

Academic Year: (2018 / 2019)

Review date: 07-05-2018

Department assigned to the subject: Social Sciences Department

Coordinating teacher: DOMENECH FELIU, JORDI

Type: Compulsory ECTS Credits : 6.0

Year : 2 Semester : 2

Branch of knowledge: Social Sciences and Law

OBJECTIVES

General:

- * Ability to work in groups
- * Ability to communicate ideas in oral and written form
- * Capacity to organize and plan research and inquiry both individually and/or in groups
- * Capacity to organize and analyse complex information.
- * Understand existing theory and to understand the main views in academic debates and identifying the relevant pieces of empirical evidence used to sustain positions.

Specific

Ability to:

- ¿ Formulate a research problems/question
- ¿ Develop concepts and typologies to help analysing a specific research topic.
- ¿ Theorize¿: Construct theory and provide explanations addressing a research problem/question on an individual basis.
- ¿ Extract hypotheses from a theory
- ¿ Find data and define measures that address a specific research problem
 - o Identify, organize, and analyze information in a critical and systematic way
- ¿ Identify methods for analysing data and measurement.
 - o Knowledge of quantitative and qualitative techniques and ability to choose which is most adequate to apply in different fields of social sciences.
- ¿ Hypothesis testing
 - o Explore the relationship between theory, methods, and the broader goals of research.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS: PROGRAMME

The main goal is to prepare the students, and provide them with basic skills, to undertake rudimentary research and inquiry in the field of social sciences with a special emphasis on questions in the area of international studies like:

- * International economy
- * Globalization
- * International inequality
- * Supranational institutions
- * International policy making
- * Historical legacies
- * Migration and assimilation
- ¿ Pandemics
- ¿ Climate change
- ¿ Poverty
- ¿ Organized crime

The course focuses on teaching the students the meaning and relevance of theory for inquiry and research in the social sciences. All aspects of the research process are covered such as:

- ¿ Questions
- ¿ Theories

- ¿ Hypotheses
- ¿ Research design and hypothesis-testing
- ¿ Evidence
- ¿ Implications

Particular emphasis is put on the art of theorizing ¿ the technique of theory construction ¿ with an aim to explain social and societal phenomena. The course will provide the students a first contact with how to use theory, data and methods in a coherent way to enable a systematic study of a social or societal phenomenon. The course will show how questions through theorising can be turned into theory. Theories motivate hypotheses which in turn can be contrasted by means of collection of empirical evidence and data. We will assess the feedbacks between empirical evidence and theories. We aim to show how new or better evidence shape theories, and how theories also discipline the enquiry into the social world by affecting measurement instruments, or by focussing the attention on specific types of evidence. We will discuss what measurement means, what guides measurement, and the problems of various sorts of evidence and the alternative research designs involved (experimental, comparative historical, statistical). We will then elaborate on how evidence informs the generation development of theory and hypotheses with a view to make causal claims that can aid policy making and policy strategies at all levels of society.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES AND METHODOLOGY

The course is divided in theoretical and practical sessions. The theoretical sessions are a mixture of lecturing and discussion of readings given in advance of each theoretical session. For each class students should take notes on the reading and be prepared to engage in discussion on the reading for that week based on his/her notes. Students should prepare half to one page of written notes based on the readings organized in dictionary like entries which seem relevant to the student. These notes should be handed in but are not graded.

The practical classes consist of three exercises in how to theorize and research. Each student will carry out three small empirical research tasks in theorizing and document these. Each exercise spans three practical sessions.

- 1) Find a topic and provide some data on it.
- 2) develop a name, some concepts, a typology and the like that help to analyse the chosen phenomenon.
- 3) come up with an explanation of the chosen phenomenon.

For each class, students should prepare half to one pages of writing on what they have come up with in relation to # 1, # 2 or # 3. These notes should be handed in.

There are three tasks for the students to carry out to get a grade.

- 1) Participating in the discussion. Doing the reading(s) for each class and notes while doing so;
- 2) Carry out the theorizing exercises
- 3) Producing the paper for the class. (Individual or Group ¿ maximum 3 students per group)
- 4) Short final exam

The paper consists of turning one exercise in to a small research report of no more than 2000 words. In the case students choose to do a group exercise, the grading is uniform across group members.

ASSESSMENT SYSTEM

Final Exam 30 % of the grade

Continuous assessment;

- 1) Research project in groups 30 (of which 10% is auto evaluation). The evaluation is based on a oral presentation of results.
- 2) Individual research paper 40% (2000 words)

% end-of-term-examination: 30

% of continuous assessment (assignments, laboratory, practicals...): 70

BASIC BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abbott, Andrew Methods of Discovery: Heuristics for the Social Sciences, Norton, 2004
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams The Craft of Research , University of Chicago Press, 1995
- Charles Lave and James G. March An Introduction to Models in the Social Sciences , University Press of

America, 1974

- Durkheim, Emile Rules of Sociological Method, The Free Press, 1982
- Maddison, Angus The World Economy. A Milleneal Perspective , OECD, 1996
- Merton, Robert K. On Theoretical Sociology, The Free Press, 1967
- Morgan, Mary S. The World in a Model. How Economists Work and Think , Cambridge University Press, 2012
- Schelling, Thomas C. Micromotives and Macrobehavior , Norton, 1978
- Stinchcombe, Arthur Constructing Social Theories, University of Chicago Press, 1987
- Swedberg Richard The Art of Social Theory: The Context of Discovery , Stanford University Press, 2014

ADDITIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Coyle, Diane GDP. A Brief but Affectionate History , Princeton University Press, 2014
- Crosby, Alfred W. The Measurement of Reality. Quantification and Western Society, 1250-1600, Cambridge University Press, 1997
- Goffman, Erving The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life, Doubleday, 1957
- McCloskey, Deirdre N. The Rhetoric of Economics , University of Wisconsin Press, 1998
- Mills, C. Wright The Sociological Imagination, Oxford University Press, 2000