

DATA COLLECTION AND RESEARCH METHODS FOR SUSTAINABILITY ANALYTICS

Course code	<i>GRAB004</i>
Level of studies	<i>Graduate</i>
Number of credits	<i>6 ECTS; 36 class hours, 124 hours of self-study, 2 hours of consultation</i>
Course coordinator (title and name)	<i>Senior Lecturer Dr. Eglė Verseckaitė-Grzeskowiak</i>
Prerequisites	<i>Undergraduate diploma</i>
Language of instruction	<i>English</i>

THE AIM OF THE COURSE

Data Collection & Research Methods for Sustainability is a module which aims to equip the students with the skills necessary to plan and undertake independent research, with a view towards the master thesis and beyond. The course will begin with the introduction to the fundamental principles that underlie approaches to research and the practical implications of these principles, including formulation of research questions and issues of research ethics. Students will learn to produce a literature review as a part of a research project. We will then proceed to unpack the main qualitative and quantitative methods used in business research. Formulating their own research project proposals 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. Students who have successfully completed the course and all its assignments will be able to define the research question, formulate the research design, choose the appropriate methods for data collection and analysis, present and apply 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 their final theses.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Course learning outcomes (CLO)	Study methods	Assessment methods
CLO1. To conduct a review of relevant and appropriate literature.	Lectures, readings, self-study, in-class discussions, group work	Research Proposal, Presentation, Participation
CLO2. To produce and structure a research report in the approved format.	Lectures, readings, self-study, in-class discussions, group work	Research Proposal, Presentation, Exam, Participation
CLO3. To have an awareness and practical knowledge of a range of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods	Lectures, readings, self-study, in-class discussions, group work	Research Proposal, Presentation, Exam, Participation
CLO4. To understand what makes for a good research proposal and report.	Lectures, readings, self-study, in-class discussions, group work	Research Proposal, Presentation, Exam, Participation
CLO5. To effectively utilise data and other evidence adopting correct statistical or qualitative practices	Lectures, readings, self-study, in-class discussions, group work	Research Proposal, Presentation, Exam, Participation
CLO6. To formulate research questions and associated hypotheses.	Lectures, readings, self-study, in-class discussions, group work	Research Proposal, Presentation, Exam, Participation
CLO7. To use appropriate data sets (primary and/or secondary) and devising a suitable schedule of analysis, which may involve fieldwork.	Lectures, readings, self-study, in-class discussions, group work	Research Proposal, Presentation, Exam, Participation
CLO8. To plan a research project to address specific research questions.	Lectures, readings, self-study, in-class discussions, group work	Research Proposal, Presentation, Exam, Participation
CLO9. To understand why risk assessments and ethical assessments are needed for data collection and be able to create them.	Lectures, readings, self-study, in-class discussions, group work	Research Proposal, Presentation, Exam, Participation

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

The ISM University of Management and Economics Code of Ethics, including cheating and plagiarism are fully applicable and will be strictly enforced in the course. Academic dishonesty and cheating will lead to a report to the ISM Committee of Ethics.

QUALITY ASSURANCE MEASURES

The lecturer will apply multiple teaching methods to keep the students engaged in the topic. Continuous student feedback will be invited and accommodated to improve class experience. Students are encouraged to communicate with the lecturer for any assistance or clarification needed. The course is designed to maximize active engagement by students in their own learning process, and the successful achievement of the learning outcomes is dependent upon the quality of such engagement. Depending on the particular situation in class, this syllabus may be adjusted; in that case the students will be informed during lectures and via the e-learning notification system.

COURSE OUTLINE

Session	Topic	In-class hours	Readings
1 (02 05)	Introduction to the course. Research problem, research question, research design, research ethics. Secondary data. Literature review.	4	Relevant chapters from select textbooks (e.g. Babbie, Chs. 3, 4; Bryman, Chs. 4-5; Hair et al., Chs. 2-4, 6; Malhotra, Chs. 1-3; Saunders et al., Chs. 3, 8; Tharenou et al., Ch. 1; van Thiel, Ch. 2; Zikmund et al., Chs. 1, 4-6).
2 (02 12)	Data measurement and quality. Sampling.	4	Relevant chapters from select textbooks (e.g. Hair et al., Chs. 7, 9; Malhotra, Chs. 8-12; Sekaran & Bougie, Ch. 10; Tharenou et al., Chs. 8-9; van Thiel, Ch.4; Zikmund et al., Chs. 13-17).
3 (03 12)	Data collection methods.	4	Relevant chapters from select textbooks (e.g. Babbie, Chs. 9-10; Bryman, Ch. 20; Hair et al., Chs. 8, 10; Malhotra, Chs. 4-7; van Thiel, Chs. 6-8; Zikmund et al., Chs. 7-12, 18).
4 (03 13)	Data collection and analysis methods.	4	Relevant chapters from select textbooks (e.g. Bryman, Chs. 15, 24; Elliott & Woodward; Hair et al., Chs. 11-15; Malhotra, Chs. 14-22; van Thiel, Chs. 10-11; Zikmund et al., Chs. 19-24).
5 (04 29)	Writing research proposals. Reflection due at a specified time.	4	Relevant chapters from select textbooks (e.g. Hair et al., Ch. 16; Malhotra, Ch. 23; Sekaran & Bougie, Ch. 14; van Thiel, Ch. 12; Zikmund et al., Ch. 25).
6 (05 22)	Workshop on research proposals.	4	
7 (05 23)	Workshop on research proposals.	4	
8 (06 12)	Research proposal defence.	4	
9 (06 13)	Research proposal defence. Review.	4	
		Total: 36 hrs.	

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

Type of assignment	Self-study hours	% of the total grade
Reflection	10	10

Research proposal	48	35
Presentation	10	10
Participation	36	25
Exam	20	20
Total:	124	100

DESCRIPTION AND GRADING CRITERIA OF EACH ASSIGNMENT

More detailed information concerning each assignments will be provided during the first class of the course.

Assessment 1. REFLECTION (10%)

Students will have to conduct an interview with their mentor and incorporate a reflection into their research proposal. More detailed instructions will be provided during the lectures. The reflection grade cannot be substituted with a retake.

Assessment 2. RESEARCH PROPOSAL (35%)

The course will invite the students to select a sustainability related research question. Writing a research proposal employing the most suitable research method(s) will expand the knowledge and contribute to students' professional advancement. Most of the exercises in the course contribute to the sequential build-out of the final proposal and they will be integrated into the final proposal. The research proposal should serve as the foundation of thesis preparation. More detailed instructions will be provided during lectures. The research proposal grade cannot be substituted with a retake.

Assessment 3. PRESENTATION (10%)

At the end of the semester students will have to defend their research proposal in an oral presentation. The presentation will be evaluated based on the quality of the slides and of the oral presentation, and will count towards 10% of the final grade. More detailed guidelines will be provided during lectures. The presentation grade cannot be substituted with a retake.

Assessment 4. PARTICIPATION (25%)

The participation scorecard will include points for presence and active participation in class activities, for timely completion of homework tasks and their quality, and will count towards 25% of the final grade. It is worth emphasizing that the participation grade greatly depends on the students' work on the research proposal in a timely manner. The participation grade cannot be substituted with a retake.

Assessment 5. EXAM (20%)

It will cover the conceptual material from the readings and questions relating to lecture/discussion material from class. It will include closed and open questions. It will last 2 academic hours and its format will depend on technical conditions available at the time. The exam comprises 20% of the final grade and is the only part of the grade that can be substituted by a retake.

RETAKE

The retake only substitutes the exam and thus is worth only 20% of the final grade, which underscores the importance of sustained participation in the course and work on the research proposal.

REQUIRED READINGS

Research methods textbooks can be used interchangeably, as long as there is a relevant chapter, e.g.:

- Babbie, E. (2004). *The Practice of Social Research*. 10th ed. Thomson/ Wadsworth.
- Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press.
- Elliott, A.C., & Woodward, W.A. (2007). *Statistical Analysis Quick Reference Guidebook: With SPSS Examples*. Sage Publications Pvt.Ltd.
- Fahy, F., & Rau, H. (eds.) (2013). *Methods of Sustainability Research in the Social Sciences*. Sage.
- Frankfort-Nachmias, C., & Nachmias, D. (1996). *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. 5th ed. London: Arnold.
- Kumar, R. (2005). *Research Methodology: A Step-by-Step Guide for Beginners*. Sage Publications.
- Malhotra, N.K. (2007). *Marketing Research*. 5th ed. Pearson Education Ltd.
- McGivern, Y. (2006). *The Practice of Market and Social Research: An Introduction*. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students*. 5th Ed. Pearson Education Limited.
- Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2009). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach*. 5th ed. Wiley.
- Tharenou, P., Donohue, R., & Cooper, B. (2007). *Management Research Methods*. Cambridge University Press.
- Vaccaro, I., Smith, E.A, & Aswani, S. (2010). *Environmental Social Sciences Methods and Research Design*. CUP.
- Van Thiel, S. (2014). *Research Methods in Public Administration and Public Management: An Introduction*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.
- Zikmund, W.G., Babin, B.J., Carr, C.J., & Griffin, M. (2009). *Business Research Methods*. 8th ed. South-Western College Pub.

Other readings will include journal articles and book chapters drawn from the academic literature, policy-oriented publications, and government reports. Readings will be available on the internet or via e-learning.