**syllabus**

**1. Information regarding the programme**

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| 1.1 Higher education institution | Babeș-Bolyai University |
| 1.2 Faculty | Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences |
| 1.3 Department | Political Science |
| 1.4 Field of study | Political Science |
| 1.5 Study cycle | Bachelor of Arts |
| 1.6 Study programme / Qualification | Political Science |

**2. Information regarding the discipline**

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| 2.1 Name of the discipline (en)  (ro) | | | Introduction to Research Methods in Social Sciences  Introducere în metodologia cercetării științelor sociale | | | | |
| 2.2 Course coordinator | | | Lector (Assistant professor) Dr. Borbála Kovács  [Borbala.kovacs@ubbcluj.ro](mailto:Borbala.kovacs@ubbcluj.ro) | | | | |
| 2.3 Seminar coordinator | | | Lector (Assistant professor) Dr. Borbála Kovács  [Borbala.kovacs@ubbcluj.ro](mailto:Borbala.kovacs@ubbcluj.ro) | | | | |
| 2.4. Year of study | **1** | 2.5 Semester | **1** | 2.6. Type of evaluation | **E** | 2.7 Type of discipline | **DD** |
| 2.8 Code of the discipline | | ULE1102 |  | | | | |

**3. Total estimated time** (hours/semester of didactic activities)

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3.1 Hours per week | 3 | Of which: 3.2 course | | 2 | 3.3 seminar/laboratory | | 1 |
| 3.4 Total hours in the curriculum | 9x14 | Of which: 3.5 course | | 2x14 | | 3.6 seminar/laboratory | 1x14 |
| Time allotment: Face-to-face: 3 hours; Individual study: 6 hours. | | | | | | | 9x14 hours |
| Learning using manual, course support, bibliography, course notes | | | | | | | 4x14 |
| Additional documentation (in libraries, on electronic platforms, field documentation) | | | | | | | 1x14 |
| Preparation for seminars/labs, homework, papers, portfolios and essays | | | | | | | 1x14 |
| Tutorship | | | | | | |  |
| Evaluations | | | | | | |  |
| Other activities: .................. | | | | | | |  |
| 3.7 Total individual study hours | | 6x14 |
| 3.8 Total hours per semester | | 9x14 |
| 3.9 Number of ECTS credits | | 5 |

**4. Prerequisites** (if necessary)

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| 4.1. curriculum | None |
| 4.2. competencies | None |

**5. Conditions** (if necessary)

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| 5.1. for the course | None |
| 5.2. for the seminar /lab activities | Attendance is mandatory for **at least 75%** of classes (11 out of 14). The grade obtained in the retake examination includes the seminar component grade.  The seminar component of the discipline can only be improved upon retaking the entire course during the following academic year.  If the student’s activity during seminars does not meet the minimal requirements to pass the course, the student has to retake the course during the following academic year. |

**6. Specific competencies acquired**

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| **Professional competencies** | By the end of the course students will have to:   * Demonstrate understanding of key concepts in social science research; * Demonstrate understanding of different research approaches in the social sciences; * Demonstrate understanding of pertinent applications and uses of these different research approaches, especially quantitative research methods, qualitative approaches, comparison, and experimental designs; * Demonstrate understanding of the different components of a social science research methodology; * The ability to develop an adequate research design for a particular social phenomenon at first encounter. |
| **Transversal competencies** | By the end of the course students will be able to:   * Demonstrate understanding of concepts in social science research methods; * Cogently choose a pertinent research methodology for a given social phenomenon to be researched (and / or explained); * Draft the outline of a research methodology for a given research problem. |

**7. Objectives of the discipline** (outcome of the acquired competencies)

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| 7.1 General objective of the discipline | The Introduction to Research Methods in the Social Sciences course represents a first step towards familiarising students with key concepts in empirical social science research; and different approaches to carrying out such research towards explaining social (political) phenomena of interest.  The course expands on the nature of knowledge needed to explain social (political) phenomena; on the ways in which we articulate what we do not know to set an agenda for empirical research; the way we engage in the different stages of empirical social science research; and how we write up our interpretation of the ‘evidence’ in support of the explanation we seem to have found for a research puzzle. |
| 7.2 Specific objective of the discipline | This means that students will have an understanding of these and many other concepts: social phenomena, social theory, concepts, explaining, causation and causal process, research design, research methodology, deductive reasoning, inductive reasoning, research question, hypothesis, data collection method, sampling, random sample, participant, selection bias, operationalisation, measurement, measurement scale, variable, in-depth interviewing, survey, focus group, experimental study, the comparative method, observation, document analysis, survey questionnaire, topic guide, ethical clearance, piloting, error term, data validity, data reliability, significance test, probability, standard deviation, covariance, standard deviation etc.  In line with the core skills we aim to help develop, students will have to demonstrate an ability to develop a pertinent research design outline in written form for a political problem at first sight. This outline, in written form, should expand on:   * The research problem * A pertinent social theory relevant for *explaining* the problem * A brief justification for the choice of research design * Data collection method * Data collection instruments * Data collection steps * Choice of and steps of data analysis * A discussion of the findings relevant for explaining the puzzle AND the articulation of the explanation. * Limitations (as anticipated) and future avenues for further research (as anticipated)   The reference list should also be contained. |

**8. Content**

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| **8.1 Course** | **Teaching methods** | **Remarks** |
| 1/ Introduction   * Course syllabus * Assignments * Assessment   The social world and its study: what for? What type of knowledge? Why a so-called methodology? | Interactive discussions using the course syllabus and a scientific text. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| RECOMMENDED READING:  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. Pp. 5-12. | | |
| **2/ How we do social (incl. political) research** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| MANDATORY READING:  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. Pp. 19-31. | | |
| **3/ Why we do social (incl. political) research** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| MANDATORY READING:  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. Pp. 35-50. | | |
| **4/ Basics in social science research**   * The scientific method: from ideas to written up representations of social life * Inductive (theory-generating) social research: from ideas to evidence to social theory about social life   How to choose, depending on … topic? | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 60 AND 62-75.**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Sections 7.4 & 7.5** of Chapter 7, **pp. 111-116.** | | |
| **5/ Research interests TO research question(s) TO hypotheses** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 50-55.**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Section 6.3**, Chapter 6, **pp. 90-98.** | | |
| **6/ Human “participants” in social research: Ethical matters** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 81-86.**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Pp. 159-165.** | | |
| **7/ Quantitative methods to study covariation**   * Puzzles for quantitative (large-N) research   Data for quantitative research | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 164-169.**  **RECOMMENDED READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 169-171.** | | |
| **8/ The process of quantitative analysis** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 172-187.** | | |
| **9/ Qualitative methods for studying commonalities in detail** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 113-116**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Pp. 44-65.** | | |
| **10/ The process of qualitative data collection** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 116-122**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications.  **Section 8.3,** Chapter 8, **pp. 122-126 *AND*** Chapter 12, **pp. 199-213 (interviews and focus groups).** | | |
| **11/ Comparison: why compare and how to do it?** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 135-137 *AND* 138-149.** | | |
| **12/ Experiments in social science research** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Babbie, Earl R. 2016. *The Practice of Social Research*. 14th ed. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning. **Pp. 225-232 *AND* 238-240.** | | |
| **13/ Doing VERSUS writing up social research** | Interactive discussions using support materials, including mandatory readings. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 31-32.**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Pp. 360-371.** | | |
| **14/ REVISION** | Interactive discussions using course materials. | Students are expected to read the mandatory reading(s) for the course meeting. |
| **NO MANDATORY READINGS.** | | |
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| **8.2 Seminar / laboratory** | **Teaching methods** | **Remarks** |
| **1/ Open discussion:** The social world and its study: what for? What type of knowledge? Why a so-called methodology? | Interactive discussion. |  |
| **RECOMMENDED READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 5-12**. | | |
| **EXIT TICKETS**  At the end of every seminar meeting, students will have to complete an exit ticket, responding to a question covering the material taught in the course and/or the seminar. | | |
| **2/ How we do social (incl. political) research** | Interactive discussion based on the 4 distinctive elements of social science research & writing. |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 19-31.** | | |
| **3/ Why we do social (incl. political) research** | Interactive discussion based on the 7 core goals of social science research. |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 35-50.** | | |
| **4/ Basics in social science research** | Interactive discussion of the scientific method; and inductive reasoning and research. |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 60 AND 62-75.**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Sections 7.4 & 7.5** of Chapter 7, **pp. 111-116.** | | |
| **5/ Research interests TO research question(s) TO hypotheses** | Varieties of research questions. Examples and exercises. |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 50-55.**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Section 6.3**, Chapter 6, **pp. 90-98.** | | |
| **6/ Human “participants” in social research: Ethical matters** | Interactive discussion of ethical principles; discussion of “bad research” in Ragin & Amoroso. |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 81-86.**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Pp. 159-165.** | | |
| **FINAL PAPER [DDL: week 14]**  Write a max 1000 words research design that comprises:   * The research problem * A pertinent social theory relevant for *explaining* the problem * A brief justification for the choice of the research design, including:   + Data collection method   + Data collection instruments   + Data collection steps   + Choice of and steps of data analysis * A discussion of the findings relevant for explaining the puzzle AND the articulation of the explanation * Limitations (as anticipated) and future avenues for further research (as anticipated).   The paper needs to also include a list of references. | | |
| **7/ Quantitative methods to study covariation** | Discussion of examples. |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 164-169.**  **RECOMMENDED READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 169-171.** | | |
| **8/ The process of quantitative analysis** | Discussion of examples. |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 172-187.** | | |
| **9/ Qualitative methods for studying commonalities in detail** |  |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 113-116**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Pp. 44-65.** | | |
| **10/ The process of qualitative data collection** |  |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 116-122.**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications.  **Section 8.3,** Chapter 8, **pp. 122-126 *AND*** Chapter 12, **pp. 199-213 (interviews and focus groups).** | | |
| **11/ Comparison: why compare and how to do it?** |  |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 135-137 *AND* 138-149.** | | |
| **12/ Experiments in social science research** |  |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Babbie, Earl R. 2016. *The Practice of Social Research*. 14th ed. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning. **Pp. 225-232 *AND* 238-240.** | | |
| **13/ Doing VERSUS writing up social research** |  |  |
| **MANDATORY READING:**  Ragin, Charles C., and Lisa M. Amoroso. 2011. *Constructing Social Research: The Unity and Diversity of Method*. 2nd ed. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE. **Pp. 31-32.**  Silverman, David. 2013. *Doing Qualitative Research*. 4th ed. London: SAGE Publications. **Pp. 360-371.** | | |
| **14/ REVISION** |  |  |

**9. Corroborating the content of the discipline with the expectations of the epistemic community, professional associations and representative employers within the field of the program**

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**10. Evaluation**

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| Type of activity | 10.1 Evaluation criteria | 10.2 Evaluation methods | 10.3 Share in the grade (%) |
| 10.4 Course | Evaluation of students’ command of course contents, specifically key concepts and conceptual models.  Evolution of students’ clarity and accuracy in orally discussing course contents. | Oral exam. | **50%** |
| 10.5 Seminar/lab activities | See components below. |  | **50%** |
| Oral participation | Actively participate in seminar discussions and exercises. | 15% |
| Exit tickets | See details under seminar contents. | 15% |
| Final paper | See details under Seminar contents. | 20% |
| 10.6 Minimum performance standards | | | |
| In line with art. 29 (2) of The Rules governing Babeș-Bolyai University Students’ Status (<https://fspac.ubbcluj.ro/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/statutulstudentului.pdf>), students are required to participate in **at least 75% of seminars**, i.e. 11 out of 14 meetings. Students who do not meet this requirement cannot sit the final exam and cannot sit the remake exam either. In such cases, they need to retake the course in the following academic year.  The make-up exam includes the seminar component also (i.e. 50% of the final grade). The seminar component in the final grade cannot be modified as a result of the retake exam. If the student’s seminar performance does not meet the minimum requirements for passing the course, the student will have to retake the course in the following academic year.  Academic fraud is defined in line with the rules of the Faculty of Political, Administrative and Communication Sciences, Babeș-Bolyai University (<https://fspac.ubbcluj.ro/application/files/9715/6828/0474/Cod_etic_studenti.pdf>). Plagiarism and attempts at academic fraud of seminar homework and during exams are punished by granting grade 1 for the entire course and the discussion of the case in the Department’s staff meeting for taking further administrative steps.  Any academic paper relies on information with proper sources cited according to scientific rules. It is strongly recommended that you use a referencing style common in the social sciences (APA, MLA, Chicago, Harvard, Oxford etc.). The Department of Political Sciences recommends the use of **APSA (the American Political Science Association) citation and referencing rules (Chicago style)**. If any other style is preferred, it should be used consistently throughout the paper. The evaluation of written assignments takes into account the correct use of the chosen citation style. | | | |

Date Signature of course coordinator Signature of seminar coordinator

25 September 2024  

Date of approval Signature of the head of department

25 Septemner 2024