
THESIS METHODOLOGY SEMINAR in Fall 2018 (PO5099)

Course Code	PO5099	Professor(s)	Susan Perry
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-L18
Class Schedule	W: 10:35-11:55 in SD-3	Office Hours	by appointment
Credits	2	Email	sperry@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2018	Office Tel. Ext.	588

Course Description

Course Summary

The MAIA Methodologies Seminar is designed to assist students in developing a viable MA thesis topic through advanced discussions of causality, analytical frameworks, resource ideas and networks, research and the actual written format. This seminar is the cornerstone in the process of building a research design for a 12,000-word thesis (15,000 for MAIA). Students from the Global Communications and Business graduate programs will follow instructions from their respective program directors.

This seminar is concerned with methodology and theory in the social sciences, as well as with its substantive results. Guest speakers may be brought in to present their current research in a manner that enlightens the seminar on various theoretical and methodological advances and helps students formulate a codified view of ongoing research in social sciences.

Please note that this seminar will focus on qualitative methods in social science research. That means that students will be working with a small number of cases, use fairly basic units of measurement or statistical testing, and rely upon detailed knowledge of chosen cases, with emphasis on participatory research, policy or legal analysis, and interviews.

Students will meet with the Professor individually and in small groups to further encourage intellectual risk taking and monitor progress. Each student will be expected to complete an 8-10 page thesis prospectus by the end of the semester that fully articulates his or her thesis topic and proposed methodology.

Course Learning Outcomes

A clear understanding of the concept of causality

Succinct analytical thinking

Articulate, well-organized oral expression

A lucid, well-structured written Prospectus
Demonstrated initiative in seeking out resources and research opportunities

General Education

[PLEASE EDIT OR REMOVE THE FOLLOWING TEXT AS APPLICABLE]

The general education program at AUP consists of four requirements: Speaking the World, Modeling the World, Mapping the World, and Comparing Worlds Past and Present.

This course can be used to fulfill the [INDICATE THE REQUIREMENT(S) FULFILLED BY THE COURSE] requirement and as such has the following learning outcomes:

[INDICATE THE GENERAL EDUCATION LEARNING OUTCOMES]

Course Outline

COURSE SCHEDULE:

Structuring the hypothesis

Week One (SEP/12): Designing a research problem and research objectives.

Reading: Luker Introduction

Optional: George and Bennett, Section I, pp. 1-64.

Week Two (SEP/19): Justifying the research problem. Why is this issue important?

Reading: Yin, Chapters 1&2

Optional: George and Bennett, Section II, pp. 65-124.

Week Three (SEP/26): Literature review. Justifying and specifying the research problem in relation to the current stage of the development and gaps in the relevant related literature. In what theoretical literature does this research problem fit? What gap in the literature, if any, does it address?

Reading: Luker, Chapter Five (on Backboard).

Research Methodology

Week Four (OCT/3): Clarifying your research goals. Is this a new hypothesis? Are you testing someone else's hypothesis? What kind of a test will be used?

Reading: Yin, Chapter 3

Optional: George and Bennett, Section III, pp. 125-204.

Week Five (OCT/10): Designing basic units of measurement and statistical testing

Reading: Luker, Chapter Ten

Optional: George and Bennett, Section III, pp. 205-286.

Week Six (OCT/17): Presenting your hypotheses and expectations.

Reading: Yin, Chapter 5

Optional: George & Bennett, Appendix, Studies that illustrate research design.

Week Seven (OCT/24): Interviewing for the case study + Statistics

Reading: Luker, Chapter Eight.

Fall Break

Core Arguments and Structural Outline:

Students will present a 40-minute cogent abstract of their chosen topic, a research plan and a brief summary of expected results, to be followed by class discussion and feedback.

NOV/5

NOV/12

NOV/19

NOV/26

DEC/2

Thesis submission requirements:

DEC/12 – In-class workshop on technical requirements for the thesis. This will include a discussion of student concerns in preparation of the thesis, and a presentation of University Guidelines and the role of the AUP Library.

Final examination period – individual appointments with professor.

Prospectus due at final examination period.

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences	Luker, Kristen	Harvard U Press	9780674048218	Yes
Case Study Research Applications	Yin	Sage	9781506336169	Yes

Attendance Policy

Attendance:

Barring death, hospitalization, or a note from the Dean:

- One absence per semester will be permitted.

Further full or half class absences will be penalized by 2 percentage points per absence.

For example, if a student is absent twice during the semester, a final grade of 80 (B-) will be reduced to 78 (C+).

- Chronic lateness will be penalized at the professor's discretion.

Students will be required to attend at least one evening lecture with a guest speaker.

Classroom comportment: As a courtesy to all, no eating (especially no bananas); no softdrinks; no cellphones, no email, Twitter or Facebook consultation in class. The use of computers and other wifi-ed electronic equipment is NOT encouraged, since student concentration suffers.

Plagiarism:

Presenting someone else's ideas as your own is unacceptable under any circumstances.

Special anti-plagiarism measures have been into this course to encourage all students to do their own work.

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, and in case of absence, should contact their professors to explain the situation. It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus. The French Department, for example, has its own attendance policy, and students are responsible for compliance. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Attendance at all exams is mandatory.

IN ALL CASES OF MISSED COURSE MEETINGS, THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION WITH THE PROFESSOR, AND FOR ARRANGING TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK, RESTS SOLELY WITH THE STUDENT.

Whether an absence is excused or not is ALWAYS up to the discretion of the professor or the department. Unexcused absences can result in a low or failing participation grade. In the case of excessive absences, it is up to the professor or the department to decide if the student will receive an "F" for the course. An instructor may recommend that a student withdraw, if absences have made it impossible to continue in the course at a satisfactory level.

Students must be mindful of this policy when making their travel arrangements, and especially during the Drop/Add and Exam Periods.

Grading Policy

Grading System:

Please note that the filing of your thesis registration form with Elizabeth Guinel (in the Office of Academic Affairs) is obligatory in order to receive your grade for this course. The form is available on our class Blackboard site.

In addition to mandatory course attendance, students will be expected to prepare (for) the following:

- Discussion (20%) based on in-class lectures and reading. Thoughtful feed-back during oral presentation sessions will be especially appreciated.
- Oral presentation of thesis topic (30%).
- Prospectus (50%) 8-10 pages in length, which articulates your thesis topic and proposed methodology. Due by final exam period. An example is available on the class Blackboard site. The following sections must be included in the Prospectus:

1. Proposed Topic
2. Central Questions
3. Core Arguments + Working Hypothesis
4. Research Methodology, including main theorists (and opposing views), as well as your strategy for collecting data or evidence on your case study.
5. Structural Outline
6. Requested Readers
7. Working Bibliography
8. Sources to follow up on

Other
