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International Association of Universities

Course manual  
Joint Master's Programme in  
International Humanitarian Action

# Methodology and methods in humanitarian action

University of Warsaw

September 2017 – June 2018  
Semester 2

<b>Module coordinator</b>	Prof. dr hab. Tomasz Stawecki e-mail: tomasz.stawecki@gmail.com phone (office): 22-552 43 16 office location: Collegium Iuridicum I, room 318 office hours: Wednesdays, 15:30-16:30 (from 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2018)
<b>Lecturers:</b>	Prof. dr hab. Tomasz Stawecki e-mail: tomasz.stawecki@gmail.com phone (office): 22-552 43 16 office location: Collegium Iuridicum I, room 318 office hours: Wednesdays, 15:30-16:30 (from 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2018)
<b>Credits awarded:</b>	5 ECTS, equivalent to 125 work hours (1 ECTS = 25 hours)
<b>Period:</b>	Second semester, block 1
<b>Venue &amp; hours:</b>	Wednesdays, 13:15-14:45, Collegium Iuridicum II (at Lipowa Street 4) <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Except for the class of 18.04.2018 (Week 8) to be held on 11:30 – 13:00 in Room 3.12 at Collegium Iuridicum III, Oboźna Street 6

## 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):

6. Atlani-Duault, Laetitia. 2008. *Humanitarian Aid in Post-Soviet Countries: An Anthropological Perspective*. Routledge.
7. 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*.
8. Dijkzeul, Dennis, Dorothea Hilhorst, and Peter Walker. 2013. "Introduction: Evidence- Based Action in Humanitarian Crises." *Disasters* 37: 1-19.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Höjjer, Birgitta. 2004. "The Discourse of Global Compassion: The Audience and Media Reporting of Human Suffering." *Media, Culture & Society* 26 (4): 513-31
12. *Humanitarian Response Index 2011: Addressing the Gender Challenge*. 2011. Madrid: Dara.
13. Hyndman, Jennifer. 2000. *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism*. U of Minnesota Press.
14. 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.
15. Lucini, Barbara. 2014. *Disaster Resilience from a Sociological Perspective: Exploring Three Italian Earthquakes as Models for Disaster Resilience Planning*. Springer Science & Business.
16. 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.
17. 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.
18. Meier, Patrick. 2015. *Digital Humanitarians: How Big Data Is Changing the Face of Humanitarian Response*. Null edition. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
19. Puri, Jyotsna, Anastasia Aladysheva, Vegard Iversen, Yashodhan Ghorpade, and Tilman Brück. 2015. "What Methods May Be Used in Impact Evaluations of Humanitarian Assistance?"
20. 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. Course material

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 four 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 - 28.02.2018

##### *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 - 7.03.2018**

### ***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  
14.03.2018, submission via Blackboard

## **Week 3 - 14.03.2018**

### ***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 21.03.2018 ,  
submission via survey site.

## **Week 4 - 21.03.2018**

### ***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  
28.03.2018, submission via survey site.

## **Week 5 - 28.03.2018**

### ***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

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Writing assignment: - interpretation of survey data gathered during exercise I (300 words) - deadline 4.04.2018, submission via Blackboard

### **Week 6 - 4.04.2018**

#### ***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, Hoijer 2004

Writing assignment: preparation of a script for an in-depth interview - deadline 11.04.2018, submission via Blackboard.

### **Week 7 - 11.04.2018**

#### ***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 18.04.2018, submission via qualitative research site.

### **Week 8 - 18.04.2018 (11:30 – 13:00)<sup>2</sup>**

#### **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 25.04.2018. Submission via qualitative research site and Blackboard.

<sup>2</sup> Room 3.12 at Collegium Iuridicum III, Oboźna Street 6; class moved from the week of 19.02.2018.

## **Week 9 - 18.04.2018 (13:15 – 14:45)**

### **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 9.05.2018. Submission via Blackboard

## **Week 10 - 25.04.2018**

### **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 9.05.2018. Submission via survey research site.

## **Week 11 - 2.05.2018**

No class - state holiday

## **Week 12 - 9.05.2018**

### **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 16.05.2018.

Submission via qualitative research site.

## **Week 13 - 16.05.2018**

### **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: Krippendorf, 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 23.05.2018. Submission via Blackboard.

**Week 14 - 23.05.2018**

**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 30.05.2018.  
Submission via Blackboard.

**Week 15 - 30.05.2018**

**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 7.06.2015.  
Submission via Blackboard, survey site and/or qualitative research site.

**Week 16 - 6.06.2018**

**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 - 14.06.2018**

Final research project, stage IV: data analysis and interpretation. Submission of a report (1000 words). Deadline 21.06.2018. Submission via Blackboard.  
Final deadline for delivering all missing or corrected assignments - 21.06.2018

**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
<b>Total</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>hours</b>	<b>5,0</b>	<b>ECTS</b>

## 7. Assessment methods

Activity during class - 20%

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

Final research project - 32%

## 8. Assessment criteria

Activity during class	Quality and quantity of contribution during class discussions and activities
Research excercises	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