



**Academic Year 2025 -2026
Syllabus
Research Methodologies | How to Write a Thesis
CFU 3
Università degli Studi di Roma “Tor Vergata”**

Prerequisite: How Write and Develop an Academic Paper or equivalent

Course Description

This course introduces students to the essential principles and practices of research methodology, preparing them for independent thesis work, from source analysis & primary research, literature review, research ethics to data collection, analysis techniques, and academic writing. By the end of the course, students will be able to develop a research proposal aligned with their thesis interests. Students throughout the course will be asked to refine their skills learned in the first course in academic writing, by perceiving both the key features of BA students research and its possible outcomes.

Students will learn how to robustly design a social science based research thesis project starting from specific research questions and select an appropriate methodology to collect the data for their thesis.

Teaching Method

The course is based on 2h/3h sessions. Lectures will blend essay theory with the basics of BA level research. Students are always encouraged to actively participate.

Assessment and final exam credit

This course carries **3 CFU**. The course is a pass/fail exam (esame di idoneità).

Credits will be assessed upon completion and passing of the final exam.

Assessment Component	Weight
Research Methods Presentation (This assignment is a presentation on an aspect of the research process, theories and or methods)	50%
Thesis proposal and oral exam.	50%

Lecture Calendar

N/A

Topics by Week

Week	Topic	Expanded Description
1/2/3	Introduction to Research, Writing from Theory and AI Ethics	Introduces the basic concepts of academic research, including the definition and purpose of research, the scientific method, types of research (basic vs. applied, qualitative vs. quantitative), and the overall research process. Minorly, this week also introduces students to the discipline of writing from and with strands of cultural theory (only major tenents). Intro to APA and review of MLA basics.
4	Writing from Theory + Identifying Research Problems and Case Studies	Students learn to formulate clear research questions and hypotheses and understand the importance of scope, feasibility, and relevance for a BA thesis. This week may/can involve a guest speaker and professor from the Univesrity. Thesis readers et al.
5	Conducting Literature Reviews	Teaches students how to locate, evaluate, and synthesize academic sources using databases <i>provided by the library</i> (e.g., JSTOR, Google Scholar) and critical reading techniques. Emphasizes the role of literature both primary and secondary in forging research.
6	Research Design	Firstly, this week covers various research design strategies such as exploratory, descriptive, experimental, and case study approaches. Students learn how to match research questions with appropriate design frameworks.
7	Quantitative Research Methods	Introduces methods for collecting and analyzing numerical data. Topics include survey design, experimental setup, types of variables, sampling techniques, and considerations for reliability and objectivity in quantitative studies. This week may/can involve a guest speaker and professor from the Univesrity. Thesis readers et al.
8	Qualitative Research Methods	Examines techniques used in qualitative research such as interviews, focus groups, observations, and content analysis.

All further weeks will be dedicated to student presentations, exposing their research project and tentative thesis outline.

The schedule is subject to change.

Main objectives

Course objectives are articulated for each student to:

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

- Formulate research questions and hypotheses.
- Conduct a structured literature review in MLA/APA and or Chicago
- Understand qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches to BA thesis research.
- Develop appropriate data collection instruments.
- Apply basic data analysis techniques.
- Design research proposal

Required and Suggested Textbooks and Materials

Book Title	Author	Publisher	ISBN number
A Practical Guide to Theoretical Frameworks for Social Science Research (2024)	Andrea J. Bingham, Robert Mitchell, Daria S. Carter	Routledge	9781032199924

*editions may be subject to change over time, for the purpose of this course please refer to the most recent editions of each book.

All further readings will be supplied by the professor during the course.

Participation

You are expected to attend all course sessions. This is your opportunity to ask questions, discuss readings and other course material, and engage in activities that will deepen your understanding of course topics. Your participation grade will be based on: 1) attendance; and 2) the quality of your participation, including demonstrating you have thoughtfully completed the reading. We expect students to come prepared, and to be respectful, attentive, and actively engaged. In classroom discussions and activities are an integral part of this course, intended to be additional learning opportunities. If you must be absent at any point, please notify me via email as soon as possible, ideally before that course session begins.

Grade Determination:

Writing and public speaking are essential to success in many careers. Students will be held to professional standards. Students should not submit first drafts and should carefully proof read all work. The following factors will be considered in evaluating student assignments:

- **Content:** Responds to the assignment's questions. Develops and supports a central thesis. Provides a focused argument throughout the essay/talk.
- **Clarity and Presentation:** Writes/speaks clearly by: developing a coherent, well-organized argument; arranging sentences in a logical and coherent manner; using correct punctuation, spelling, and grammar; and providing correct citations in the APA format.
- **Comprehensiveness:** Reviews the relevant literature and material, shows an in-depth understanding of the topic, and critiques differing points of view on the topic.
- **Creativity:** Draws the reader/listener in and engages him/her in the topic. Makes an original contribution to the topic. Presents material in an interesting and unique way that elucidates the ideas.
- **Accuracy:** Free of obvious errors. All facts are derived from assigned course material and properly cited.

Class Policy

Plagiarism

You are encouraged to form study groups to review course material and discuss general approaches for assignments. However, you are expected to complete assignments independently. Plagiarism of published work is an ethical violation. Any two assignments that are submitted containing the same sentences will be considered a breach. In written work (including overheads or handouts used in presentations), words drawn from others should be indicated by quotation marks and ideas drawn from others should refer to their source. If you are unsure about what needs to be cited, please talk to the professor.

AI and use of generative Artificial Intelligence

Generative AI is not permitted.

The detected use AI will result in failing the required assignments and, thus, the integrity of the course. If you are unsure about what constitutes AI misconduct, please contact the professor.

Attendance

NOTE: If you are an **Erasmus or a non-Global Governance student** who would like to attend one or more courses in the Global Governance programme, please be aware that, **before enrolling in the course**, you should have read the code of conduct and the procedural rules characterizing our programme. We assume that, if you enrol in the course, **you have read and accepted all Global Governance values and rules**. Notice that attendance is expected from the very first lesson and you need to attend at least 80% of the course to be considered an attending student.

Non attending students must sustain an oral exam with questions on their research project, on selected readings in the course textbook and on their research methodology.

Description of the methods and criteria for testing learning

The examination assesses the student's overall preparation, ability to integrate the knowledge of the different parts of the program, consequentiality of reasoning, analytical ability and clarity of presentation,

in accordance with the Dublin descriptors (1. knowledge and understanding; 2. applying knowledge and understanding; 3. making judgements; 4. learning skills; 5. communication skills).

The examination will be graded according to the following criteria:

Unsuitable: important deficiencies and/or inaccuracies in the knowledge and understanding of the topics; the topics are exposed in an incoherent manner and with inappropriate language.

18-20: barely sufficient knowledge and understanding of most of the topics, with some missing items; sufficient capacity for analysis; the topics are sometimes exposed in an inconsistent manner and with inappropriate/technical language;

21-23: basic knowledge and understanding of most of the topics; ability to analyze and synthesize correctly with sufficiently coherent logical argumentation, with possibly some inaccuracy in the technical language.

24-26: good knowledge and understanding of most of the topics; good analytical and synthetic skills with rigorously expressed arguments, though with possibly a few inaccuracies in the technical language.

27-29: complete knowledge and understanding of the topics; good capacity for analysis and synthesis. Arguments presented in a rigorous manner and with appropriate/technical language, with only minor inaccuracies.

30-30L: very good level of knowledge and thorough understanding of topics. Excellent analytical and synthetic skills and independent judgement. Arguments expressed in an original manner and in appropriate technical language.

Office hours

Students can interact with the professor after each lecture. For extended meetings students must contact the professor by email to arrange an appointment