

Course manual
Joint Master's Programme in
International Humanitarian Action

University of
Warsaw

September 2015

Methodology and methods in humanitarian action

Semester 2

Module coordinator:	Dr. Jan Winczorek e-mail: janwin@janwin.info phone (office): 22-5520815 office location: Collegium Iuridicum I, room 320 office hours: Tuesdays, 13:45-14:45 (from 23 rd February)
Lecturers:	Dr. Jan Winczorek e-mail: janwin@janwin.info phone (office): 22-5520815 office location: Collegium Iuridicum I, room 320 office hours: Tuesdays, 13:45-14:45 (from 23 rd February)
Credits awarded:	5 ECTS, equivalent to 125 work hours (1 ECTS = 25 hours)
Period:	Second semester, block 1 .
Venue & hours:	Tuesdays, 15:00 - 16:30, room 403, Collegium Iuridicum I

1. Introduction

The module is an element of the third component (Orientation Period, 30 ECTS) of the NOHA Joint Master's Degree in International Humanitarian Action to be completed during the second semester. It forms a recognised part of the curriculum and is a requirement for obtaining the NOHA Master's degree.

The objective of the course is to introduce students to research methods of social science applicable in both academic study of humanitarian action and the practice thereof. Skills and knowledge obtained during this course should in particular be useful in designing and conducting evaluation studies of humanitarian intervention, completing need assessments in the field, analysing policy objectives, and collaborating with specialised research agencies.

As designing and conducting empirical research requires both knowledge and skill, the main principle of the course is to combine theoretical discussion of research methodology with practical training involving both fieldwork and data analysis. To that end students will be asked to participate in research exercises and conduct a research project of their own.

2. Learning outcomes

Knowledge

- *Has developed* specialised knowledge and a critical understanding of research methods appropriate for the humanitarian field.

Skills

- Has demonstrated the ability to identify and justify research methods that are ethically appropriate for scientific research in the humanitarian workfield.
- Has demonstrated the ability to implement research methods for humanitarian research in a controlled setting.

Competences

- Has developed the capacity to reflect on the use of a method and the knowledge gained thereof in terms of ethical aspects and the researcher's position.

- Has studied a research topic in depth with an application of relevant methodology, learns from past experiences in order to be prepared for a bigger humanitarian research

3. Course material

Mandatory reading (excerpts):

1. Babbie, Earl, 2014, *The Basics of Social Research*, Cengage. (hereinafter "Babbie")
2. Krippendorff. Klaus, 2004, *Content Analysis. An Introduction to its Methodology*. Sage (2nd edition)
3. Patton, Michael Q, 2001, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, Sage.
4. Tomaszewski, Brian. 2014. *Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Disaster Management*. 1 edition. Boca Raton: CRC Press.
5. *Humanitarian Needs Assessment: The Good Enough Guide*. 2015. Practical Action.

Recommended reading (to be used as additional/illustration material):

1. Atlani-Duault, Laëtitia. 2008. *Humanitarian Aid in Post-Soviet Countries: An Anthropological Perspective*. Routledge.
2. Clarke, M., C. Allen, F. Archer, D. Wong, A. Eriksson, and J. Puri. 2014. "What Evidence Is Available and What Is Required, in Humanitarian Assistance." *International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, London*.
3. Dijkzeul, Dennis, Dorothea Hilhorst, and Peter Walker. 2013. "Introduction: Evidence-Based Action in Humanitarian Crises." *Disasters* 37: 1–19.
4. Doocy, Shannon, Adam Sirois, Jamie Anderson, Margarita Tileva, Elizabeth Biermann, J. Douglas Storey, and Gilbert Burnham. 2011. "Food Security and Humanitarian Assistance among Displaced Iraqi Populations in Jordan and Syria." *Social Science & Medicine* 72 (2): 273–82.
5. Henson, Spencer, and Johanna Lindstrom. 2013. "'A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep'? Understanding Public Support for Aid: The Case of the United Kingdom." *World Development* 42: 67–75.
6. Höijer, Birgitta. 2004. "The Discourse of Global Compassion: The Audience and Media Reporting of Human Suffering." *Media, Culture & Society* 26 (4): 513–31
7. *Humanitarian Response Index 2011: Addressing the Gender Challenge*. 2011. Madrid: Dara.
8. Hyndman, Jennifer. 2000. *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*. U of Minnesota Press.
9. Jacobsen, Karen, and Loren B. Landau. 2003. "The Dual Imperative in Refugee Research: Some Methodological and Ethical Considerations in Social Science Research on Forced Migration." *Disasters* 27 (3): 185–206.
10. Lucini, Barbara. 2014. *Disaster Resilience from a Sociological Perspective: Exploring Three Italian Earthquakes as Models for Disaster Resilience Planning*. Springer Science & Business.
11. Mackenzie, Catriona, Christopher McDowell, Eileen Pittaway, A. Zwi, Grove, N, Zion, D, Tarantola, D., and Silove, D. 2007. "Beyond 'Do No Harm': The Challenge of Constructing Ethical Relationships in Refugee Research." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20 (2): 299–319.
12. Mazurana, Dyan, Prisca Benelli, and Peter Walker. 2013. "How Sex- and Age-Disaggregated Data and Gender and Generational Analyses Can Improve Humanitarian Response." *Disasters* 37: S68–82.
13. Meier, Patrick. 2015. *Digital Humanitarians: How Big Data Is Changing the Face of Humanitarian Response*. Null edition. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.

14. Puri, Jyotsna, Anastasia Aladysheva, Vegard Iversen, Yashodhan Ghorpade, and Tilman Brück. 2015. "What Methods May Be Used in Impact Evaluations of Humanitarian Assistance?"
15. Zacher, Meghan, Hollie Nyseth Brehm, and Joachim J. Savelsberg. 2014. "NGOs, IOs, and the ICC: Diagnosing and Framing Darfur." In *Sociological Forum*, 29:29–51. Wiley Online Library.

NB! The recommended reading list is preliminary and might change.

4. Teaching and learning methodology

The course focuses on research techniques (sets of activities aimed at producing knowledge of a particular type) rather than on particular topics in humanitarian research or possible applications of research techniques (such as need assessments, policy studies, evaluation studies etc). It is also assumed that full production cycle of a research study - from conceptualisation stage to writing up of results is simulated during the course. This design aims to provide optimal learning environment for student groups whose prior knowledge of research methodologies varies, and to ensure that the steep learning curve needed for obtaining learning outcomes is indeed accomplished.

The same objectives are served by diverse teaching methods including short presentations by the lecturer, individual assignments for students, and different forms of group work. Extensive use is made of Blackboard learning environment and other IT tools allowing for collaborative learning. A standard textbook of research methods in social sciences is used as a reference, along with supplementary reading material addressing specific issues in humanitarian research.

The course consists of 15 classes (tutorials) which can be roughly divided into 4 categories. The first is theoretical. Classes within this group are devoted to discussion of basic issues in research methodology of social sciences, such as different research designs, sampling strategies, and ethical questions. Three classes of this type are conducted during the course.

The second component focuses on specific techniques of humanitarian research: doing interviews, collecting official data, observing, performing content analysis. Within this component every class will be devoted to discussion of one research technique. For the sake of practical training, during each class students will be asked to collaboratively prepare a research tool and then use it outside of the classroom in a short research exercise. Five classes of this type are conducted.

The third component of the course is devoted to analysis and interpretation of empirical data gathered during exercises in the second component or obtained in a different way. This includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis. During classes of this type, apart from reading assignments and in-class discussions, students will be expected to perform certain analytical activities and write a short paper (approx 300 words) interpreting the results. Five classes of this type are conducted.

The fourth component is devoted to choice of research techniques for given purposes and their typical limitations. Two classes of this type are conducted.

5. Programme and training activities

Week 1 – 23.02.2016

1. Introduction

Organisation of the course.

Basic notions in methodology of humanitarian research.

Qualitative, quantitative and mixed research strategies

Common applications of empirical knowledge in humanitarian action

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapters I & II

Recommended reading: Dijkzeul, Hilhorst, and Walker 2013
Writing assignment: none

Week 2 – 1.03.2016

II. Research design

Conceptualisation of research
Units of analysis
Correlation and causality
Operationalisation of concepts
Quality control

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapters IV & V
Recommended reading: Clarke et al. 2014
Writing assignment: Drafting a conceptual research proposal - deadline 7.03.2016 , submission via Blackboard

Week 3 – 8.03.2016

III. Doing interviews, pt. I: structured interviews

Types of questions
Structure of interview
Methods of executing surveys

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapter IX
Recommended readings: Henson and Lindstrom 2013, Doocy et al. 2011
Writing assignment: preparation of a questionnaire - deadline 14.03.2016 , submission via survey site.

Week 4 - 15.03.2016

IV. Sampling

Descriptive and inferential statistics
Types of samples
Sampling errors and bias

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapter VII
Recommended reading: Jacobsen and Landau 2003
Writing assignment: none
Research exercise I: execution of a sample survey, 5 interviews -deadline 21.03.2016, submission via survey site.

Week 5 - 22.03.2016

V. Analyzing quantitative data pt. I: survey data.

Introduction to quantitative data analysis
Software for analysis of quantitative data
Types of analysis
Interpretation of quantitative data

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapter IX
Recommended reading: Mazurana, Benelli, and Walker 2013

Writing assignment: - interpretation of survey data gathered during exercise I (300 words) - deadline 29.03.2016, submission via Blackboard

Week 6 - 30.03.2016

VI. Doing interviews, pt. II: in-depth interviews

Objectives of qualitative research
Types of qualitative research
Types and purposes of triangulation
Preparing for in-depth interviews
Conducting in-depth interviews

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapter IX

Recommended reading: Lucini 2014, chap. 5, 6, 8, Höijer 2004

Writing assignment: preparation of a script for an in-depth interview - deadline 4.04.2016, submission via Blackboard.

Week 7 - 5.04.2016

VII. Ethical and political concerns in humanitarian research

Power relations in research
Consent of participants
Possible threats
Fads and foibles of evidence-based policy

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapter III

Recommend reading: Mackenzie et al. 2007

Research exercise II: conducting and transcribing one in-depth interview - deadline 11.04.2016, submission via qualitative research site.

Week 8 - 12.04.2016

VIII. Analyzing qualitative data I: grounded approach

Types of qualitative analysis
Grounded theory as a methodological principle
Inductive coding
Theory building
Software for analysing and visualising qualitative data

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapter XIII

Recommended reading: Atlani-Duault 2008, chap. 4

Writing assignment: coding and interpretation (300 words) of qualitative data obtained during exercise II - deadline 18.04.2016. Submission via qualitative research site and Blackboard.

Week 9 - 19.04.2016

IX. Collecting/Analyzing quantitative data, pt. II: Using official data.

Sources of official data
Dangers and common problems
Using software for analyzing official data
Building indices

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapter VI

Recommended reading: *Humanitarian Response Index 2011: Addressing the Gender Challenge* 2011

Research exercise III: analysis and interpretation (300 words) of data on a selected topic in humanitarian research - deadline 25.04.2016. Submission via Blackboard

Week 10 - 26.04.2016

X. Observing.

Types of observation

Stages of observation in the field

Production of evidence

Reading assignment: Patton, Chapter 6

Recommended reading: Hyndman 2000, chap. 4

Research exercise IV: - participant observation in a site relevant for humanitarian research, provision of notes from fieldwork - deadline 9.05.2016. Submission via survey research site.

Week 11 – 3.05.2016

No class - state holiday

Week 12 – 10.05.2016

XI. Content analysis

Characteristics of the technique

Types of content analysis

Unitizing

Coding schemes

Reading assignment: Krippendorff, Chapters 2, 4.1, 5.1 to 5.3, 7.1 and 7.4

Research exercise V: selection and preparation of content for analysis - deadline 16.05.2016. Submission via qualitative research site.

Week 13 - 17.05.2016

XII. Analysing qualitative data, pt. II: structured and mixed approaches

Quantitative analysis of qualitative data

Qualitative analysis of quantitative data

Intercoder reliability

Validity criteria

Reading assignment: Krippendorff, Chapter 9

Recommended reading: Zacher, Brehm, and Savelsberg 2014

Writing assignment: analysis and interpretation of data (300 words) obtained in exercises IV and V. Deadline 23.05.2016. Submission via Blackboard.

Week 14 - 24.05.2016

XIII. Analysing quantitative data, pt. III: Big data and GIS in humanitarian research

Reading assignment: Tomaszewski 2014, 1,3,8

Recommended reading: Meier 2015, chap. 2

Final research project, stage I: writing a proposal. Deadline 30.05.2016. Submission via Blackboard.

Week 15 – 31.05.2016

XIV. Applying research tools: evaluation studies

Reading assignment: Babbie, Chapter XII

Recommended reading: Puri et al. 2015

Final research project, stage II: designing research tools. Deadline 6.06.2015. Submission via Blackboard, survey site and/or qualitative research site.

Week 16 – 7.06.2016

XV. Applying research tools: need assessments

Reading assignment: *Humanitarian Needs Assessment: The Good Enough Guide* 2015

Final research project, stage III: conducting the research.

Exam week - 14.06.2016

Final research project, stage IV: data analysis and interpretation. Submission of a report (1000 words). Deadline 20.06.2016. Submission via Blackboard.

Final deadline for delivering all missing or corrected assignments - 20.06.2016

6. Workload

Participation in classes	30	hours	1,2	ECTS
Reading assignments & preparation	45	hours	1,8	ECTS
Completion of exercises and projects	50	hours	2,0	ECTS
Total	125	hours	5,0	ECTS

7. Assessment methods

Activity during class - 20%

Research exercises - $6 \cdot 8\% = 48\%$

Final research project - 32%

8. Assessment criteria

Activity during class	Quality and quantity of contribution during class discussions and activities
Research exercises	Quality of individual work Quality of collaboration with others Time discipline
Final research project	Quality of individual work Quality of collaboration with others Time discipline

