UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Quantitative and Qualitative Methodologies for Social Research

2627-1-F4902N005

Aims

Knowledge and Understanding
Students will acquire knowledge of the logical foundations and main techniques of social research, with particular attention to the application in the fields of tourism, territorial studies and local development.

Applied Knowledge and Understanding
Through the analysis of real-world cases and practical activities, students will be able to apply qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods in the design and implementation of research projects, interpreting results rigorously and within context.

Independent Judgement
Engagement with existing research and reflection on methodological choices will foster the development of critical thinking, enabling students to assess the quality of data, the coherence of research designs and the appropriateness of the techniques employed.

Communication Skills
Students will develop skills in presenting research projects and communicating research findings, learning to tailor language and tools according to different audiences, from the scientific community to territorial stakeholders.

Learning Skills
The course promotes active learning through independent study, practical exercises and guided discussions, encouraging a reflective approach and the ability to independently update and refine research practices.

Contents

The course introduces the main practices of social research applied to the study of tourism, territory, and local development. The content is structured around three major families: observation, interrogation, and documentary

analysis. Following an introductory section on the logical foundations of social research, both qualitative and quantitative tools are examined. Teaching includes remote lectures and in person interactive activities based on real case studies. Particular attention is given to the design of integrated research approaches and the dissemination of results to diverse audiences.

Detailed program

The course aims to introduce students to the main practices of social research, with a particular focus on their application in the study of tourism, territory and local development. Following an initial section on the logical foundations of social research, the course will address various research strategies, distinguishing between qualitative, quantitative and mixed approaches.

Lectures will systematically explore the three major families of techniques: observation, interrogation and documentary analysis. For each, the main modes of application, contexts of use, advantages and limitations will be presented. Among the tools covered are observation, interviews (structured, semi-structured, and unstructured), focus groups and group techniques, as well as the analysis of documents, administrative data and open data.

Attention will be devoted to the critical reading and discussion of existing research, with the aim of enhancing students' ability to assess methodological coherence and the overall quality of a study. Building on these cases, students will be guided in designing their own integrated research project, combining qualitative and quantitative tools in a way that is consistent with clearly defined objectives.

A specific focus will be placed on the dissemination of research results, understood as a key practice for sharing knowledge both within the scientific community and with broader audiences, including stakeholders and territorial actors. Various communication strategies will be explored, ranging from the writing of reports and scientific articles to the use of innovative tools.

The teaching is structured around one weekly lecture (delivered remotely), dedicated to the theoretical introduction of research techniques, and two weekly interactive sessions (in person) focused on real case studies and hands-on activities. All teaching materials will be available on the e-learning platform throughout the course. Practical activities will foster active and reflective learning, supporting the development of skills that can be applied in real-world research contexts.

Prerequisites

Learning, writing, and oral communication skills.

Teaching form

The course consists of 56 hours: 20 hours are delivered through traditional teaching methods (lectures using slides, audio, and video) and 36 hours through interactive teaching methods (discussions, exercises, group work, presentation of case studies).

The course allows 30% of the hours to be conducted remotely .

Language: Italian

Textbook and teaching resource

1. de Lillo A., Arosio L., Sarti S., Terraneo M., Zoboli S., “Metodi e tecniche per la ricerca sociale”, Pearson, Milano, 2011 (capp. 1, 3, 4, 5; inoltre cap. 6 –solo par. 6.1 e 6.2-, e cap. 7- solo par. 7.1, 7.2, 7.3);

2. de Lillo A. (a cura di) “Il mondo della ricerca qualitativa”, Torino, Utet, 2010 (capp. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, postfazione);

3. Arosio, L. "La Celebrante. Racconti dal tempo futuro" Viterbo Utterson, 2024.

Semester

Second semester

Assessment method

Mid-term assessments
No mid-term or partial assessments are scheduled during the course.

Type and structure of the final exam
The final exam consists of an individual written test with three open-ended questions:
One question on general aspects of social research (research logic, ethics, qualitative and quantitative approaches, and methodological integration);
One question on qualitative methods;
One question on quantitative methods.
Each question is divided into subsections that guide students from the verification of basic definitions to critical reflection and the application of methods to concrete contexts.

Skills assessed
The exam is designed to evaluate:
Theoretical knowledge of core methodological concepts and tools;
Critical thinking in assessing research strategies;
Ability to apply qualitative and quantitative techniques in practice;
Mastery of disciplinary language and clarity of expression.

Assessment criteria and grading scale
Student performance will be assessed across four levels:
Fail : Insufficient understanding of basic concepts, unclear or incorrect answers;
Pass (18–23/30): Basic knowledge of definitions, limited critical or applied insight;
Good (24–27/30): Solid understanding, presence of critical reasoning and logical structure;
Excellent (28–30L/30): Full command of the material, ability to apply concepts, critically reflect, and articulate methodologically sound arguments.

Alignment with learning objectives

The written exam allows for a comprehensive assessment of theoretical understanding, critical reasoning, independent judgment, and the ability to apply knowledge in realistic research contexts .

Office hours

Please send a mail to laura.arosio@unimib.it

Sustainable Development Goals

GOOD HEALTH AND WELL-BEING | QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY