



## College of Social Sciences

<b>Course Title:</b>	<b>Research Design</b> (For MRes and PhD students only, MSc must enrol on course SPS5034)
<b>Course Code:</b>	SPS5041
<b>Course Co-ordinator:</b>	Dr Philip Leifeld
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:philip.leifeld@glasgow.ac.uk">philip.leifeld@glasgow.ac.uk</a>
<b>Office hours:</b>	Mondays 10:00-11:45am during the semester

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**Lectures:** Mondays 12pm – 1.30pm from 17<sup>th</sup> September – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2018 **Semester One** (11 weeks)

**VENUE:** Main Building, Room 226, East Quad LT

**Tutorials:** Mondays 2pm – 3pm (TU01) **OR** Mondays 3pm – 4pm (TU05) **OR** Mondays 4pm – 5pm (TU09) **OR** Mondays 5pm – 6pm (TU13) **OR** Mondays 6pm – 7pm (TU15) from 24<sup>th</sup> September – 26<sup>th</sup> November.

**Venue:** various, see MyCampus timetable once enrolled. *Please note that tutorial allocation is based on a first come, first served basis when enrolling on MyCampus.*

### Course summary

The course aims to provide students with a broad overview of different research designs in the social sciences. A research design is a plan that connects the different stages of the research process in a logical way such that new knowledge can be generated in an unbiased and robust way.

### Course aims

The course aims to provide students with a broad overview of different research designs in the social sciences. A research design is a blueprint that connects the different stages of the research process in a logical way such that new knowledge can be generated in an unbiased and robust way. There is a range of different designs, such as longitudinal and cross-sectional, or experimental and observational research designs. The choice of a research design should suit the research question to be answered. The research design determines which methods can be used to answer the question. Research designs for qualitative and for quantitative research as well as mixed-methods designs exist. The course aims to provide an introductory overview across these types of research and expose students to a range of advanced methods that are most commonly employed across the social sciences. It improves students' skills around developing a strong and robust research design and outlines clear guidelines for distinguishing good research from bad research. In addition to exposure to a variety of designs and corresponding methods as well as the different stages of the research process, students will learn how to combine these different elements in order to increase the quality of their own research. At the end of the course, students should be able to make an informed decision on how to select a good research question, how to select cases, how to measure and collect data, and what methods to choose for the analysis in their own prospective research. Rather than selecting methods by personal taste or abilities, students will be enabled to select appropriate methods in an informed way in order to maximise the validity of the findings they generate.

### Learning outcomes

After taking this course, students should:

- Have an overview of the different stages and interactive nature of the research process, including formulating research questions, operationalising complex theoretical constructs, principles of case selection, measurement, analysis, write-up, and dissemination.
- Understand and appreciate the different epistemological paradigms that underlie qualitative and quantitative research and be able to discuss the common ground as well as the key differences between these traditions.
- Be able to assess the quality of research using criteria like validity, reliability, parsimony, generality, operationalisability, political and normative desirability, falsifiability, and relevance, and describe types of research, such as inductive and deductive, descriptive and causal, explanatory and predictive, and empirical and theoretical research.
- Understand the logic of randomisation, including observational and experimental, cross-sectional and longitudinal, and control-group research designs that involve randomisation, and understand the



## College of Social Sciences

logic of non-randomised, observational research designs, including comparative and non-comparative research designs and case selection.

- Recognise the importance of selecting an adequate research design and methods following from one's theory and/or research question, and be able to transfer and apply research design skills to one's own dissertation topic.
- Develop an understanding of the practical aspects of carrying out research, including replication standards, codebooks and documentation, ethics approval, the publication process, and good practices for using and citing literature.

### Summative Assessment

Students take two exams, one after the first block and one after the second block of three to four sessions each. The exams combine multiple choice questions (for testing factual knowledge) with decision scenarios, in which the student reads a short paragraph and has to decide on the choice of a measure, method, case selection, or similar. These exams will ensure coverage of all areas of research design, including qualitative and quantitative approaches. After the last block, students deliver a critique of the research design of a published journal article (700-1,000 words excluding bibliography). The two exams and the written critique will each contribute 30% to the final grade, and there is an additional 10% grade for participation in the tutorials to ensure active engagement. **The deadline for the submission of the written critique is 4pm, Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December.**

### Formative Assessment

Students work on a research proposal throughout the semester, including research question, case selection or sampling, data collection, measurement and considerations of validity, ethical and philosophical considerations, and planned methodology. Students are encouraged to work on their dissertation or thesis topic, but are free to choose a different topic. Twice during the semester, the proposal is submitted for peer review using the University's Aropä system. Each student reviews two proposals, also twice during the semester. Due to the progression of topics in the course, the feedback in the first round will naturally focus more on the research question, theory, and literature review while the second feedback round will focus more on the research design choices. The tutors support the peer review process and writing process in the tutorials.

### Course Delivery

The course will be delivered as a weekly 90-minute lecture and one weekly hour-long tutorial.

Students are expected to read the required reading associated with each class **before** each session (further details will be available towards the beginning of Semester 1).

### Enrolment

As with all courses, spaces are limited so it is important that you enrol as soon as you are fully registered. To enrol on this course, ensure that you have completed financial and academic registration on MyCampus and then follow the instructions found here: <http://www.gla.ac.uk/services/registry/enrolment/#/>  
The course code required to enrol in Research Design is SPS5034 (for MSc students) or SPS5041 (for MRes and PhD students).

**SPS5034 is designed only for MSc students. SPS5041 is only designed for MRes and PhD students. Please enrol in the appropriate course for your degree.**

Before registering you **must** contact your own Academic Unit to check the status of this course as an accredited option within their research training programme.

**Note: Further details concerning the course will be provided during Semester 1.**