



Methodological pluralism in the SPS department

EUI is an exclusive (small) research institution, offering a high-quality PhD program. The SPS department covers four disciplines (political philosophy and theory, political science, sociology, and international relations). Its faculty on substantive grounds, all operating at methodological vanguard in their area of specialization. Altogether, the SPS department makes up for a cross-disciplinary environment with a strong commitment to:

- Puzzle- or question-driven research
- Methodological pluralism

As a consequence of its relative small, substantive and selective makeup, the SPS department does not have a professorial method chair. As a consequence, method-teaching curriculum is a joint venture of the faculty.

Methods training is done in two stages. The first stage comprises of three compulsory courses. *Introduction to Effective Research Design* is compulsory for all first-year researchers, whereas *Introduction to Quantitative Methods* and *Introduction to Qualitative Methods* can be taken during the first two years of the programme.

The second stage covers courses on more advanced qualitative and quantitative research methods. These are taught as regular seminars as well as workshops, the latter being usually taught in the third term. The workshops typically focus on specific methods and are targeted at “blind spots” that are not covered by other methods teaching. Workshops can be “top-down”—initiated by a professor—or “bottom-up”, initiated by researchers. In many cases, the workshops are taught by a specialist from outside the EUI. SPS aims to cover the teaching of some core advanced methods every second year or so and welcomes input from its researchers on methods teaching needs.

Finally, if your specialized methods teaching needs are not covered by SPS, there is the opportunity to participate in summer or winter schools with the help of mission funding. This should be seen as a back-stop solution, because when possible, we prefer organizing workshops that can be attended by several researchers rather than sending individual researchers elsewhere for methods training.