
THESIS METHODOLOGY SEMINAR in Fall 2020 (PO5099)

Course Code	PO5099	Professor(s)	Philip Golub
Prerequisites	None	Office Number	G-L17
Class Schedule	W: 10:50-12:25 in G-113	Office Hours	By appointment
Credits	2	Email	pgolub@aup.edu
Semester	Fall 2020	Office Tel. Ext.	cell: +33674575820

Course Description

Course Summary

The MAIA Methodologies Seminar is concerned with theory and methodology in social scientific research. It is designed to assist students in developing a viable MA thesis question/topic and prepare them for thesis writing through advanced discussions of social scientific approaches and methods: analytical frameworks, research methods 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. The 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, interviews, and policy or legal analysis (when relevant). 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 her/his 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

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND THE COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

These objectives are part of the graduate program's aim to provide rigorous intellectual preparation in the social sciences that, combined with professional training in other courses, will give graduates the tools to contribute to the global dialogue and effectuate change in the twenty first century.

Course Outline

CLASS SCHEDULE:

Please note that we will be as flexible as possible in the scheduling to make room under current conditions for creative teaching interactions and solutions.

September

Week I – 23/9

Course Introduction: What's an MA thesis all about? General outline of Thesis development and structure, course materials, course requirements and grading.

Week II – 30/9

Social science or social interpretation? What distinguishes social studies from the natural sciences, or how to be rigorous without trying to be an experimental physicist. The epistemological and methodological problems of intersubjective subject-object relations, and how to deal with this in qualitative research.

Readings: Luker, Chap.1 (and parts of Chapter 4)

September 30th – last day to drop/add courses online

October

Structuring the question and hypothesis

Week III – 7/10

Research interests, research problems, and research questions. Defining and justifying the research

problem/question(s): what is being investigated and why is it significant? Working out a research design (strategy

to address the research problem effectively and identifying the kind of evidence required to fulfill the research).

Readings: Luker Chapter 4; Yin, Chapters 1&2

Week IV –14/10

Literature reviews. Research questions and theory building. Situating the research problem in relation to the

current state of development and the gaps of the literature in your field. In what theoretical matrix does the

research problem/question fit? What gaps, if any, does it address? Addressing the problem of literature selection

in the age of infoglut.

Reading: Luker, Chapter 5

Research methodologies

Week V – 21/10

Case studies: from the micro to the macro or how case studies can lead to generalization.

Examples of

contemporary case studies in International Relations and Global Political Economy. Examples of historical

sociological methods in International Relations.

Reading: Yin, Chapter 1

Week VI – 28/10

Specification of research goals and narrowing of research topic (building the logical architecture of your case). Is

a new hypothesis being proposed, or are you testing or advancing another author's work?

What kind of logical

and empirical test(s) will be used to validate hypothesis of your work, and against what alternative theories will it

be tested? In the case of historical analysis, how will you found and unfold your argument?

Reading: Luker Chapter 8; Yin, Chapter 3

October 28th, Mid-semester

November

Week VII – 4/11

Data collection once research question is . Using and interpreting primary and secondary sources.

November 11th to 13th, fall break (no classes)

Week VIII – 18/11

Student presentations: core arguments and structural outline (40 minute presentations)

Week IX – 25/11

Student Presentations

November 27th, last day to withdraw from a course

last day to choose credit/no credit option

December
Week X – 2/12
Presentations (if still required) and work on prospectus with Professor
Week XI –9/12
Work on prospectus with Professor
December 11th, last day of classes,
December 12th - 15th, reading days
December 16th – 22th, Prospectus due
January 4nd, all grades due

Textbooks

Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN	Required
Salsa Dancing into the Social Sciences	Kristen Luker	Harvard University Press	9780674048218	Yes

Attendance Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are expected to attend ALL scheduled classes, in person or via video conference. In case of absence, they 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. Academic Affairs will excuse an absence for students' participation in study trips related to their courses.

Covid-19 temporary amendments:

Students studying at The American University of Paris are STILL EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL scheduled classes. Due to special circumstances related to the Covid-19 pandemic, students will have the option of attending some classes online either in a synchronous or asynchronous format. In general, students are expected to attend at least one class a week in a synchronous format by either being physically present or logged in via the TEAMS online platform during class. It is still the student's responsibility to be aware of any specific attendance policy that a faculty member might have set in the course syllabus.

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.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY STATEMENT: As an Anglophone university, The American University of Paris is strongly committed to effective English language mastery at the graduate level. Most courses require scholarly research and formal written and oral presentations in English, and AUP students are expected to strive to achieve excellence in these domains as part of their course work. To that end, professors include English proficiency among the criteria in student evaluation, often referring students to the university Writing Lab where they may obtain help on specific academic assignments.

Grading Policy

Grading

Please note that the filing of your thesis registration form with Elizabeth Guinel (Office of Academic Affairs) is obligatory in order to receive your grade for this course. Grade will be based on class presentations and prospectus.

Other

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE GRADUATE PROGRAM LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND THE COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

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