

Empirical Research Project I: Qualitative & Quantitative Data Analysis Strategies

Course Syllabus 2025

LECTURERS |

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GUEST LECTURER | Mercedes Máspero, MA

DATES AND TIME | Tuesdays from Aug. 19th to Nov 25th and Friday October 24th
9:30 to 11:30

CREDIT HOURS (total) | 30 hours

1. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE

This methods seminar is focused on research practice rather than on research theory. The aim is to guide students through the empirical research process, utilizing both the presentation of scholarly literature and classroom workshops. The seminar proposes an inductive approach to the research process, by observing, analyzing and reconstructing published research studies from Latin America and the Caribbean region. By discovering the process from the question to the discussion of results, students will be expected to discuss methodological aspects, extracting valuable tools and strategies useful for their own projects.

Hands-on data analysis exercises will provide guidance on strategies and offer tools for data analysis and presentation, especially qualitative data, but also introducing quantitative data and analysis. A thorough discussion on research ethics, data protection and analysis ethics will also result from these exercises.

Assessment will be continuous, based on group work conducted during class workshops and result presentations. Professors will be asking individual questions to group members to ensure that students have taken part in the activities and are aware of what they are presenting. Evaluation will be complemented by a final individual assignment to be submitted after the end of the course (see guidelines).

2. OBJECTIVES

This seminar aims to reinforce the standards established by the scientific community by guiding students through the analysis and reconstruction of empirical research processes. It supports the development of practical skills in data analysis, enabling students to apply techniques and present data with methodological rigor. In parallel, the course encourages critical reflection on research ethics and reflexivity, emphasizing the researcher's positionality and responsibility throughout the process. Ultimately, the seminar is designed

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to help students begin outlining their future research projects with a strong foundation in both analytical strategies and ethical awareness.

3. COURSE SECTIONS

1. Scientific knowledge and ethical considerations
2. Quantitative data analysis
3. Life Stories, biographical data and Interviews
4. Socio-historic Archival research
5. Netnography

4. STRUCTURE

Scientific Knowledge

The characteristics of scientific knowledge, qualitative and quantitative approaches. Theoretical framework and state of the art. Bibliographical research. IA as an assistant. Citation norms and ethical considerations.

Blackstone, A. (2012). *Principles of sociological inquiry: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. Saylor Academy. <https://open.umn.edu/opentextbooks/textbooks/139>

Bolanos, F., Salatino, A., Osborne, F., & Motta, E. (2024). Artificial intelligence for literature reviews: Opportunities and challenges. *Artificial Intelligence Review*, 57(10), 259.

Cheng, A., Calhoun, A., & Reedy, G. (2025). Artificial intelligence-assisted academic writing: recommendations for ethical use. *Advances in Simulation*, 10(1), 22.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2016). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches*. Sage Publications.

Behar, R. (2022). *The vulnerable observer: Anthropology that breaks your heart*. Beacon Press.

Clifford, J., & Marcus, G. E. (Eds.). (2023). *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography*. Univ of California Press.

Tufte, E. R. (2001). *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*. Graphics Press. (Especially Ch. 2 Graphical Integrity)

Strategy 1: Quantitative data analysis

Foundations of quantitative analysis. Basic elements of research. Statistics in the research process. Variables and frequency distributions. Summarizing data. Tools for making tables and charts. Practical exercise. Ethical considerations.

Research publication to deconstruct

Bühlmann, F., Christesen, C. A., Cousin, B., Denord, F., Ellersgaard, C. H., Lagneau-Ymonet, P., Larsen, A. G., Savage, M., Thine, S., Young, K., Araujo, P., Arrigoni, P., Atria, J., Benz, P., Behr, J., Botelho, C., Butt, A., Casanova, P., Clemente-Casinhas, L., . . . Yu, X. (2025). Varieties of Economic Elites? Preliminary Results from the World Elite Database (WED). *The British Journal of Sociology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-4446.13203>

Literature for strategy 1: Quantitative analysis

Hanneman, R., Kposowa, A. J., Riddle, M. D. (2013) *Basic Statistics for Social Sciences*. Wiley. Chapters 1 and 2.

Treiman, D., J. (2009) *Quantitative Data Analysis. Doing Social Research to Test Ideas*. Wiley. Chapters 1 and 2.

Strategy 2: Life Stories, biographical data and Interviews

Life stories as research approach and interviews as data collection techniques. Ethical considerations. Visual and written result presentations.

Research publication to deconstruct

Rausky, M.E. (2019). From Childhood to Adolescence: Vulnerable Life Stories and Persistent Inequalities in Argentina Since Post-Convertibility (2003). In Rausky, M.E. & Chaves, Mariana. *Living and Working in Poverty in Latin America. Trajectories of Children, Youth, and Adults* (pp. 41-68). Palgrave Macmillan

Literature for strategy 2: Life stories and biographies

Knott, E., Rao, A.H., Summers, K. et al. Interviews in the social sciences. *Nat Rev Methods Primers* 2, 73 (2022). <https://doi.org/10.1038/s43586-022-00150-6>

Maxwell, Joseph A. (2013). Decisions about qualitative data analysis. In: *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach: An Interactive Approach* (pp. 104-115). Sage Publications

Smith, L. M. (1994). Biographical method. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 286–305). Sage Publications

Chroniques for Data Analysis workshop:

Alarcón, Cristian (2019). *Dance for me when I die*. Duke University Press

Guerriero Leila (2017). *A Simple Story. The last Malambo*. A New Directions Ebook

Almada, Selva (2020). *Dead Girls*. Chaco Press

Child of the dark: the diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus (2023). New York: New American Library. Available at:

<https://archive.org/details/childofdarkd00jesu/page/n3/mode/2up>

Euclides da Cunha (1944). *Rebellion in the backlands: Os sertões*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press Available at: <https://archive.org/details/rebellioninbackl0000cunh>

Lloyd Bradley (2001). *Bass culture: when reggae was king*. Penguin

Strategy 3: Socio-historic Archival research

Comparative approach, historical reconstruction, analysis of archival evidence, institutional analysis, archival and oral histories, uncatalogued archival collections. Interpretation of narratives and documents, identifying links, patterns and outcomes. Ethical considerations for archival research.

Research publication to deconstruct

Rostica JC. (2022) The Collaboration of the Argentine Military Dictatorship with the Governments of Guatemala and Honduras in their 'Fight against Subversion' (1980–3). *Journal of Latin American Studies*, 54(3):431-456. doi:10.1017/S0022216X22000475

Literature for strategy 3: Archival research

Fogel, C., Quinlan, A., Quinlan, L., & She, Q. (2010). Ethical issues in socio-historical archival research: A short skit. *Research Ethics*, 6(3), 91-94.

Nolan-Ferrell, C. (2021). Pedimos Posada: Local Mediators and Guatemalan Refugees in Mexico, 1978-1984. *Historia Crítica*, (80), 129-151.

Tamboukou, M. (2014). Archival research: unravelling space/time/matter entanglements and fragments. *Qualitative Research*, 14(5), 617-633.

Strategy 4: Netnography

Digital ethnography, strengths and limitations as a research method. Subjects and communities which can be studied through netnography. Theoretical, practical, and ethical challenges of conducting research in digital environments.

Research publications to deconstruct

Seaver, N. (2018). Captivating Algorithms: Recommender Systems as Traps. *Journal of Material Culture*, 24(4).

Spyer, J. (2017). *Social media in emergent Brazil*. UCL Press.
<https://doi.org/10.14324/111.9781787351653>

Literature for strategy 4: Netnography

Miller, D. (2012). 'Social Networking Sites'. In H. Horst & D. Miller (Eds.), *Digital Anthropology*. Routledge.

Pink, S., Horst, H., Postill, J., Hjorth, L., Lewis, T., & Tacchi, J. (2015). *Digital Ethnography: Principles and Practice*. Sage.

UNESCO. (n.d.). *Digital anthropology*. UNESCO. Available at:
<https://www.unesco.org/en/digital-anthropology>

5. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Class discussion on the mandatory readings, involvement in workshops and presentations (40%)
- Final Essay (60%)

Students are required to submit an individual short written reflection (approximately five pages) as the final assignment. The reflection must focus on one analysis strategy covered during the course and address key methodological aspects related to the strategies discussed in class. Particular attention should be paid to how these strategies can be combined or complemented, and to the ethical, analytical, and methodological challenges encountered. These reflections should be related to research interests or emerging research problems, even if still at an early stage of development. The paper should demonstrate the integration of concepts, discussions, and practical exercises undertaken throughout the course and workshop sessions. It should reflect scientific thinking and comply with scientific standards and citation norms.

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6. SCHEDULE

#	Date	Content	Deliverables
Scientific Knowledge (<i>Gabriel Levita and Ana Lopez Molina</i>)			
1	August 19 th	How the seminar is structured, and what is expected of students. Review: The characteristics of scientific knowledge, qualitative and quantitative approaches. Theoretical framework and state of the art.	
2	August 26 th	Bibliographical research (IA). Citation norms and ethical considerations.	
Strategy 1: Quantitative data analysis (<i>Gabriel Levita</i>)			
3	Sept. 2 nd	Foundations of quantitative analysis. Basic elements of research. Statistics in the research process. Variables and frequency distributions. Summarizing data.	
4	Sept. 9 th	Data Analysis Workshop (in groups): Paper analysis. Each group presents one table/chart. The actual data collection and dataset of the paper. Paper or report?	
5	Sept. 16 th	Tools for making tables and charts. Practical exercise. Ethical considerations.	Brief analytical report
Strategy 2: Life Stories, biographical data and Interviews (<i>María Eugenia Funes</i>)			
6	Sept. 23 rd	Review of research publication: theoretical framework, research problem and analytical process. Basics of life stories as research approach and interviews as data recollection techniques. Ethical considerations.	
7	Sept. 30 th	Chroniques Workshop (in groups): based on the previous reading of chroniques suggested by the professor, identify 4 sociological processes that the life story shows and identify 3 quotes for each of them.	
8	Oct. 7 th	Result presentations: visual and written. PPT and brief account of the social processes shown by the life stories developed in the chronicles.	Brief analytical report
Strategy 3: Socio-historic Archival research (<i>Ana López Molina</i>)			
9	Oct. 21 st	Review of research publication: theoretical framework, research problem and analytical process. In-depth investigation of official archives, comparative approach, historical reconstruction, analysis of archival evidence, institutional analysis, archival and oral histories, uncatalogued archival collections, interpretation of narratives and documents, identifying links, patterns and outcomes.	
10	Fri Oct. 24 th	Archival research workshop: visit online archives to apply one type of analysis (historical reconstruction, institutional analysis, identifying links, patterns or outcomes).	
11	Oct. 28 th	Result presentation: each group selects the best way to present. Ethical considerations for archival research.	Brief analytical report
Strategy 4: Netnography (<i>Mercedes Máspero</i>)			
12	Nov. 4 th	Review of research publication: definition of digital ethnography, strengths and limitations as a research	

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		method. Examination of case studies that demonstrate how different subjects and communities can be studied through netnography. Discussion of theoretical, practical, and ethical challenges of conducting research in digital environments.	
13	Nov. 11 th	Netnography Workshop: Exploratory research on digital platforms, work collaboratively to analyze algorithmic systems through a netnographic lens,	
14	Nov. 18 th	Result presentation: visual and written, present a PPT with your findings.	Brief analytical report
Final discussion (<i>Gabriel Levita and Ana Lopez Molina</i>)			
15	Nov. 25 th	Closing session: review of core contents and final essay draft presentations and discussion.	Final essay draft (individual)