



COURSE DATA

DATA SUBJECT

Code: 34417

Name: The method of social sciences

Cycle: Undergraduate Studies

ECTS Credits: 6

Academic year: 2025-26

STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
1310 - Degree in Sociology	Facultat de Ciències Socials	4	First quarter
1924 - Double Degree Prog. Sociology-Political and Public Administration Sciences	Facultat de Dret	5	First quarter
1924 - Double Degree Prog. Sociology-Political and Public Administration Sciences	Facultat de Ciències Socials	5	First quarter
1925 - Double Degree Prog. Sociology-Political and Public Administration Sciences	Facultat de Dret	5	First quarter
1931 - Double Degree Program in Sociology-Political Sciences and Public Administr.	Facultat de Dret	5	First quarter

SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
1310 - Degree in Sociology	The method of social sciences	COMPULSORY
1924 - Double Degree Prog. Sociology-Political and Public Administration Sciences	Year 5 compulsory subjects	COMPULSORY
1924 - Double Degree Prog. Sociology-Political and Public Administration Sciences	Year 5 compulsory subjects	COMPULSORY
1925 - Double Degree Prog. Sociology-Political and Public Administration Sciences	Year 5 compulsory subjects	COMPULSORY
1931 - Double Degree Program in Sociology-Political Sciences and Public Administr.	Asignaturas obligatorias de quinto curso	COMPULSORY

COORDINATION

GRAU MUÑOZ ARANZAZU

SUMMARY

The subject "The method of social sciences" is one of the six that make up the module "Techniques and methods of research in social sciences". If the other 5 (Socio-statistics, Computer science applied to sociological research, Demographic analysis, Quantitative techniques and Qualitative techniques of social research) aim to provide the students of the Sociology Degree with the technical-practical competences and skills associated with the methods and techniques of sociological work, this one has the dual objective of integrating and articulating what has already been acquired in the five previous ones, providing, in turn,



the reflective dimension required in social-scientific work. The general and clearly theoretical character of its name refers directly to the problem of the unity-plurality of methodological approaches in the social sciences, also taking into account the complex and diverse field of the social sciences. Hence, in "The method of the social sciences", attention should be paid both to methodological practice, in its epistemological foundation, and to the different methods used in the different social sciences. The meta-scientific nature of the subject should therefore be linked to the complexity, multidimensionality and historicity of the social object. It is not so much a matter of thinking from the method, however pluralistic it may be, as of thinking about the method and about the methodology itself. In this subject the social sciences are the object, but from the methodological point of view, which is the very center of social-scientific work. The specificity and problematicity of the social sciences are to be found in questions of method.

We are not, therefore, before a subject focused exclusively on the procedural, since while it consolidates the operations involved in the successive phases of the social research process, it must have an integrating purpose, both of these phases and of the disciplines that practice social research. That is the reason why it is taught after the "social sciences" module in which a particular knowledge of this plural and heterogeneous field has been acquired. In the same way, it must also provide students with the epistemological principles and bases that underlie the various methodological approaches and techniques of social research. These epistemological foundations cannot be separated from the different ways of conceiving social structure and change. Therefore, this subject crowns and complements, in some way, the module of "sociological theory, social structure and change". The different modules that make up the Sociology Degree converge in this subject, which thus serves as a bridge to empirical social research and applied social sciences.

Therefore, in this subject it is about starting from the knowledge already acquired throughout the studies of Sociology Degree on methodology, social sciences and sociological theory in order to integrate them through an epistemological reflection on sociology as a science and as a social practice integrating them into the participatory research method. In this sense, students will initially become familiar with the language of epistemology, as well as with its paradigmatic plurality. This will be followed by the treatment of the main problems and contradictions of the methodology of science: the conflict between different sciences, different conceptions of science and different epistemologies, as well as the false dualism of some theoretical oppositions. All this will be used, in a next step, in the application to the design, implementation and evaluation of research in which participatory methods, PAR, are applied.

This reflection on method cannot be done without the appropriate logical, epistemological and methodological tools. The scientific method has provided us with elements to think about science itself, which is why the science of science must be considered in this subject. In particular, the history of science, the sociology of science and the logic of science will be taken into account to address the subject of the method of social science.



On the other hand, given the integrative and synthetic character of the subject, the points of articulation of the social-scientific work, that is, the link between the levels of the same, especially between epistemology and methodology and between methodology and technology of social research, will have to be especially taken into account. These two nodes are directly related, respectively, to the different ways of approaching and working with both questions (scientific problems) and answers (scientific hypotheses and conjectures). From a general approach to the principles of the scientific method, it will be explained how each principle can be understood in multiple ways in the field of social sciences and why. This necessary consideration of the articulation between moments of the scientific research process must be extended to the different methodological perspectives, so as to understand how and why quantitative-distributive research must be integrated with qualitative-structural and historical-dialectical research, the participatory method applied in sociological research constitutes an excellent opportunity to address all these issues. In this context, the different levels and orders of social research will be addressed, with particular emphasis on the issues of reflexivity and complexity.

Precisely because of the reflexivity and historicity of the social sciences, characteristics related to the political and historical nature of social relations, neither the different and conflicting uses of methodological practices nor their limits can be left aside. The assumptions and the social and political consequences of the different methodological options must be included in the consideration of the method of the social sciences. The purpose of science is the production of a certain knowledge about reality that serves both to transform-control that reality and, critically, itself; bearing in mind that there are different ways of exercising criticism. The consequence of this is that scientific knowledge serves to legitimize certain types of actions and to delegitimize others, in turn delegitimizing the knowledge on which it is based. Not to understand the characteristics of objectification, self-objectification, transformation and legitimization of scientific knowledge is not to have the elements to understand what is at stake in the question of the method of the social sciences.

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PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

No enrollment restrictions have been specified with other subjects of the study plan. However, although it is not an administrative requirement, in this subject it is essential, as already mentioned, the background acquired by the student throughout the undergraduate studies, mainly in terms of knowledge of basic concepts of sociology and skills of analysis of social reality, sociological theory, and skills in the design and conduct of research.

COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

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Analyse social phenomena adopting a multidisciplinary perspective (sociological, psychosocial, economic,



political, historical and anthropological).

Apply the principles of the professional code of ethics of sociology and develop a commitment to social problems.

Apply the quantitative and qualitative techniques of sociological data collection.

Conduct qualitative sociological analyses.

Design and implement plans and programmes aimed at addressing social problems and evaluating their results.

Develop gender perspective and integrate it into the study of social reality.

Know the tools needed to create, implement and evaluate public policy programmes and social intervention projects.

Learn independently and develop initiative in the field of sociology.

Propose, design and develop a sociological research project.

Respect and promote the principles of fundamental rights, gender equality, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, democratic values and sustainability.

Students must be able to apply their knowledge to their work or vocation in a professional manner and have acquired the competences required for the preparation and defence of arguments and for problem solving in their field of study.

Students must be able to communicate information, ideas, problems and solutions to both expert and lay audiences.

Students must have acquired knowledge and understanding in a specific field of study, on the basis of general secondary education and at a level that includes mainly knowledge drawn from advanced textbooks, but also some cutting-edge knowledge in their field of study.

Students must have developed the learning skills needed to undertake further study with a high degree of autonomy.

Students must have the ability to gather and interpret relevant data (usually in their field of study) to make judgements that take relevant social, scientific or ethical issues into consideration.

Work in a team with a multidisciplinary perspective.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS



1.

PROGRAM

- 1. The theoretical and empirical research on science.
 - 1.1. Science, method, methodology, technique and technology
 - 1.2. Logic, ontology and epistemology
 - 1.3. Methodological unity and/or diversity
 - 1.4. Science studies

- 2. Epistemological foundations of social-scientific methodology.
 - 2.1. Nomothetic and ideographic. Verstehen and erklaren
 - 2.2. Classical epistemologies of science: analytical, hermeneutic, dialectical
 - 2.3. Alternative, subaltern and counter-hegemonic epistemologies
 - 2.4. Holism and Individualism

- 3. Methodological practices and social research programs from the participatory method.
 - 3.4. The propositional phase and its epistemological idiosyncrasy
 - 3.1. Describe and explain the epistemological and theoretical foundations of participatory methods.
 - 3.2. The construction of the participatory aims
 - 3.3. Participatory diagnosis and the identification of power relationships between social agents and the research question in the methodology of citizen participation
 - 3.5. Evaluation of participatory processes and participatory evaluation of public policies.
 - 3.6. Empirical technology applied to the processes of citizen participation
 - 3.7 Channels and strategies for communication of the results obtained in the participation processes.

- 4. Social and political uses of methodological perspectives.
 - 4.1. Values in science and scientific research in the participation processes
 - 4.2. Ethics in research
 - 4.2. Policies of science, method and knowledge
 - 4.3. Objectivity

WORKLOAD

PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theoretical and practical classes	60,00
Total hours	60,00

NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES



Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	3,00
Individual or group project	20,00
Independent study and work	32,00
Preparation of lessons	20,00
Preparation for assessment activities	15,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
Total hours	90,00

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Teaching methodology will derive from the organization of the activities programmed at the beginning of the course, the distribution in theoretical and practical classes and the nature of the materials that will be worked on. The subject will be developed jointly in theoretical class hours and of practical classes. For the theoretical part it is advisable to read beforehand the materials provided, as well as mandatory for the practical part, in addition, the work in parallel of the non-contact hours will be required.

At the classroom level, the theoretical classes will be combined (exposition by the professor and student participation based on the questions raised) with the practical classes (based on the work previously done by the students, individually and in groups), as stated in the Verifica Document.

The teaching methodology will consist of some of the following modalities:

- Participatory master class.
- Oral presentations by students.
- Study of cases.
- Team work.
- Elaboration of diagrams, conceptual maps and synoptic tables.
- Group discussion and analysis sessions from materials such as films, documentaries, exhibitions, conferences, etc.
- Reading, synthesis, analysis and criticism of texts.
- Research projects.
- Realization of exercises.
- Presentation and exhibition of panels, poster.



- Preparation of scientific articles.
- Individual and group tutorials for guidance, monitoring and supervision.

In short, in the lectures, the various contents of the syllabus will be exposed, based on the discussion and resolution of problems, on cooperative learning and on the comprehensible reading of texts and study materials. And the students will expose the knowledge acquired both orally and in writing, using face-to-face classes for presentations and debate. At the beginning of the course and depending on the circumstances, guidelines will be given for carrying out individual and group work. There will be tutoring activities and, eventually, seminars and other specific training activities, such as conference attendance.

EVALUATION

Individual work will be evaluated and a team made by students throughout the course, both as it relates to the acquisition of competences and with regard to their own knowledge of the subject. This evaluation will be based on the general and specific objectives proposed in this area, both for applying disciplinary knowledge and skill development. Throughout the process, students are guided on ways to assess the learning process.

- Written tests: including written evidence of the theoretical issues and practices, analysis and case resolution, problem solving, short-answer tests, essay, or other similar options.
- Oral exams: including oral examinations, interviews, debates and oral presentations in the classroom or other similar options.
- Development, delivery of one or more papers, reports / reports and / or oral presentations; and student attendance at seminars.

If a diversified assessment was adopted, the result of it would come from both a written and practical activities of all individual and collective nature test. Given the theoretical and practical and reflective nature of this subject is to acquire the tools of critical method, using them. This will be carried out both analysis of articles / papers published in prestigious journals in the social sciences and by different agencies public or private research and research reports. Since the aim of the course is to know exercised Review of methodological level research papers, you have to practice through the analysis of this work.

Which will be specified in the Annex to the Teaching Guide, the weight of the written exam note will range between 60% and 40%, and the practical part between 40% and 60%.

The final grade would be a weighted average based on this distribution. The / students who did not obtain the pass mark for 1st call, could be presented to the second call without repeating activities, both individually and collectively, if they have already been evaluated positively.

In order to average out the two parts mentioned, the part of the exam (5 out of 10) must be passed, and get at least a 4,5 (out of 10) on the continuous qualification part.

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