

Course manual
Joint Master's Programme in
International Humanitarian
Action

University of
Warsaw

Research design

Semester 3



Module coordinator:

Dr. Jan Winczorek
 e-mail: janwin@janwin.info
 phone:
 office location: room 318, Collegium Iuridicum I
 office hours: Tuesdays, 10:15-11:15

Lecturers:

Dr. Jan Winczorek
 8 ECTS, equivalent to 200 work hours (1 ECTS = 25 hours)
 Third semester
 Venue: Room 416, Collegium Iuridicum I
 Tuesdays, 11:30-13:00

1. Introduction

The module is an element of the fourth component of the NOHA Joint Master's Degree in International Humanitarian Action to be completed during the third 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 improve students' understanding of what constitutes a proper research design and guide them through the process of designing their own research for the purposes of writing a master thesis. To that end, the course will provide information on standards of research design and results communication recognized in the academic community as well as relevant training in these areas. It will also give students an opportunity to receive critical feedback on their own attempts to work up to this standard.

2. Learning outcomes

Knowledge	
Has a critical methodological understanding of what constitutes an appropriate design for a research project in a certain regional context.	K_W01 +++
Skills	
Has demonstrated the ability to develop a research proposal based on a given research line.	K_U01 +++
Has the ability to develop an appropriate methodological setup for a given study with a limited scope.	K_U01 +++
Has the ability to establish and implement an appropriate research design for the systematic collection and analysis of data under the guidance of an assigned tutor.	K_U01 +++
Has demonstrated the ability to present and defend one's research proposal and preliminary findings of a research project.	K_U09 +++
Has the ability to synthesise data towards viable recommendations for a research study with limited scope.	K_U03 +++
Has demonstrated the ability to document a research project with limited scope in accordance with the agreed guidelines on	K_U01 +++

research design and referencing.	
Has the ability to develop an appropriate literature review from relevant primary and secondary sources regarding a certain regional humanitarian topic.	K_U01 +++
Has demonstrated the ability to apply theoretical knowledge to new and unfamiliar and complex situations.	K_U03 +++
Has the ability to use research methods to solve problems based on evidence in a certain regional humanitarian context.	K_U07 ++
Social competences	
Demonstrates transparently the principles that guide data collection (objectivity, ethics and accountability) in one's research.	K_K01 +++ K_K02 ++ K_K03 +

3. Course material

Core readings:

1. J. Creswell (2014), Research design, Sage
2. J. W. Anastas (1999), Research design for social work and the human services, Columbia University Press
3. F. Bechofer & L. Paterson (2000), Principles of Research Design in the Social Sciences, Routledge
4. V. Desai & R. Potter (2006), Doing Development Research, Sage.
5. J. Hofman et al (2004), Measuring the impact of humanitarian aid
A review of current practice, HPG.
6. R. Stockman (2011), A Practitioner Handbook on Evaluation, Edward Edgar
7. D. Greenwood & M. Levin (2007), Introduction to action research: social research for social change, Sage
8. G. King, Keohane and S. Verba (1994), Designing social inquiry : scientific inference in qualitative research, Princeton University Press.

Illustrative readings:

TBA. (For every class there will be one illustrative reading to be skimmed through)

Websites:

- <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide>
- <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info>
- <https://cirt.gcu.edu/research/developmentresources/tutorials>
- <http://repository.forcedmigration.org/>
- <http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications>

9. Teaching and learning methodology

Teaching methodology is primarily organised around critical reading and discussing of relevant academic and practical literature. This will mainly include works in research design and methodology, but also examples of good practices in HA research. To ensure that knowledge accumulation

translates into skill enhancement, during the course students will also complete two research projects: a literature review, and a research proposal. These projects will have the form of assignments to be accomplished out of class as individual work (research proposal) or as individual work or group work (literature review). A typical class will involve teacher's short presentation, an in-class discussion, and collective work elements. Apart from this, students will have an opportunity to present the result of their work in the form of oral presentations of their own research proposals when they reach sufficient maturity.

10. Programme and training activities

Course is offered as in-class seminar, with individual topics discussed over 14 meetings, 2 academic hours (90 minutes) each. Literature is distributed, and writing assignments are to be delivered using Blackboard site.

Week 1

Essentials of research methodology - a rehearsal
Reading: Creswell, chapter 1 (19 pages)

Week 2

Theory and data in basic and applied research designs
Reading: Creswell, chapter 3, Bechofer & Paterson, chapter 9 (25 + 15 pages)

Week 3

Doing literature reviews
Reading: Creswell, chapter 2 (24 pages)

Assignment: A literature review in HA.

Explanation: In this assignment you are asked to review academic and grey literature in a select topic relevant to HA. Your tasks include selecting the literature, finding it, analyzing it, critically reflecting upon it, and writing a paper summarizing the findings (1200 words minimum). As a result, you should obtain knowledge on the state of knowledge in the selected field and be able to identify its strong points and gaps as well as potential topics for further study. It is advised, but not mandatory, that the topic of literature review is linked to your planned master thesis. The assignment can be performed as a group assignment (2 persons max) with required paper volume growing accordingly. **NB! Topic selection influences your next assignment so you must be considerate.**

Objective of assignment: Doing this assignment will enhance your familiarity with HA literature and improve skills in critical analysis of complex topics.

Assessment criteria: see assessment methods below.

Due date: 20 November 2017, 12:00PM.

Submission method: Via Blackboard.

Week 4

Academic writing & communication of results
Reading: Desai & Potter, chapters 30 & 31 (22 pages)

Week 5

Univariate, causal, cross-sectional and longitudinal designs
Reading: Anastas, chapter 6 (19 pages)

Week 6

Baseline and impact assessments

Reading: Hofman et al, chapters 1,2,3,4,5 (28 pages)

Week 7

Evaluation

Reading: Stockman, chapter 2 (49 pages)

Week 8

Operations research or research projects management - TBD by students

Literature reviews due on 20 November 2017

Week 9

Rejecting the split: action research

Reading: Greenwood & Levin, chapters 1, 8 & 9 (38 pages)

Week 10

Case studies

Reading: Anastas, chapter 4 (15 pages)

Week 11

Idiographic, descriptive and historical designs

Reading: King, Keohane and Verba, chapter 2 (41 pages)

Week 12

Presentations of research projects

Reading: TBA by presenting students

Week 13

Presentations of research projects

Reading: TBA by presenting students

Week 14

Presentations of research projects

Reading: TBA by presenting students

Exam week

Assignment: Final research project due on 5 February 2017.

Explanation: In this assignment you are asked prepare a research project design. This should be realistic proposal to be executed in the process of your master thesis preparation. It should take into account all knowledge you have obtained in the methodology of research in HA, incorporate findings from your literature review, and have both a theoretical and practical relevance. You should formulate a clear topic of your research, put forward hypotheses, and prepare research tools (if you intend to use them), as well as provide bibliography. Proposal should be written up to academic standard and be no shorter than 2400 words.

Objective of assignment: Doing this is assignment is a step towards preparation of master thesis. The text produced might (upon consultation with master thesis supervisor) be incorporated in the master thesis.

Assessment criteria: see assessment methods below.

Due date: 5 February 2017, 12:00PM.

Submission method: Via Blackboard.

11. Workload

Participation in classes	42 hours
Reading assignments (except literature review) approx. 300 pages	43 hours
Literature review preparation & writing up	40 hours
Research proposal preparation & writing up	75 hours
Working hours total	200
ECTS total	8

12. Assessment methods

Task	Description	Weight
Active participation in classes	Students are expected to take part in discussion, participate in group work, demonstrate familiarity with mandatory readings.	10%
Preparation of literature review	Students will prepare a literature review on a HA topic of their choosing. This includes identifying relevant writings, analysing them, identifying topics, critically reflecting upon existing knowledge and writing up to an academic standard (1200 words). This assignment is available as both individual or group work. Due date for this assignment is end of week 7.	30%
Preparation of a research design project	Students will prepare a research project proposal, including a conceptualisation of research problem in the light of existing theoretical and empirical literature, choice of a research design and its justification, operationalisation of an empirical problem, empirical tool preparation, preparation of a theoretical, methodological and empirical bibliography, and writing up to an academic standard (2400 words). This assignment is available as individual work only. Due date for this assignment is beginning of exam week.	50%
Research design presentation in class	Research design will be presented orally in class. Due dates for this assignment are classes during week 13, 14, 15.	10%

13. Assessment criteria

Task	Assessment criteria
------	---------------------

Active participation in classes	Continuous assessment - teacher's discretion
Preparation of a literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance and validity of topic choice Coverage of literature Analysis quality Criticality Observation of academic writing guidelines Time discipline
Preparation of a research project design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance and validity of topic choice Quality of conceptualisation Relevance and justification of research design choice Validity and feasibility of operationalisation Empirical tool quality Bibliography quality, technical Observation of academic writing guidelines Time discipline
Research design project presentation in class	Peer assessment using assessment sheet

14. Appendices

[Any supporting documents to explain parts of the module more in detail.]