

Course Guide

PGT Research Design (SPS5034)

An Introduction to Social Science Research



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V3.4

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1 Welcome

This guide provides detailed information about the content, format, and assignments of the PGT Research Design course.

1.1 Contact

Please read this guide carefully. If you have any questions, particularly of an administrative nature, please contact the course administrator.

For administrative questions: email [<socpol-pgt-rm-courses@glasgow.ac.uk>](mailto:socpol-pgt-rm-courses@glasgow.ac.uk)

For questions about the course content: *Please use the Moodle*
<https://moodle.gla.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=39085>

The guide should be read in conjunction with the University of Glasgow rules and regulations especially on [plagiarism](#).

We hope you find this guide useful and the course interesting.

Michael T. Heaney & Thees Spreckelsen

2 Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)

2.1 What the course aims to achieve

After taking this course, students should:

- **understand the different stages and interactive nature of the research process**, including formulating research questions, operationalising complex theoretical constructs, principles of case selection, measurement, analysis, write-up, and dissemination;
- understand and appreciate the **epistemological paradigms** that underlie qualitative and quantitative research and be able to discuss the common ground, as well as differences, among research approaches;
- **be able to assess the quality of research** using criteria such as validity, reliability, parsimony, generality, operationalisability, political and normative desirability, and relevance, and describe types of research, such as inductive, deductive, descriptive, causal, explanatory, predictive, empirical, and theoretical research;
- recognise the **importance of selecting an adequate research design** and methods following from one's theory and/or research question, and be able to transfer and apply research design skills to one's own dissertation topic;
- and develop an understanding of the **practical aspects of carrying out research**, such as replication standards, codebooks and documentation, ethics approval, the publication process, and good practices for using and citing literature.

2.2 Knowledge, critical assessment, application

Students should develop:

- **knowledge** of research design, philosophy of social sciences, and criteria to assess research;
- the **ability** to use the knowledge **to critically assess** existing research and research designs for planned research; *Critical assessment* means that this ability entails not only the application of a criterion, but also weighing competing criteria against each other, considering context-specific limitations, as well as ethical and philosophical underpinnings; and
- and skills to **apply** the knowledge and demonstrate critical awareness in planning (students' own) research.

3 Course content: Overview of topics

The course introduces and discusses the conceptual and practical aspects of designing research and, in turn, how to assess research done by others.

The topics are summarised in the table below. More details will be available on the course's Moodle page.

3.1 Schedule (all times are UK/London time)

<i>Wk</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Assessment & Activities</i>
01	18/09	What is this course about?	
02	25/09	Where do research questions come from?	
03	02/10	Connecting theories, hypotheses, and empirical tests	
04	09/10	Conceptualisation and measurement	
	11/10	FORMATIVE ASSIGNMENT	Draft proposal research question , submitted to tutor
05	16/10	Case studies, case selection, and comparative research	Submit papers from your field
06	23/10	Experiments and ethics I	Group presentations set
	23/10	ASSESSMENT: 1pm-2pm	Online Exam (Materials W1-5)
07	30/10	Cross-sectional and longitudinal designs	
08	06/11	Interviewing and discourse analysis	Group presentations
09	13/11	Ethnography and ethics II	Group presentations
10	20/11	Mixed-methods designs	
11	27/11	Epistemology, ontology, and reflexivity	
12	06/12	ASSESSMENT: 1pm-2pm	Online Exam (Materials W6-11)
13	13/12	ASSESSMENT: 12:00 (Noon)	Proposal submission (via Moodle)
	25/03		Return of proposal marks and feedback
	08/05	Resit Exam 1 (2024) – 2pm	
	08/05	Resit Exam 2 (2024) – 4pm	
	09/05	Resubmission of research proposal (2024) – 12:00 (Noon)	

4 Course format: What you will do in this course?

4.1 Overview of course activities

The course aims to provide knowledge of key concepts to develop the ability to critically assess research, and to give students the possibility to apply the ideas in a research proposal (see ILOs).

Three general activities support this: Essential reading and study questions; Lectures; and Tutorials.

4.2 Essential reading and study questions

The course is based around high-quality empirical research examples. These studies demonstrate key aspects of social science research and form the basis of the lectures.

Time: Any time (preparation necessary for Lectures and Tutorials)

Place: Online reading list: [Link to Reading List Online](#)

Preparation: Familiarize yourself with the weekly study questions. Then read all the assigned studies.

Plan the time to read approximately 100 pages every week. The study questions are meant to guide your reading towards the research elements of each study.

Each week you also find recommendations for further reading. These readings are meant to clarify concepts and ideas in addition to the lectures.

Aim: Through the reading you should gain knowledge of key concepts and ideas. Furthermore, it should enable first reflections on these ideas, their critical use, and application.

<p>Important: The reading is compulsory. It is essential to understand the lectures and tutorials.</p>

4.3 Lectures

Time: Mondays 12:00 – approximately 13:50, Week 1 - Week 11

Place: Zoom (live) – Available on Moodle. Note that there are different Zoom links for the different lecture sections. Make sure that you attend your section.

Preparation: You must complete the essential readings.

Attendance: Compulsory

Important: The concepts and research methods covered in the lectures are an essential part of the online exams.

You have been placed into a lecture section depending on the programme in which you are enrolled:

Lecture Section 1 – Sociology-Linked Programmes (Thees Spreckelsen / Philipp Heinrich)

- MSc Criminology & Criminal Justice
- MSc Global Health
- MSc Global Migrations & Social Justice
- MSc Media, Communications & International Journalism
- MSc Media, Culture & Society
- MSc Sociology
- *Any programme not otherwise listed*

Lecture Section 2 – Politics, ESH, CEES, & Urban Studies-Linked Programmes (Michael Heaney)

- Int Masters in South European Studies
- MSc Global Economy
- MSc Global Security
- MSc Human Rights & International Politics
- MSc International Relations
- MSc Political Communication
- MSc Public Policy & Management
- MSc Russian, East European & Eurasian Studies

4.4 Tutorials

Time: see MyCampus, Week 2 - Week 11.

Place: Seminar rooms, please consult MyCampus OR the ["UofG Life"-app](#). Students may not switch tutorial groups.

Preparation: Readings and tutor-assigned tasks

Attendance: Compulsory (attendance will be recorded)

Tutorial etiquette:

Come prepared – ensure you have done the readings and attended the lecture (or watched its recording).

Contribute – you must participate in the tutorial by asking questions and working together on the group tasks.

5 Reading

Social science research is exciting. Finding out about the social world is what motivates us to be social scientists.

5.1 The role of essential reading in this course

The **Essential Readings** are central to the pedagogy of this course. They have been selected to illustrate a wide range of approaches to research and to exemplify some of the very best work in the social sciences. We find these readings to be very interesting and we hope that you will too.

These readings will be discussed in every course session except for the first week. You will be expected to ask and answer questions about the readings during the lecture sessions and tutorial sessions. Hence, it is **ESSENTIAL** that you read the required material **BEFORE** attending these sessions. Otherwise, you are likely to feel quite lost in the discussions and may find it difficult to learn much from the course.

The readings and their discussion during lectures and tutorial sessions will be a focus of the examinations. For each reading, you are expected to understand the research question, research design, and conclusions of the empirical analysis. You are **NOT** required to know specialised statistical tests or methods (beyond a simple significance test), which is material left for future courses. If you have questions about what you do or do not need to know from a reading, please ask a member of the course staff.

These readings are challenging. Thus, you are well advised to read each of them more than once. Our suggestion is to read an item before it is covered in lecture and then read it again after the lecture. We also suggest reviewing each reading carefully before exams, and then re-reading (a third time) anything that you found especially difficult.

Recommendations for **Further Reading** contain a series of links to textbook explanations of the technical aspects of the methods discussed. These are meant to aid your understanding. These readings are **not required**.

We encourage you to engage in conversations with the course staff and your peers about these readings. We expect that they will provoke engaging conversations.

5.2 Reading list

To access these readings, please go to our online reading list: [Link to Reading List Online](#).

Important: Each set of readings is accompanied by a set of questions in the following **reading guide**: [Link to Reading Guide Online](#). These are meant to focus your reading on the methodological aspects of each piece. Our expectation is that after reading, the lectures, and the tutorials you would be able to answer these.

We recommend that you check the reading questions *before* you start reading.

Week 1. What is this course about?

Key topics:

- Goals of the course
- Requirements of the course
- The role of required reading in the course
- The purpose and role of tutorials
- Examinations
- Research proposal paper

Essential reading:

- No required reading for Week 1.
- Please start reading **now** for Week 2!

Week 2. Where do research questions come from?

Key topics:

- Developing research questions
- Observation
- Theory
- Qualitative approaches
- Quantitative approaches

Essential reading:

- Clifford Geertz. 2005. "Deep play: notes on the Balinese cockfight." *Daedalus* 135(4): 56-86.
- Diego Gambetta and Steffen Hertog. 2009. "Why are there so many Engineers among Islamic Radicals?" *European Journal of Sociology* 50(2): 201-230.
- Kimberle Crenshaw. 1989. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 1989(1): 139-167.
- Robert D. Putnam. 1995. "Bowling Alone: America's Declining Social Capital." *Journal of Democracy* 6(1): 65-77.

Further reading:

- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 4 Formulating & evaluating research questions (5th ed.: 78-85). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 3. Connecting theories, hypotheses, and empirical tests

Key topics:

- Theory
- Hypotheses
- Literature
- Empirical tests
- Qualitative approaches
- Quantitative approaches

Essential reading:

- John M. Owen. 1994. "How Liberalism Produces Democratic Peace." *International Security* 19(2): 87-125.
- Mark S. Granovetter. 1973. "The Strength of Weak Ties." *American Journal of Sociology* 78(6): 1360-1380.
- Andrew G. Walder and Qinglian Lu. 2017. "The Dynamics of Collapse in an Authoritarian Regime: China in 1967." *American Journal of Sociology* 122(4): 1144-1182.

Further reading

- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 5 Reviewing the literature (5th ed.: 90-119). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 4. Conceptualisation and measurement

Key topics:

- Conceptualisation
- Categorisation and conceptual stretching
- Measurement
- Measurement validity
- Measurement reliability
- Asking questions in surveys and interviews
- Ontology
- Epistemology
- Qualitative approaches
- Quantitative approaches

Essential reading:

- Nora Cate Schaeffer and Stanley Presser. 2003. "The Science of Asking Questions." *Annual Review of Sociology* 29: 65-88.
- Silke L. Schneider and Anthony F. Heath. 2020. "Ethnic and cultural diversity in Europe: validating measures of ethnic and cultural background." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46(3): 533-552.
- Joceline Pomerleau, Cecile Knai, et al. 2013. "Measuring the food and built environments in urban centres: Reliability and validity of the EURO-PREVOB Community Questionnaire." *Public Health* 127(3): 259-267.
- Gary Goertz and James Mahoney. 2012. "Concepts and measurement: Ontology and epistemology." *Social Science Information* 51(2): 205-216.

Further reading

- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 7.5 Concepts and their measurement & Reliability and Validity (5th ed.: 151-163). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 5. Case studies, case selection, and comparative research

Key topics:

- Case studies
- Case selection
- Sample selection
- Generalisability
- Selection bias
- Unit of analysis
- Dependent variable
- Independent variable
- Control variable
- Qualitative approaches
- Quantitative approaches

Essential reading:

- Theda Skocpol. 1976. "France, Russian, China: A Structural Analysis of Social Revolutions." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 18(2): 175-210.
- Barbara Geddes. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." *Political Analysis* 2: 131-150.
- Andrew Bennett, Joseph Lepgold, and Danny Unger. 1994. "Burden-sharing in the Persian Gulf War." *International Organization* 48(1): 39-75.
- Mara A. Yerkes and Jana Javornik. 2019. "Creating capabilities: Childcare policies in comparative perspective." *Journal of European Social Policy* 29(4): 529-544.

Further reading:

- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods.* Chapter 3 Research Designs (5th ed.: 39-72). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 6. Experiments and ethics I

Key topics:

- Laboratory experiments
- Field experiments
- Ethics
- Internal validity
- External validity
- Quantitative approaches

Essential reading:

- Stanley Milgram. 1963. "Behavioral Study of Obedience." *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 67(4): 371-378.
- Nahomi Ichino and Matthias Schündeln. 2012. "Deterring or Displacing Electoral Irregularities? Spillover Effects of Observers in a Randomized Field Experiment in Ghana." *Journal of Politics* 74(1): 292-307.
- James Habyarimana, Macartan Humphreys, Daniel N. Posner, and Jeremy M. Weinstein. 2009. *Coethnicity: Diversity and the Dilemmas of Collective Action*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. Chapter 4: 64-105 and 6: 132-150.

Further reading:

- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 6 Ethics and politics in social research (5th ed.: 120-146). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stanley Milgram. 1974. *Obedience to Authority: An Experimental View*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Hannah Arendt. 1964. *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*. New York: Penguin Books.

Week 7. Cross-sectional and longitudinal designs

Key topics:

- Longitudinal designs
- Quasi-experimental designs
- Cross-sectional designs
- Generalisability
- Threats to validity
- Online data
- Sentiment analysis
- Quantitative approaches

Essential reading:

- Donald T. Campbell. 1969. "Reforms as experiments." *American Psychologist* 24(4): 409-429.
- Robert C. Allen, Jean-Pascal Bassino, Debin Ma, Christine Moll-Murata, and Jan Luiten Van Zanden. 2011. "Wages, price, and living standards in China, 1738-1925: in comparison with Europe, Japan, and India." *Economic History Review* 64(S1): 8-38.
- Ussama Yaqub, Soon Ae Chun, Vijayalakshmi Atluri, and Jaideep Vaidya. 2017. "Analysis of political discourse on twitter in the context of the US presidential elections." *Government Information Quarterly* 34(4): 613-626.

Further reading:

- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 3 Research Designs (5th ed.: 39-72). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 8. Interviewing and discourse analysis

Key topics:

- Interviewing
- Unstructured interviews
- Focus groups
- Thematic (framework) analysis
- Critical discourse analysis
- Generalisability
- Qualitative approaches

Essential reading:

- Hannah Schilling, Talja Blokland, and AbdouMaliq Simone. 2019. "Working precarity: Urban youth tactics to make livelihoods in insatiable conditions in Abidjan, Athens, Berlin and Jakarta." *The Sociological Review* 67(6): 1333-1349
- Irene Tessaro et al. 1997. "Genetic Testing for Susceptibility to Breast Cancer: Findings from Women's Focus Groups." *Journal of Women's Health* 6(3): 317-327.
- Xiao Han. 2021. "Uncovering the low-profile #MeToo movement: Towards a discursive politics of empowerment on Chinese social media." *Global Media and China* 6(3): 364-380.
- Joanna Szostek and Dariya Orlova. 2022. "Understandings of democracy and 'good citizenship' in Ukraine: utopia for the people, participation in politics not required." *Post-Soviet Affairs* 38(6): 479-496.

Further reading:

- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 20 Interviewing in qualitative research (5th ed.: 465-499). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 22 Language in qualitative research (5th ed.: 525-544). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 9. Ethnography and ethics II

Key topics:

- Ethnography
- Case studies
- Participatory research
- Methods of observation
- Positionality
- Transparency
- Generalisability
- Ethics
- Qualitative approaches

Essential reading:

- Alice Goffman. 2014. *On the Run: Fugitive Life in an American City*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Read the entire book, including the Appendix.
- Gideon Lewis-Kraus. 2016. "The Trials of Alice Goffman." *New York Times Magazine* (17 January).

Further reading:

- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 19 Ethnography and participant observation (5th ed.: 422-464). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 6 Ethics and politics in social research (5th ed.: 120-146). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 10. Mixed-methods designs

Key topics:

- Mixed-methods designs
- Case studies
- Cross-sectional designs
- Longitudinal designs
- Qualitative approaches
- Quantitative approaches

Essential reading:

- Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan. 2011. *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolence Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press. Read the entire book, including the Appendix.

Further reading:

- John W. Creswell. 2017. *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*. London: SAGE, Ch.1: 1-20.
- Alan Bryman. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Chapter 27 Mixed methods research (5th ed.: 634-660). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Week 11. Epistemology, ontology, and reflexivity

Key topics:

- Epistemology
- Ontology
- Reflexivity
- Positionality
- Qualitative approaches

Essential reading:

- Gloria Ladson-Billings. 2003. "It's Your World, I'm Just Trying to Explain It: Understanding Our Epistemological and Methodological Challenges." *Qualitative Inquiry* 9(1): 5-12.
- Hannah Mason-Bish. 2019. "The elite delusion: reflexivity, identity and positionality in qualitative research." *Qualitative Research* 19(3): 263-276.
- Stathis N. Kalyvas. 2003. "The Ontology of 'Political Violence': Action and Identity in Civil Wars." *Perspectives on Politics* 1(3): 475-494.

Further reading:

- Alan Bryman. 2016. "Social Research Methods." Chapter 2 Social research strategies: quantitative research and qualitative research (5th ed.: 16-37). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Katie Moon and Deborah Blackman. 2014. "A Guide to Understanding Social Science Research for Natural Scientists." *Conservation Biology* 28(5): 1167-1177.

6 Assessment

6.1 Rationale: What the assessments aim to achieve

Students will be assessed through three summative assignments which map onto the intended learning outcomes (ILOs) of the course:

Two exams focussing on:

- *knowledge* of research design, philosophy of social sciences, and criteria to assess research;

One research proposal providing an opportunity to demonstrate your:

- *ability* to use the knowledge to critically assess existing research and research designs for planned research. *Critical assessment* means that this ability entails not only the application of a criterion, but also weighing competing criteria against each other, considering context-specific limitations, as well as ethical and philosophical underpinnings;
- and *application* of the knowledge and critical awareness in planning (students' own) research.

6.2 Online exams

These assessments take the form of a quizzes with multiple-choice and short-answer questions. Each exam contributes 20% of the overall course grade.

Preparation and support

The test assesses knowledge and the use of ideas in a critical way. Both of which are focus of the weekly lectures, reading, and the tutorial discussions.

In addition, students may prepare for the exam format through:

- **mock test questions**, available one week prior to the exam on Moodle, which give students a sense how the questions are asked, scenarios presented, and provides some (automated) feedback, and
- a **question-and-answer session**, in the weekly tutorial prior to the first test.

Format

The exams consist of 22 questions. Questions are multiple choice with only one correct answer, as well as short answers which are graded as correct/incorrect.

What types of questions are there? Fixed-choice questions may have up to four possible answers and may require a yes/no or true/false response. For these, please select exactly one item. Open-ended questions require a short response written in English.

What are the questions about? The questions are based on the weekly readings and lecture sessions.

The exams are **open-book exams**. That means that, during the exams, you may look at PowerPoint slides, your notes, the essential readings, further readings, or any course materials (e.g., the reading guide).

Important: All answers must be written in English. Answers submitted in any other language will not be marked. Check that your computer or browser do not automatically translate text into another language. If they do, then you are advised to use a library computer for the exam.

Times

The exams are open from **1pm to 2pm** on the date specified in the course schedule above. **Once started you have 45 minutes to complete** the test. You cannot stop the exam; once the 45 minutes are done the test will be automatically submitted.

Important: you must **start no later than 1:15pm** if you want to make use of the full 45 minutes.

Important: It is your responsibility to ensure you have a stable internet connection and working device.

Academic misconduct during the exams

You may **not** work with other students while taking the exams, pass information about the exams to other students once you have taken them, or receive information about the exam from other students before you have taken it. Doing so would constitute **academic misconduct** which would be a violation of the **Student Code of Conduct**. Such behaviour could be subject to penalties such as receiving a mark of 0 on the exam, failure of the course, or expulsion from the university.

Grade calculation

There are 22 questions with each question corresponding to a grade point.

The University of Glasgow grades on a scale from 0 (fail) to 22 (excellent), the grades and their meaning are explained here:

https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_124293_smx.pdf

Each question yields one point if answered correctly. No partial points are given. Wrong answers do not attract a penalty.

The total number of points constitutes the overall exam grade. For example, 17 correct answers = 17 points = a grade of “17” (B1) on the Glasgow grading scale (0-22).

Return of the marks

Provisional marks for exams should be available within 15 working days. Please note that the short-answer questions are manually graded and marks must be checked before release, which may result in delays.

All grades are provisional pending confirmation by the PG Research Methods Exam Board. (It is unusual for the Exam Board to change a grade.)

Feedback

On release of the provisional grades, you will see the correct answers to your multiple-choice questions. There will not be individual feedback on the exams.

Sickness and Inability to take an exam

Please consult Section 7.8 (below) and the University information on Good Cause claims in case you are ill, otherwise prevented from taking an exam, or were impeded during an exam.

Adjustments and Disabilities

If you need adjustments or have any disabilities that may affect your exam performance, please ensure you get in contact with the disabilities service in advance of the exam. Should they not be able to see you in time, please get in touch with the course administrators.

Resits

The opportunity to retake an exam will only be offered to students whose overall course grade is C3:12 or lower. For example, if one exam is a D2:10, but your other exam is C1:14 and your research proposal a C1:14, no resit will be offered.

Resits will be confirmed at the exam board. Students will be informed after the exam board in case they have the opportunity to retake one of more assessments. **Dates for this year's resit assessments are listed above (p. 5).**

Questions and Help

For any questions on the format or practicalities, students should post questions to the courses "Discussion Forum."

6.3 Research proposal

What the assignment is about

This is the main assessment of the course. You are expected to write a proposal with a **maximum of 3,000 words** (including bibliography/references and any appendixes, but **not** including the cover sheet) in which you describe a planned piece of research based on **one your section's scenarios provided (below) in this Course Guide**. 3,000 words is a hard limit, with 3,001 considered over the limit. The suggested minimum is 2,700 words.

The proposal should have four broad sections (but NO table of contents):

- 1) Introduction (Philosophy, Theory, Literature). We recommend keeping the literature review relatively brief, thus allowing space for other aspects of the proposal.
- 2) Research question/aims
- 3) Data and Methods (Sampling/Cases, Type of data, Planned analysis, Ethical considerations).
- 4) Limitations.

Important:

You must develop your research question based on one of your section's scenarios provided in this Course Guide. Any research proposal that does not follow one of these scenarios will be penalised, receiving a maximum mark of 12 (C3).

Please indicate your choice of scenario on the assignment coversheet (provided on Moodle).

You must select **one** (and only one) of the scenarios corresponding to the lecture section in which you are enrolled.

Options for Lecture Section 1 (Thees Spreckelsen / Philipp Heinrich)

Scenario 1 – Preparedness for epidemics (option for Section 1)

- The global COVID pandemic has bluntly demonstrated the extent to which the world is ill prepared to confront the challenges of contagious diseases. Challenges are embedded in the nature of public health systems, medical practices, microbiological research, public opinion, and the limits of public policy tools, among other things. Design an original study to assess the effectiveness of one actual policy focused on managing contagious diseases. The policy could be administered by a single government or an intergovernmental organisation.

Scenario 2 – Advocacy for Migrant Rights (option for Section 1)

- Migrants tend to be a vulnerable group throughout the world. Vulnerabilities may be affected by factors such as limited economic resources, mismatched language skills, ethnic/racial hostilities and prejudices, government policies, limited access to local social networks, and anti-migrant public opinion. For these reasons, some advocacy organisations work to advance the rights and well-being of migrants, while others seek to mobilise public opinion against them. Design an original study to explain the strategies and tactics adopted by a specific pro-migrant or anti-migrant advocacy organisation (or well-defined set of such organisations). Strategies and tactics could include (but are not limited to) holding public rallies, coalition building, legal support, issue framing, or social media advocacy.

Scenario 3 – Transitions from Prison to the Workforce (option for Section 1)

- Helping former prisoners transition from incarceration to productive employment is a universal problem. Barriers to employment may include social stigma and stereotypes, lack of relevant training, lack of necessary education, history of illness or trauma, or lack of employment opportunities. Both government agencies and nongovernmental organisations administer programmes with varied effectiveness to address these problems. Design an original study to assess the effectiveness of one such programme that is actually administered somewhere in the world. Programmes could include (but are not limited to) job training, mental health counselling, or partnerships with local employers.

Scenario 4 – Media coverage of LGBTQIA+ issues (option for Section 1)

- LGBTQIA+ issues are increasingly the subject of media coverage worldwide. This coverage may include discussion of inequalities in access to public programmes, discrimination and violence toward LGBTQIA+ communities, marriage, health care, and education, among other topics. Design an original study to better understand variation in the media coverage on LGBTQIA+ issues with respect to its quantity, salience, tenor, and/or substantive focus. Coverage may include (but need not be limited to) social media, newspapers, periodicals, or television.

Scenario 5 – Educational responsiveness to technological change (Sect. 1)

- Technological change presents both opportunities and challenges for educational institutions at the secondary school level (i.e., for students aged roughly 13 to 18 years). Pupils are naturally exposed to new technologies in their social environments, which affects what they learn and how they learn. Schools may attempt to incorporate some of these innovations into the

formal educational process but must also manage preexisting standards and pedagogical routines. Design an original study to better understand the consequences of one technological development for student performance in a concrete education setting (such as a school, school district, or national system of education). The development may be one that is introduced intentionally by leaders in the educational setting or one that is inadvertently introduced by the environment. Such developments may include (but need not be limited to) new educational software, social media platforms, devices, artificial intelligence, or social trends.

Options for Lecture Section 2

Scenario 6 – The war between Ukraine and Russia (option for Section 2)

- The war between Ukraine and Russia has been disruptive to economic, political, and social processes in Europe and beyond. Design an original study in which you investigate factors that have brought about a specific disruption and/or that have prevented a specific disruption. Examples of disruptions could include (but are not limited to) constraints on access to medical care, energy, food, shelter, human rights, or free trade.

Scenario 7 – Military cooperation in the 2020s (option for Section 2)

- The world has evolved from bipolar to multipolar alignments in the post-Cold War era. This evolution has undercut some existing military alliances and created opportunities for new relationships to develop. Design an original study in which you investigate factors that encourage or undercut the formation and maintenance of international military alliances. These factors could include (but are not limited to) technological developments, geography, economic change, great power politics, histories of conflict, concerns about human rights, political leaders, or political systems.

Scenario 8 – Policies to address climate change (option for Section 2)

- Climate change is increasingly a threat to the viability of human social systems. A wide range of policies have been pursued to halt or reverse this problem, yet the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these policies is generally ill understood. Design an original study in which you evaluate the effectiveness of an actual policy that has been implemented somewhere in the world with the intention of addressing problems linked to climate change. Such policies could include (but are not limited to) incentives for investing in renewable energy, public investment in technologically efficient uses of energy, direct extraction of carbon from the environment, reshaping the nature of economic activity, or the humane management of human migration.

Scenario 9 – Social media in political campaigns (option for Section 2)

- Social media is a dynamic force in the management and outcomes of political campaigns. Politicians attempt to use social media to influence voters and elites, though they are challenged by evolving institutions and social spaces. Design an original study to investigate the effects of a social media strategy or tactic in an actual election. Strategies or tactics could include (but are not limited to) advertising, posting content, creating platforms, doxing, issue framing, linking online and offline action, or fundraising.

Scenario 10 – Government policy & international investment (opt. for Sec. 2)

- Governments frequently adopt policies with the intention of attracting foreign investment to their country or with the aim of aiding their nation's firms' in undertaking successful investments in other countries. These policies vary in their effectiveness over the short term and long term. Design an original study to investigate the effectiveness of one actual policy administered by a nation or a multi-national block (e.g., the European Union) designed to increase international investment. Policies could include (but are not limited to) building public infrastructure, establishing free trade zones, guarantees of military support, eliminating tariffs or nontariff trade barriers, or aiding the domestic development of high-tech industries.

Choose one of **your section's** scenarios to develop your research design. Within your chosen scenario, you can develop any research question/aim, concept, and approach you like (that fits within the scenario). A few points:

Stay within the topic: You **MUST** stay within the broad topic of the scenario you selected.

How to start: Begin by reading through all your section's scenarios and select the ONE for your overall proposal. We strongly advise you to commit to one scenario early on to get the most helpful feedback throughout the course and to enable you to refine your proposal accordingly. Once you have picked a scenario, start drafting a research question and, importantly, think about why it is interesting; that is a key element of the justification for your question.

Help: You will have to submit your research question and justification as a formative assignment. You will receive feedback, which should ensure that your question and justification are good basis for a research proposal.

Example research question based on a hypothetical scenario

This example is NOT based on any the scenarios listed above but is presented for illustration only.

Hypothetical scenario: "Private healthcare and social inequality." Regularly the question of privatization of the public National Health Service (NHS) comes up in the UK, most recently in the context of post-Brexit trade deals. Often a key

objection and worry concerning such a privatization is social inequality, more generally the health outcomes of private healthcare provisions are discussed.

Example research question: How is a possible privatization of the NHS perceived by working poor in the Greater Glasgow area?

Example justification: The political debate around healthcare privatization is often about questions of economic efficiency, the comparison of the NHS with more private (often insurance-based) healthcare systems, and more general macro-level health outcomes. Similarly, inequality is usually debated as a macro-level determinant of poorer health outcomes. Little research exists on how 'privatization of the NHS' is understood and consequently assessed by those who are affected by inequality.

Overall aim of this assignment: This assignment assesses the ability to design research. For example, whether there should be a rule such as “saturation” – for when to stop sampling new interview participants – and what the pros and cons for such rule would be. You will develop a proposal **for one of your section’s scenarios**, based on current events, described above. These scenarios should help you find a topic – usually the hardest part of doing research – and ensure that we mark you on roughly similar topic areas. This also means that you get to practice proposal writing **before** you will have to write the proposal for your final Master’s dissertation.

The assignment contributes 60% of the overall course grade.

Table 1: Submission dates for the research proposal

Submission deadlines:	
Formative “Research question” assignment:	11 th of October, 12:00 (Noon)
Research proposal:	13 th of December, 12:00 (Noon)
<i>Return of marks and feedback via Moodle:</i>	25 th of March

Preparation and support

The sections of the assignment broadly map onto the topics of the course sessions. These are exemplified and discussed through published research. The tutorials will further discuss these as well as contain practical exercises.

The assignment guidance and requirements will be available to you from Week 1. You are encouraged to familiarize yourselves with them in the first week, as this assignment should be built over the course of the term.

- **Formative “Research question/aim” assignment.** You will be asked to submit a research question/aim with a 200-word abstract explaining and justifying the question to your tutor, who will provide you with brief feedback on the assignment. If you submit this assignment late (without following

appropriate procedures for extension/good cause), your tutor may not provide feedback.

- **Formative group paper presentation.** As part of the tutorials, you will be asked to prepare short presentations of the research designs of published research (papers). The presentation will examine a paper using the same structure as the proposal: the paper's introduction, research question/aims, methods, and limitations. In addition, you may also consider how all these link to the paper's conclusion. *This will be a group task.*
- **Proposal tutorial.** The final tutorial of the course will be partly dedicated to any remaining questions that you might have about completing the proposal.

Additional support is available through the tutorial discussions, office hours, and the course forum.

English and Academic writing support

The school runs a program to help you strengthen your academic writing skills. This is especially useful for students who are non-native English speakers:

[Developing Your Academic Writing \(DYAW\) for Social & Political Sciences](#)

DYAW is a programme of classes and online activities on academic writing in social and political sciences. We focus on key aspects of Master's writing, including:

- assignment and dissertation writing;
- using source materials effectively; and
- critical analysis.

You can choose as many of the classes and activities as you like. Find out more at the **[DYAW for Social & Political Sciences and Interdisciplinary Studies Moodle](#)**.

DYAW is coordinated by Dr Gayle Pringle Barnes, the College International Student Learning Officer. Please feel free to **[contact Gayle directly](#)** if you have any questions.

6.4 Formative Assignment: Research question

You will be asked to write a research question/aim with a 200-word abstract that explains and justifies the question.

You will submit this assessment to your tutor, who will provide you with brief feedback. This is a formative assignment, which means there will be **no grade**.

Important:

Like your proposal the research question must be based on one of your section's scenarios. Please indicate which one you used.

The below example indicates what we would expect you to do (see also above):

Example research question: How is a possible privatization of the NHS perceived by working poor in the Greater Glasgow area?

Example justification: The political debate around healthcare privatization is often about questions of economic efficiency, the comparison of the NHS with more private (often insurance-based) healthcare systems, and more general macro-level health outcomes. Similarly, inequality is usually debated as a macro-level determinant of poorer health outcomes. Little research exists on how "privatization of the NHS" is understood and consequently assessed by those who are affected by inequality.

6.5 Step-by-step guide for the proposal

- 1) Choose **ONE** scenario from your section's options.
- 2) Develop a research question based on the scenario and provide a justification for it.
- 3) Submit the research question to your tutor (11/Oct/2023 or date arranged with your tutor).
- 4) Write your proposal with the four sections outlined above (use them as headings). A Table of Contents should **not** be included.
- 5) **Style and Coversheet:** Please use the **style-template (that includes the cover sheet)** provided on Moodle.
- 6) **Scenario statement:** Indicate which scenario your proposal is based on. **Important:** your proposal must be based on one of **your section's scenarios**.
- 7) **Submission format:** We will accept proposals only in Microsoft Word or Mac Notes format. **We will NOT accept .PDF submissions.**
- 8) **Plagiarism check:** Post a **draft** of your paper through Turnitin to obtain a preliminary originality score. This works through the submission link. You **may NOT** submit your **draft proposal** through **any other Moodle** besides the one from this course, as that will yield a nearly 100% Turnitin scores. If that happens, you will need to re-write your proposal.

Any proposal with an originality score of 50% or greater – for any reason – will not be marked and will be treated as a NONSUBMISSION. If your preliminary originality score is 50% or higher, then **you must modify your proposal** at this stage to obtain a lower score.

Important:

It is your responsibility to submit to the right Moodle page, and that you submit as **draft**. Failure to do so may lead to extremely high originality scores and require you to rewrite your entire proposal.

- 9) **Submit your final research proposal VIA MOODLE by 12:00 (noon), 13 December 2023.**

Important:

Upon submission, check that your proposal is no longer in the “draft” modus.

6.6 Assignment formatting and reference style

Font and Formatting

Please use the style-template posted on Moodle. You are free to choose your own font, size, and layout. We recommend that you use a consistent style throughout the paper for clarity.

Citation and Reference style

You can use any common citation and reference style (e.g., APA, Harvard, Vancouver). We recommend that you use a consistent style throughout the paper for clarity.

Important: All word-for-word quotes must be highlighted using inverted commas.

Granovetter (1973) clearly mentions the research gap in his article: “But how interaction in small groups aggregates to form large-scale patterns eludes us in most cases.” (p. 1370).

Important: Ensure that your **reference list** is complete and contains all relevant information about your sources.

Failure to do the above is likely to result in your assignment being flagged as plagiarised.

6.7 Plagiarism

You must avoid plagiarism. Instances of plagiarism are treated seriously and may result in a failing grade.

Plagiarism declaration:

When you submit your assignment, you will be asked to confirm that your assignment does not violate any plagiarism guidelines. Below is a brief overview. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes plagiarism and to avoid it.

What is plagiarism?

According to the university regulations:

*“32.2 Plagiarism is defined as the **submission or presentation of work, in any form, which is not one's own, without acknowledgement of the sources.** Plagiarism **includes inappropriate collaboration with others.** It is important to note that inappropriate collaboration with others includes inappropriate interaction with any other student, **outside agency, website, or software that generates assessment responses.** Special cases of plagiarism can arise from a student using their own previous work (termed auto-plagiarism or **self-plagiarism**). Self-plagiarism includes using work that has already been submitted for assessment at this University or for any other academic award..”*

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/apg/policies/uniregs/regulations2023-24/feesandgeneral/studentssupportandconductmatters/reg32/>

If you are unsure about this use the resource below AND/OR ask you tutor!

Why is plagiarism treated seriously and potentially resulting in a “Fail” grade?

The university requires that we evaluate you based on your own *original ideas and work*. If you are taking ideas and work from other people without giving appropriate credit, then you are misrepresenting your work as “original” when it is not. Hence, you are claiming academic credit that you are not properly entitled to. Thus, the university treats cases of plagiarism very seriously.

How to avoid plagiarism:

In addition to the tips for citing and reference list above, a stand-alone Moodle resource is available here:

[**Moodle course – “Avoiding Plagiarism”**](#)

Advice on Artificial Intelligence

Given the nature of the assessment in Research Design, it is not permissible to use artificial intelligence software in preparing the course's assessments; doing so constitutes plagiarism in this course.

6.8 Submission of the research proposal

The research proposal should be SUBMITTED ONLINE ONLY by 12pm (noon) on 13th of December 2023. It will be marked electronically via Moodle. Please follow the submission guidelines for electronically marked essays, as these differ slightly from normal Turnitin submissions. We aim to release all feedback through the Turnitin portal on 25 March 2024.

Check that you submitted the correct file

Because this Module's assessments are electronic-only, please check your file after submission to make sure that you submitted the correct document. We can only mark what you submit. This means that if you accidentally submit a draft, we can only mark the draft.

File naming

You must upload your essay onto Turnitin using the following submission title and file name:

- Student ID_Module code – For example: 4123456_SPS5041

Please note that underscores must be used between each section.

Anonymity

Important: The Graduate School operates anonymous coursework marking. So, please do not type your name on your essay. You should instead print your student ID number in the header or footer of each page.

Late submissions

You are strongly advised not to leave the submission of your essay until the last moment on deadline day. Submissions will automatically be marked late after the deadline.

Penalties: Assignments not submitted by the required deadline will be subject to a two-mark deduction for each working day overdue, subject to a maximum of five working days. If an assignment is submitted after the five working days limit, the student will be awarded zero (grade H).

If no assignment is submitted by the time other students in the cohort receive feedback, it will be treated as a non-submission, which may affect the award of credit for the whole course.

Important: You must **submit** your proposal. Assignments left as a **draft** will not be accepted and will accrue a penalty if submitted after the submission date.

University regulations

The above guidance provides only summaries. Please consult the University Regulations for the complete regulations. Follow the link to the relevant year, then to “University Fees and General Information to Students,” and then to “Code of Assessment for Undergraduate and Taught Postgraduate Programmes.”

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/senateoffice/policies/calendar/>

6.9 Proposal feedback

The research proposal assignment is meant to provide you with an opportunity to practice planning a research project, an activity that you probably will repeat for a dissertation or in a future job.

Please note in line with the University feedback policy (https://www.gla.ac.uk/media/Media_383677_smxx.pdf) that the feedback will give you indications on the strengths and areas of improvement in your assignment, it should not be read as the justification for the grade you will receive.

Feedback will be provided in the following format:

- An overall grade (A1:22-H:0).
- Letter grades (A-H) for the broad areas of the proposal (see the marking schema below).
- A brief series of comments on the strengths of the proposal and suggestions that you should consider when writing a proposal (or research report) in the future.

When will the feedback and grades be released?

Important:

Please note, given the course size and the Christmas closure period, feedback will be provided no earlier than 25th March 2024.

What are the criteria used to mark the proposal?

The next page details the marking schema and categories that markers will look at.

Important:

The marking criteria are guidance, not a definitive list. They should NOT be used as a tick list which guarantees a full mark. It is the overall potential of the proposal to answer your research question that will determine your mark.

Marking schema

The below outlines the marking schema (sometimes also referred to as marking rubric) for the assignment:

	Criteria
Introduction	<p>The introduction provides:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) a good justification of the research question's relevance;2) a concise review of relevant and current, empirical and/or theory-focused academic literature;3) a clear identification of a gap in the literature; and4) a clear overview of some theoretical arguments underpinning the research question.
Research question/ aim	<p>The proposal provides a clear research question/aim with sufficient details (either as part of the question or an explanation of it) so that it is clear what type of research to expect (e.g., descriptive, causal, comparative, theory-generating).</p>
Data and Methods	<p>The proposal demonstrates good understanding of research designs, operationalization, data-collection, and analysis techniques by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) describing appropriate research design, data-collection, and analysis elements needed to answer the research question/aim;2) operationalising all concepts of the research question; and3) The proposal must include an "Ethics" section, detailing the potential research ethical implications of the proposed question, data collection, analysis, and results.
Limitations	<p>The proposal shows evidence of critical, analytical thought, by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) reflecting the strengths and weakness of the methodological choices; and2) listing ways to minimize the negative aspects of a method;3) contrasting the chosen design, data, sampling, analysis method, and theoretical or epistemological position, with potential alternatives;4) making suggestions for future or alternative research beyond what is proposed; and5) for qualitative-oriented proposals: provide a reflexivity paragraph.
Overall proposal	<p>The proposal demonstrates a good overall sense of research design and methodology through providing:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) an appropriate plan to address the research aim or to answer the research question; and2) linking the parts of the proposal together logically.
Presentation	<p>The proposal is well presented such that there is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) appropriate referencing;2) a clear structure; and3) arguments are supported by references, examples, data, appropriate paragraphs, and a concluding paragraph.

Notes on marking schema

The criteria are not a tick box. That is, simply ensuring the proposal addresses each does not guarantee a full mark. It is the examiners' academic judgement to assess whether the proposal provides a convincing research plan that is appropriate given its research question.

Likewise, the criteria are not equally weighted, and grades given in the assignment are meant to provide additional feedback not a numeric score leading to the overall grade.

Grades for the sections will be indicated on the A-F scale.

Resubmissions

The opportunity to resubmit the proposal will only be offered to students whose overall course grade is C3:12 or lower. For example, if your proposal receives a D2:10, but your other exam is B3:15 and your research proposal a C1:14 no resit will be offered.

Resits will be confirmed at the exam board. Students will be informed after the exam board in case they have the opportunity to retake one of more assessments. Dates for this year's resit assessments are listed above.

6.10 Extensions, illness, and Good Cause

If illness or other adverse personal circumstances affect you and result in your missing an examination, or failing to submit coursework on time, or if your performance in the assessment is clearly prejudiced, you can submit a Good Cause Claim.

Submission of a Good Cause Claim is the mechanism which allows your circumstances to be considered by the Board of Examiners. Please note that all Good Cause Claims must be submitted **within five working days** of the date of the affected assessment.

How to submit and regulations for Good Cause claims: [Link to guidance](#)

Applying for extensions and Good Cause applications

1) All extension requests should be made via our administrative team.

Please email socpol-pgt-rm-courses@glasgow.ac.uk. Please do not contact your course or programme conveners.

2) Good Cause applications should be made via the Good Cause system in the first instance.

If you have any questions regarding a Good Cause application, please contact the administrative team: socpol-pgt-rm-courses@glasgow.ac.uk. Again, please do not contact your course or program conveners, as they do not deal with Good Cause applications.

7 Teaching team

Lectures and course conveners:

The content is delivered by:

- Dr Michael Heaney
- Dr Thees Spreckelsen
- Dr Philipp Heinrich

Tutorials:

Tutorials will be coordinate by:

- Dr Lito Tsitsou

Students will not be able to change tutorial groups.

Tutors:

- Dr João Almeida
- Dr Chris Blyth
- Dr Anna Bochorishvili
- Dr Nicole Cassie
- Dr Kristin Hay
- Dr Adnan Hossein
- Dr Ida Norberg
- Dr Galina Oustanova-Stjepanovic
- Dr Bastian Struve
- Dr Gerald Tambula
- Dr Alexander Tertzakian
- Dr Tim Winzler
- Dr Liyuan Zhuang

8 Feedback and evaluation

We welcome feedback on the course.

8.1 How to give feedback

Course representatives:

Please contact your course representatives first. Their contacts will be available on Moodle.

Since the course is large, the course representatives help us to take all feedback into account.

Please be polite when giving feedback. Remember that the representatives are your fellow students.

Representatives are chosen in the first week. If you are interested, please put your name forward.

Course evaluation:

The end-of-course feedback is crucial to us. You could greatly help us by completing it.

Below you can see how we use it.

Office hours:

You can speak to the course conveners directly during their office hours.

For details, please see the Moodle page “Course introduction”:

<https://moodle.gla.ac.uk/course/view.php?id=39085> - section-1