Research Methods (Courses + Methodology Workshop)

Institution: International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam

Year, Block: Year 1, Blocks 1 and 3

Course type: Core course

ECTS: 8

Brief description: Students are required to take 8 ECTS: 5 ECTS from one of the courses below and 3 ECTS from the Workshop.

Course code	Course Title	ECTS
ISS- M202	Qualitative Research Methods and (Digital) Fieldwork	5
ISS- M203	Quantitative Methods for Development Research	5

ISS- 4380	Research Methodology Workshop	3

ISS-M202	**Qualitative Research Methods and (Digital) Fieldwork**
Institution:	International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Year/Term:	Year 1, Block 1
Course type:	Research Methods
Assessment:	Individual assignment on research design (25%)
	Field report (30%)
	Individual assignment on data analysis (45%)
ECTS:	5

Brief description (including learning outcomes):
The course introduces students to methods and skills for qualitative research emphasising the social interaction, the co-creative, and increasingly, the digitally-enabled processes through which qualitative data is generated. Participants will develop necessary and pragmatic skills to design, implement, analyse, and document, interview- and ethnography-based research to be conducted in-person and remotely virtually.

Structured around experiential learning, the course treats qualitative interviewing as the central method, which is extended into participant observation. It will also incorporate participatory techniques (i.e. photo elicitation, photo voice, (digital) transect walks). It will guide students on maintaining detailed field notes to document the interview context and surroundings, enabling a comprehensive and well-rounded approach to fieldwork. Through various workshop sessions, the course will also introduce students to the analysis of qualitative data, including manual techniques as well as software-aided approaches (Atlas.ti).

At the end of this course, participants will be able to:

- Explain key qualitative research methods, including interviews and participant observation, by identifying their core principles, appropriate applications, types of research questions addressed, and respective strengths and limitations.
- Design and implement a qualitative research strategy that integrates interviews and/or participant observation in alignment with their research project.
- Select and navigate physical and digital field sites by developing strategies for gaining access and identifying key interlocutors in alignment with research objectives.
- Analyse qualitative data using digital methods in a systematic and ethically informed manner.
- Critically reflect on positionality, power, and ethics in qualitative research, evaluating how their own social location and research context shape knowledge production.

Indicative readings

King, N., C. Horrocks and J. Brooks (2019). *Interviews in Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.

Pinsky, D. (2015). The sustained snapshot: Incidental ethnographic encounters in qualitative interview studies. Qualitative Research, 15(3), 281-295.
Soedirgo, J., & Glas, A. (2020). Toward Active Reflexivity: Positionality and Practice in the Production of Knowledge. *PS: Political Science & Politics*, 53(3), 527–531.
Thunberg, S., & Arnell, L. (2022). Pioneering the use of technologies in qualitative research–A research review of the use of digital interviews. *International journal of social research methodology*, *25*(6), 757-768.

ISS-M203	**Quantitative Methods for Development Research**
Institution:	International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Year/Term:	Year 1, Block 1
Course type:	Research Methods
Assessment:	Individual assignments (40%), Final invigilated exam (60%)
ECTS:	5

Brief description (including learning outcomes):

This course is designed for MA students with an interest in quantitative analysis of development research and a critical assessment of data-driven claims. It introduces students to the foundation and techniques of classical regression analysis and provides hands-on experience with statistical software.

The course is structured in two parts. In the first part, students will be introduced to basic linear models to analyse bivariate and multivariate linear relationships. The second part of the course covers non-linear methods to analyse qualitative and limited dependent variables, such as probit, logit, ordered and unordered logit and probit models. Through lectures and computer workshops, students will develop an understanding of estimation and inferences using these models.

After completion of the course, students will be able to:

- demonstrate a solid understanding of the theories and principles of basic quantitative data analysis and their application in development research;
- utilize quantitative data to address research questions and inform policy analysis with a focus on development studies;
- appraise and interpret quantitative research results produced by other researchers, identifying potential biases and limitations;
- demonstrate proficiency in the use of statistical software to design, execute, and interpret empirical analyses confidently.

Indicative readings

Gujarati, D. (2023) *Essentials of Econometrics* (5th edn), Boston: Sage.

Singh, K. (2007) *Quantitative Social Research Methods*, New Delhi: Sage India.

Swift, L., and Piff, S. (2014) *Quantitative Methods for Business, Management and Finance* (4th ed), London: Bloomsbury.

Wooldridge, J.M. (2019) *Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach* (7th edn), Mason: Cengage Learning, chapters 2-9 and 17.

ISS-4380	**Research Methodology Workshop**
Institution:	International Institute of Social Studies, Erasmus University Rotterdam
Year/Term:	Year 1, Block 3
Course type:	Research Methods
Assessment:	
ECTS:	3
Teaching Staff:	**Karin Arts; Jeff Handmaker; Wil Hout; Karim Knio; Shuaib Lwasa**

The research methodology workshop aims to organize and guide the thesis report process throughout year 1. It consists of three phases:

Phase I: It starts in mid-February when students are invited to submit an initial thesis proposal document (one pager) which is comprised of the following:

- Thematic area of concern.
- A clear problem of research presented via why and how research questions.
- Sub research questions (optional at this stage).
- Indication of the theoretical and methodological frameworks selected.
- Indication of ontological commitment and positioning.

Upon the submission of this document by early March, a series of individual meetings with the program director will follow. The aim of these meetings is to situate the thesis proposals within the problem situating learning objectives of the ISS tracks.

Phase II: Starts in mid-April with the appointment of ISS supervisors. Students are encouraged to consult with their respective ISS supervisors to expand upon the initial thesis proposal into a six pager document. Both the one and six pager documents will be shared with year 2 institutions to facilitate the appointment of year 2 supervisors around May-June.

Phase III: This phase revolves around the Mundus MAPP thesis seminars organized in the first two weeks of July. During these informal seminars, every student should present their current findings and where they are in the thesis report process. Every session is for one hour. The presenter will have i) 20 minutes to showcase their thesis followed by ii) 10 minutes Q&A between the presenter and two discussants, iii) followed by another 10 minutes Q&A between the presenter and audience, iv) before the supervisor and/or program director wraps up the session with their comments.

The discussants in these seminars are fellow Mundus MAPP and /or Masters in Development Studies colleagues. Students have to pick discussants in advance and at least one of the discussants has to be a Mundus MAPP student to ensure the articulation and expression of problem situating language and reasoning throughout the seminars. Students can opt for two Mundus discussants if that would be their preference. Discussants' comments are expected to be sharp, concise and critical in their formulation. Furthermore, all Mundus MAPP students are expected to be present in each other's presentations. They are also expected to send power point (ppt) presentations to their supervisor at least 2 days before their respective presentations.

At the end of the seminars, students should quickly meet again with their supervisors and incorporate the relevant comments and send them back to the program director within few days for a finalized version of their ppts (sous form of PDF). The program director will then share these documents with year 2 institutions and introduce the students to their second year supervisors.

All of these three phases are the preparatory steps before the students submit their thesis report by the end of August.