



Syllabus

Academic Year	2022/2023
Program	Politics: Philosophy and Economics
Course	Methods of Social Research
Term	II semester
Year	2
SSD	SPS/07 - Sociologia generale
Credits	8

INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS

In this course students are introduced to the logic of social inquiry, and to the practice of social research, learning how to deal with basic concepts and techniques used in sociology and, more broadly, in social sciences.

Social research approaches and heuristics will be overviewed, to understand the challenges researchers face while actually doing a research. Various techniques will be presented, and the associated strengths and weaknesses will be analyzed. Several approaches to social research will be reviewed, matching methods with real data.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

They describe what a learner is expected to know, understand and be able to demonstrate after completion of a learning path.

Knowledge and understanding:

At the end of the course, students will be able to understand methodological aspects linked to models of economic and strategic behavior, some aspects pertaining to methods of measurement and analysis of social phenomena, and general aspects of philosophy of science as applied to social science.

Applying knowledge and understanding:

The second part of the course gives students the tools needed for applied work and, in the in-class part, helps them in the organization of such work. The course indeed does not only offer methodological knowledge, but also functions as an example of the application of such empirical research to policy design.

Making judgements:

At the end of the course the student will be able to make judgments about the deep characteristics of our interdependent social choices. Along with such an analysis the students will also be able to use concepts learned in composite judgements relative to a concrete case.

Communications Skills:

The assessment includes students' active participation, which will take place both offline (discussion, participation, presentation) and online (active participation to discussion forum).

Learning skills:



At the end of the course students will be able to come up with both explanations and normative arguments relative to social institutions.

Pre-requisites	None.
Course content	<p>The course is divided into four main sections, each dealing with a number of relevant topics:</p> <p>I. An introduction to social inquiry [the foundations of social sciences: paradigms, theories and research; ethics in social research];</p> <p>II. The structuring of inquiry (research design; conceptualization; operationalization; measurement; indexes, scales and typologies; the logic of sampling);</p> <p>III. Modes of observation [experiment; survey research (with a focus on advantages and shortfalls of mixed modes and online/web research techniques); qualitative field research; unobtrusive research; evaluation research];</p> <p>IV. Analysis of data (qualitative and quantitative data analysis); writing a social research report.</p> <p>Methods will be analyzed both in theory and in practice, applying some methods and techniques in practical/exemplary research situations.</p>
Reference Books	<p>Earl R. Babbie, <i>The Basics of Social Research</i> [Cengage Learning, 2016].</p> <p>Supplementary recommended reading assignments on specific topics will be suggested during the course. All students in class are expected to actively discuss the material being presented, the relevant points and emerging questions.</p>
Teaching Methods	<p>This is a 72-hour course. Overall, 15 hours of workload a week is expected for the student to be effective in reading, working on exercises, and attending classes.</p>
Assessment	<p>Final written exam.</p>
