

### Research Design

**Course code:** 40G33NAK41M

**Course name :** Research Design

**Course name (Hungarian):** Research Design

**Number of hours per semester:**

**Credits:** 3

**Fall/Spring:** Fall

**Language:** English

**Prerequisites:**

**Course type:**

**Department:** [Összehasonlító és Intézményi Gazdaságtan Tanszék](#)

**Course leader:** [Medve-Bálint Gergő](#)

**Course description:** The course introduces the basic principles of academic writing and research design. The course aims to help students in preparing their MA thesis but it also offers some practical tools for completing their various academic writing assignments. In the first part of the course the students will learn how to identify a research topic, how to formulate a research question, how to perform a literature review, and how to properly reference the sources they use. In the second part, students will learn about the key aspects of empirical research such as the treatment of independent and dependent variables, formulating hypotheses, dealing with causality, case selection and the role of case studies and the structure of research papers.

During the course students will perform individual tasks and complete short written assignments. At the end of the semester they will submit a research paper as the main output of their course work. All the course materials, including the readings will be available on moodle.

Those students who fail to attend more than three classes cannot be graded! Any act of plagiarism results in automatic failing of the course and the case will be reported to the University's ethical committee.

#### Course requirements during the semester:

##### Examination requirements:

**Assessment, grading:** Those students who fail to attend more than three classes cannot be graded! Any act of plagiarism results in automatic failing of the course and the case will be reported to the University's ethical committee.

The final grade will be composed of the following elements:

- Research topic (2 points)
- Research question (3 points)
- Preliminary literature review (5 points)
- Five testable hypotheses (5 points)
- Research plan (10 points)
- Outline of the research paper (5 points)
- Research paper (30 points)

Grading:

- 0 - 30: fail (1)
- 31-37: sufficient (2)

- 38-44: satisfactory (3)
- 45-51: good (4)
- 52- : excellent (5)

**Aims, objectives and description of the course:** (1) Introduction. Discussion about academic research. The basics of research design  
(2) Types of academic texts in higher education. How to choose a research topic. The research question  
(3) The literature review. Where to find information and relevant sources  
(4-5) Citation and referencing. Practical exercises  
(6) Plagiarism - what is it and how to avoid it  
(7) Independent and dependent variables  
(8) Hypotheses and causality  
(9) Components of research design. How to write a research plan  
(10) The comparative method. Case selection, selection bias and units of analysis  
(11) The research paper - how to write it  
(12) Case study - qualitative or quantitative?  
(13) Process tracing

### Course schedule:

**Learning outcomes:** At the end of the course students will be able to independently identify a research topic, formulate adequate research questions and prepare a complete, feasible research design to conduct empirical research by selecting appropriate qualitative or quantitative methods. They will also be able to efficiently perform a literature review, and use citations and references properly while writing academic papers.

### Course assessment during the semester:

#### Assignments:

All the written assignments should be submitted via moodle!

Research topic (2 points): The title of the topic should be submitted together with a short description (3-4 sentences) of its background and significance.

Research question (3 points): This should be closely related to the chosen topic and, most importantly, should be well-specified and researchable.

Literature review (5 points): Brief summary of some academic sources (3-5 are sufficient) that are relevant for the research topic. The review is a summary of the main points of the selected works (one paragraph per academic source is fine).

Hypotheses (5 points): Ideally, the required five hypotheses should be testable (which also means that they should be empirical) and should be related to the research question.

Research plan (10 points): This piece of work should not exceed 2 pages and should provide an outline of the research that the students will perform. Although the detailed requirements will be discussed in class, a research plan usually includes a title, a topic and its description, a research question, a brief, preliminary literature review, hypotheses, potential data sources and methods of data collection, the preferred analytical method and expected results and some thoughts on the limitations of the research.

Outline of the research paper (5 points): A very short (1 page) outline of the structure and content of the research paper.

Research paper (30 points): This is the final output of the course. The text should follow the standard format of an academic paper (details will be provided in class) and should not exceed 2500 words including footnotes and references.

**Program's name:**

**Readings:**

Compulsory readings:

- Beach, Derek and Rasmuss Brun Pedersen (2013), *Process-Tracing Methods*, The University of Michigan Press, Chapters 1 and 2
- Bell, Judith (2010), *Doing Your Research Project*. Fifth Edition, Open University Press. Chapters 2, 4, 6
- Creswell, John W. (2012), *Research Design*. Fourth Edition, Sage. Chapter 7
- Diamond, Jared (2005), *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, Penguin Books. Chapter 11
- Gerring, John (2007), *Case Study Research*, Cambridge University Press, Chapter 1
- King, Gary, Robert E. Keohane and Sidney Verba (1994), *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton University Press. Chapter 1
- Posner, Daniel N. (2004), *The Political Salience of Cultural Difference: Why Chewas and Tumbukas are Allies in Zambia but Adversaries in Malawi*. *American Political Science Review* 98(4): 529-545

Recommended readings:

**Course professor(s)/lecturer(s):**