

MSc Research Design B | POP88051

Year	1Yr (fulltime) 2Yr (parttime)
ECTS Credits	5
Contact Hours	TBC
Pre-requisite	Nil
Semester	1
Module Leader & Lecturer	Dr Alexander Held
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Module Outline

Module Description:

This graduate seminar introduces students to the scientific inquiry of the political world. Students will learn how to identify compelling research questions and how to structure a study that contributes to an existing body of research. Moreover, we will discuss the problems of casual inference and multiple methodological approaches (statistical analysis, process tracing, case studies) to the empirical study of politics. The emphasis of the module will be on the development of novel, falsifiable, and empirically testable explanations of political phenomena.

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of the course, students are expected to gain a greater understanding of the research process, problems associated with conducting social research, become familiar with different research methods, learn how to formulate research questions, hypotheses, and selecting appropriate research design and data sources to test their hypotheses. Students will gain first-hand experience by putting together a full research proposal, thus helping them to build the skills essential to conduct high quality research in the field of international relations and comparative politics.

Assessment

10% Participation
10% Research Question Paper
30% Project outline
50% Final research design

Recommended Reading List

The main texts for this module are:

- King, G., Keohane, R.O. and Verba, S., 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press.
- Gerring, J., 2012. *Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework*. Cambridge University Press.

For those with a limited social science methods background, it might be helpful to start by reading chapters from an introductory text, such as:

- Kellstedt, P.M. and Whitten, G. D., 2018. *The Fundamentals of Political Science Research*. 3rd Edition, New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Manheim, J.B., Rich, R.C., Willnat, L., Brians, C.L. and Babb, J., 2012. *Empirical Political Analysis*. Pearson Higher Ed.
- Shively, W.P., 2016. *The Craft of Political Research*. Routledge.