not allowed to take the exam.

Note:

Assessment requirements, procedures, and other important regulations may be communicated verbally during lectures. Failure to attend a lecture where such information is provided does not exempt the student from the responsibility to comply with these requirements.

RETAKE POLICY

In case of a failing final grade, students are allowed a retake exam. It will cover all course material and take place on the e-learning system (in a computer lab if conditions permit). The weight of a retake is 20%. The grades for the research project, midterm report, participation and presentation are not annulled and cannot be substituted by the retake. Therefore, a passing grade for this course is only possible with consistent work throughout the semester.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

- This course is content-rich, so you do need to learn quite a bit of information. You are expected to know all the main points discussed during the lectures and supported by the weekly readings, and are likely to be periodically tested on that knowledge. You are also expected to know what you are given to do each time for homework and get it done on time. Any changes made to the syllabus during the course of the semester will be announced during lectures and via announcements on the e-learning system. Lecture attendance is highly advisable, since that will be the main source of information and each student is expected to know everything that has been said during the lecture. Remember: *Ignorantia legis non excusat*. Furthermore, due to the highly interactive nature of the course, during theoretical lectures there will be opportunities for further advancement of your research projects, so it is best to not abandon your team and to attend both lectures and seminars, not to mention the in-class tasks like quizzes which are included in your participation scorecard. The irregular schedule of the class is determined by the variation in the time needed to complete specific homework assignments and may change slightly depending on the demands of the fieldwork etc., thus you must sustain close attention to any communication related to this class.
- This course is about learning a craft, which requires rigour and paying close attention to detail. You need to master the terminology and the methods, both the theory and the practical skills. This is a fundamental course for any person with university education and there are no unimportant parts here, you need to learn everything.
- The most important thing the students can do to succeed in this class is work during the semester and complete all assignments on time. Those who expect to only study before the exam can expect to fail, because the bulk of your grade is determined by your ongoing work on the research project and participation in seminars.

- Keep in mind that it is a violation of academic ethics to pressure the teacher for a higher grade than you have earned throughout the semester. Students who try to skirt the rules and get away from doing all the work they are supposed to do make life harder for everyone by prompting a tightening of rules. You have plenty of opportunities to gather points throughout the semester, so do not start asking for additional opportunities at the end of the class, there will be none.
- Meeting deadlines is imperative. No excuses and no exceptions (part of the reason for doing the work in teams is to ensure that there is always someone else to pick up the slack if someone is failing in their duties, although, of course, the participation grades will differ among teammates accordingly). Lateness will be heavily penalized – from getting a 0 for the assignment to not being allowed to take the exam.
- The standards of professionalism always apply. The lecturer can be contacted via e-mail or Teams to discuss issues related to studies and will respond to most inquiries within 48 hours on working days. Please follow the standards of professional communication. The students must use their official ISM e-mail to contact the lecturer and clearly indicate the course name, the team ID and the subject matter of the question in the subject line of the e-mail. The same requirement to identify yourself applies when contacting the lecturer on the MS Teams chat. Due to the number of students, it is very important that you follow these rules so your e-mails/ messages do not get lost.
- Whenever the students have to submit their work, their names must be clearly indicated on the document and the document must be properly formatted according to ISM requirements and properly referenced. The file names of documents, such as the research project, must start with the team ID. Due to the number of students it is very important that you follow these rules so your e-mails and submissions do not get lost.
- The strength of the university depends on academic and personal integrity. Ethical violations include cheating on exams, plagiarism, reuse of assignments, improper use of the Internet and electronic devices, including AI, unauthorized collaboration, alteration of graded assignments, forgery and falsification, lying, facilitating academic dishonesty and unfair competition. Questionable submissions may be required to be defended in a viva voce. All the final assignments and exams involving acts of an academic misconduct will be assigned a penalty grade of 0 and the instance will be reported to the Committee on Ethics. Our pursuit of quality must be uncompromised.

Literature (Additional resources may be provided during the course of the class)

1. Babb, J. (2012). *Empirical Political Analysis*. Pearson.
2. Babbie, E. (2004). *The Practice of Social Research*. 10th ed. Thomson/ Wadsworth.
3. Brians, L.C., Willnat, L., Manheim, J.B., & Rich, R.C. (2011). *Empirical Political Analysis*. 8th ed. Longman.
4. Carver, R.H., & Nash, J.G. (2011). *Doing Data Analysis with SPSS: Version 18.0*. 5th ed. Boston, MA, USA: Duxbury Press.
5. Elliott, A.C., & Woodward, W.A. (2007). *Statistical Analysis Quick Reference Guidebook: With SPSS Examples*. Sage Publications Pvt.Ltd.
6. Frankfort-Nachmias, C., & Nachmias, D. (1996). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. 5th ed. London: Arnold.
7. Halperin, S., & Heath, O. (2012). *Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills*. Oxford University Press.
8. Johnson, J.B., Joslyn, R.A., & Reynolds, H.T. (2001). *Political Science Research Methods*. 4th ed. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press.
9. McGivern, Y. (2006). *The Practice of Market and Social Research: An Introduction*. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
10. McNabb, D. E. (2010). *Research Methods for Political Science: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. 2nd ed. Armonk, New York, & London, England: M.E.Sharpe.
11. Morton, R.B., & Williams, K.C. (2010). *Experimental Political Science and the Study of Causality*. Cambridge University Press.
12. Van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research Methods in Public Administration and Public Management: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.
13. Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

ANNEX

DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Business Management

Programmes:

*International Business and Communication,
Business Management and Marketing, Finance,
Industrial Technology Management*

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	BLO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the business disciplines
	BLO1.2. Students will be able to conduct a contextual analysis to identify a problem associated with their discipline, to generate managerial options and propose viable solutions
Students will be socially responsible in their related discipline	BLO2.1. Students will be knowledgeable about ethics and social responsibility
Students will be technology agile	BLO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	BLO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	BLO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	BLO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	BLO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Social Science

Programmes:

*Economics and Data Analytics,
Economics and Politics*

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	ELO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the key economics disciplines
	ELO1.2. Students will be able to identify underlying assumptions and logical consistency of causal statements
Students will have skills to employ economic thought for the common good	ELO2.1. Students will have a keen sense of ethical criteria for practical problem-solving
Students will be technology agile	ELO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	ELO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	ELO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	ELO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	ELO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper