**Method of Social Research**

**Spring 2022**

**IR-480**

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**Course Description:**

The course of Method of Social Research will revolve around the methodology/gies used in social research to understand the social phenomena around us. The course will first deconstruct the knowledge we have of social phenomena around us and investigate what constitutes of our knowledge and how have we formed social and political concepts. In particular, the debate will dig deep into the components which form the basis of our understanding of socio-political issues.

This will enable us to connect theory with methodology and finally we shall be able to better choose methods for our research. In this regard, we will study how do we scientifically approach different social issues around us. Moreover, we shall engage in the scholarly debates amongst different scholarly circles about social research.

 With an enhanced methodological literacy, we will be able to strike a difference between a poorly conducted research and otherwise. Moreover, it will also allow us to be wary of methodological biases and fallacies we unconsciously incorporate in our understanding of social life around us.

**Course Format:**

This is a mandatory course for the students of BS Political Science and IR. It is very important course as it allows an aerial view of all other social sciences courses we have studied so far.

 I plan to start the course from the basic philosophical ideas of social ontology and epistemology. Subsequently, we shall discover how these two guide us towards our theory, methodology and the specific methods. Equally important, we shall discuss different theories in social sciences and particularly in Political Science and IR.

After equipping us well with a structure of social research we shall discuss in detail the steps needed in doing social research. This includes research design, research questions, hypothesis, methodology and theoretical framework. We will link these important components of research with different research topics. It is important for students to form their research topics and start applying the research tools on them.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course the students should be able to:

1. Understand the ontological, epistemological and methodological basis of different theories.

2. Apply different theories and methodologies on various research topics

3. Understand the biases and assumptions rooted in different theories

4. Distinguish between an authentic and bogus research

5. Understand the composition of social phenomena presented to us

6. Craft their own research proposals

**Assessments and Assignments:**

**1. Collaboration: 5**

This involves asking relevant questions and avoiding irrelevant questions and remarks. Students can good marks in collaboration by only staying quiet and actively making notes in the class.

**2. Elevator Pitch: 10**

Students will be asked to form a thesis proposal and present it in class in 90 seconds. The significance of elevator pitch is that allows students to develop their ideas in a more coherent way.

**3. Group Assignments: 10**

There shall be two in-class group assignments. The best will be selected for marking. Only presents students will have their names on the assignment.

**4. Quizzes: 10**

Two quizzes will be conducted and the best will be considered for marking. First quiz will probably be conducted in the third week of the semester and the other will be held during the last three weeks. There is no policy of requiz.

**5. Mid Term Exam: 25**

**6. Final Exam: 40**

**Week 1:**

In the first week, we shall dig into the fundamentals of political and social research. This would constitute as the most important part of this course as it involves philosophical deconstruction of our understanding of social phenomena around us.

 Moreover, theoretical and methodological underpinnings of different concepts will be investigated and critiqued. Students are expected to critically view these components of research.

**Week 2:**

In this week, we will investigate the theoretical differences between qualitative and quantitative methodologies. In this regard, the philosophies of positivism, behavioralism and post-positivism would be discussed and contrasted.

**Week 3:**

In continuation to the previous week debate, students will be taught four basic theoretical paradigms of Behavioralism, Institutionalism, Rational-Choice Theory and Constructivism. Moreover, I shall give an introduction of Normative Political Theory.

**Week 4:**

In this week, we shall critically examine each theoretical paradigm, theory and the resultant methodology. In this discussion, shortcoming of the ontologies, epistemologies and methodologies of the paradigm will be elucidated.

**Week 5:**

This week involves using the theoretical tool learned until then to understand the elements of research design. Students will be able to apply different theoretical tools to approach one topic from different lens and resultantly different designs.

**Week 6:**

In this week, I shall help students form research questions on the topic of their choice. This in-class activity would involve bringing clarity in the process of approaching a research topic. Second class of the week will consist of quiz.

**Week 7:**

In this week, students will make their research topic more nuanced by locating a research puzzle in their research topic. I shall first shed light on the importance of research puzzle in the research.

**Week 8:**

Mid-Term Week

**Week 9:**

We shall expand on the topic of research design. This week would involve in-depth study of the 7 steps of research. Moreover, three main designs: explanatory, interpretive and critical will be studied.

**Week 10:**

In this week revision will be done and students’ queries will be entertained. Second class will constitute of in-class quiz.

**Week 11:**

This week will consist of introducing the method of grounded theory. Students will be taught how this method is practiced in the backdrop of inductive philosophy; how researcher give its subjects the authority to give research a direction. In relation to this, ethnographic research will be introduced and discussion shall be done how the method of grounded theory is related to ethnographic research.

**Week 12:**

In continuation to the last week’s discussion, week 12 will discuss the importance of abstract concepts in the method of grounded theory. This shall be linked with the conceptual framework and how does it help in constructing research questions. Moreover, the research tools of grounded theory will be understood in the backdrop of ethnography.

**Week 13:**

In this week, we shall study the method of phenomenology. After introduction, we shall discuss the uniqueness of this method. Furthermore, the controversial elements of the particular method will be brought into discussion as well.

**Week 14:**

Week 14 will constitute of studying case study method. It will involve the chronology of description and subsequently abstraction involved in this method.

**Week 15:**

In this week we shall study the method of discourse analysis. In introduction, we shall study how language is connected to the construction of knowledge and politics. Moreover, one class will be dedicated to the learning of the practical usage of this method.

**Week 16:**

In this last week, we shall study the action method which can be situated in the critical design. A distinction will be struck that how does this method takes away lead from a particular data and imposes a critical view over a situation.

**Week 17:**

Final-Exam