

# MGA 674 Research Methods (5 ECTS, 135h), spring 2017 (16 weeks)

**Instructors:** Dr. Alexandros Yertziotis ([alexis@idmaster.eu](mailto:alexis@idmaster.eu))

**Contact Details:** For efficient communication all email communication regarding this course should be sent to [alexis@idmaster.eu](mailto:alexis@idmaster.eu). Special online “office hours” will be set up for group and individual mentoring and those will be conducted through google hangout/chat.

**Course objectives:** To create opportunities for acquiring theoretical knowledge about various research approaches and to support developing one’s ability to apply as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of different research methods.

**Course content:** Classification and main features of research approaches and methods. Overview of research designs for empirical and design research: experiment, survey, ethnographic research, grounded theory, narrative research, case study, action research, evaluation research. The choice of methods depending on research purposes and questions.

**Learning Outcomes:** Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to: (a) Design a research study for qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research; (b) Compare the three approaches (qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods) to inquiry and understand their philosophical assumptions; (c) Review literature in a scholarly manner; (d) Assess the use of theory in research approaches (e) Reflect on the importance of writing and ethics in scholarly inquiry; (f) Write an introduction for a research study; (g) State the purpose of a research study; (h) Identify research questions and hypotheses; (i) Advance methods and procedures for data collection and analysis.

**Workload:** In order to successfully conclude this course, students are required to do individual and group activities. Theoretical topics are presented as short modules through google classroom and other forms of synchronous and asynchronous communication. Independent work is divided into six parts: work on *Assignments workbook* (approximately 10 hours); work on *Research problems workbook* (approximately 10 hours); work on individual assignments (approximately 20 hours); work on group assignments (approximately 40 hours); work on literature (approximately 45 hours); work on a final reflection assignment (approximately 10 hours).

**Assessment:** The exam grade consists of following components: individual assignments (20%); group assignments (40%), final reflection assignment (10%); *Assignments workbook*

(10%), *Research problems workbook* (10%); overall participation (10%). Final mark will be on a 0-10 scale in increments of 0.5 points. Passing grade is 5 out of 10.

**Expected individual work activities:** Students will work individually on a provided research topic, engaging in the following activities:

- Personal research reflections
- Creating literature maps
- Using theory and addressing ethical considerations
- Writing problem statements, purpose statements, research questions and hypotheses
- Designing and executing plans for quantitative data collection and analysis
- Designing and executing plans for qualitative data collection and analysis
- Designing and executing plans for mixed methods data collection and analysis
- Any additional activities to strengthen the quality of your research project work

Students will also be asked to keep an individual *Assignments workbook* to record both their individual and group activities.

The individual assignment script for sessions where individual work activities are planned will be announced before the respective sessions' starts. The style of the individual *Assignments workbook* will be announced on google classroom during the first few week of classes.

Late submissions are not accepted.

**Assessment criteria:** Grades will be based on these criteria:

- 91–100% of the work is done — excellent: outstanding work with only few minor errors.
- 81–90% of the work is done — very good: above average work but with some minor errors.
- 71–80% of the work is done — good: generally good work with a number of notable errors.
- 61–70% of the work is done — satisfactory: reasonable work but with significant shortcomings.
- 50–60% of the work is done — sufficient: passable performance meeting the minimum criteria.
- 49% or less of the work is done — fail: more work is required before the credit can be awarded.

**Expected group work activities:** In addition to the individual work, students will be required to engage in group assignments too where they will demonstrate their abilities to plan, collect and analyse data.

The group assignment script for sessions where group work activities are planned will be announced before the respective sessions' start. As previously mentioned, you will also record you group activities in your *Assignments workbook*.

Late submissions are not accepted.

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**Technology needed to perform this course:** Basic knowledge of computers and use of Google applications.

**Synchronous activities:** The delivery of the course will be primarily asynchronous with discussions taking place mainly through the google classroom platform. In addition though, there will be set times for short synchronous sessions (either text chat or voice chat through google hangouts). In each session we will discuss acquired knowledge, provide feedback and/or mentor students. The times and days of these synchronous sessions will be decided and announced early in the semester.

**Required Textbook:** Creswell, J. W. (2014). Research Design Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.  
 (ISBN-13: 9781452226101)  
 (ISBN-10: 1452226105)

**The pedagogical script for this course:**

Sessions	Topic/Materials	Tasks/assignments	Technology
Session 0: (16-22/01)	Induction session: Getting familiar with the course environments and technologies  <b>Material:</b> Course pedagogical script	<b>Assignments:</b> 1) Read course Pedagogical script 2) Read the Research Topic description 3) Explore course Resources 4) Buy the required textbook <a href="https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/research-design/book237357?id=23976">https://uk.sagepub.com/en-gb/eur/research-design/book237357?id=23976</a> <a href="https://www.amazon.com/Research-Design-Qualitative-Quantitative-Approaches/dp/1452226105">https://www.amazon.com/Research-Design-Qualitative-Quantitative-Approaches/dp/1452226105</a> 4) Explore the concept of “research” from a scientific perspective through your own reading.	Google applications

		5) Share any research experience that you may have had and briefly explain the purpose of your research investigations and how you conducted these.	
<b>Session 1:</b> (23/01-05/02)	The Selection of a Research Approach & Review of the Literature  <b>Material:</b> Chapter 1 and 2 of the book	In Chapter 1 the focus will be on defining quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods approaches and in Chapter 2 the focus will be on conducting literature reviews.  The main aims of this session will be to understand how philosophy, design and methods intersect when choosing an approach that is most suitable for a research study, emphasising the importance of conducting an extensive literature review on a topic of interest and determining the steps that a researcher will need to follow in order to conduct such a literature review.  <b>Assignments:</b> 1) Read and understand the material. 2) Participate in a synchronous or asynchronous communication.	Google Hangout and classroom
	Work on your workbooks and individual assignment	<b>Assignments:</b> 1) Read the assignment script 2) Complete the assignment in accordance to the assignment script provided. 3) Start developing your workbooks ( <i>Assignments &amp; Research problems</i> )	Google classroom
<b>Session 2:</b> (06-19/02)	The Use of Theory & Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations  <b>Material:</b> Chapter 3 and 4 of the book	In Chapter 3 the focus will be on incorporating theory into your research study and in Chapter 4 the focus will be on writing strategies and thinking of ethics.  The main aims of this session will be to examine the role that theory has in the three approaches to inquiry (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods), to examine outlines for writing proposals for the three approaches and	Google Hangout and classroom

		<p>to discuss ethical issues that will need to be considered during the research process.</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read and understand the material.</li> <li>2) Participate in synchronous and asynchronous communication.</li> </ol>	
	Work on your workbooks and individual assignment	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read the assignment script</li> <li>2) Complete the assignment in accordance to the assignment script provided.</li> <li>3) Continue developing your workbooks (<i>Assignments &amp; Research problems</i>)</li> </ol>	Google classroom
<b>Session 3:</b> (20/02-05/03)	<p>The Introduction &amp; The Purpose Statement &amp; Research Questions and Hypotheses</p> <p><b>Material:</b> Chapter 5, Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 of the book</p>	<p>In Chapter 5 the focus will be on designing a scholarly introduction to a proposal or study. In Chapter 6 the focus will be on writing purpose statements for quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods studies. In Chapter 7 the focus will be on writing research questions and hypotheses for quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods studies.</p> <p>The main aims of this session will be to properly introduce a research study, to define the central purpose or intend of a study and to define questions and hypotheses that serve to narrow and focus the purpose of the study.</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read and understand the material.</li> <li>2) Participate in synchronous and asynchronous communication.</li> </ol>	Google Hangout and classroom
	Work on your workbooks and individual assignment	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read the assignment script</li> <li>2) Complete the assignment in accordance to the assignment script provided.</li> <li>3) Continue developing your workbooks (<i>Assignments &amp; Research problems</i>)</li> </ol>	Google classroom
<b>Session 4:</b> (06-19/03)	Individual meetings and Group mentoring	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Participate in a synchronous communication to review the content that has</li> </ol>	Google Hangout and classroom

)		<p>been covered to this point and discuss the individual assignments.</p> <p>2) Students have the opportunity to catch-up on any assignments from Sessions 1, 2 and 3 that have not yet been submitted. Note that there will be penalties however on these assignments as they were not submitted by their initial due date.</p>	
<b>Session 5:</b> (20/03-02/04)	Quantitative Methods  <b>Material:</b> Chapter 8 of the book	<p>In Chapter 8 the focus will be on learning the specific quantitative procedures for designing survey or experimental methods.</p> <p>The main aims of this session will be to examine quantitative methods for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting the results of a study. Specific methods exist for both survey and experimental research.</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read and understand the material.</li> <li>2) Participate in synchronous and asynchronous communication.</li> </ol>	Google Hangout and classroom
	Work on your workbooks and group assignment	<p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read the assignment script</li> <li>2) Complete the assignment in accordance to the assignment script provided.</li> <li>3) Continue developing your workbooks (<i>Assignments &amp; Research problems</i>)</li> </ol>	Google classroom
<b>Session 6:</b> (03-16/04)	Qualitative Methods  <b>Material:</b> Chapter 9 of the book	<p>In Chapter 9 the focus will be on learning the specific procedures that will need to be designed into a qualitative research study. Examples are provided from narrative studies, grounded theory, ethnographic studies and case studies.</p> <p>The main aims of this session will be to examine qualitative approaches for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting the results of a study.</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p>	Google Hangout and classroom

		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read and understand the material.</li> <li>2) Participate in synchronous and asynchronous communication.</li> </ol>	
	Work on your workbooks and group assignment	<b>Assignments:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read the assignment script</li> <li>2) Complete the assignment in accordance to the assignment script provided.</li> <li>3) Continue developing your workbooks (<i>Assignments &amp; Research problems</i>)</li> </ol>	
<b>Session 7:</b> (17-30/04 )	Mixed Methods Procedures  <b>Material:</b> Chapter 10 of the book	<p>In Chapter 10 the focus will be on defining mixed methods research (integration of both quantitative and qualitative data in a study) and the core characteristics that describe it.</p> <p>The main aims of this session will be to introduce important developments in mixed methods research, provide an introduction in the use of this design, and presenting three basic and three advanced designs in mixed methods research.</p> <p><b>Assignments:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read and understand the material.</li> <li>2) Participate in synchronous and asynchronous communication.</li> </ol>	Google Hangout and classroom
	Work on your workbooks and group assignment	<b>Assignments:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Read the assignment script</li> <li>2) Complete the assignment in accordance to the assignment script provided.</li> <li>3) Continue developing your workbooks (<i>Assignments &amp; Research problems</i>)</li> </ol>	Google classroom
<b>Session 8:</b> (01-14/05 )	Presentation of the <i>Assignments workbook</i> and <i>Research problems workbook</i>	<b>Assignments:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The <i>Assignments workbook</i> is presented.</li> <li>2) The <i>Research problems workbook</i> is presented.</li> <li>3) The final individual reflection assignment is completed and submitted.</li> </ol>	Google presentation and documents

