# Quantitative Social Research Laboratory

## Prof. Marco Caselli; Prof. Veronica Riniolo

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

The main objective is to provide students with a key tool of the social researcher - the questionnaire – and enable them to draft a research report. The implications of empirical interpretation of sociological theory will be explained through references to standard research, including its set-up and planning.

At the end of the course, students will be able to carry out a sociological research in all its phases (research design, creation of survey tool, sampling, field survey, analysis and interpretation of the data collected) and based on the use of a questionnaire as the main survey tool. Students will also be able to communicate their main results through both a written report and a public presentation.

***COURSE CONTENT***

The course is divided into two semesters.

In the first semester (prof. Caselli) students will be taught the most commonly used and well-known techniques for gathering factual data, opinions and attitudes. The course takes a particularly practical focus, and revolves around the questionnaire: from its development to its administration, from the organisation of the information gathered to its actual use. In the second semester (Prof. Riniolo), students will apply the concepts learned in the first semester through a research project led by the lecturer. Specifically, students will work in small groups and create a questionnaire on an assigned topic, they will then administer it according to instructions received in class, and they will analyse the data collected through a statistical analysis software. The final aim of the course will be the drafting of a research report and its presentation in class.

***READING LIST***

Students may choose between two types of programmes (A and B). Programme A is for students who can attend lectures in semesters 1 and 2. Programme B is for students who cannot attend lectures in semester 1 and cannot carry out the group project in semester 2.

*Students following Programme A must study the following materials:*

M. Caselli, *Indagare col questionario. Introduzione alla ricerca sociale di tipo standard,* Vita e Pensiero, Milan, 2005 (excluding paragraph 7 in Chapter 7 and the whole of Chapter 9).

P. Parra Saiani, *Gli indicatori sociali,* Franco Angeli, Milan, 2009 (Chapters 2 and 9).

M. Caselli, *Measuring... What? Notes on Some Globalization Indices,* in *Globalizations*, 3, sept. 2008 [On line magazine available at UCSC library or directly requestable to the lecturer by email].

***TEACHING METHOD***

Lectures, guided practical work sessions.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

*For students who opt for Programme A:*

Semester I

At the end of the first semester students will sit an interim written exam consisting both of 6 closed and 4 open-ended questions, based on the text *Indagare col questionario*; for each close-ended question 3 points will be awarded to each correct answer, 0 points to each wrong answer, 1 point if students chose the option ‘I prefer not to answer’; for each open-ended question 0 to 4 points will be awarded depending on how correct and complete the answers are. The maximum achievable score for the written test is therefore 34; a score equal to or greater than 18 will result in a pass. Students who do not pass the interim test will be tested on the textbook *‘Indagare col questionario’* during the oral exam.

The interim test of semester 1 counts 50% of the final mark.

Semester II

The evaluation for semester 2 will be centred on a research report to carried out in group that counts 40% of the final mark, and on a classroom presentation of the research results (counts 10% of the final mark).

Starting from this score and on the basis of the results of an individual interview focused on the research path carried out in the second semester, the final grade of each student will be defined. At the end of the individual interview, to be carried out during the official exam sessions, the vote will be recorded. The research report will be evaluated on the basis of formal correctness and conceptual relevance of the prepared questionnaire and indexes; of formal correctness and conceptual relevance of the analysis carried out; on correct and clear presentation; on the quality of the graphic layout of the report. The presentation in class will be evaluated based on its communicative efficiency. The oral exam will be evaluated based on relevance and correctness of given answers with respect to questions, appropriate use of specific reference terminology and students’ ability to support and defend the choices made in preparing their research report.

*For students following Programme B:*

Non-attending students may take part in the interim test of semester 1 (according to the methods and evaluation criteria indicated for students following Programme A), but cannot carry out the group project in semester 2.

Assessment for non-attending students will consist of an oral exam based on the textbooks specified in the syllabus (except the volume ‘Indagare col questionario’ for those students who have taken and passed the interim test). The oral exam will be evaluated based on relevance and correctness of answers given with respect to questions and appropriate use of specific reference terminology. The lecturer will be available during office hours to provide explanations for any questions on syllabus and assessment methods.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

The issues covered are closely related to those taught in the degree programme courses, in particular, in the Social Statistics course: students are expected to be familiar with the basics of statistics to effectively present tables and charts and to draw up the research report. Students are therefore invited to take the Social Statistics exam before attending the second module of this course.

Notices and communications concerning course, exams and office hours (e.g. deferments or suspensions) will be available on the Cattolica University website, on the lecturer's webpage.

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.