Introduction to Research Methods

Seminar, 2nd term academic year 2018-2019

Mondays, 9:00-11:00, Seminar Room 2

Dorothee Bohle and Ellen M. Immergut

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Register online

Contact: Adele.Battistini@eui.eu

Description
The course offers an introduction to qualitative methods in social research, which is compulsory for all first-year researchers in the EUI SPS Department. The aim of the course is to introduce researchers to state-of-the-art knowledge in qualitative research and methods, including their respective strengths and weaknesses. The course has two parts. The first is concerned with the crafting of research puzzles and qualitative research designs, that is, case-based research. In the second part, we turn to specific methodological approaches: process-tracing, archival work, interviewing and ethnography. We will focus on readings that either explain the purpose and logic of these approaches, or apply them, or provide guidance on how to carry out the research. The course will also draw on the concrete experiences of doctoral researchers doing qualitative research.

Requirements
- Preparation of Class discussion questions (1 time in group, random assignment)
- Research Puzzle and Design Questionnaire due January 25th (1-1/2 pages)
- Archive Visit report due February 15th (2 pages)
- Critique of Design and Execution of Qualitative Study of either Epstein or Cramer due March 15th (3 pages)

Term paper option: to be discussed with instructors

This seminar is worth 20 credits.

Schedule
The seminar takes place on Mondays 09:00-11:00, in Seminar Room 2 in the Badia Fiesolana, for any changes please refer to the full list of seminar sessions below:

Session 1: Wednesday 9th January Seminar room 2 9.30-11.30
Seminar topics and readings

Part one: Crafting Qualitative Research

Session 1: Introduction (January 9 at 9.30)


Suggested reading:


Session 2: Crafting a puzzle and literature review (January 14)


Session 3: Case based research (January 21)


Assignment 1: Research Puzzle and Design Questionnaire due January 25th (1-1/2 pages)

Session 4: Comparative historical analysis (January 28)


Part 2 Methods of data collection

Session 5: Process tracing (February 4)


Session 6: Archival work (February 11):

Guest: Dieter Schlenker, Director of the Historical Archives of the European Union

  https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/eui/detail.action?docID=1474568

Visit to the EUI archives:
14 Feb 14-17
15 Feb 9-13

Assignment 2: Archive Visit Report due February 15th (2 pages)

Session 7: Interviewing (February 18)


Session 8: Ethnography (February 25)


Session 9: Discourse analysis (March 4)


Session 10: Experiences from the field (March 11)

- 2-3 doctoral students report their experiences (and assign 1 reading which helped them for their field work)

Assignment: Critique of Design and Execution of Qualitative Study of either Epstein or Cramer due March 15th (3 pages)