# Methodology of Social Research

## Prof. Giulia Mezzetti

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course aims to teach students the methodological basis and the main tools of social research, with a special focus on the relationship between social research and social services. The purpose of the course is to enable students to acquire the basic elements – in terms of knowledge, competences and skills – which are essential for the analysis and interpretation of social phenomena. Special attention will be paid, on the one hand to conducting interviews (standardised, non-directive and semi-structured), and on the other to the ability to interpret and use statistical data, which have become increasingly important for social workers.

Intended learning outcomes

KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

At the end of the course, students will have acquired knowledge/understanding of:

1. Conditions and assumptions of the scientific nature of social research;
2. Research design and its phases;
3. The main social research tools.

ABILITY TO APPLY KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

At the end of the course, students will be capable of:

1. Distinguishing between scientific knowledge and common knowledge;
2. Finding statistical data and information on selected research topics;
3. Assessing the methodological soundness of the collected data and information;
4. Distinguishing between research techniques and tools, particularly for preparing and conducting standardised interviews (questionnaires), non-directive and semi-structured interviews;
5. Structuring a quantitative-qualitative research process, choosing the most appropriate tool for the set cognitive objectives;
6. Presenting research data in a report

***COURSE CONTENT***

* The relationship between social research and social services
* Research design: how to formulate cognitive questions and select the most appropriate methods for providing answers
* Data collection: quantitative and qualitative techniques
* Sources of statistical data and their use
* Sample survey, sampling and questionnaire preparation
* Types of individual interviewing and interview methods
* Focus groups
* Participant observation
* Analysis of collected information
* Writing a research report

***READING LIST***

Students may choose between two programme options (A and B). The first (A) is recommended for students able to attend lectures, participating in in-depth work; the second (B) is recommended for students unable to attend lessons.

**For *attending students (programme A)***:

Complementary to lecture notes and slides:

R. Albano, C. Bianciardi, M. Dellavalle (edited by) *Metodologia della ricerca e servizio sociale. Seocnda edizione,* Giappichelli, Turin, 2021. (excluding: chapter V).

Further teaching material may be specified during the course.

**For *non-attending students (programme B)*:**

R. Albano, C. Bianciardi, M. Dellavalle (edited by) *Metodologia della ricerca e servizio sociale. Seocnda edizione,* Giappichelli, Turin, 2021.

***TEACHING METHOD***

The course will be held alternating between different teaching methods: frontal lectures based on numerous examples drawn from actual research experiences, participatory teaching, in-depth individual and/or group work to be presented during the course, orally or in writing,

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Students will take a written exam. The test will be structured as follows:

* eleven close-ended questions, each marked from 0 to 2 (0 if students give a wrong answer, 1 if there is no reply, 2 if they answer correctly) for a maximum of 22 points;
* two open-ended questions, one of which is marked from 0 to 4 points and the other from 0 to 5 points, for a maximum of 9 points.

The sum of the marks given for close-ended and open-ended questions corresponds to the final mark out of thirty. If students answer correctly, clearly and fully to all the close-ended and open-ended questions, they will get 31 points, equivalent to “30 and distinction”.

Closed-ended questions are aimed at assessing the extent to which the study has been carried out in depth, while open-ended questions are designed to assess students’ accuracy in reporting content, their argumentative and reasoning skills and proficiency in the use of the technical-disciplinary lexicon.

The exam will last 50 minutes.

Both closed-ended and open-ended questions will be based on the above-mentioned reading list.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

As it is introductory, there are no prerequisites for students to attend the workshop.

*Further information can be found on the lecturer’s webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENGor on the Faculty notice board.*