**Methodology of Social Research**

## Prof. Emanuela Bonini

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

The course aims to familiarise students with the main approaches and tools of social research, illustrating the most common data detection, construction and analysis techniques. There will be a particular focus on the limitations of the various research techniques, in particular those due to their misuse.

Knowledge and understanding: the objective is therefore for students to be able to use the basic social research techniques in awareness of the risks and problems associated with them.

Ability to apply knowledge and understanding: there will also be a focus on the ability to interpret and use research data, which is also important for social workers. In this sense, the objective is for students to be able to translate official statistics, research reports and scientific articles into useful information for interpreting the social context in which bodies providing services operate.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course will first identify the difference between scientific knowledge and knowledge in the general sense, examining the constituent elements of the former and related sources. Next, it will illustrate various ways of conducting research, examining the distinction between qualitative and quantitative research or standard and non-standard research. In this introductory phase, the course will present examples of research questions typical of the two approaches, and will reflect on ways in which various empirical sources may be integrated most beneficially.

It will then present the typical process used in quantitative research, highlighting its constituent elements and main steps. The course will illustrate modes of collecting data, relating them to the sampling of the subjects being studied. The course will then explore the process of applying concepts and constructing the questionnaire, paying particular attention to the most common mistakes by drawing on practical examples.

Next, the course will present the cornerstones of qualitative research, illustrating the main surveying techniques and focusing in depth on interviews, both group interviews and observation. In particular, the course will explore these techniques through simulations in class.

Other lectures will focus on analysing and interpreting data, briefly illustrating the main sources of official data of interest to social workers.

***READING LIST***

E. Ammaturo (ed.), *Metodologia della ricerca sociale,* UTET, Novara, 2012. The following chapters are not part of the course programme: 7, 9, 10 and 11.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal teaching with simulations, exercises and practical applications of the research processes illustrated in lectures. The course adopts a participatory method designed to engage students: questions and interventions will be particularly appreciated as opportunities for individual and collective growth.

Slides with key points will be used in lectures and subsequently made available on Blackboard.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

Written exam with:

– closed and open questions on key concepts and relative definitions;

– exercises and simulations on interpreting and using data from tables and graphs/charts;

– constructing detection tools for quantitative and qualitative surveys.

Students are asked to demonstrate their knowledge of the theoretical concepts discussed during classes and to apply the concepts seen in the handbook to concrete examples.

The maximum mark for the written test is 30/30. The highest performing students will be awarded a distinction (*lode*). The pass mark is 18/30.

The assessment criteria are: knowledge of the topics presented during the course (from 0-15 marks), clarity of expression and presentation of information (0-8), pertinence of arguments (0-7).

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Although the lecturer is aware of the difficulties of the material for some students, there are no prerequisites in terms of content.

Finally, students should update their own email address on Blackboard to receive potential communications related to the course.

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