Course Description

This course introduces International Relations students to the fundamentals of the social sciences as a vocation as well as the nuts and bolts of conducting research in the social sciences. The course is designed to provide an overview of the important concepts of research design, data collection, methods of empirical and interpretative analysis, and final report presentation.

The course is composed of three parts. The first portion, *Understanding the Big Picture*, serves as an introduction focusing on fundamental issues, such as ways of identifying social phenomena, formulating research questions, discussing different types of epistemologies and describing the stages of a given research process. During this part of the course students will learn how to operationalize, sensitize, or hermeneutic social phenomena in our political world.

The second portion of the course, *Understanding the Methodology*, focuses on the various types of research strategies. In this part, students will learn about the characteristics and the trade-offs between qualitative and quantitative research and how to identify the components of a given research design.

The third part, *Understanding the Methods*, exposes students to the wide array of tools that International Relations scholars use, allowing them to appreciate the diversity of methodological approaches.

By the end of the course students should feel more confident when reading and analysing academic literature and capable of understanding published works in International Relations.
Objectives
The overarching course objective is for each student to
1. understand the terminology of social science research.
2. identify the components of a research design.
3. be familiar with basic methods commonly used in International Relations.
4. develop research questions and apply appropriate methods for research.
5. become sophisticated readers of academic literature, capable of understanding and evaluating published pieces of research.
6. be aware of the ethical principles and challenges of social science research.

Requirements
Students are expected to complete all baseline readings assigned each week prior to coming to class in order to participate in a fruitful discussion. Extensions in all forms will be granted only for extraordinary circumstances by notifying me well in advance.

Grading
Students with module requirements (6 ECTS / 7.5 credits in the local system):
1. regular participation.
2. reading of the literature including the preparation of two questions concerning the baseline articles (30 %).
3. 20 min. presentation in a given meeting, and a hand-out (30 %).
4. the assignment of the practice week (see the November 23rd below).
5. project paper: word count should be between 1500 and 1600. NOT including the bibliography (40 %).

*No Certificate for attendance is awarded.

Important Dates
the first meeting: October 5th, 2018
the practice week (no class): November 23rd, 2018
the last meeting: January 4th, 2019
the deadline for project paper submission: January 18th, 2019

Statement of Diversity
During this course, I strive to create a teaching and learning environment that supports diversity in all manifestations, including race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, social class, disability status, country and region of origin, and political orientation. I have zero tolerance for violations of this principle and have clear procedures for responding to such behaviour.
Course Outline & Readings

October 5th. Course orientation—Syllabus review, and Q & A.

Part One. Understanding the Big Picture
This part serves as an introduction focusing on fundamental issues, such as ways of identifying social phenomena, formulating research questions, discussing different types of epistemologies and describing the stages of a given research process. During this part of the course students will learn how to operationalize, sensitize, or hermeneutic social phenomena in our political world.

October 12th. Asking questions and finding puzzles.

Baseline

Suggested further readings

October 19th. Epistemologies: empiricism vs. social constructivism.

Baseline

Suggested further readings
October 26th. Research process.

Baseline


Suggested viewing and further reading


Part Two. Understanding the Methodology

This part focuses on the various types of research strategies. In this part, students will learn about the characteristics and the trade-offs between qualitative and quantitative research and how to identify the components of a given research design.

November 2nd. Clusters of methodology: qualitative vs. quantitative.

Baseline


Suggested further readings


November 9th. Strategies of research.

Baseline

Suggested further readings


November 16th. Generating research designs.

Baseline


Suggested further readings


November 23rd. Practice week (no class)

Assignment: Find a quiet street in Ankara. Find a corner where you can watch the cars passing by. Spend the same one hour at this corner in the following three days and note the colours, brands, and types cars (at least 90 cars). At the end, note this information on a simple Ms Excel, Open Office or Mac Numbers Table. In addition, note any other interesting observations you make on this street over three days.

Part Three. Understanding the Methods

The third part, *Understanding the Methods*, exposes students to the wide array of tools that International Relations scholars use, allowing them to appreciate the diversity of methodological approaches.

November 30th. Case study method I: basics.

Baseline


Suggested further readings

December 7th. Case study method II: process-tracing.

Baseline

Suggested further readings

December 14th. Large-N I: basics.

Baseline

Suggested further readings

December 21st. Large-N II: dealing with the data.

Baseline
Suggested further readings


December 28th. Discourse analysis.

Baseline


Suggested further readings


January 4th. Wrap up—Evaluation of the course & the round of feedbacks.