

SPL 503

Introduction to Social Policy Research

Spring 2019



Instructor(s): Volkan Yılmaz
Guest instructor: Nazlı Aktakke
Spring 2019, Thursdays btw. 14:00-17:00
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Office hours: By appointment.

Course overview

The course aims to provide master's students a comprehensive introduction to methods of social research in social policy. This course covers the philosophical foundations of social policy research, fundamentals of positivist social research, survey research, using administrative data, quantitative comparative social policy analysis, qualitative methods in social policy research with a special focus on interviewing, qualitative content analysis, documentary analysis, social policy impact evaluation and research ethics. The objective of the course is to allow students to develop skills and knowledge about quantitative and qualitative social research, help them to better evaluate the quality of the published social research, formulate researchable questions, and design and carry out a research project.

The organization of classes

I will lecture around 40-50 minutes at the beginning of the class to set the scene. After Q & A session following the lecture, we will give a short break, which will be followed by in-class practical exercises.

Requirements

I expect you to **read each week's assignments** before the class. Course requirements are as follows:

- Weekly analysis papers (5 points per each paper: 50 points in total)
- Preparing your thesis reading list (10 points) (February 28th)
- Thesis proposal defense (10 points) (May 13th)
- Thesis proposal (30 points) (Due June 8th)

Grading scale: 90-100: AA; 80-89 BA; 75-79 BB; 70-74 CB; 65-69 CC

February 7

The philosophy of social sciences

Rosenberg, Alexander. *Philosophy of Social Science*. Routledge, (2018): 8-28.

Houston, Stan. "Beyond social constructionism: critical realism and social work." *British Journal of Social Work* 31.6 (2001): 845-861.

The study under focus: Fitzpatrick, Suzanne. "Explaining homelessness: a critical realist perspective." *Housing, Theory and Society* 22.1 (2005): 1-17.

February 14

Fundamentals of positivist social research

Ruane, Janet M. *Essentials of Research Methods: A Guide to Social Science Research*. Blackwell publishing, (2005): 75-90; 177-208.

February 21

Survey

Groves, Robert M., Floyd J. Fowler Jr, Mick P. Couper, James M. Lepkowski, Eleanor Singer, and Roger Tourangeau. *Survey Methodology*. Vol. 561. John Wiley & Sons, (2011): 1-34.

The study under focus: Gelissen, J. P. T. M. "European scope-of-government beliefs: The impact of individual, regional and national characteristics." Oorschot W van, Opielka M, Pfau-Effinger B, eds. *Culture and Welfare State. Values and Social Policy in Comparative Perspective*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar (2008): 247-267.

Database: Eurobarometer: <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/>

February 28

Administrative data

Connelly, Roxanne, Christopher J. Playford, Vernon Gayle, and Chris Dibben. "The role of administrative data in the big data revolution in social science research." *Social Science Research* 59 (2016): 1-12.

The study under focus: Castles, Francis G. "What welfare states do: a disaggregated expenditure approach." *Journal of Social Policy* 38.1 (2009): 45-62.

Database: Kamu Harcamalarını İzleme Platformu: <https://www.kahip.org/>

March 7

Quantitative comparative social policy

Danforth, Benjamin, and John D. Stephens. "Measuring social citizenship: achievements and future challenges." *Journal of European Public Policy* 20.9 (2013): 1285-1298.

The study under focus: Esping-Andersen, Gosta. *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism*. Polity Press, (1990): 47-54

Database: Social Policy Indicators: <https://www.sofi.su.se/spin/>

March 14

Designing qualitative research

Agee, Jane. "Developing qualitative research questions: a reflective process." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 22.4 (2009): 431-447.

Ruane, Janet M. *Essentials of Research Methods: A Guide to Social Science Research*. Blackwell publishing, (2005): 104-120.

Yin, Robert K. "Case study research design and methods." *Applied Social Research Methods Series 5* (2003): 1-15.

The study under focus: Guillén, Ana M., and Manos Matsaganis. "Testing the 'social dumping' hypothesis in Southern Europe: welfare policies in Greece and Spain during the last 20 years." *Journal of European Social Policy* 10.2 (2000): 120-145.

March 21

Interviewing

Seidman, Irving. *Interviewing as qualitative research: A guide for researchers in education and the social sciences*. Teachers College Press-Columbia University, (2006): 1-27; 78-111.

Small, Mario Luis. "How many cases do I need?' On science and the logic of case selection in field-based research." *Ethnography* 10.1 (2009): 5-38.

The study under focus: Millar, Jane, and Tess Ridge. "No margin for error: fifteen years in the working lives of lone mothers and their children." *Journal of Social Policy* (2018): 1-17.

March 28

Qualitative content analysis

Berg, Bruce L. *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. Allyn and Bacon, (2001): 238-267.

Spencer, Liz, and Jane Ritchie. "Qualitative data analysis for applied policy research." *Analyzing Qualitative Data*. Routledge, (2002): 187-208.

The study under focus: Burman, Erica, Sophie L. Smailes, and Khatidja Chantler. "'Culture' as a barrier to service provision and delivery: domestic violence services for minoritized women." *Critical Social Policy* 24.3 (2004): 332-357.

April 4

Documentary analysis

Atkinson, Paul, and Amanda Coffey. "Analysing documentary realities." *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (2004): 56-75.

Prior, Lindsay. "Doing things with documents." *Qualitative Research: Theory, Method and Practice* (2004): 76-94.

The study under focus: Askheim, Ole Petter, Karen Christensen, Synnove Fluge, and Ingrid Guldvik. "User participation in the Norwegian welfare context: an analysis of policy discourses." *Journal of Social Policy* 46, no. 3 (2017): 583-601.

April 11

Social policy impact evaluation (will be taught by Dr. Nazlı Aktakke, in collaboration with Development Analytics)

Gertler, Paul J.; Martinez, Sebastian; Premand, Patrick; Rawlings, Laura B.; Vermeersch, Christel M. J. 2016. *Impact Evaluation in Practice*, Second Edition. Washington, DC: Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank. Access: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/25030> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO

Angrist, Joshua D., and Jörn-Steffen Pischke. *Mastering Metrics: The Path from Cause to Effect*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015.

April 18

Social policy impact evaluation (will be taught by Dr. Nazlı Aktakke, in collaboration with Development Analytics)

TBA

April 25

Research ethics

Ruane, Janet M. *Essentials of Research Methods: A Guide to Social Science Research*. Blackwell publishing, (2005): 16-29.

The study under focus: Humphreys, Laud. "Tearoom trade: Impersonal sex in public places." *Public Sex/Gay Space* (1999): 29-54.

Babbie, Earl. "Laud Humphreys and research ethics." *International Journal of Sociology and Social Policy* 24.3/4/5 (2004): 12-19.

May 13

Thesis proposal defense @ Social Policy Forum (10:00-13:00)