

Subject (code, title, credits)	PSIR 550 RESEARCH METHODS 6 ECTS, 15 Weeks (60 in-class hours)
Department	Political Science & Philosophy
Level	Graduate
Term	Fall 2025
Instructor	Prof. Dr. Didem BUHARI
E-mail:	didem.buhari@gmail.com
Classroom/hours	<i>MS Teams</i> , 18:40-21:50
Office hours	By Appointment on dedicated <i>MS Teams</i> channel
Medium of instruction	English
Compulsory/Elective	Compulsory
Required textbooks and course materials	<p><i>Core readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Sandra Halperin and Oliver Heath (2012) <i>Political Research: Methods and Practical Skills</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <p><i>Suggested readings:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peter Burnham, Karin Gilland Lutz, Wyn Grant and Zig Layton-Henry (2008) <i>Research Methods in Politics</i> (Palgrave Macmillan) • Colin Hay (2002) <i>Political Analysis</i> (Palgrave) • David De Vaus (2002) <i>Surveys in Social Research</i> (London Routledge). • Gary King, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba, <i>Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research</i> (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) <p>Reading materials for the course will be conveniently accessible to students through the dedicated <i>MS Teams</i> channel.</p>
Course outline	This course introduces the students to how to conduct ethical scientific research in social and political sciences. Students will formulate research questions and hypotheses, will design a research plan by selecting the most appropriate data collection methods, and report their findings in an analytical way. The course will explain the strengths and limitations of main qualitative and quantitative methods.
Course objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ To distinguish different epistemological traditions ❖ To assess the strengths and limitations of data collection methods; ❖ To design a research design for a scientific project ❖ To analyze qualitative data and report them in an academic manner

Learning outcomes	<p>Upon completion of the course, students are expected to be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • distinguish scientific sources from non-scientific ones • do a critical literature review and give references in a careful manner • apply the most suitable research design for their own project / thesis • learn how to use different data collection methods 	
Grading	Methods	Percentage %
	Active participation	10%
	2 Written reports	20%
	Midterm takehome exam	30%
	Final takehome exam	40%
	Total	100
Assessment	<p>Course assessment is based on students' active participation, written reports, written midterm & final takehome examinations.</p> <p><u>Active Participation & Case-Study Discussions:</u> Students following this course are not simply expected to listen and memorize the lectures but to study the reading materials well; engage in discussions; and be able to demonstrate and debate his/her viewpoints.</p> <p><u>Mid-term & Final Exams:</u> The mid-term and final exams will be takehome exams. Students will prepare a research design for the midterm about a topic the lecturer will assign them and implement it for the final exam.</p>	
Policy	<p>You are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - attend classes on a regular basis as the classes are conducted in a combined lecture/seminar format where students should <u>play an active part</u>. - read the assigned and suggested readings before you come to class - engage actively in classroom discussions - offer thoughtful and informed classroom presentations and written work - submit all your assignments on time - follow assignments closely and carefully. <p>Class attendance: Students are required to comply with the attendance policy of Khazar University. Full-time students are expected to attend all classes unless they are sick or have the permission of the instructor (<i>approved absence</i>). A student must submit an absence request in anticipation of an absence from the course. In case he/she fails to do so, his absence will be considered unapproved. Specifically, to be eligible for taking exams, students must not</p>	

	<p>miss more than <u>25%</u> of class hours (<i>unapproved absences</i>). Otherwise, the student can take the exam only with the approval of the School Dean. Continuing unapproved absences or lack of participation may lead to withdrawal from the course.</p> <p>Academic misconduct Academic honesty plays an essential part in maintaining the integrity of Khazar University. Students are expected to recognize and uphold high standards of intellectual and academic integrity. The following acts are examples of academic dishonesty, therefore are strictly forbidden and will, if proven, be penalized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- plagiarism,- cheating,- unauthorized collaboration,- falsification,- multiple submissions. <p><i>On plagiarism:</i> Plagiarism is unethical and an <u>offence</u> under the University regulations. Please familiarize yourself with the regulations relating to plagiarism and cheating in examinations. Plagiarism is copying other people’s work without <u>proper</u> attribution. The students committing plagiarism and the students providing materials for plagiarizing will automatically receive a zero (0) for the assignment. Students must always indicate that they used someone else’s words and ideas if they have done so, by using quotation marks and mentioning the source in the text or a footnote. A bibliography must also follow after the end of your essays.</p> <p>!!!NOTE!!! <u>The use of AI tools for assignments and examinations is strictly prohibited.</u></p> <p>Rules of Professional Conduct The students shall behave in the way to create favorable academic and professional environment during the class hours. Unauthorized discussions and unethical behavior are strictly prohibited. Classroom behavior that seriously interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to benefit from the course program will not be tolerated. When a student’s behavior in a class is so seriously disruptive as to compel immediate action, the instructor has the authority to remove a student from the class on an interim basis, pending an informal hearing on the behavior.</p>	
Tentative Schedule		
Date/Day	Topics	Readings
Week 1 17.09.2025	Introduction to the Course	
	Fundamentals of Scientific research & Epistemological traditions (Positivism vs Interpretivism)	Textbook, p. 25-52.

Week 2 24.09.2025	Research design (Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed) & Literature review	Textbook, p. 53-78.
Week 3 01.10.2025	Finding your research question & formulating hypotheses	Textbook, p. 101-128.
Week 4 08.10.2025	Application in class (both written and oral) & Strategies for Case selection	Textbook, p. 202-230.
Week 5 15.10.2025	Application in class (both written and oral) & Research Ethics	Textbook, p.178-181.
Week 6 22.10.2025	Preparing a research proposal	Handout 1
Week 7 29.10.2025	Mid-term Exam	➔ Prepare a research proposal according to TUBITAK form (use at least 10 academic sources)
Week 8 05.11.2025	Qualitative Data collection method 1: Interviewing and Focus group	Textbook, p. 230-287
Week 9 12.11.2025	Qualitative Data collection method 2: Discourse analysis	Textbook, p. 309-318
Week 10 19.11.2025	Qualitative Data collection method 3: Ethnographic observation	Textbook, p. 287-309
Week 11 26.11.2025	Quantitative Data collection method 1: Survey	Textbook, p. 230-251

Week 12 03.12.2025	Quantitative Data collection method 2: Content analysis	Textbook, p. 318-330.
Week 13 10.12.2025	Quantitative Data collection method 3: Political Experiments	Textbook, p. 178-200.
Week 14 17.12.2025	Introduction to data analysis	PPT Slides
Week 15 24.12.2025	Overall assessment of the course	
	Final exam	<p><i>The date of the Final Exam will be communicated to students well in advance by the Dean's Office.</i></p> <p>➤ Write your Research project's Final report according to TUBITAK form. Use at least two different data collection methods, describe and analyze your findings.</p>

If necessary, the instructor may make some minor modifications to this syllabus.