



APPLIES TO ACADEMIC YEAR 2011/2012

## GRA 5924 Research Methods for Political Economy

### Programme

Master of Science in Political Economy

### Responsible for the course

Nick Sitter

### Department

Department of Accounting - Auditing and Law

### Term

According to study plan

### ECTS Credits

6

### Language of instruction

English

### Introduction

This course is the research methods course for the MSc in Political Economy. It provides an introduction to theory of knowledge and research design, and covers quantitative and qualitative research methods

### Learning outcome

Students will become familiar with a range of research methods used in the social sciences, and will learn how to apply these to their own research projects. They will explore the principal debates relating to theory of knowledge (ontology and epistemology), and learn how to assess the implications these matters have for research design. Students will gain knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of a range of research methods, explore the role of clear and precise models, concepts and hypotheses, and gain practice in critically assessing research proposals. They will learn how to evaluate and assess research design. The course covers the comparative method, case studies, and both quantitative and qualitative research design. Upon completion of the course, students will be able to write and submit a good, and ethically sound, thesis research proposal.

### Learning outcome for the library session:

Broader understanding of advanced information search strategies:

- acquaintance with advanced methods for information "harvesting", search technique, evaluation of sources
- understand what a cited reference search is, know how to do it and be acquainted with how one can make use of it
- know what a critical literature review is and how this type of articles may be searched for and used

### Prerequisites

A Bachelor degree qualifying for admission to the Master programme. Students should have basic knowledge in the use of library sources and search techniques.

### Compulsory reading

#### Books:

Della Porta, Donatella and Michael Keating, eds. 2008. Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences : a pluralist perspective. Cambridge University Press  
Elster, Jon. 2007. Explaining social behavior : more nuts and bolts for the social sciences. Cambridge University Press

### Collection of articles:

A list of journal articles that are electronically available

A printed compendium of book chapters and journal articles that are not electronically available

### Other:

During the course there may be hand-outs and other material on additional topics relevant for the course and the examination.

Saunders, Mark. 2009. Research methods for business students. 5. Pearson Education; Essex. Chapter 3: Critically reviewing the literature, pp. 58-101. Available electronically.

**Recommended reading****Books:**

Collier, David and John Gerring, eds. 2009. Concepts and method in social science : the tradition of Giovanni Sartori. Routledge  
Gerring, John. 2007. Case study research : principles and practices. Cambridge University Press  
Marsh, David and Gerry Stoker, eds. 2010. Theory and methods in political science. 3rd ed. Palgrave Macmillan

**Course outline**

1. Theory of knowledge and philosophy of science
2. Research design
3. Research ethics
4. The comparative method
5. Qualitative analysis
6. Case studies
7. Quantitative analysis
8. Data, sources and literature reviews

During the semester there will be thesis seminars to guide the students towards writing a thesis registration form. This is conducted outside the course.

**Computer-based tools**

online library resources: ISI web of science and Business Source Complete, and Google Scholar  
It's learning

**Learning process and workload**

A course of 6 ECTS credits corresponds to a workload of 160-180 hours.

Please note that while attendance is not compulsory in all courses, it is the student's own responsibility to obtain any information provided in class that is not included on the course homepage/It's learning or text book.

**Examination**

Your course grade will be based on the following activities and weights:

20% class work and a final term paper ( individual) accounts for 70% of the grade and a completed and approved work assignment given by the library accounts for 10 % of the grade. This is to be completed in the autumn term.

Students will have to submit and pass (graded pass/fail) their Thesis Registration form, as a prerequisite for course completion. This is to be submitted in the spring term with a deadline of May 2nd.

Due to administrative processes, students will be registered for GRA 5925 in the first term and GRA 5926 in the second term.

Specific information regarding student evaluation beyond the information given in the course description will be provided in class. This information may be relevant for requirements for term papers or other hand-ins, and/or where class participation can be one of several elements of the overall evaluation.

This is a course with continuous assessment (several exam elements). Each exam element will be graded using points on a scale (e.g. 0-100). The elements will be weighted together according to the information in the course description in order to calculate the final letter grade for the course. You will find detailed information about the point system and the cut off points with reference to the letter grades on the course site in It's learning.

**Examination code(s)**

GRA 59241 accounts for 100% of the final grade.  
GRA 59242 for thesis registration form pass/fail.

**Examination support materials**

N/A.

Exam aids at written examinations are explained under exam information in our web-based

Student handbook. Please note use of calculator and dictionary.  
<http://www.bi.edu/studenthandbook/examaids>

**Re-sit examination**

It is only possible to retake an examination when the course is next taught.

The assessment in some courses is based on more than one exam code.

Where this is the case, you may retake only the assessed components of one of these exam codes.

Where this is not the case, all of the assessed components of the course must be retaken.

All retaken examinations will incur an additional fee.

**Additional information****Honor Code**

Academic honesty and trust are important to all of us as individuals, and represent values that are encouraged and promoted by the honor code system. This is a most significant university tradition.

Students are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the ideals of the honor code system, to which the faculty are also deeply committed.

Any violation of the honor code will be dealt with in accordance with BI's procedures for cheating. These issues are a serious matter to everyone associated with the programs at BI and are at the heart of the honor code and academic integrity. If you have any questions about your responsibilities under the honor code, please ask.