



Research Methodology

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Course Format

This course will inter-weave essential knowledge about the nature of research in the social sciences (where we will place research in the economics and management of natural resources) with activities and practical advice about how to conduct your research. At the end of the course, you should be able to:

- understand the requirement of doctoral research in the economics and management of sustainability and innovation **to contribute to scholarly knowledge (make a “theoretical contribution”)** as well as address practical problems in the field;
- develop a research question able to define research that makes a theoretical and practical contribution;
- conduct a literature review that defines the theoretical and empirical background for research to answer your question;
- develop a research design that ensures, logically and logistically, that you will be able to gather and analyse sufficient appropriate evidence to make your planned theoretical and practical contribution to knowledge;
- describe the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of research methods available for data collection and data analysis in different research contexts; and
- present your research design to others.

We have 6 four-hour sessions of teaching classes, plus 4 hours of interactive teaching, dedicated to e-tivity supporting the students' final work development. Each class session will be different, depending on the topic. A typical session will include presentation of key concepts or frameworks mixed with activities and small group discussion. Starting with the first session, you will be required to complete some activities in preparation for the following sessions. Completion of this work will count toward your assessment in the course.

Course evaluation

The evaluation will consist of:

- A research proposal (80% of final grade). Please note that this final paper should be a proposal (a plan) for future research and not a report of research that has been completed. It is not your final proposal for your thesis, but you can propose research on the same topic (or choose a different one).

Maximum length is 20,000 characters (9-10 pages) plus References, consisting of: Title; Abstract; Introduction (purpose and proposed contribution of the research, guiding research question); Background (very brief introduction to the research context if necessary; brief overview of relevant theory and empirical literature); Conceptual Model, if appropriate; Research Design (overview; proposed data source(s) and/or population, sample and sampling plan; detail or proposed data collection procedures; proposed methods and techniques for analysis of the collected data); Conclusion, including Limitations of the proposed design. Proposed survey questions, interview protocols, and data collection sheets can be added in appendices.



Please note: Do not submit a completed study, with results. It is also a bad idea to re-use the first part of your ongoing working papers; the focus of the Research Methodology is different. You are required to propose new research that must be discussed during classes.

- Participation in in-class activities, discussions, and presentations (20%). You are expected to come prepared to class and to actively contribute to class discussion by asking and answering questions, bringing up issues, defending your arguments, and constructively criticizing the arguments your colleagues and professor make. The grade will recognize the *quality* of the contribution.

NB: If you submit *any* work that includes an unacknowledged copy or translation or that is developed using AI (e.g., ChatGPT) from the work of others, your grade for this course will be **D (Fail)**, regardless of marks received in other assessments.

Textbooks

General textbooks on social science research:

- **(B) Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). Social science research: Principles, methods and practices (2nd ed.). Tampa, Florida: Global Text Project. (Provides a straightforward overview of almost all topics. Available online at no cost from: http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbooks/3)**
- (BB) Bryman, A., & Bell, E. (2015). Business research methods (4th ed.): Oxford University Press. (Probably the best general text on research methods currently available. Covers almost all topics, many in much greater depth than we will be able to cover in class.)
- (deV) de Vaus, D. (2001). Research design in social research. London: Sage. (Provides well-informed detail on the most important research designs. Focuses on the logic of conducting research to obtain sufficient evidence to support an argument.)
- Trochim, W. M. K. (2006). Research methods knowledge base. (Another free online textbook organized by topics. Treats several topics dealt with lightly by Bhattacharjee in greater depth. Available at <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb>)



Detailed syllabus with sessions' assignment

Interactive teaching activities (4 hours) will be scheduled with the students throughout the semester.

Session 1	November 5th, 2025
<i>Topic</i>	Introduction to the course and doctoral research Philosophy, logic, and argument in doctoral research and writing
<i>Readings</i>	Davis, M.S., 1971.01. "That's interesting. Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology", <i>Philosophy of the Social Sciences</i> , pp. 309-344. B Chs 1,2,15; BB Chs 1,6
<i>Assignment</i>	Before Session 1, students must read and critically analyse the paper by Davis (1971). A powerpoint presentation has to be developed to make a presentation of 15-20 minutes to the class.

Session 2	November 6th, 2025
<i>Topic</i>	Developing research ideas Using and reviewing the literature The nature and role of theory
<i>Readings</i>	B : Chs 3-4
<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Before Session 3</i> , define an area of research, identify at least one theory that is used by researchers working in that area of research, and locate at least two empirical papers from the scholarly literature that use or criticise the theory.* Write a brief overview of the theory and a brief critical analysis of the theory based on the empirical papers that you find. In addition, read some recently published articles that interest you, and make notes about possible topics for you to research in your PhD. Be prepared to present your work to the class and/or discuss it in detail. * If you find a review article in the field, it is excellent! Search for two empirical papers that cite the review article.

Session 3	November 13th, 2025
<i>Topic</i>	Conceptualization of research problems Research questions Designing research projects
<i>Readings</i>	B : Chs 2-4

Session 4	November 14th, 2025
<i>Topic</i>	Research designs cont. Empirical research questions, hypotheses Common elements of research methods
<i>Readings</i>	B : Ch (2-4), 5
<i>Assignment</i>	<i>Before Session 5</i> , conceptualize a study that you might undertake in the area of research you studied in the previous assignment. Define the research problem and the over-arching research question to guide your research.* What research stance will you take (what is your worldview)? What will be the role of theory? Identify and use the theory to operationalize the research in empirical research questions,



	<p>if appropriate. What research design(s) would be appropriate for this research? Indicate if you will use hypotheses, and why or why not. If you plan to use hypotheses, write them! Finally, select a research design and consider, in general terms, what kind of data you will need to answer your empirical research questions / test your hypotheses and how you might obtain it. Be prepared to present your work to the class and/or discuss it in detail.</p> <p>* If you are using this exercise to prepare a research proposal, use the literature to help identify the new contribution you can make to the field, and be ready to justify your research.</p>
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Session 5		November 24th, 2025	
<i>Topic</i>	The AMJ management research canvas: a tool for conducting and reporting empirical research		
<i>Readings</i>	Dorobantu, S., Gruber, M., Ravasi, D., & Wellman, N. (2024). The AMJ Management Research Canvas: A Tool for Conducting and Reporting Empirical Research. <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> , 67(5), 1163-1174. doi:10.5465/amj.2024.4005		

Session 6		November 25th, 2025	
<i>Topic</i>	Conceptualization and operationalization of research Variables, Measurement; Sources of data: primary and secondary		
<i>Readings</i>	B: 6, 7, 8, 9		
<i>Assignment</i>	Students have to be ready to present (15-20 minutes) to the class and discuss a draft version of their research proposal. A PowerPoint presentation is required.		