**syllabus**

**1. Information regarding the programme**

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

**2. Information regarding the discipline**

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| 2.1 Name of the discipline (en)  (ro) | | | Research and Critical Thinking Seminar  (Seminar de cercetare si gandire critica) | | | | |
| 2.2 Course coordinator | | | - | | | | |
| 2.3 Seminar coordinator | | | Dr. Daniela ANGI, CSIII  [daniela.angi@ubbcluj.ro](mailto:daniela.angi@ubbcluj.ro); [angi@fspac.ro](mailto:angi@fspac.ro)  [office hours: Wednesdays 15.00-17.00, room 206, FSPAC 2 – Topaz building] | | | | |
| 2.4. Year of study | 3 | 2.5 Semester | 1 | 2.6. Type of evaluation | VP | 2.7 Type of discipline | compulsory |
| 2.8 Code of the discipline | | ULE1524 |  | | | | |

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

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 3.1 Hours per week | 2 | Of which: 3.2 course | | - | 3.3 seminar/laboratory | 2 |
| 3.4 Total hours in the curriculum | 28 | Of which: 3.5 course | | - | 3.6 seminar/laboratory | 28 |
| Time allotment: 2 hours face to face, 5 hours individual study per week | | | | | | hours |
| Learning using manual, course support, bibliography, course notes | | | | | | 1x14 |
| Additional documentation (in libraries, on electronic platforms, field documentation) | | | | | | 2x14 |
| Preparation for seminars/labs, homework, papers, portfolios and essays | | | | | | 2x14 |
| Tutorship | | | | | |  |
| Evaluations | | | | | |  |
| Other activities: .................. | | | | | |  |
| 3.7 Total individual study hours | | 70 |
| 3.8 Total hours per semester | | 98 |
| 3.9 Number of ECTS credits | | 4 |

**4. Prerequisites** (if necessary)

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| 4.1. curriculum | There are no prerequisites in place for this discipline |
| 4.2. competencies | There are no prerequisites in place for this discipline |

**5. Conditions** (if necessary)

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| 5.1. for the course | - |
| 5.2. for the seminar /lab activities | According to the regulations set by the University, students must attend at least 75% of the total number of seminar meetings. In a 14 week- semester, students are expected to be present at minimum 11 meetings.  Academic dishonesty - plagiarism, cheating, fabrication or multiple submissions - will not be tolerated. Consequences will be in accordance with the department’s rules. For details, see: https://fspac.ubbcluj.ro/application/files/9715/6828/0474/Cod\_etic\_studenti.pdf>.  Apart from having attended the seminar as described above, the successful completion of this discipline involves the submission of all 4 (four) written assignments listed in the weekly calendar and in the evaluation rubric. |

**6. Specific competencies acquired**

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| **Professional competencies** | The ability to plan and implement a cohesive research endeavour on the basis of which a paper can be developed. Specifically, this involves:  Becoming accustomed with the recommended steps in developing and writing an empirical or conceptual research in political science.  Organizing the tasks and planning them over time.  Formulating research problems and research questions.  Searching for relevant sources, for contextualizing and substantiating an empirical or conceptual research in political science  Organizing sources with the help of dedicated online tools (e.g. Zotero);  Critical and strategic reading skills to write a literature synthesis  Synthesizing in writing some concepts, conceptual models and some empirical results from the literature for the substantiation of research questions/hypotheses  Choosing, justifying and explaining in writing a research methodology |
| **Transversal competencies** | Getting accustomed to accomplishing complex tasks, a process that involves multiple skills and actions, among which:  - the identification of necessary resources needed to accomplish a task, while respecting a deadline  - learning to use technology to facilitate planning, organizing resources  - learning to manage information, i.e. organizing and storing, selecting and synthesizing written and oral communication, using the appropriate scientific language when communicating a specific content  - application of effective work techniques.  - objective self-assessment of the need for professional training for the purpose of insertion and adaptability to the requirements of the labor market. |

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

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| 7.1 General objective of the discipline | This discipline aims to provide 3rd year students with practical support for planning, organizing and carrying out an empirical or conceptual study that will form the basis of writing the bachelor's thesis. An additional objective of the Research Seminar is to improve students’ reading and writing skills, as well as students’ critical thinking skills. |
| 7.2 Specific objective of the discipline | Students will learn the form and content requirements for a bachelor's thesis, and the criteria according to which the BA theses are evaluated by the committee.  Students will learn to plan and conduct empirical or theoretical research specific to the subfields of political science, as well as to write part of what will become their undergraduate thesis.  Students will learn to be critical regarding information hosted by different sources, in this case scientific texts from the social sciences, mass media and popular culture.  Accordingly, students will learn about:  - The components and form and content specifications of a bachelor thesis;  - The specific stages of the research approach (empirical and conceptual)  - Techniques to avoid plagiarism, including presenting ideas and data from other sources with appropriate citations and references and paraphrasing.  - software used for the management of citations and references (eg Zotero). |

**8. Content**

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| 8.2 Seminar / laboratory | Teaching methods | Remarks |
| 1. **Introductory meeting**  * presentation of the discipline, of the requirements that apply, and of the evaluation forms and criteria * presentation and discussion of form and content requirements for a bachelor's thesis, and the criteria according to which the BA theses are evaluated * announcing **Assignment no. 1: Getting started with the BA thesis** (to be submitted by e-mail, during **Week 4**, prior to the scheduled meeting)   **Assignment no. 1** consists of preparing a written material, in which each student describes the following steps: (1) identification of one or two possible research topics for the upcoming BA thesis (for each research topic considered, students must also indicate what they want to find out at the end of their research); (2) initial thoughts about the data students will use in their work; (3) contacting potential BA thesis coordinators | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students are required to actively engage in the discussion and participate in the debates. |
| 1. **Finding and formulating a research problem**   Subtopics: clarifying what a research problem is and discussing the steps involved in formulating a research problem for one’s research; choosing a BA thesis coordinator for supervision. | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students are required to actively engage in the discussion and participate in the debates.  Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading |
| 1. **From research problems to research questions**   Subtopics: research objectives and competing methodologies in social research; types of research questions and the relationship between research questions and hypotheses; in-class exercises. | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students are required to actively engage in the discussion and participate in the debates.  Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading |
| 1. **Seminar meeting focused on discussing students’ Assignment no.1**   Each student presents the first assignment in the semester; discussion; in-class exercises  + discussing the recommended structure of the BA thesis | Interactive discussion of examples. | Students are expected to be active during discussions |
| 1. **Locating the relevant literature**   Subtopics: how to search for the literature relevant for the BA thesis: where to start, how to proceed with keeping track of sources, how to organize sources? Zotero as an example of useful tool.  Announcing **Assignment no. 2 - the initial reading list**; submission deadline: by e-mail, **before the meeting from Week 6.**  Requirements: write a one-page text where you describe the steps taken for searching preliminary sources that address your research topic; explain why you chose these texts to be included in your preliminary bibliography; attach to the one-page description a list with 10-15 titles that you selected; arrange them alphabetically, in APSA citation format. | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading  Students are expected to be active during discussions |
| 1. **The reading process: making the best use of your sources**   Subtopics: reading a text critically; making notes while reading and organizing notes.  Announcing **Assignment no. 3**: **critical notes on a text**  Choose one text from those selected as part of your Assignment no. 2. Make sure its length is somewhere between 5,000 and 8,000 words (not counting the references; it can be a part of a wider piece, such as a chapter in a book). Your notes should address 5 of the 8 types of items listed below:   * research focus and research questions * theoretical framework * key concepts/definitions used in the text * methodology * data used * analysis of data * results * organization of data and results   Submission deadline:before the meeting from Week 9 | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading  Students are expected to be active during discussions |
| 1. **Plagiarism: a reminder of what plagiarism is and how to avoid it**   Key issues: Plagiarism and academic fraud; research ethics; citing and referencing; in class exercises and examples. | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading |
| 1. **The process of literature review (1)**   Subtopics: the rationales of lit review in the research process; the theoretical/conceptual framework of the thesis; grounding the research questions/hypotheses in the literature.  Discussions and examples. | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading |
| 1. **The process of literature review (2)**   Resuming the discussion started in the previous week.  In class exercises.  Introducing the final assignment in the semester - **Assignment no. 4** + clarifying its requirements.  **Assignment no.** **4:** students are required to develop **preliminary versions** for the first 2 chapters of the BA thesis in progress, i.e. the Introduction and the Literature Review. The elements that need to be included in each of these chapters are those listed in the Structure of the BA thesis, the guiding document approved and used in the Political Science Department. For obvious reasons (the dynamic nature of working on the BA thesis being the most evident), these drafts are not to be considered the final versions to be incorporated in the upcoming BA thesis. They are meant to prompt students to start early with the writing process, by practicing on drafts, submitted as chief task for this seminar.  Format: Word document, 10 pages (where the list of references is not counted), TNR 12, 1.5 pt.  Deadline: TBA | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading  Students are expected to be active during discussions |
| 1. **Choosing the appropriate methodology (1)**   Meanings of ‘methodology’ and ‘methods’; primary data and secondary data; decisions involved in deciding the methodological approach that best suits a given research topic. | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading  Students are expected to be active during discussions |
| 1. **Choosing the appropriate methodology (2)**   Subtopics: observing ethical principles while doing research: meanings and examples;  In-class exercises  Discussions on students’ chosen methodologies | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading  Students are expected to be active during discussions |
| 1. **Making sense of it all: reporting and discussing the findings / results of one’s research**   Subtopics: communicating one’s findings in a clear and transparent manner; interpreting and discussing the results in relation to the objectives of one’s research and to the expectations derived from the extant literature. | Exposure of a set of concepts.  Interactive discussion of examples. | Students must read the texts indicated under the bibliography heading  Students are expected to be active during discussions |
| 1. **Back to the BA thesis structure: focus on the introduction (Ch. 1) and the literature review (Ch. 2)**   Discussions on students’ progress in relation to their work on the BA thesis, in particular the preliminary chapters.  In class exercises. | Interactive discussion of examples.  In class exercises. | Students are expected to be active during discussions |
| 1. **Wrap up meeting**   Review of topics discussed throughout the semester. | Interactive discussions | Students are expected to be active during discussions |
| **Readings (resources and bibliography for the weekly meetings):**    **Week 1. Introductory meeting**.  *Readings*: the syllabus; the structure of the BA thesis [guidelines document]  **Week 2. Finding and formulating a research problem**  *Mandatory:*  Bryman, Alan. 2012. Social Research Methods. 4th Edition. Oxford University Press. Ch. 4 – Planning a research project and formulating research questions, pp. 80-96.  Silverman, David. 2013. Doing Qualitative Research, 4th ed. London: Sage. Chapter 6 – Formulating a Research Question, pp. 79-83.  *Recommended:*  Bell, Judith. 2014. Doing Your Research Project: A guide to first-time researchers, 6th ed. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill Education & Open University Press. pp. 29-33.  **Week 3. From research problem to research questions**  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 and p. 54  Silverman, David. 2013. Doing Qualitative Research, 4th ed. London: Sage. Chapter 6 – Formulating a Research Question, pp. 90-98.  **Week 4. Seminar meeting focused on discussing students’ Assignment no.1**  The structure of the BA thesis [guidelines document]  **Week 5. Locating the relevant literature**  *Mandatory:*  Bell, Judith. 2014. Doing Your Research Project: A guide to first-time researchers, 6th ed. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill Education & Open University Press. Chapter 5 – Literature Searching. pp. 87-103  *Recommended:*  Silverman, David. 2013. Doing Qualitative Research, 4th ed. London: Sage. Chapter 19 – The Literature Review Chapter, pp. 340-341.  American Political Science Association [APSA]. 2018. ‘Style Manual for Political Science’, updated 2023. Available online at <https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2023/12/Style-Manual-for-Political-Science-December-2023-Revision.pdf>  **Week 6. The reading process: making the best use of your sources**  Booth, Wayne, C., Gregory C. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams. 2003. The Craft of Research. 2nd Edition. University of Chicago Press. Ch. 6 – Using sources. Pp. 90-107.  Tracy, Sarah J. 2010. “Qualitative Quality: Eight “Big-Tent” Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research.” Qualitative Inquiry 16(10): 837-851.  **Week 7**. **Plagiarism: a reminder of what plagiarism is and how to avoid it**  Bell, Judith. 2014. Doing Your Research Project: A guide to first-time researchers, 6th ed. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill Education & Open University Press. Chapter 4 – pp. 67-70.  FSPAC students’ code of ethics: at  <https://fspac.ubbcluj.ro/application/files/9715/6828/0474/Cod_etic_studenti.pdf>  American Political Science Association [APSA]. 2018. ‘Style Manual for Political Science’, updated 2023. Available online at <https://connect.apsanet.org/stylemanual/wp-content/uploads/sites/43/2023/12/Style-Manual-for-Political-Science-December-2023-Revision.pdf>  **Week 8. The process of literature review (1)**  *Mandatory*  Silverman, David. 2013. Doing Qualitative Research, 4th ed. London: Sage. Chapter 19 – The Literature Review Chapter, pp. 340-350.  Bell, Judith. 2014. Doing Your Research Project: A guide to first-time researchers, 6th ed. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill Education & Open University Press. Chapter 6 – The Review of the Literature, pp. 104-115.  *Recommended*  Silverman, David. 2013. Doing Qualitative Research, 4th ed. London: Sage. Chapter 7 – Using Theories, pp. 103-119.  **Week 9. The process of literature review (2)**  The structure of the BA thesis [guidelines document]  **Week 10. Choosing the appropriate methodology (1)**  *Mandatory*  Silverman, David. 2013. Doing Qualitative Research, 4th ed. London: Sage. Chapter 8 – Choosing a Methodology, pp. 122-138.  *Recommended*  Bell, Judith. 2014. Doing Your Research Project: A guide to first-time researchers, 6th ed. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill Education & Open University Press. – any of the following chapters: 7,8,9,10,11,12 – in accordance with students’ particular interests around specific methods of data collection.  **Week 11. Choosing the appropriate methodology (2)**  Babbie, Earl. 2012. The Practice of Social Research, 13th edition, Cengage Learning. The section “Ethical Issues in Social Research” – pp. 32-44.  Silverman, David. 2013. Doing Qualitative Research, 4th ed. London: Sage. Chapter 10 – Ethical Research, pp. 159-163.  **Week 12. Making sense of it all: reporting and discussing the findings / results of one’s research**  Bryman, Alan. 2012. Social Research Methods. 4th Edition. Oxford University Press. Ch. 29 – Writing up social research. pp. 685-706.  **Week 13. Back to the BA thesis structure.**  **Focus on introduction (Ch. 1) and the literature review (Ch. 2)**  The structure of the BA thesis [guidelines document]  **Week 14. Wrap up meeting.**  No bibliography for this meeting. | | |

**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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| This discipline aims to develop students’ critical thinking and their general understanding of how a social problem can be examined in a systematic manner and with scientific rigor. As such, the content covered is aligned not only to the expectations of the epistemic community, but also with a relevant set of skills that are valuable in relation to the employability in the field. |

**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 |  | |  |
| 10.5 Seminar/lab activities | Active participation during the semester | Active participation in the discussion of the mandatory bibliography and discussions around the topics approached throughout the semester | 25% |
| Assignment no. 1 | Written assignment | 15% |
|  | Assignment no. 2 | Written assignment | 15% |
| Assignment no. 3 | Written assignment | 15% |
| Assignment no. 4 | Written assignment | 30% |
| * 1. Minimum performance standards | | | |
| Students must attend at least 75% of the total number of seminar meetings. In a 14 week- semester, students are expected to be present at minimum 11 meetings. Apart from having attended the seminar as described above, the successful completion of this discipline involves the submission of all four written assignments listed in the weekly calendar and in the evaluation rubric.  Any academic paper is based on information the sources of which must be properly cited. In writing any academic paper, it is mandatory to consistently use one of the existing bibliographic styles (APA, MLA, Chicago, etc.). The Department of Political Science recommends using the APSA (American Political Science Association) style. If another bibliographic style is preferred, it should be used consistently. The evaluation of the works will also consider the correctness of the use of the chosen bibliographic style. | | | |

Date Signature of seminar coordinator

September 25, 2024

Date of approval

September 25, 2024 Signature of the head of department