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International Association of Universities

Course manual
Joint Master's Programme in
International Humanitarian Action

Methodology and methods in humanitarian action

University of Warsaw

October 2023 – July 2024
Semester 2 (February – July 2024)

**Module
coordinator**

Dr Marcin Romanowicz

Lecturer:

Dr Marcin Romanowicz
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office location: Collegium Iuridicum I, room 318
office hours: Tuesday, 14:30-15:30

Credits awarded: 5 ECTS, equivalent to 125 work hours (1 ECTS = 25 hours)

Period: Second semester, block 1

Venue & hours: **Tuesday, 11:30-13:00,**
Collegium Iuridicum III, Oboźna Street 6, room 3.12
+ 4 extra meetings (Wednesday)

1. Introduction

The module is an element of the third component (Orientation Period, 30 ECTS) of the NOHA Joint Master's Degree in International Humanitarian Action to be completed during the second semester. It forms a recognized part of the curriculum and is a requirement for obtaining the NOHA Master's degree.

The objective of the course is to introduce students to research methods of social science applicable in both academic study of humanitarian action and the practice thereof. Skills and knowledge obtained during this course should in particular be useful in designing and conducting evaluation studies of humanitarian intervention, completing need assessments in the field, analysing policy objectives, and collaborating with specialised research agencies.

As designing and conducting empirical research requires both knowledge and skill, the main principle of the course is to combine theoretical discussion of research methodology with practical training involving both fieldwork and data analysis conducted in teams. To that end students will be asked to participate in research exercises and prepare a research project of their own.

2. Learning outcomes

Knowledge

- Has developed specialised knowledge and a critical understanding of research methods appropriate for the humanitarian field.

Skills

- Has demonstrated the ability to identify and justify research methods that are ethically appropriate for scientific research in the humanitarian work-field.
- Has demonstrated the ability to implement research methods for humanitarian research in a controlled setting.

Competences

- Has developed the capacity to reflect on the use of a method and the knowledge gained thereof in terms of ethical aspects and the researcher's position.
- Has studied a research topic in depth with an application of relevant methodology, learns from past experiences in order to be prepared for a bigger humanitarian research.

3. Course material

Mandatory reading (excerpts)

1. Babbie, Earl, 2014, *The Basics of Social Research*, Cengage. (excerpts) (hereinafter "Babbie").
2. Dijkzeul, Dennis, Dorothea Hilhorst, and Peter Walker. 2013. Introduction: Evidence- Based Action in Humanitarian Crises. *Disasters* 37: 1-19.
3. Humanitarian Needs Assessment: The Good Enough Guide. 2015. *Practical Action*.
4. Krippendorff. Klaus, 2004, *Content Analysis. An Introduction to its Methodology*. Sage (2nd edition) (excerpts),
5. Patton, Michael Q, 2001, *Qualitative Research & Evaluation Methods*, Sage (excerpts).
6. Tomaszewski, Brian. 2014. *Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for Disaster Management*. 1 edition. Boca Raton: CRC Press (excerpts).
7. Tourangeau, Roger and Ting Yan, 2007, Sensitive Questions in Surveys, *Psychological Bulletin* vol. 133, no. 5, p. 859-883.
8. Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava. 1992. *Research methods in the social sciences*. New York: St. Martin's Press (excerpts).
9. Kalpokas, Neringa and Ivana Radivojevic, 2021. Bridging the Gap Between Methodology and Qualitative Data Software: A Practical Guide for Educators and Qualitative Researchers. *Sociological Research Online*.

Recommended reading (some items will be used as additional/illustration material):

10. Clarke, M., C. Allen, F. Archer, D. Wong, A. Eriksson, and J. Puri. 2014. "What Evidence Is Available and What Is Required, in Humanitarian Assistance." *International Initiative for Impact Evaluation, London*.
11. Doocy, Shannon, Adam Sirois, Jamie Anderson, Margarita Tileva, Elizabeth Biermann, J. Douglas Storey, and Gilbert Burnham. 2011. "Food Security and Humanitarian Assistance among Displaced Iraqi Populations in Jordan and Syria." *Social Science & Medicine* 72 (2): 273-82.
12. Henson, Spencer, and Johanna Lindstrom. 2013. "'A Mile Wide and an Inch Deep'? Understanding Public Support for Aid: The Case of the United Kingdom." *World Development* 42: 67-75.

13. Höijer, Birgitta. 2004. "The Discourse of Global Compassion: The Audience and Media Reporting of Human Suffering." *Media, Culture & Society* 26 (4): 513-31
14. Humanitarian Response Index 2011: Addressing the Gender Challenge. 2011. *Madrid: Dara.*
15. Hyndman, Jennifer. 2000. *Managing Displacement: Refugees and the Politics of Humanitarianism.* U of Minnesota Press.
16. Jacobsen, Karen, and Loren B. Landau. 2003. "The Dual Imperative in Refugee Research: Some Methodological and Ethical Considerations in Social Science Research on Forced Migration." *Disasters* 27 (3): 185-206.
17. Lucini, Barbara. 2014. *Disaster Resilience from a Sociological Perspective: Exploring Three Italian Earthquakes as Models for Disaster Resilience Planning.* Springer Science & Business.
18. Qadir, Junaid, and Anwaar Ali, Raihan ur Rasool, Andrej Zwitter, Arjuna Sathiaseelan and Jon Crowcroft. 2016. "Crisis analytics: big data-driven crisis response". *Journal of International Humanitarian Action* 1:12
19. Mackenzie, Catriona, Christopher McDowell, Eileen Pittaway, A. Zwi, Grove, N, Zion, D, Tarantola, D., and Silove, D. 2007. "Beyond 'Do No Harm': The Challenge of Constructing Ethical Relationships in Refugee Research." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20 (2): 299-319.
20. Mazurana, Dyan, Prisca Benelli, and Peter Walker. 2013. "How Sex- and Age-Disaggregated Data and Gender and Generational Analyses Can Improve Humanitarian Response." *Disasters* 37: S68-82.
21. Meier, Patrick. 2015. *Digital Humanitarians: How Big Data Is Changing the Face of Humanitarian Response.* Null edition. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press.
22. Puri, Jyotsna, Anastasia Aladysheva, Vegard Iversen, Yashodhan Ghorpade, and Tilman Brück. 2015. "What Methods May Be Used in Impact Evaluations of Humanitarian Assistance?"

NB! The recommended reading list is preliminary and might change.

4. Course material

The course focuses on research techniques (sets of activities aimed at producing knowledge of a particular type) rather than on particular topics in humanitarian research or possible applications of research techniques (such as need assessments, policy studies, evaluation studies etc.). It is also assumed that full production cycle of a research study - from conceptualisation stage to writing up of results is simulated during the course. This design aims to provide optimal learning environment for student groups whose prior knowledge of research methodologies varies, and to ensure that the steep learning curve needed for obtaining learning outcomes is indeed accomplished.

The same objectives are served by diverse teaching methods including short presentations by the lecturer, individual assignments for students, and different forms of group work. A standard textbook of research methods in social sciences is used as a reference, along with supplementary reading material addressing specific issues in humanitarian research.

The course consists of 14 classes (tutorials) and 4 workshops which can be roughly divided into four categories. The first is theoretical. Classes within this group are devoted to discussion of basic issues in research methodology of social sciences, such as different research designs, sampling strategies, and ethical questions.

The second component focuses on specific techniques of humanitarian research: doing interviews, collecting data, observing, performing content analysis. Within this component every class will be devoted to discussion of one research technique. For the sake of practical training, during each class students will be asked to collaboratively prepare a research tool and then use it outside of the classroom in a short research exercise.

The third component of the course is devoted to analysis and interpretation of empirical data gathered during exercises in the second component or obtained in a different way. This includes both qualitative and quantitative analysis. During classes of this type, apart from reading assignments and in-class discussions, students will be expected to perform certain analytical activities and write a short paper interpreting the results.

During the course, students will be asked to work in groups of 3 persons to prepare research tools, gain empirical material and conduct analyses on given topic.

The classes of second and third type will be supported by practical workshops during which students will receive some comments to the research exercises and writing assignments.

The fourth component is devoted to choice of research techniques for given purposes and their typical limitations.

5. Conditions for completion of the course

- A) The basic condition for passing the course is class attendance - each student is entitled to 2 unexcused absences; subsequent absences require justification (e.g. the submission of a medical sick certificate).
- B) Prepare and deliver on time four Writing assignments:
- Writing assignment (no. 1): drafting a conceptual research proposal re humanitarian action – deadline: **Tuesday, 9th April 2024**, 23:59, submission by e-mail;
 - Writing assignment (no. 2): preparation of the fieldnotes based on Research exercise I – deadline: **Friday, 5th April 2024**, 23:59, submission by e-mail;
 - Writing assignment (no. 3): preparation of a script for an in-depth interview [max. 10 main questions] - **topic: Humanitarian Aid Concept in Modern European Society (Polish perspective)** - deadline: **Tuesday, 23rd April 2024**, 23:59, submission by e-mail;
 - Writing assignment (no. 4): preparation of a questionnaire (including pilotage in the form of structured interview with a Polish colleague) on: **Polish students' attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees and the Polish government policies, regarding this same group**; deadline: **Tuesday, 21st May 2024**, 23:59, submission via e-mail.

Each Working assignment shall be conducted by a team of 3 students.

C) Conduct one Research exercises:

- Research exercise I: field observation in a center for Roma refugees from Ukraine (Kidałowice near Przemyśl): **Friday, 22nd March 2024.**

Research exercise I shall be conducted by each student individually.

PLAN OF LECTURES, WORKSHOPS, ASSIGNMENTS AND EXERCISES

Class I

20th February 2024

Introduction. Research design

Organisation of the course
Types of research (to be practiced)
Basic notions in methodology of humanitarian research
Nature of social science and social research
Qualitative, quantitative and mixed research strategies
Introduction to research design

Reading assignment for the class no. II: Dijkzeul, Hilhorst, and Walker. 2013

Reading assignment for the workshop no. I:

Babbie, Chapters IV & V

Preliminary task: look for a Polish colleague who will agree to participate in the questionnaire pilotage (Writing assignment no. 4).

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Class II

5th March 2024

Research design (cont.)

A simplified model of humanitarian action
Conceptualization of research
Units of analysis
Correlation and causality
Operationalization of concepts
Variables and indicators

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Workshop I

6th March 2024 (Wednesday, 15:00-16:30; Collegium Iuridicum III, room 2.12)

Research design: how to design a research proposal?

Structure of a research proposal
Description of the research problem and definition of key concepts
Operationalization exercise: hypotheses - variables - indicators

Reading assignment for the class no. III: Patton, Chapter 6

Writing assignment (no. 1): Drafting a conceptual research proposal re humanitarian action – deadline: **Tuesday, 9th April 2024, 23:59**, submission by e-mail.

Class III
12th March 2024

Observation

Types of observation
Stages of observation in the field
Rules and principles of observation - recommendations

Reading assignment for the class no. IV: Babbie, Chapter IX
Recommended reading: Lucini 2014, chap. 5, 6, 8

Workshop II
13th March 2024 (Wednesday, 8:00-9:30 or 16:45-18:15)

Observation: research task (simulation)

Observation exercise
Separation of observation and interpretation
Using fieldnotes

Workshop III
19th March 2024

Observation: Research exercise I - preparations

Overview of the observation task
Conceptualization of the observation task
Presentation of the socio-institutional context

On site field training (Przemyśl - Kidałowice):
21st-23rd March 2024

Research exercise I: field observation at a center for Roma refugees from Ukraine (Kidałowice near Przemyśl): **Friday, 22nd March 2024.**

Writing assignment (no. 2): preparation of the fieldnotes based on Research exercise I – deadline: **Friday, 5th April 2024, 23:59, submission by e-mail.**

Class IV
26th March 2024

Doing interviews, pt. I: types of interviews – introduction

Types of interviews
Types of questions – introduction
Principles of conducting in-depth interviews

Reading assignment for the class no. V: Roger Tourangeau and Ting Yan, 2007

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Class V
16th April 2024

Doing interviews, pt. II: in-depth interviews

Preparing for in-depth interviews
Structure of script for an in-depth interview
Conducting in-depth interviews

Reading assignment for the class no. VI:

Humanitarian Needs Assessment: The Good Enough Guide. 2015. Practical Action.

Writing assignment (no. 3): preparation of a script for an in-depth interview [max. 10 main questions] - **topic: Humanitarian Aid Concept in Modern European Society (Polish perspective)** - deadline: **Tuesday, 23rd April 2024, 23:59**, submission by e-mail.

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Workshop IV
17th April 2023 (Wednesday, 8:00-9:30 or 16:45-18:15)

Observation task (Research exercise I): feedback session

Lecturer's comments to the fieldnotes based on Research exercise I (Writing assignment (no. 2) - see: 22nd April 2024)

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Class VI
23th April 2024

Doing interviews, pt. III: structured interviews (questionnaire)

Questionnaire design
Structure of a questionnaire
Types of questions and question quality checklist
Methods of executing surveys

Reading assignment for the class no. VII: Babbie, Chapter VI

Class VII
30th April 2024

Doing interviews, pt. IV: structured interviews (questionnaire) (cont.)

Distinguish between indexes and scales
Constructing an index
Types of scales

Reading assignment for the class no. VIII: Frankfort-Nachmias 1992, Chapter 11
Recommended reading: Mazurana, Benelli, and Walker 2013

Class VIII
7th May 2024

Gathering of quantitative data: questionnaire (survey)

Basic principles of conducting surveys - paper v. online
Designing, preparing, and implementing of a questionnaire
Consent, information, and instructions for participants

Reading assignment for the class no. IX: Babbie, Chapter VII

Writing assignment (no. 4): preparation of a questionnaire (including pilotage in the form of structured interview with a Polish colleague) on: **Polish students' attitudes towards Ukrainian refugees and the Polish government policies, regarding this same group**; deadline: **Tuesday, 21st May 2024, 23:59**, submission via e-mail.

Class IX
14th May 2024

Sampling

Descriptive and inferential statistics
Types of samples
Sampling errors and bias

Reading assignment for the class no. X: Krippendorff, Chapters 2, 4.1, 5.1 to 5.3, 7.1 and 7.4
Recommended reading: Qadir 2016

Class X
21st May 2023

Content analysis I

Characteristics of the technique

Types of content analysis

Unitizing and coding schemes

Reading assignment for the class no. XI: Kalpokas, Radivojevic, 2021.

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Class XI
22nd May 2024 (Wednesday, 8:00-9:30 or 16:45-18:15)

Content Analysis II

Coding tree preparation and assuring coding quality

Data categorisation and interpretation process

Software for content analysis (Atlas.ti, MAXqda) and its basic functionalities

Reading assignment for the class no. XII: Tomaszewski 2014, Chapter 3

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Workshop IV
28th May 2023:

Doing content analysis: exercise

Software for content analysis (Atlas.ti, MAXqda) and its basic functionalities - continuation

Coding (sample interview)

Approaches for coding of qualitative data

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Class XII
4th June 2024

Analysis of quantitative data: Big Data and GIS in humanitarian research

Sources of Big Crisis Data

Digital humanitarianism

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

Recommended reading: Jacobsen and Landau 2003

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Class XIII
11th June 2024

Questionnaire design: feedback and discussion

Lecturer's comments to the preparation of a questionnaire (Writing assignment no. 4
- see: 7th May 2024)

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