

Qualitative Methods

Institution:	School of Public Policy, Central European University
Year/Term:	Year 1, Term 1
Course type:	Core course
ECTS:	4

Brief description (including learning outcomes):

The course explores the philosophy of (social) science, research design and techniques of qualitative data gathering and analysis. We investigate what social scientists do and how they evaluate their theories and empirical material. In the course we explore research design (finding a research question, defining concepts and measurement, case selection), data gathering (interviews, using documents and archives, observation), data analysis and research based policy recommendation.

The course also sets the ground for research design issues and themes that will be further explored in the quantitative methods course offered in the winter semester. The course consists of ten seminars and two workshops. The formats of the seminars vary, but may feature guest speakers as well as short group exercises in addition to overviews given by the instructor/s and classroom discussions. The first of the workshops is devised to train students' capacity to analyze the research design of works by peers or scholars. The second workshop is a brainstorming session on how to put together the main building blocks of a research proposal. The workshops will be conducted in small groups, which are expected to submit short reports of their work afterwards. They may also be asked to present the results to the rest of the class.

Learning outcomes:

The general goal of the course is raising awareness of methodological problems and solutions in qualitative research. The material is based on book chapters and papers from the respective field, new contributions in the field and a selection of applied studies. As specific learning outcomes students should be able to develop a coherent qualitative research design on their own and choose the appropriate method of data gathering and data analysis tailored to their research question. In

addition, students should be able to critically review research and policy papers regarding their research design and methodological choices.