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**Subject: Invitation to Participate in four day Widening Project Seminar:**

## **Fundamentals of Fieldwork Research**

**taught by Mariusz Bogacki, EUI**

### **Course Summary**

#### **Fundamentals of Fieldwork Research**

In today's world, where scientific understanding plays a crucial role across various industries, the ability to comprehend how scientific knowledge is generated, applied, and disseminated is highly valuable—not just within academic circles, but also in a wide range of professional fields. A key element in the evaluation of scientific knowledge is understanding how researchers collect data. This course offers a comprehensive introduction to fieldwork research and data collection techniques.

Fieldwork, defined broadly as any research conducted outside of a home institution, remains an important part of modern social sciences research. It can be conducted in diverse settings such as private companies, public organizations, cultural groups, and international locations. Consequently, fieldwork research employs various data collection methods, including archival research, interviews, surveys, field experiments, and ethnographic studies.

This course aims to provide a thorough overview of the fundamental concepts, practices, approaches, and methodologies associated with fieldwork research. Additionally, it will cover the ethical and safety considerations necessary for conducting research in the field. Students will learn about the significance and relevance of fieldwork, acquire practical skills for gaining access to research sites, and develop strategies for sampling and building networks of informants. Depending on the students' requirement the course will also include hands-on experience with key data collection methods, such as archival research, different types of interviews, surveys, field experiments, and ethnographic observation, while emphasizing the importance of ethics and safety throughout the research process.

Designed for advanced undergraduate and master's students, this interactive course equips participants with practical skills that can be directly applied to their ongoing academic projects, such as bachelor's or master's theses. By engaging in this course, students will build a solid foundation in fieldwork research methods, enhancing their academic work and preparing them for future professional endeavours.

## **Day 1: Introduction to Fieldwork Research and Planning**

Lecture (1 hour):

- Introduction to Fieldwork Research:
  - o Definition and scope in the social sciences.
  - o Overview of different contexts for fieldwork (e.g., private/public organizations, cultural groups, foreign countries).
  - o Importance of fieldwork in producing scientific knowledge.
- Planning Fieldwork:
  - o Steps in designing a fieldwork project.
  - o Developing research questions and hypotheses.
  - o Identifying appropriate fieldwork methods.

Practical Exercise (1.5 hours):

- Workshop on Designing a Fieldwork Plan:
  - o Activity: Students are divided into small groups to choose a research topic and design a basic fieldwork plan, including defining the research questions and choosing suitable methods.
  - o Discussion: Groups present their plans and receive feedback from peers and the instructor.

## **Day 2: Data Collection Methods in Fieldwork**

Lecture (1 hour):

- Overview of Data Collection Methods:
  - o Archival research, interviews (structured, semi-structured, unstructured), surveys, field experiments, and ethnography.
  - o Pros and cons of each method.
- Ethnographic Approaches:
  - o Participant observation techniques.
  - o Maintaining objectivity and dealing with subjectivity.

Practical Exercise (1.5 hours):

- Hands-On Data Collection Workshop:
  - o Activity: Students practice conducting interviews and surveys with their peers. Small groups create a short interview guide and questionnaire based on their fieldwork plan from Day 1.
  - o Ethnographic Field Notes: Practice taking observational notes in a simulated environment.

## **Day 3: Preparing for Fieldwork and Effective Data Collection**

Lecture (1 hour):

- Logistical Planning for Fieldwork:
  - o Essential preparations before entering the field (e.g., securing permissions, planning logistics, understanding local contexts).
  - o Managing time, budget, and resources effectively.
  - o Contingency planning for unexpected challenges (e.g., weather, local politics, access issues).
- Data Quality and Reliability in Fieldwork:
  - o Strategies to ensure high-quality and reliable data.
  - o Techniques to minimize bias and error during data collection.
  - o Maintaining flexibility and adaptability in the field.

Practical Exercise (1.5 hours):

- Scenario-Based Problem-Solving Workshop:
  - Activity: Students are divided into small groups and given different fieldwork scenarios with specific challenges (e.g., unexpected refusal of access, equipment failure, cultural misunderstandings). Each group develops a detailed plan to address these challenges, focusing on logistics, communication, and data quality.
  - Group Presentations and Feedback: Each group presents their solutions to the class. The instructor and peers provide constructive feedback, discussing the feasibility and creativity of each approach.
- Data Collection Simulation:
  - Activity: A simulation exercise where students practice organizing a small fieldwork exercise. This could involve setting up mock interviews, organizing survey logistics, or planning observational research in a controlled classroom environment.
  - Debrief and Discussion: Reflect on the experience, focusing on the planning aspects, challenges encountered, and how well data collection objectives were met.

#### **Day 4: Ethical and Safety Considerations in Fieldwork**

Lecture (1 hour):

- Ethical Issues in Fieldwork:
  - Informed consent and confidentiality.
  - Navigating ethical dilemmas and maintaining integrity.
- Safety Considerations:
  - Assessing risks and developing a safety plan.
  - Ethical reflexivity and dealing with unexpected events.

Practical Exercise (1.5 hours):

- Case Study Analysis and Discussion:
  - Activity: Students are presented with case studies that highlight ethical dilemmas and safety challenges in fieldwork. In small groups, they discuss and propose solutions.
  - Final Reflection Exercise: Students reflect on what they have learned and how they can apply these principles to their own research.

### About the instructor

Mariusz Bogacki is a fifth year PhD candidate at the European University Institute's (EUI) Department of Social and Political Sciences where he studies under the supervision of Prof. Jeff Checkel. Mariusz holds degrees from the European University Institute (Italy), Tilburg University (The Netherlands), and Edinburgh Napier University (UK). He has also held visiting researcher positions at the University of California, Berkeley, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and Goethe University, Frankfurt. Prior to his position at the EUI he has worked as a researcher at the University of Glasgow and the United Nations in Vienna. Mariusz has presented his research at internationally renowned conferences such as the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, and the European Political Science Association General Conference. He has conducted various types of fieldwork research in diverse regions of the world, including, Palestine, China, Poland, Scotland, and Greece. For his most recent doctoral projects he is investigating grassroots conceptions of Hong Kong identity in light of the ongoing socio-political transformations in the region.

### About The Widening Project

The EUI Widening Europe Programme aims to build a bridge between the EUI and universities in the Widening countries by offering shared activities for early-stage researchers, fellows, senior academics, and administrative staff. Supported by contributions from the European Union and EUI Contracting States, the programme features PhD scholarships, postdoctoral fellowships, mobility grants, summer schools, fieldwork experiences, seminars, and workshops to the scholarly community in the Widening countries. Through the programme, the EUI provides scholars from the Widening countries with opportunities to enhance academic training, conduct excellent research, and produce top-quality policy advice, thereby fostering the development of exceptional expertise within those regions

### Practical Information

This seminar is open to a total of 30 students in the fields of social sciences and humanities interested in any fieldwork research. Students from other fields are also welcome to apply if they are interested in the topics covered.

To secure your spot, please fill out the registration form provided through the following link: <https://forms.gle/t27XFM37swc6AXcr8>

**The deadline for registration is October 4th, 2024.** Due to limited slots available, registrations will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis. All accepted participants will receive a confirmation by the end of the week.

Further details regarding the schedule and specific room locations will be communicated to registered participants closer to the event date.

For any additional information, please contact [jasmin.hasanovic@fpn.unsa.ba](mailto:jasmin.hasanovic@fpn.unsa.ba).