

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem
The Faculty of Social Sciences
The European Forum and The Department of International Relations

Research Methods in the Study of Europe and Germany (54699)

Lecturer: Dr. Daniel F. Wajner

Year 2025-2026 (תשפ"ו), 1st sem., Monday 1630-1800 (Room 42605 European Forum)

Reception hours: Wednesday, 14:00-15:00 (by appointment), Room 42 617 EF

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Course description

This course aims to familiarize students with some of the most relevant methodological frameworks and research skills used to analyze international political events, with a specific emphasis on European Studies in general and Germany in particular. After introducing basic knowledge about theory, ontology, epistemology, and methodology, the course delves into the importance of having well-defined research questions and an adequate research design to carry out systematic scientific research. In addition, the course explores the main qualitative and quantitative techniques used by scholars to gather primary and secondary sources and subsequently process, describe and analyze such data to explain current political phenomena occurring in Europe at different sub-regional, regional, and inter-regional levels.

Course goals

- Expose the students to the research process and the diverse tools used in the humanities and social sciences for reading and conducting research.
- Encourage students to exercise the use of multiple analytical tools to explain current affairs in Europe and between Europe and the world.
- Prepare students to plan and conduct their own independent scientific research, while recognizing the challenges, opportunities, and ethical responsibilities as researchers.

Course requirements and evaluation

Students are expected to demonstrate active participation throughout the course and deliver a final assignment related to one of the topics studied in class.

Grading: 20% class participation [attendance requirement 80%], 20% assignments, 30% presentation of project in class, 30% submitted research project.

Learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

- Design their own research proposal independently, which will serve them for a research seminar or other future projects.
- Know how to find relevant research puzzles and formulate different types of research questions and hypotheses.
- Build a comprehensive literature review.
- Critically reading academic studies and policy-oriented analysis.
- Be aware of the difficulties and challenges in collecting and analyzing data.

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction

Text discussions; group work; exercises; presentations; lectures.

Course content

Lesson 1) Opening remarks, basic tools and why European Studies?

Lesson 2) What do we “know” and “how” do we know? Theory, ontology, epistemology, methodology, empirics. The meaning of science (versus art?). Positivism. Contingency and determinism.

Lesson 3) Finding research puzzles, defining independent and dependent variables, writing research questions, and suggesting hypothesis. Causal and constitutive mechanisms.

Lesson 4) Testing hypothesis: Research design, case selection, methodology, sources.

Lesson 5) Gathering sources (speeches, interviews, polls, media texts, among others).

Lesson 6) Reading and mapping qualitative/interpretative methods.

Lesson 7) Case studies and process tracing.

Lesson 8) Content analysis, discourse analysis, network analysis and other qualitative techniques.

Lesson 9) Reading and mapping quantitative and experimental methods

Lesson 10) Regression analysis.

Lesson 11) Questionnaires and experiments.

Lesson 12) Presentation of projects 1.

Lesson 13) Presentation of projects 2.

General Reading

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane, and Sidney Verba. Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research. Princeton university press, 1994 (or last version, 2021).

The Crafts of Research, Chicago UP, 2003.

Sage Handbook of European Studies, Sage, 2009.

Supplementary Reading

Beach, Derek, and Rasmus Brun Pedersen. Process-tracing methods: Foundations and guidelines. University of Michigan Press, 2019.

Bennett, Andrew, and Jeffrey T. Checkel, eds. *Process tracing*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.

Bennett, Andrew, and Colin Elman. "Case study methods in the international relations subfield." *Comparative Political Studies* 40.2 (2007): 170-195.

Exadaktylos, Theofanis, and Claudio Radaelli, eds. *Research design in European studies: Establishing causality in Europeanization*. Springer, 2012.

Hafner-Burton, Emilie M., Miles Kahler, and Alexander H. Montgomery. "Network analysis for international relations." *International organization* 63.3 (2009): 559-592.

Klotz, Audie, and Cecelia Lynch. *Strategies for research in constructivist international relations*. Routledge, 2014.

Krippendorff, Klaus. *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Sage publications, 2018.

Lakatos, Imre. *The methodology of scientific research programmes: Volume 1: Philosophical papers. Vol. 1*. Cambridge university press, 1980.

Levy, Jack S. "Case studies: Types, designs, and logics of inference." *Conflict management and peace science* 25.1 (2008): 1-18.

Burrow, J. W. *A History of Histories : Epics, Chronicles, Romances and Inquiries from Herodotus and Thucydides to the Twentieth Century*. London: Allen Lane, 2007.

Kuhn T. *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*.
Science as a Vocation

Thies, Cameron G. "A pragmatic guide to qualitative historical analysis in the study of international relations." *International Studies Perspectives* 3.4 (2002): 351-372.

Popper *Of clouds and clocks: an approach to the problem of rationality and the freedom of man*.

Van Evera, Stephen. *Guide to methods for students of political science*. Cornell University Press, 1997.

Weber, Max. *Methodology of social sciences*. Routledge, 2017.