



# Social Sequence Analysis. An holistic approach to explore trajectories

**Workshop, 3<sup>rd</sup> term 2016-2017**

Lecturers: **Philippe Blanchard (Warwick University), Lara Monticelli (SNS Florence)**

Organised by **Fabrizio Bernardi and Riccardo Emilio Chesta**

Please register [online](#)

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## Course Outline

The aim of the workshop is presenting both the theoretical and empirical implications of the social sequence analysis (SSA), a method developed in biology and applied to the social sciences. SSA has indeed been developed by sociologist Andrew Abbott with the aim at studying social mechanisms beyond the familiar framework that sustains our usual methods, both quantitative and qualitative.

## Requirements:

This workshop is worth **10 credits** upon fulfilment of all requirements.

In order to obtain the 10 credits, participants are required to:

- 1) attend regularly;
- 2) either present a paper in the workshop, or act as discussants

## Schedule

<b>Tuesday 16 May 2017, 10:00 – 13:00</b>	(Emeroteca, Badia Fiesolana)
<b>Wednesday 17 May 2017, 10:00 – 16:00</b>	(Seminar Room 3, Badia Fiesolana)
<b>Thursday 18 May 2017, 10:00 – 16:00</b>	(Emeroteca, Badia Fiesolana)

## Day 1 (Tuesday 16 May)

### Theoretical Introduction on Sequence Analysis in the Social Sciences

1. Temporality and Science: how SSA was introduced in sociology
2. Regressions vs SSA; Causes and Events; Temporality and Structure
3. Possible applications

## Readings:

Andrew Abbott, *Time matters. On theory and method*, Chicago University Press, Chicago, 2001

### Day 2 (Wednesday 17 May)

1. Development and principles of sequence analysis
2. Specificities, strengths and pitfalls of the methods
3. An empirical application
4. Standard steps in sequence analysis. From data preparation to data treatment and presentation
5. Varieties of sequence comparison algorithms

### Day 3 (Thursday 18 May)

6. Strategies for treatment
7. Bibliography and software
8. Hands-on: Gendered careers in Swiss trade unions (data will be provided)
9. If time allows, advanced topics, on demand
10. If time allows, Q&A (especially about personal projects)

### Software and data instructions

Bring your own laptop, with any system installed. Otherwise, you may share a laptop by pairs.

Prior to the course, please:

- Make sure you have administrator rights on your computer. This means that you can install and uninstall as you wish.
- Install the last version of R. Instructions for this can be found in any textbook or on the R project website.
- Install the last versions of the following packages: *TraMineR*, *foreign*, *questionr*, *RcolorBrewer*, *cluster*, *graphics*, and make sure they can be loaded into an R session by typing for example “library TraMineR”. Installation can be done directly from the R menu.
- Familiarise yourself with the basic logic and functions of R. It differs significantly from other data management and statistics environments, therefore requires a time of adaptation from beginners. But the investment is worthy, in the medium term. Nothing will hinder your progress with the core of sequence analysis more than getting stuck with basic R syntax issues.
- I also recommend using an R editor, that is, a small programme that manages the different panels in R and enables a more efficient use of R. I use RStudio, but other editors can do. Please familiarise yourself with your editor prior to the course.

*Readings:*

- A short, general introduction: Blanchard P. 2011. Sequence Analysis for Political Science. Working Papers of the Committee on Concepts and Methods, International Political Science Association: <http://www.concepts-methods.org/WorkingPapers/PDF/1082>
  - An application to social movements : Fillieule and Blanchard.2013. “Fighting Together. Assessing Continuity and Change in Social Movement Organizations Through the Study of Constituencies’ Heterogeneity.” Pp. 79-108 in *A Political Sociology of Transnational Europe*, edited by N. Kauppi. Basingstoke: ECPR Press
  - An application to international politics: Casper G. and M. Wilson. 2014. Using Sequences to Model Crises. *Political Science Research and Methods* 3 (2): 381-397
  - A methodological focus: Blanchard P. 2013. “What is Time for Sequence Analysis?” *Qualitative & Multi-Method Research* 11(4): 17-21
  - The only comprehensive book on SA: Blanchard P., F. Bühlmann and J.-A. Gauthier (eds.). 2014. *Advances in Sequence Analysis: Methods, Theories and Applications*. London: Springer. Chapter 1 is another introduction to SA
- Subsequent chapters can be read according to participants' personal interest.

*updated 04.05.2017*