

PhD PROGRAMME 2017-2018

STUDY GUIDE¹

Version November 2017

Graduate School of Social Sciences

VU University Amsterdam

¹ This study guide will be updated throughout the year, please check our [website](#) for the latest version of this document.

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1. Introduction

The main mission of the VU Graduate School of Social Sciences (VU-GSSS) is to support PhD candidates in their endeavour towards obtaining a PhD degree, and in becoming independent, fully qualified researchers in the Social Sciences. These objectives are pursued by means of different instruments.

First, the VU-GSSS organizes a scheme aimed at monitoring and ensuring progress and quality of PhD projects (i.e., the Training and Supervision Plan (Opleidings- en Begeleidingsplan or OBP), the 8 Month Product and Yearly Progress Reports).

Second, the VU-GSSS Graduate Fund offers financial support to our internal and external PhD candidates to enable international collaborations, attending and organizing conferences, participating in summer schools, carrying out research, etc.

And last, but definitely not least, the VU-GSSS aims to support and advance PhD candidates' knowledge, project progress and development by means of a variety of small-scale courses taught by renowned scholars of our Faculty and (inter)national fellows. This study guide offers an overview of these courses for the academic year of 2017-2018.

The content of the PhD programme, the individual courses, as well as the academic teaching staff are carefully chosen. All courses are designed to enhance the academic knowledge and skill development of PhD candidates, not only to enable a successful completion of their PhD project, but also to prepare them for a career as an applied or postdoctoral researcher or Assistant Professor thereafter. The programme is tailored to serve the needs of PhD candidates at different stages of their project, regardless of their topic or methodological approach.

We surely hope you will enjoy and benefit from it!

Best regards,

The VU-GSSS team

2. The PhD Education Programme

The VU-GSSS PhD programme is designed to support PhD candidates linked to the various departments of the VU Faculty of Social Sciences in their project progress and individual development. In order to stimulate a careful planning at the start of each PhD trajectory, PhD candidates and their supervisors are required to design and submit a *Training and Supervision Plan* (TSP) within the first 2 months of their project. An individual course programme for the (usually three or four year) PhD trajectory is part of this plan. A minimum of 30 EC² of PhD training is required as specified in the [VU Doctorate Regulations](#). A meeting with the Graduate School programme director, the PhD candidate and the supervisor(s) to discuss the training programme part of the Training and Supervision Plan before the latter is submitted, is advised.

The training programme may vary per individual candidate depending on discipline, prior training, personal interest and the requirements of the candidate's research project. As a general rule, and aimed at acquiring the final attainment levels for PhD candidates, the training programme should be designed such that PhD candidates develop their knowledge, expertise and skills in the three areas specified below. PhD candidates are advised to concentrate their course work in the first two years of their PhD project and thus limit the course work in the last (two) year(s). For details on the requirements and recommendations for the PhD training plan see the [PhD Information document](#).

2.1 General structure of the programme

The various courses in the programme center around one of three main fundamental content areas, although there will certainly be overlap and courses may attend to more than one area. These areas, and associated courses, are:

- *Area 1: Social scientific content, theory building and application.* These courses aim to support PhD candidates to assess and build theories both within and beyond the boundaries of their own discipline:
 - Proposal Design & Writing
 - Advanced Theory Construction
 - Theoretical tutorials
- *Area 2: Social scientific research design and methodology.* These courses focus on research design and methodology, and provide hands-on experience with advanced methods of analysis:
 - Research Designs in the Social Sciences
 - Selected Quantitative Methods
 - Selected Qualitative Methods
 - Collecting, Analysing and Writing Qualitative Data
 - Methodological tutorials
- *Area 3: Academic skills.* The main focus in these courses is on the development of academic and transferable skills, aimed at improving the necessary skills for current and future practice as an academically educated researcher:

² According to the European Credit Transfer System → 1 credit = 28 hours.

- Research Integrity and Responsible Scholarship
- Writing Academic English
- Teaching Practice and Supervision
- Popular science writing
- Science Blogging
- PhD Induction Conference
- PhD Career Day

In addition to following courses PhD candidates can arrange individual or small group tutorials focusing on a specialized theoretical or methodological topic (theoretical and methodological tutorials). Science blogging can be performed throughout the PhD trajectory; communicating about scientific activities in online blogs is intended to aid PhD candidates both in developing academic skills (i.e., writing, valorization) as well as in their project- and individual progress (fostering understanding, networking, publishing).

2.2 Basic program for first year PhD candidates

A number of courses are particularly relevant and instructive in the starting period of a PhD project and thus provide essential education for first year PhD candidates.

These courses provide useful knowledge and assignments that help PhD candidates to understand and delimit their research field, to review and evaluate the literature, to formulate a proper research question, to determine the right methodology, and to conduct research in a responsible manner. As such they support PhD candidates to specify the research plan of their PhD project, prepare them for the delivery of the 8 month product, and facilitate a proper start of the project.

In designing a training plan first year PhD candidates are therefore urged to schedule these courses within the quality assessment scheme aimed to enhance progress and quality of PhD projects (i.e., the Training and Supervision Plan and 8 month product). For the cohort of PhD candidates who start their PhD trajectories at the advised starting period in August / September, this results in the following basic course programme³:

- PhD Induction Conference (period 1: Sep-Oct)
- Research Designs in the Social Sciences (period 1: Sept-Oct)
- Proposal Design & Writing (period 1-4: Oct-March)
- Research Integrity and Responsible Scholarship (period 2: Nov/Dec)
- Writing Academic English (period 4-5: April)
- *Deadline 8 month product (March / April)*

The remaining courses offered in the programme are usually advised for the second and third year of the PhD trajectory.

2.3 Organizing your training plan

³ Note that our program is subject to change. Please check our [website](#) for an up-to-date version of this study guide.

Individual training plans likely vary between PhD candidates depending on their prior education and methodological differences in their research projects. If relevant, courses offered by other graduate schools or research institutes at other universities in the Netherlands or abroad can be followed as a supplement to parts of the VU-GSSS PhD programme, provided they are at least research master or PhD candidates' level.

Note that it is the PhD candidate's own responsibility to keep a proper administration of their course work, and to keep a clear and complete overview that allows for a valid judgment of the completed training program. Make sure to commence keeping this administration right at the start of your project. Create a list providing detailed information about the completed courses (i.e. course titles, place and date of completion, organizers, obtained EC, etc.), and make sure to obtain and carefully archive certificates of completed courses (including VU-GSSS courses). You need this list and certificates to report on completion of the training plan (at first designed in the OBP) in your annual progress reports, and when applying for a required VU-GSSS PhD training certificate by the end of your trajectory (see our [PhD Information document](#)).

Note that, during the year, new courses, seminars and summer workshops, for instance taught by visiting fellows, may be added to the VU-GSSS education programme. You will be informed about this through the mailing list. We will also try to keep you posted about relevant courses offered by other institutions. Please note that courses offered by the [VU Amsterdam Business Research Institute](#), are open to participation from VU-GSSS members (max. 5), free of charge. Once available, their 2017-18 programme will be sent around. The same applies to a smaller selection of courses offered by the [Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research](#) (AISSR) these will be announced through the mailing list.

At the end of this Study Guide a variety of courses offered outside of the VU-GSSS both at the VU, and at other Research Institutes in the Netherlands, as well as International Summer Schools are listed. VU-HRM for instance, offers courses on PhD planning and career planning, such as a highly appreciated *PhD Success and Personal Efficacy* (3 EC). If you wish to participate in any of these courses, please contact Saskia Jans through graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl and she will forward your request to the HRM department. The list of Summer Schools that can be found in this Study Guide is of course not exhaustive, there are many more interesting Summer Schools, which also depends upon your specific needs, background, project and discipline. Any additional suggestions are very welcome!

For more information and suggestions on courses/seminars offered by VU-GSSS or elsewhere, or training plan requirements, and to sign up for a course, please send an email to FSW Graduate School graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl.

3. Course Schedule ⁴

Calender week	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	1	2	3	4	5
	Period 1								Period 2								Period 3					
	September				October				November				December				January					
Basic programme for 1 st years			PhD Induction Conference			Research Designs in the Social Sciences			Research Integrity & Responsible Scholarship													
			Proposal Design & Writing																			
Recommended for 2nd and 3rd years			Teaching Training and Supervision – Module 1													Advanced Theory Construction			Selected Qualitative Methods			
Ongoing throughout PhD Project	Theoretical and Methodological Tutorials																					
	Science Blogging																					
Calender week	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
	Period 4								Period 5								Period 6					
	February				March				April				May				June					
Basic programme for 1 st years	Proposal Design & Writing (continued)																PhD Day					
	Writing Academic English		Attractive Academic Writing (intensive course)																			
Recommended for 2nd and 3rd years	Selected Qualitative Methods (continued)							Selected Quantitative Methods					Collecting and Analysing Qualitative Data									
	Popular Science Writing					PhD Career Day			Teaching Training and Supervision - Module 2				Teaching Training and Supervision – Module 3									
Ongoing throughout PhD Project	Theoretical and Methodological Tutorials																					
	Science Blogging																					

- Area 1: Theory Building and Application
- Area 2: Research Design and Methodology
- Area 3: Academic Skills

4. Course Descriptions

4.1 Science Blogging

Period:	flexible, throughout PhD employment
Credits:	1-6 EC
Coordination:	Camiel Beukeboom

Course objectives

The VU-GSSS blog <http://socializingsciencevu.com/> launched on February 19 2014, provides an online platform for all VU Social Sciences PhD candidates. On this website VU-GSSS PhD candidates can post blogs about their own research, scientific research they read, and hear about in colloquia, and reflect on other PhD relevant issues. The blogs are disseminated through social media (@SocSciVu) both within and outside the Faculty. The website also contains a section that introduces VU-GSSS PhD candidates by means of a picture and brief description, and link to their profile on the FSS departmental webpage.

This website facilitates PhD candidates to contribute to a lively scientific environment and community by discussing scientific research both within and outside FSS. It also allows them to take note of their fellow VU-GSSS researchers, to meet fellow scientific researchers or people working in practice, and to partake in the valorization of scientific knowledge.

Moreover, writing blogs gives PhD candidates the opportunity to publish, albeit in an informal manner, at an early point in their PhD trajectories, and to practice writing by explaining scientific research to a broader audience. It also allows both individual PhD candidates, and the Faculty as a whole, to build a reputation of excellence and expertise on particular topics.

Content

PhD candidates are free to determine the content of their blogs as long as it is within a social science scope or about PhD relevant issues. They can write blogs about visited conferences, academic colloquia and presentations; about read scientific literature; about their own research; about experiences as a PhD student; or reflect on actual topics from a scientific perspective (e.g. the news, TV show etc.). PhD candidates are free to determine when to write blog post, and on what topic. A student assistant assists in scheduling contributions, in order to be able to publish a regular stream of postings on the website. We aim to involve the whole PhD community connected to the various departments of the Faculty of Social Sciences, both internal and external candidates, and candidates working abroad.

Organization

PhD candidates are advised to start participating by sharing blogs at the beginning of their PhD employment. This may continue until requirements are fulfilled,

and/or the PhD employment ends. The website and publication of blogs is organized by a student assistant. The course manual provides a more extensive description of what to gain from blogging and how to do it well (i.e., general goals, ideas on blog topics, concrete writing tips). To submit a blog or blog posts idea, and for all questions and remarks email SocializingScience.fsw@vu.nl.

Type of assessment

When a PhD candidate has published the required number of blogs to obtain 6 credit points, or when employment ends, he or she submits an overview of contributions in a Word doc (with titles and links to published blogs) to c.j.beukeboom@vu.nl to apply for the credits and course certificate.

In order to determine the EC's awarded for one's blogging efforts we advance the standard that writing an average elaborate blog, that requires some preparation, corresponds to 7 hours study load. This is determined as follows: One blog is approximately two pages long (500-1000 words). The general norm for writing assignments is 2 hours per page, which means that writing the blog itself equals 4 hours, plus 3 hours for the preparation for writing the blog (e.g., reading literature, attending colloquium etc). Given that one EC corresponds to 28 hours of work, writing 4 blogs corresponds to 1 credit; writing 8 blogs = 2 credits; 12 blogs = 3 credits; 16 blogs = 4 credits; 20 blogs = 5 credits; 24 blogs = 6 credits.

Every now and then someone may write a very short and easy blog (e.g., a very brief note) that requires no preparation, nor a lot of writing time. This is certainly welcomed, but these should not be counted for credits. You may, however, in your submitted overview argue that a number of short and easy blogs or postings should in combination count as one elaborate blog.

Target group

All PhD candidates connected to the VU Faculty of Social Sciences

4.2 Self-organized tutorials and seminars

Period: throughout the year
Credits: max. 3 EC per tutorial / seminar
Coordinator: Naná de Graaff

Course objectives and content

PhD candidates can (collaboratively) organize small group tutorials and seminars supervised by a Faculty member.

Tutorials can be organized by individual PhD candidates, or small groups of up to five participants. Tutorials focus on a specialized theoretical or methodological topic and allow PhD candidates to profit from the expertise of Faculty researchers other than their own supervisors on a topic of their need. The content is highly variable, and depends on the research interests and needs of the PhD candidate and the input of the proposed available professor. It may for instance encompass

training in designing a particular type of quantitative or qualitative study, a specific advanced method of analysis, using a particular tool, or conducting and writing a literature review on a specific disciplinary topic. Given the small set-up, tutorials are usually highly interactive, and have a hands-on character. They can be organized throughout the PhD trajectory, and are thus highly flexible both with respect to timing and content. Faculty tutors (only VU FSS) receive compensation for these activities.

Seminar series or lab group meetings are self-organized (regular) meetings under the supervision of Faculty staff member(s). It can be a series of regular meetings in a broader research group in which participants, for instance, discuss papers (of guest speakers or participants own work), methods, or other topics related to a research theme. It can also be an intensive short-term meeting of a number of days – for instance with (international) guests.

In any case, the participating group should be broader than just one supervisor and his/her own PhD candidates; the goal is to allow PhD candidates to profit from expertise of other Faculty researchers or invited guests other than their own supervisors.

Organization

To organize a tutorial or to receive credits for a seminar series, participating PhD candidates (with Faculty member) have to submit a plan prior to the meeting schedule and report afterwards who completed it. This plan needs to be worked in close collaboration with the proposed tutor / Faculty member and in consultation with the VU-GSSS program director. The final plan should be submitted for approval, at least one week before the start of the tutorial / seminar series by email to both the coordinator (n.a.de.graaff@vu.nl) and VU-GSSS (graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl).

The tutorial / seminar plan should include: 1) Name and details of Faculty member and PhD participants; 2) course objectives; 3) schedule; 4) readings; and 5) assignments. Also add a 6) detailed validation of assigned credits in which it is specified how the content of the tutorial fits to the proposed number of European Credits (EC's). 1 EC stands for 28 hours of work. The study load is based on different parts of the tutorial: readings (number of pages to read), the number and size of assignments completed outside the meetings, and the number and duration of meetings. Use the following standards to compute the study load for each part:

- Meetings: 1,5 hour meeting = 2 hours study load (preparation included)
- Readings: reading 6 pages of scientific literature = 1 hour study load
- Assignments: Writing a paper = 2 hours study load per page (line spacing 1.5).

A tutorial and seminar series can encompass a maximum of 3 EC's. PhD candidates can participate in a maximum of two tutorials and two seminar series during their PhD trajectory. Please refer to the course manual for additional detail.

Finding expertise within FSS

To facilitate PhD candidates in finding tutors with expertise on specialized topics, we created a document listing expertise of scientific staff within the Faculty of Social Sciences. You can access the **FSS expertise list** here: <https://goo.gl/ltGYsk>

Note that this is a living document that can continuously be updated by both PhD candidates and Faculty staff. The goal is to collaboratively create a comprehensive and useful overview of expertise. This will facilitate PhD candidates to find staff members with expertise on a topic of their need to either ask brief questions (helpdesk), or set-up a tutorial. Tutorials are organized in small groups (1-5 students), with meetings on a regular basis.

Type of assessment

Defined in tutorial proposal

Target group

All PhD candidates linked to the VU Faculty of Social Sciences.

4.3 PhD Induction Conference

Period:	1 (Sept/October)
Credits:	1
Lecturers:	various
Coordinator:	Naná de Graaff and PhD council

Schedule/Programme*:

Date	Time	Location	
Friday, 22 September	12.00-12.45	Forum 3, VU main building	Lunch and introduction Graduate School
	12.45-14.30		PhD Panel I – presentations PhD research and discussion
	14.30-15.00		Coffee break (with speed dating support services VU)
	15.00-16.45		PhD Panel II – presentations PhD research and discussion
	16.45-17.00		Short break with refreshments
	17.00 – 18.00		Keynote / Alumni panel → Survival Tips for life as a PhD and beyond
	18.00		Drinks
	20.00	Boca's Sarphatipark 4, Amsterdam	Conference dinner - Off Campus (mandatory)
Saturday, 23 September	09.00-12.00	Forum 3,	Workshop: Efficiency Skills and Project Management in

	VU main building	PhD Projects – Brigitte Herz and Daniel Schut
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*** Please note that this is still a preliminary programme that might be subject to change!** The exact final programme is developed by VU-GSSS and the PhD council and will be communicated early September through the mail system. First year's candidates are encouraged to already sign up.

Course objectives and content

During the PhD induction conference all first year PhD candidates are welcomed and introduced in the Faculty of Social Sciences. During this 24 hour conference PhD candidates will present their research projects to each other and discuss each others ideas and approaches. More advance PhD candidates will be part of the conference as chairs and discussants. In this way the new PhDs will get to know their fellow PhD candidates and their research, both those in their cohort year and more advanced PhD candidates, which will be pleasant and valuable for the remainder of their PhD project and after. They will also learn about the people, research and organization of the Faculty in general; and about PhD issues and practicalities in particular. The conference will include an inspiring Keynote or an Alumni Panel offering advice, tips and tricks, do's and don'ts for your life as a PhD and beyond. There will be a conference dinner in a nice venue later to be disclosed, and the conference will be concluded by the workshop: Efficiency Skills and Project Management in PhD Projects led by Brigitte Herz and Daniel Schut which has always been a highly appreciated part of our Introductory programme.

Type of assessment

To obtain one EC for the conference participants are required to participate in all sessions and complete all assignments, in particular, present your research during the conference and actively participate in the discussions.

Target group

All first year PhD candidates of the FSS. The induction conference is part of the **basic programme for first year PhD candidates**; participation is regarded as an essential part of the training plan of all FSS (both internal and external) PhD candidates. The conference is organized yearly; PhD candidates are expected to participate in the first opportunity after starting date.

4.4 Teaching practice and supervision

adjusted dates!

Period: 1 (September/ October 2017) and 5 (April/ May 2018)
Credits: 6 EC for the whole programme (Module 1: 3 EC, Module 2: 1 EC, Module 3: 2 EC)
Fee for non-FSS participants: 150 Euro's per EC
Lecturer: Dr Hester Glasbeek

Schedule:

Module 1 (Teaching practice: basic course)	Date	Time	Location
1	Monday 11-09-2017	09:30-12:30	Z 021, Metropolitan Building
2	Monday 18-09-2017	09:30-12:30	
3	Friday 6-10-2017	09:30-12:30	
4	Monday 16-10-2017	09:30-12:30	
Module 2 (Supervising theses)			
1	Monday 5-02-2018	09:30-12:30	tba
2	Monday 19-02-2018	09:30-12:30	
Module 3 (Teaching practice: deepening course)			
1	Monday 09-04-2018	09:30-16:30	tba
2	Monday 16-04-2018	09:30-12:30	
3	Monday 23-04-2018	09:30-12:30	

All sessions will be in the Metropolitan building, Buitenveldertselaan 3. Modules 1 and/or module 2 can be followed separately. Module 3 can only be followed if module 1 is completed successfully. For a partial VU-BKO-certificate, you need to follow all modules.

Course objectives

This course aims to develop and strengthen two main teaching competencies: *Teaching practice* and *Supervising theses*.

Teaching Practice is focused on direct contact with (groups of) students. A primary aim of the sessions is to develop an awareness of your own assumptions about good teaching and how you should carry out your work as a good teacher. Another aim is to improve your qualities through practice and reflection.

Supervising Theses is focused on successfully guiding students through their theses. Students working on their theses are required to be mostly self-steering or to be self-directed learners: they are expected to take charge of their own learning process. This change in role needs to be facilitated and supported by the supervising teacher. This part of the course aims to improve the process of supervising, giving feedback to students, and to design a valid, reliable and transparent method of assessment.

Participants who complete module 1 are able to:

- explain the importance of active learning and apply principles of active learning to your teaching practice;
- explain differences between students and use this knowledge to draw conclusions about the structure of your classes;
- prepare systematically and effectively for your teaching, and adequately transform learning objectives into learning activities;

Participants who complete module 2 are able to:

- describe methods to ‘tailor’ their support of student learning processes, to consciously design thesis supervision programme, and to assess theses in a valid, reliable and transparent manner;
- deal with common problems related to supervising or assessing theses;
- provide feedback to students in an effective and efficient manner.

Participants who complete module 3 are able to:

- give constructive feedback to your colleagues, in order to improve the overall quality of education related topics;
- reflect upon their own teaching experiences, in such a way that they are able to improve their knowledge and skills;
- use various teaching skills that are important for good classroom management;

It is possible to follow Module 1 and/ or 2 separately. However, for Module 3, completion of Module 1 is requested. Participants who follow all three modules and pass the final assessment receive a partial VU-BKO-certificate (or: University Teaching Qualification, UTQ), i.e. the part on teaching practice.

Course content

Just as we encourage you as a teacher to see your role as directing, initiating and supervising the learning process of your students, we at the VU-Learn Academy see our role as directing, initiating and supervising your learning process as a participant in this course. This means we make as much use as possible of assignments that activate learning and a range of methods that do the same.

Where possible, we seek to build on the experiences that you have acquired in your work as a teacher. Becoming aware of your own experiences and assumptions is an important part of the process. Exchanging experiences is therefore a key feature of the programme. This implicates that you must have teaching tasks *during* the course.

Requirements for participation

- For all modules, you should be able to attend all of the sessions.

In addition, requirements for module 3 (*Teaching practice: deeping course*) are:

- You have teaching tasks between October 2017 and May 2018 (i.e. after Module 1 and before Module 3). You are able to videotape two lessons during this period.
- An experienced colleague from your department is willing to observe one of your lessons and to discuss it with you;

Form of tuition

Interactive lectures, assignments, exchanging experiences, class observations, peer feedback sessions.

Assessment

Participants who attended all sessions of a module and who were actively engaged, receive a certificate of participation. For participants who completed all three modules and who wish to obtain a partial VU-BKO-certificate, there is a final assessment. You will write a report on your development during the year. In your report you reflect on the insights you gained and you give evidence of your

development as a teacher. This report will be used by the staff developer to assess your ability to develop your teaching skills.

Target group

PhD candidates of the FSS. This course is in principle not advised for first year's PhD candidates, unless they expect to be teaching already in their first year.

4.5 Research Designs in the Social Sciences

Period: 1 (Oct)

Credits: 4

Fee for non-FSS participants: €600,-

Lecturer: Prof. René Bekkers, Dr. Ton Salman

Schedule:

Date	Time	Location	Lecturer	Topic
Monday, October 9	15.30-17.30	HG-1A14	Ton Salman	Philosophy of Science
Tuesday, October 10	10.00-12.00	WN-F664	René Bekkers	Causal models and hypothesis formulation
Tuesday, October 17	10.00-12.00	WN-F664	Ton Salman	Beyond Structure/Agency
Thursday, October 19	10.00-12.00	HG-1A37	Ton Salman	Ethnography
Monday, October 23	15.30-17.30	HG-1A14	René Bekkers	Case Study
Thursday, October 26	15.30-17.30	WN-S624	René Bekkers	Survey Design
Monday, October 30	15.30-17.30	HG-1A14	René Bekkers	Experimental Design

Course objectives

To be able to choose and apply appropriate methods, it is crucial for any researcher to possess knowledge and understanding of a variety of alternative research designs. This is particularly also the case for PhD candidates in the starting phase of a research project. Knowledge about the variety of methods in the social sciences allows you to position and delimit your own research projects, to choose the most appropriate research approach, to increase awareness of the strengths and limits of your own approach, and to find inspiration in other approaches.

The objectives of this course are (1) to acquaint participants with common types of data collection in social research – ethnographic research, the case study, the survey, and the experiment; (2) to explore the methodological strengths and weaknesses of types of data collection, and (3) to prepare students for specialized research methodology courses in which practical analytical tools are taught.

At the end of this course, students (1) have gained knowledge and understanding of different research designs and methods both within and beyond

the scope of their own discipline; (2) have understanding of the philosophy of science behind various research approaches; (3) have explored alternative research designs to answer a given research problem; and (4) are able to criticize and optimize research designs.

Course content

This course provides tools for doing research in theory and practice. 'In theory' means that we talk about *the theory of methodology* or the *theory behind designing research*. 'In practice' means that we talk about the work involved in doing science, which involves first of all formulating a research question, selecting a research design, collecting and analyzing data. Questions addressed in this course are 'How can I tell whether research is high quality?', 'What is the best research design for specific research goals?', 'What sort of data and material do I need to answer my questions?', 'How do I design a research strategy that will provide me with such material?', and 'How to test causal hypotheses?'

Form of tuition

Interactive lectures, readings and assignments.

Assessment

To obtain credits for the course participants are required to be present and actively participate in all sessions, and sufficiently fulfill all assignments.

Target group

First year PhD candidates of the FSS. This course is part of the **basic programme for first year PhD candidates**; participation is regarded as an essential part of the training plan of all FSS PhD candidates (see §2.2). The course helps PhD candidates to develop their 8-month product focusing on the design and method of your research, and can be taken in combination with the course Proposal Design and Writing, which focuses on the writing of the proposal itself (developing a research problem, academic relevance, etcetera), If relevant it is also open to candidates in later years. Also open to non-FSS participants, providing space.

4.5 Proposal Design & Writing

adjusted!

Period: 1-4 (Oct 2017 - March 2018)

Credits: 6

Lecturers: Prof. dr. Bianca Beersma and Prof. Gjalt de Graaf

Fee for non-FSS participants: €900,-

Schedule:

Meeting	Date	Time	Location	
			Quantitative	Qualitative
1	Monday October 16	14:00-17:00	HG-10A28	
2	Monday October 30	9:00 -12:00	WN-M616	
3	Monday November 27	12:00-15:00	W-C638	

4	Monday January 15	14:00-17:00	WN-C616 (Quan)	<i>* note different timeslot!</i>
		12:00-15:00*		WN-F664 (Qual)
5	Monday January 29	14:00-17:00	HG-1A37	HG-1A41
6	Monday February 12	12:00-15:00	tba	tba
7	Monday March 26	14:00-17:00	tba	

Course objectives

This course is aimed to support PhD candidates in formulating and delimiting their research question, to review and evaluate the literature, and to determine appropriate methodology for their research project. The course is particularly relevant and instructive in the starting period of a PhD project, to be followed before the submission date of the 8 months product. During the course PhD candidates specify the research plan of their PhD project, and work their 8 month product. The course will teach participants to position their research vis-à-vis an established body of literature, identifying gaps in the literature and innovations in their own research. The course thereby aims to facilitate a proper start of the project, and complements the regular PhD supervision.

By the end of this course, participants (1) have reviewed the existing literature on their research problem; (2) have discussed alternative theoretical approaches; (3) have developed the best research approach for their dissertation research; (4) have explored alternative research approaches; (5) have identified potential problems and disadvantages of the preferred research approach, and repaired them as much as possible; (6) have written a research plan or research proposal for their Ph.D. dissertation, conforming to quality standards as required by VU-GSSS or other relevant (funding) institutions.

Course content

Participants in this course develop a research proposal in three stages:

1. Participants formulate and sharpen their research questions, describing their scientific and societal relevance.
2. Participants review the existing literature, describing the key issues, identifying the gaps and criticizing shortcomings of previous research.
3. Participants develop the research approach and methodology of their project, in particular focusing on how to effectively write this in a proposal format.

Form of tuition

This course has three forms of meetings: lectures, workshops, and individual / small group appointments with one of the lecturers. The lectures will focus on how to develop the problem statement, how to review and discuss previous research, what reviewers want, the advantages and disadvantages of common research designs in the social sciences, and validity and reliability of methods. You will also discuss examples of good and bad research questions and examples of full proposals. In preparation of the workshops participants complete individual assignments, which are discussed during the meetings. In the individual or small group appointments with the lecturer participants discuss their own research

proposal. Taking into account that quantitative vs. qualitative research approaches often come with different requirements, the group will, in a number of sessions and depending on the composition of the participating group, be split in two subgroups supervised by the lecturer from the relevant background.

Type of assessment

Participants complete assignments in a progressive structure, and present and submit their research proposal in subsequent steps. In weekly assignments to be discussed in the workshops participants prepare elements of the research proposal: the problem statement, the literature review, and the research approach. Draft versions of the proposal will be peer-reviewed by another participant in the course, and by the lecturer. The final assignment is the full research proposal for the research project which will be presented in the final conference meeting. With this structure participants see the progression in their research design throughout the course, and they will receive ample feedback on their project proposal. To obtain credits for the course participants are required to be present and actively participate in all sessions, and sufficiently fulfill all assignments.

Target group

PhD candidates linked to the VU Faculty of Social Sciences. This course is part of the **basic programme for first year PhD candidates**; participation is regarded as an essential part of the training plan of all PhD candidates. The course is designed and organized as to optimally support those PhD candidates in the process of writing their 8-months product and as complementary to the basic course Research Designs in Social Sciences. The basic lessons of this course are relevant for writing research proposals across social science disciplines, and for participants with preferences for qualitative as well as quantitative research methods – where desirable PhD candidates with equivalent research approaches (i.e., quantitative vs. qualitative) will join in smaller subgroups.

4.7 Research Integrity and Responsible Scholarship *adjusted venues!*

Period: Period 2 Nov/Dec 2017

Credits: 3

Fee for non-FSS participants: € 450,-

Lecturers: Prof. René Bekkers, Dr. Ivar Vermeulen, Dr. Ellen Bal, Dr. Ida Sabelis, Prof. Dr Ben Crum

Schedule:

Sessions	Date	Time	Location
1	Monday 6 November	9.00-13.00	WN-S640
2	Thursday 9 November	13.00-17.00	HG-12A22
3	Monday 13 November	13.00-17.00	WN-M648
4	Thursday 23 November	13.00-17.00	WN-C624
5	Thursday 7 December	13.00-17.00	HG-5A37

6	Friday 15 December	13.00-17.00	HG-9A24
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Course objectives

This course follows from efforts of the Faculty of Social Sciences to prevent violations of research integrity. It seeks to contribute to a reflection and discussion on the normative consequences of the abstract ideals of science and an awareness of standards of good conduct among PhD candidates in the social sciences.

Recent scandals in the social sciences have put integrity in research at the heart of much debate in the press and in the academic community. The highly visible cases in social psychology, economics and anthropology may only be the tip of the iceberg. Violations of research integrity include a wide range of behaviors, from seemingly minor problems resulting from 'sloppy science', to questionable research practices (QRP), research misconduct (RM), abuse of power by dissertation supervisors, and outright fabrication, fraud, and plagiarism (FFP). How can such violations of research integrity be prevented? What should researchers do when they notice violations of research integrity? Formulated in a more positive way: how can researchers contribute to responsible social science research?

Coordinated efforts to promote responsibility originate from self-regulation by the academic community through codes of conduct formulated by National Academies of Science such as NWO, academic journals, professional associations, universities, and faculties. Recently, funders such as the European Commission have increased efforts to promote responsibility in research by adding funding allocation criteria. At the same time, the incentives for individual researchers embedded in tenure tracks, academic careers, publication cultures, are tempting researchers in the direction of violations of integrity. This course helps PhD candidates in the social sciences to develop a position vis-à-vis the conflicting demands regarding research integrity. How should researchers deal with them? Because of the importance of responsibility and integrity in social science research, and of individual responsibility in determining one's career path, this course is regarded as an essential part of the education of all Social Science PhD candidates.

By the end of this course, participants (1) are aware of the values embodied in science, according to the association of universities (VSNU); (2) are aware of the behavioral consequences of these values in daily practice, and have acquired the knowledge for proper scientific behavior; (3) are aware of the internal review board procedures and quality control procedures within the Faculty of Social Sciences at VU University; (4) are aware of the codes of conduct developed to prevent integrity violations by research funders, professional associations, leading scholars, and academic journals; (5) have developed a critical position on their own responsibility in academic research.

Course content

The course consists of five meetings with lecturers from different backgrounds in which you will discuss integrity in research conduct and handling of data and its requirements according to faculty, university, national and disciplinary agreements. You will explore the terrain of scientific integrity and research quality, discuss violations of integrity, sloppy science, and questionable research practices.

You will learn about proper data collection and storage; reliable and verifiable publication practices, impartiality, independence and norms on co-authorship.

Form of tuition

Course meetings are a mix between lectures and workshops. The final meeting is a conference with presentations by participants. In preparation of the meetings you are required to read papers from the recent and ongoing debates on research integrity in the social sciences, which are discussed in the meetings. During the course you will write a paper reflecting on an issue of your choice – usually connected to your own discipline or research subject – regarding integrity and quality of research, which you will present in the final conference meeting. You will also comment on two papers by other participants.

Type of assessment

To obtain credits for the course participants are required to be present and actively participate in all sessions and sufficiently fulfill all assignments.

Target group

First (or second) year PhD candidates of the FSS. This course is part of the **basic programme for first year PhD candidates**; participation is regarded as an essential part of the training plan of all FSS PhD candidates (see §2.2). If applicable it is also open to candidates in later years. Also open to non-FSS participants, providing space.

4.8 Selected Qualitative Methods

Period: 3 and 4 (Jan – March)

Credits: 6 EC

Lecturers: various

Coordination: Dr. Kees Boersma, Dr. Giulia Sinatti

Schedule

Date	Time	Room
Week 4 - Fri 26 January* Peter Versteeg	t.b.c.	t.b.c.
Week 5 - Thu 1 February Kees Boersma	t.b.c.	t.b.c.
Week 6 - Fri 9 February* Harry Wels Dimitris Dalakoglou	t.b.c.	t.b.c.
Week 7 - Thu 15 February* Lorraine Nencil Giulia Sinatti	t.b.c.	t.b.c.

Week 8 - Fri 23 February Christine Moser	t.b.c.	t.b.c.
Week 9 - Fri 2 March* Naomi van Stapele	t.b.c.	t.b.c.
Week 12 - Tue 20 March Kathy Davis	t.b.c.	t.b.c.

* **NB: might still be subject to some final changes.**

Course objectives

The goal of this course is to provide PhD candidates with high-quality support and supervision on conducting qualitative research allowing them to profit from the extensive expertise about qualitative methods present in the FSS. At the end of the course, students

- 1) have gained knowledge and understanding of different methods of data collection and analysis
- 2) are able to link different kinds of qualitative data to their PhD research questions
- 3) have gained hands-on experience in designing different methodological tools and analyzing the relative data
- 4) are able to critically reflect upon methodological choices and the implications for data analysis

Course content

The course is meant for PhDs in different phases of their fieldwork: students both designing their methodological tools and who have already collected (some or all) field data will benefit from attending this course. There will be a practical focus on how to design qualitative data collection tools and choice of methods, as well as on how to analyze qualitative data and on the process of writing about results. Students in a *before* fieldwork phase will benefit from the course's relatively broad focus on a variety of qualitative methods, strengths and weaknesses of different methods, possibilities of using mixed methods, and important issues when planning the exact methods for data collection. Students in an *after* fieldwork phase will benefit from the course's practical focus on how to analyze qualitative data, and on the process of writing about results. Whenever possible, participants will be invited to work with their own collected material to increase the effectiveness of the course.

Form of tuition

Interactive lectures, practical workgroups, readings and assignments.

Topics:

Topic 1: The nature of qualitative research: In the first meeting, students will briefly present the core problematic of their research projects. We will then explore key epistemological issues in qualitative research: its inductive nature and

consequences thereof; its broad focus; foreshadowed problems and sensitizing concepts; the ideal of an unobtrusive or naturalistic approach; fieldwork as deliberate immersion; the principle of iteration; the imperative of reflexivity; the distinction between description, interpretation, and explanation; grounded theory as the eventual yield of qualitative research. Going back to participants' projects we will further discuss some of these issues and see what combination of methods they suggest for particular projects.

Topic 2: Interpretive analysis: Semantics, content and discourse analysis, sense-making, reflexivity. This meeting will be dedicated to discussions of (definitions of) reflexivity, reflexive methodology and meaning making. We will discuss three different domains of reflexivity: a) methodology and methods; b) epistemological assumptions; c) science (sub)disciplines. Eventually we will explore and develop a reflexive practice, understood as a constant iteration between your personal experience of research, selection of potentially relevant theory, debating underlying assumptions, the used methods, data and – if the situation allows - participants' feedback.

Topic 3: Ethnographic fieldwork: This interactive conversation on the topic of 'ethnographic fieldwork' will discuss some of the 'usual suspects' of this approach like 'participant observation / observant participation', 'doing ethnography' (Geertz 1973), 'writing field notes' and 'reflexivity'. Furthermore it will be argued that fieldwork is above all a sensory endeavor. During the conversation we will explore some of the intricacies and complexities that this argument implies for fieldwork and we will discuss what it might mean for a 'reflexive methodology' (Alvesson and Sköldberg 2000).

Topic 4: Qualitative interviews: In this class, students will engage with the most common form of qualitative data collection: semi-structured interviewing. While much is available about conducting and analyzing qualitative interviews, more rarely do scholars critically think about the preparatory phase, which will also be the focus of this class. Among the questions addressed are: What kind of knowledge can you gain from interviews? How does this relate to research design? How can you break down research questions into different dimensions of an interview? Do you need an interview script and can you do a good interview following one? How do you formulate open or closed questions? What kinds of interactions and power dynamics do you anticipate with interviewees?

Topic 5: Qualitative research and virtual data: During this class, we will explore the many possibilities of doing qualitative research in virtual environments. Such environments – e.g. Facebook, Twitter, online fora and the like – provide unique opportunities for investigation. The key question when conducting such research is: what are we actually looking at, and how should we generate, analyze and present our data? We will tackle this question during in-depth discussions and practical exercises.

Topic 6: I have too much! Making sense of large amounts of data: Data analysis can take many forms and researchers need to make choices in each empirical project they do about how to deal with reporting on their data and experiences. In this class we will introduce requirements for data reporting in different disciplines. We will zoom in on processes of coding and systematizing data that are connected to the traditions of grounded theory building in sociology, as well as the way anthropologists address this problem. The coding process is related to use of computer supported qualitative data analysis, so we invite you to bring in your own work for discussion.

Topic 7: Writing up your research: This class will be devoted to some of the problems involved in academic writing – for example, the fear of the Blank Page, getting stuck, not knowing how to situate yourself in your research, or worrying about how to capture the attention of your audience. In addition to discussing strategies for resolving these problems, we will be doing some writing exercises in class which are aimed at making the process of writing less painful and more productive.

Target group

PhD candidates linked to the VU Faculty of Social Sciences. The course is relevant for PhDs both in a phase before their data collection / fieldwork and for PhDs who have already conducted (part of) their data collection/fieldwork.

Registration

Please register for this course by sending an email with your name and details (e.g. department, etc.) to FSW Graduate School (graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl). Participants must also submit a short description of their PhD project and a draft research question to the course instructors as soon as possible, but at least one month before the start of the course.

4.9 Selected Quantitative Methods

Period: *tba*
Credits: 3 EC
Lecturer: dr. Marcello Galluci (University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy); marcello.gallucci@unimib.it

Schedule: *tba*

Sessions	Date	Time	Location
1			
2 & 3			
4			

5			
6&7			

Course objectives

This course trains PhD candidates in analytical skills pertaining to specific quantitative research methods. Participants will receive intensive training in specified advanced methods of analysis which are as much as possible tailored to participants' interests and needs.

Course content

Participants will be trained in some of the most commonly used quantitative analytical methods in the social sciences. The content of the course will be tailored to the needs of participants and their individual research projects, and the level of training will depend on students' existing knowledge. Prior to the course (in advance of and during the pre-course meeting) participants are required to indicate in which specific method of analysis they want to receive further training. A focus on a variety of quantitative methods is possible upon request (ranging from general linear models to mixed models and generalized linear models, Multilevel analysis and Structural Equation Modeling). The exact content and set-up of the course is then specified after the number and interests of participating students is known.

Form of tuition

The instructor will tailor the contents of the module and may create optional contents if desired. The meetings will cover both theory (presentations by the lecturer) and time to work hands-on with real data (either provided or from participants' own project). If possible, the seminar will be dismantled into smaller groups, in which students go through specified literature and exercises.

Type of assessment

To obtain credits for the course participants are required to be present and actively participate in all meetings and sufficiently fulfill readings and assignments, which are specified prior to the course. The amount of credit points awarded is dependent upon set-up.

Target group

PhD candidates linked to the VU Faculty of Social Sciences. Advised for 2nd or 3rd years working with their own data, but if relevant also open to candidates in first year.

4.10 Advanced Theory Construction

Period: 3 (Jan) and 4 (March)

Course Credits: 6

Lecturer: Prof. dr. Marshall Scott Poole (University of Illinois, USA)
Fee (external participants): € 900,-

Schedule:

Date	Time		Room
Friday, January 5	9.30-12.30	13.30-15.30	<i>HG-1A44</i>
Monday, January 8	9.30-12.30	13.30-15.30	<i>IN-3B59</i>
Wednesday, January 10	9.30-12.30	13.30-15.30	<i>HG-1G10</i>
Friday, January 12	9.30-12.30	13.30-15.30	9.30 WN- S640 (morning) 13.30 HG- 1A32 (afternoon)
Monday, March 19	9.30-12.30	13.30-15.30	<i>HG-1A43</i>
Wednesday, March 21	9.30-12.30	13.30-15.30	<i>HG-1A43</i>

Course objectives

1. This course will introduce you to the nature of theory and theory construction in the social sciences. The topics it will explore include the following: the nature of explanation; theoretical types; strategies for theory construction; the relationship between theory and inquiry in social science research; evaluating and critiquing theories.
2. This course will also introduce you to a range of theories in the social sciences, particularly organizational science and organizational communication studies. There are so many theories in such a wide range of contexts that we cannot pretend to be comprehensive. Instead we will focus on exemplars of good theory.

Course content

Most courses on theory in the social sciences concentrate on the content of theories. In contrast, this class focuses on the canonical formats of various types of theories and what constitutes an adequate theory of a given type. The course will consider a number of types of theories, including causal theory, contingency theory, systems theory, network theory, several types of process theories and interpretive theory. It details the characteristics of each type of theory, how to build an effective theory of each type, and criteria that a good theory of each type must fulfill. Along with general discussion of each theory type, we consider specific examples drawn from several social science disciplines. We discuss the strengths and weaknesses of each example and how they can be reconstructed to better fulfill the criteria for an effective theory of their type. We will also cover issues of construct explication and philosophy of social science that are relevant to theory construction.

Methods

The class meets four times over a period of one and a half week in January to cover the basic course material; this will be a rather intensive period requiring concentrated reading and writing. You will then have two months to develop your seminar paper in consultation with the instructor (see below). In March we will have two final meetings where you will present your paper and get feedback from the instructor and your fellow PhDs.

At the end of each regular course day in the January sessions, there will be a lecture that lays out the basics of a particular type of theory. Then the next class period begins with discussion of examples of the type led by seminar participants (you are given the intervening period to read and analyze the examples). You will hand in a short summary of your critique of the example before each period in Compass and students will be assigned to lead discussion on specific examples.

The main assignment for the course is to develop a theory in your own area of interest. You should bring an idea or problem that you want to theorize about and over the course you will develop a theory and some ideas about how it might be tested or evaluated. This paper will be developed in stages. First you will write a 1-2 page proposal outlining the basic theory you want to develop and what its contribution will be. The instructor will give you feedback on this and you will discuss it in individual meetings to negotiate a reasonable and useful topic. Second (about a week later), you will turn in an outline of the paper and the instructor will again give you individual feedback; you will meet to discuss this as needed. Third, you will submit a first draft of the paper a week after the class concludes and you will receive detailed feedback on it; we will discuss this via skype (The instructor will have returned to the U.S. at this point). You will then work toward a final draft of the paper and you will be able to discuss it when required. This will be an iterative process in which the instructor will consult with you and comment on up to two more drafts of the paper. In March, when the instructor returns to the Netherlands, there will be two more classes and you will have a final paper ready to present. During these classes you will give a presentation of your theory (1/2 hour) and your colleagues will comment on it and give you suggestions.

Type of assessment

To obtain EC's for the course participants are required to (1) be present in all sessions; (2) actively participate during the lectures, (3) fulfill all assignments.

Target group

Ph.D. candidates linked to the various departments of the VU Faculty of Social Sciences. The course is, providing space open for candidates from other faculties and from other universities. These external participants are charged a fee (see above). The course is advised for second and third years. It builds on the course (Introduction to) Theory building, Logic and Argumentation offered by ABRI, but to participate, this course is not necessarily needed, nor a requirement.

4.11 Popular Science Writing: Writing about Science for the General Public

Period: 4 (Feb 2018)
Credits: 2 EC
Lecturer: Dr. Camiel Beukeboom
Fee (external participants): € 300,-

Schedule:

Date	Time	Location
Friday, 2 February	<i>tba</i>	tba
Friday, 16 February	<i>tba</i>	tba

Course objectives

In addition to the traditional outlets for scientific research, scientific discourse nowadays increasingly occurs on fast online blogging sites hosted by individual researchers or groups, or interactive scientific news sites. This trend fits in an increasing emphasis for scientists to valorize their work and show the societal relevance and real world impact of their research. Many scholars agree that this form of scientific communication has many advantages for academics.

Compared to scientific articles, a blog gives you more writing freedom and your style can be much looser (i.e., informal and entertaining). However, just like an article a blog certainly also needs structure and a clear focus. A popular science article or blog is much more about telling a story. This means you will have to look at your research or your field of expertise from a different angle. What does it mean? What excites me about this? Or: what infuriates me? How did I feel when I realized what my research could mean for the world? What big questions are still left open? What would this mean to my mother, to my neighbor, to children, or to a president? What's happening in society that the science I know so well can shed a light on?

This course will teach you how to think like a popular science writer, and will teach you skills and techniques to help you tell, write or blog a story about (your) science for the general public. As societal impact and valorization of scientific knowledge become more and more important for scientists, these are valuable skills to acquire. Moreover, explaining science in a comprehensible manner to a broad audience will foster your own understanding, and is great practice for your writing skills.

Course content

In the first session of this course we will focus on thinking like a popular science writer. We will discuss some of the basics of popular science blogs and the techniques that will help you tell stories instead of communicate methodology and results. We will look at specific types and examples of blogs, and their chances and pitfalls. In the second session we will discuss the blogposts you have written yourselves, along with additional writing tips.

Assessment

To obtain EC's for the course participants are required to (1) be present in all sessions; (2) read the advance readings, do the preparatory assignment and actively participate during the session; (3) write and submit an article to be discussed in the second session (see above); (4) finalize the article after feedback and publish it (it can be published on <http://socializingsciencevu.com>, but another outlet is allowed).

Target group

The course is interesting and useful for both first year and more advanced PhD candidates. If space permits PhD candidates from relevant other VU and other universities are welcome. These external participants are usually charged a fee.

4.12 Writing Academic English

adjusted!

Period: 4 (February 2018)

Credits: 3

Lecturer: Mike Hannay

Schedule:

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, 13 February	14.30-17.15	<i>tba</i>
Wednesday, 14 February	14.30-17.15	<i>tba</i>
Thursday, 15 February	14.30-17.15	<i>tba</i>
Tuesday, 20 February	14.30-17.15	<i>tba</i>
Wednesday, 21 February	14.30-17.15	<i>tba</i>
Thursday, 22 February	14.30-17.15	<i>tba</i>

Course objectives

This course helps you to determine how confident you can afford to be about your written academic English. It shows you what you can do to improve your confidence in the short term, helps you to eradicate those silly mistakes, and gives you hopefully new options for expressing complex ideas in well-structured English sentences. At the end of the course, you will have a clear idea of your strengths and weaknesses concerning written academic English. You will also be a better manager of your own text, and you will be equipped with a set of personalized criteria for editing your text.

Course content

In a first introduction session participants will briefly meet with their lecturer. During this session you will discuss the goals, content and assignments of the course, how you can best prepare for the course, and most importantly what topics you would like to be included in the course as there is definitely some flexibility concerning the precise programme.

The actual course consists of six sessions. Session 1 is an introductory session: the lecturer will provide a presentation of participants' skills profiles,

quick fixes, remedial grammar issues; and there is room for Q and A over matters arising from the individual feedback you received on your submitted text. The subsequent sessions include a punctuation workshop: everything you secretly always wanted to know about commas, colons and dashes but did not realize was actually important; a session in which you will expand your syntactic repertoire, covering how to add variation to your writing and how to produce complex sentences in the English mould without losing the flow and rhythm of the sentence; an editing workshop in which you will work in small groups to provide rewrites of two very badly written texts and then discuss your rewrites and come up with a single final version. This is a way of checking that you can spot silly mistakes but also a way of discussing different ways of improving the idiomaticity, flow and coherence of badly constructed texts.

Classes will be a mix of interactive lecture elements, class exercises, and small group assignments. There will be a modest amount of preparation during the three weeks of the course, but a lot of the work doesn't start until the session are over.

Target group

This course is open for PhD's of the Faculty of Social Sciences only. The course is intended for PhD candidates who have experience with writing in Academic English at an advanced level [e.g. an MA thesis or an academic article]. The course is offered at English skills level 500 (i.e., on a VU scale ranging 100-600).

Registration

The maximum number of internal PhD candidates (no fee) is 15, the maximum total number of participants (including paying external participants) is 20. Advanced PhD candidates have priority over first year candidates, who can follow the course in later years.

After signing up, participants are asked to submit a text that they have recently worked on, up to 2000 words in length. The texts will be used to help determine the precise content of the course. Send your text to the course tutor, Mike Hannay, no later than one week before the start of the actual course session.

This course is not open for non-FSS PhD candidates.

Type of Assessment

To obtain credits for the course, participants are required to be present at all sessions and to actively participate during class. Second, participants are required to sufficiently fulfill two separate writing and editing assignments.

4.13 Intensive Course in Attractive Academic Writing

new!

Period: 4-5 (Spring 2018)

Credits: 3

Lecturer: Mike Hannay

Schedule:

The dates for this course will be agreed with lecturer and participants once the participants are known.

Deadline for application is 15 January, 2018.

Course objectives and content

This intensive course is designed for any small group of PhD researchers who are in an advanced stage of writing their dissertation (or articles) and who are interested in increasing the attractiveness and sharpness of their writing. The writer's aim at this point in the writing process is to pay more attention to the reader and in that light the focus in this course will be on precise argumentation, concise formulation, and stylistic variation.

The course has an introductory group session focusing on linguistic techniques, two working sessions with peer feedback, and an individual tutorial with the teacher.

Type of assessment

Assessment is on the basis of at least one edited thesis chapter (or article) using ELS-online, the ALP feedback system. The precise content of the course will be agreed between teacher and participants in a meeting prior to the course.

Registration

The course is open to PhD researchers from VU-GSSS who have completed at least two chapters (articles) of their dissertation. This course is not open for non-FSS PhD candidates.

4.14 Time - and Project management**new!**

Period: 5
Credits: **tbd**
Instructor: Ellis Vyth (Hertz trainingen)

Schedule:

Date	Time	Location
Wednesday 4 April	tbc	tbc
Wednesday 18 April		

Course objectives and content

In this course you will learn to work more efficiently and effectively. Making better use of your time starts with formulating very clear goals and translating these to concrete tasks. It's important to give priority to these tasks when planning a year/month/week/day; don't be distracted by other nice, important and/or interesting activities. On top of that, it's

important how to make clear to your colleagues and supervisors what your priorities are and what your way of dealing with this, what your working method is. Even more so when you're combining another job with a part-time PhD-program.

A point of much concern these days is the excessive workload many PhD-students experience. The work-life balance is under pressure. In this course you explore the possibilities to say 'yes' to all the duties and activities that fit your personal choices and to kindly say 'no' to yourself and others when the tasks do not suit your plans.

Working efficiently often doesn't mean trying to do more in less time, it entails having a well thought-out plan for you to work and act accordingly.

Stress is the result of having to do too much in a short time, when there often are deadlines to meet or when you often do too many tasks that don't really belong to the core activities of your PhD-program.

In this course you will learn to make a distinction between the time management of a day/week, of a long-term project and of a research program. You will learn to analyse the way you spend your time in a day and a week in different ways. This gives you new insights into your strong points and also provides options for improving your working method. Focus is on:

- Set specific goals
- Determine your optimal working rhythm
- Make a weekly planning schedule
- Apply the rules of project management
- Make a planning schedule for research

Form of tuition

tba

Type of assessment

tba

Target group

The course is open to all PhD candidates from the VU-GSSS. It follows up on the workshop on Time Management that you will have followed during the PhD Induction conference.

Registration

Please register for this course by sending an email with your name and details (e.g. department, etc.) to FSW Graduate School (graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl). Please note that there is a limited number of places for this course, make sure to sign up in time. In case the course is full external candidates are given priority over internal candidates, since the latter can participate in similar courses without extra

costs as offered by VU HRM (see and end of this Study Guide):

<https://vunet.login.vu.nl/services/pages/detail.aspx?cid=tcm%3a164-765662-16>

Please note the helpful online Project Management Tool for PhD's by Brigitte Hertz training which is available for free:

<http://www.klaarinvierjaar.nl/planning/voorbeeld/>

4.15 PhD Career Day- together with University of Amsterdam (AISSR and ASCoR)

Period: 5 (Apr - May 2018)
Date: tba
Time: tba
Location: CREA, Nieuwe Achtergracht 170, Amsterdam

A programme from lunch to drinks with presentations, workshops and networking opportunities, all focused on your career perspectives. Guestspeakers, trainers and alumni working in academia, politics, business and civil society organisations will provide you with insights, tips and short practical training to help you define your career opportunities and develop strategies towards that goal. A more detailed programme will be announced in due time. No credits can be earned by participating in this event. But we are pretty sure that you will benefit from it and enjoy it. It also offers a nice opportunity to meet fellow PhDs from the University of Amsterdam, as well as alumni.

4.16 PhD Day

confirmed!

Period: 5 (May 2018)
Credits: For presenting PhD candidates (poster or oral presentation).
Coordinator: PhD council and VU-GSSS

Schedule:

Date	Time	Location
11 May	<i>tba</i>	<i>tba</i>

Course objectives and content

In order to showcase the research done by all PhD candidates within the Faculty of Social Science the PhD council and VU-GSSS organizes a yearly PhD day. The PhD day consists of a poster market and oral presentations by PhD candidates, and is open for all members of the Faculty of Social Sciences. PhD candidates can present their research and informally interact with senior staff. A price is awarded to the best presenter. The PhD day ends with informal drinks and snacks.

Type of assessment

Presenting PhD candidates (poster or oral presentation) can receive credits (credit amount and criteria to be determined).

4.17 Collecting, Analyzing and Writing with Qualitative Data

Period: 5 (May 2018)
Credits: 3 EC
Professor: Dr. Barbara J. Risman
Fee for non-FSS participants: € 450,-

Schedule:

Date	Time	Room
Tuesday 15 May	10:00-12:00 13:00-15:00	
Thursday 17 May	10:00-12:00 13:00-15:00	
Tuesday 22 May	10:00-12:00 13:00-15:00	
Thursday 24 May	10:00-12:00 13:00-15:00	

Course objectives

The first goal of this course is to introduce graduate students to the diversity of qualitative data collection methodologies. The second goal of this course is to provide students with a critical understanding of qualitative data analysis, and to provide them with individualized consultation for an on-going project. The third

goal is to introduce students to strategies for writing empirical research articles in English with qualitative data as evidence.

Course content

This course is an introduction to qualitative methods in the social sciences. The class will have five themes. The first will be a discussion on the relationship between method, methodology and epistemology and how the researcher's choices on all three issues necessarily influences the research. This will be a theoretical conversation. The next two themes will be practicing very practical skills of data collection and data analysis. The class will both learn about data collection and do a series of exercises where they experience field work and interview techniques. There will be time required outside of class time for these homework assignments. We will then discuss the analysis of data conceptually. Following this, the students will practice coding with two exercises. The fourth theme will be more theoretical, focusing on how to conceptualize patterns in qualitative data, to go from coding to analytic summaries to developing an argument. Finally, the last theme will be about effective skills for writing and publishing qualitative data in English language journals. The class will meet on four days, with two hour sessions in the morning and afternoon. The active learning assignments will begin during class time but may need time to be finished between classes. Each of the students will also receive individual consultation on their research projects.

Form of tuition

Interactive lectures, active learning exercises, readings and assignments.

Target group

PhD candidates linked to the VU Faculty of Social Sciences. Advised for students near the beginning of their studies but who have some on-going research to use for the coding and writing course exercises.

4.18 Career Orientation

new!

Period: 6 (June 2018)
Credits: tbd
Instructor: Caroline Rehbach (Hertz Trainingen)

Schedule:

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday, 15 June	10.00-13.00	<i>tba</i>
Tuesday, 12 June	10.00-17.00	<i>tba</i>
Tuesday, 19 June	10.00-17.00	<i>tba</i>
Tuesday, 26 June	10.00-13.00	<i>tba</i>
Wednesday, 27 June	1 hour personal coaching, schedule tbd	<i>tba</i>

Course objectives and content

If you have doubts about how to pursue a job in science or outside of academia or find it difficult to think about which direction to go, if you cannot describe your special skills yet, or if you are not sure which is the best way to start looking for a job, this will be a good course for you.

As a PhD student who enters the job market, you should be aware of your own (transferable) skills and should be able to communicate them. Most scientists can present their scientific knowledge, their research- and their practical skills very well. They are, however, less aware of the social, communication and directing skills they have.

But every PhD-student clearly possesses a collection of skills you could see as your 'Transferable Skills'; these are skills you can use in any situation and which make you valuable for the job market both inside and outside of academia.

In a step-by-step approach you will do many different kinds of practical exercises with a focus on the following:

- Personal objectives and values, to discover what is important to you in work, and life in general.
- Exploring what would be your dream job
- Personal skills; different exercises to find out about them, naming your own skills
- Network conversations as one of the important strategies
- Job applications and interviews

At the end of the program you are offered a personal interview to discuss your situation more in depth.

Form of tuition

tba

Type of assessment

tba

Target group

The course is open to all PhD candidates from the VU-GSSS and will be particularly useful for candidates in the final year(s) of their PhD.

Registration

Please register for this course by sending an email with your name and details (e.g. department, etc.) to FSW Graduate School (graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl). Please note that there is a limited number of places for this course, make sure to sign up in time. In case the course is full external candidates are given priority over internal candidates, since the latter can participate in similar courses without extra costs as offered by VU HRM (see :

<https://vunet.login.vu.nl/services/pages/detail.aspx?cid=tcm%3a164-765662-16>

5. Courses offered outside VU-GSSS

All PhD candidates are stimulated to attend courses that are offered outside the VU-GSSS educational program, provided they are at least research master or PhD candidates' level. These may be courses and workshops offered at other VU faculties or at other universities in the Netherlands or abroad, in (inter)national research schools, or in VU Interfaculty Research Institutes. Following external courses may be particularly appropriate when they offer a specialized content that is not covered within the VU-GSSS program, or when they are organized in a more convenient time period. Also, some PhD projects are closely linked to a disciplinary research school outside VU-GSSS, which justifies following (part of) the education program offered there.

VU GSSS aims to facilitate linking PhD candidates to suitable research schools, relevant courses and other scientific researchers, both in national and international contexts. The VU-GSSS also collaborates with major research schools in Amsterdam in order to increase supply of courses and flexibility to design individualized training plans. We have an agreement for exchange of course participation free of charge with ABRI (VU) and AISSR (UVA). This means that PhD candidates enrolled in the VU-GSSS can participate without fee in the AISSR PhD course programme offered at the University of Amsterdam. The actual overview of PhD courses offered by AISSR, and information about how to sign up through an online form, can be found on their website. The same holds for a limited number of courses offered in the ABRI PhD programme (VU Faculty of Economics & BA). Note that participation is only possible if space permits. Usually there is a maximum of 15 participants in a course and internal PhD's get priority over external participants.

Many external institutes offering PhD courses provide participants with a certificate specifying the number of EC's earned once the course requirements are fulfilled. Such a certificate is needed as evidence that a course is completed (see §4.4.1). If credits are not specified for a course, PhD candidates can request VU-GSSS to judge the content of the course to specify whether, and how many, credits can be awarded. Make sure to submit a timely request in order to ascertain whether EC's can be obtained for a course.

5.1 Courses offered by HRM VU University

The following courses offered at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam can be included in a PhD's training plan.

NB: More courses will be available soon at the HRM educational website.

- *PhD Success and Personal Efficacy*
For first-year PhD candidates at Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, Human Resource Management organizes the training PhD success and personal efficacy. In this training, which is taught in English, one will learn how to set their own goals, develop a strategy for realizing them and to communicate them to others. More information about the course can be found on [VUnet](#). A certificate is provided after

completion of the course. A successful completion of this training is counted as 3 EC by VU-GSSS. Participation is free of charge for PhD candidates employed at the VU, but external PhD candidates are usually charged a fee of € 1600,-. External candidates are encouraged to contact Saskia Jans (graduate.school.fsw@vu.nl) who can advice and connect you with the Human Resource Management department.

- Not a course per se but definitely of interest for all PhD's is the Project Management Tool for PhD's. Brigitte Hertz organizes the Project Management training for 1st year PhD's (part of the PhD Induction Programme), but their online tool is available for free. For more information (also in English) see <http://www.klaarinvierjaar.nl/>
- *[The University Teacher Training Program \(UTTP\)](#)*
This course, currently offered within the VU Faculty of Psychology and Education, prepares academic teachers for the University Teaching Qualification (UTQ; or Basiskwalificatie onderwijs, BKO), which is nationally recognized by all Dutch universities. The UTTP has a study load of approximately 150 hours. A certificate is provided after completion of the course. A successful completion of this track is counted for 6 EC's by VU-GSSS. A short track UTTP is available for teachers with a minimum of 5 years of experience in academic teaching. The study load for this short track varies between 50 and 100 hours depending on experience. A successful completion of this track is counted as 3 EC's by VU-GSSS. For participation by teaching staff of Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam only the administrative costs of € 75,- apply. External participants pay € 2.500,- for this course. (But see also our own course on Teaching Practice and Supervision which if successfully completed provides you with a partial UTQ, the Practice part).

5.2 Courses offered at Research Schools within the Netherlands

The following research schools offer PhD courses, and have regular attendance of VU-GSSS PhD's. These courses are accepted for the training plan. Courses of some schools are open for VU-GSSS PhDs without a fee (ABRI, AISSR). For other schools a participation fee is usually required (see Chapter 6 of the Information Document for PhDs and Supervisors for financial support).

Graduate Schools where VU-GSSS has an exchange agreement for (limited) participation without fee:

- University of Amsterdam: Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR; [PhD program current courses](#))
- Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam: Amsterdam Business Research Institute ([ABRI](#))

Other Graduate Schools that may ask a fee:

- Research School for Resource Studies for Development ([CERES](#))

- Kurt Lewin Institute ([KLI](#))
- Netherlands Institute of Government ([NIG](#))
- Netherlands School of Communication Research ([NeSCoR](#))
- Netherlands Research School of Gender Studies ([NOG](#))

5.3 International Summer Schools

The following international summer schools are accepted for the training plan, but note that a participation fee is usually required (see chapter 6 of the Information Document for PhDs and Supervisors for financial support).

- [Essex Summer School](#) (Social Science Data Analysis)
- [ECPR Summer School/Winter school](#), Ljubljana (Methods and Techniques)
- [Oslo Summer School](#) (Comparative Social Studies)
- [ICPSR Summer Program](#), Michigan (Quantitative Methods of Social Research)
- [Summer School in Comparative Urban Studies](#), London
- [VU Amsterdam Summer School](#)
- [Berlin Summer School in Social Sciences](#)
- [GESIS Summer School in Survey Methodology](#), Cologne
- [Artisa Dissertation Week](#), Greece (Dissertation Writing Week & individual coaching)
- [VU Amsterdam Summerschool](#) offers three blocks of 2 weeks topical and methodological courses between 8 July and 19 August 2017, some of which are at PhD level.

5.4 VU Research Data Services

Finding, managing and archiving research data is a fast-developing field which requires specific knowledge. The *Research Data Services* (RDS) team of the VU supports researchers and students during the entire data lifecycle, from the initial research plan up to the archiving of results.

RDS offers VU researchers and students, free of charge:

- Support in searching in and downloading from secondary datasets, for both proprietary databases and open data.
- Advice on writing data management plans
- Advice on selecting, collecting, structuring and using data
- Advice on drawing up faculty guidelines and procedures for research data management
- Guidelines on personal data protection
- Support in finding the right partner for customised projects

Feel free to contact the Research Data Services team at: researchdataservices.ub@vu.nl.

Available data sources

Through the university library, you have access to a number of proprietary databases, mostly for company, financial, or economic data. Below we list the most important ones.

Company data

We have several data sources that collect information on companies, such as their size (in terms of employees or assets), performance (revenue, profitability, etc), production (industry or product groups), or organization (governance structure, ownership).

- The Worldscope component in **Datastream** has information from annual reports on some 80.000 companies internationally, going back to around 1980. The ASSET4 component has information on environmental, social, and governance indicators.
- **Amadeus** provides extensive information on 300.000 European large European companies, and basic information for millions of small & medium companies. It includes data on ownership and governance structures.
- **SDC Platinum** and **Zephyr** provide data on mergers and acquisitions, and on initial public offerings.
- **Compustat** has annual report data, going back to 1950 for the US and Canada, or approximately 1987 for other countries. The Execucomp component has extensive data on executive salaries and compensation.

Financial markets

The databases below provide data on financial markets for company stocks and bonds, derivatives, currency, or commodities.

- **CRSP** has information on stocks, indices, and mutual funds going back to 1925. It links to the Compustat data where possible.
- The **NYSE**, **FOREX**, and **Thomson tick history** databases have high-frequency (intra-day) data for different topics.
- **SDC** and **Datastream** —already mentioned above— also provide financial market data.

Economic and socio-economic data

In addition to the proprietary data bases listed above there are many sources for data on inflation, trade, GDP, or unemployment, many of which are freely available.

- **Statistics Netherlands (CBS)** provides many aggregated statistics with a focus, obviously, on the Netherlands.
- **FRED** collects and provides US and international time series from many sources. FRED has data on banking, finance, employment, price indices, and also provides data sets from several influential academic publications. There are useful plugins for Excel and for Stata that allow you to import data directly.
- **International organizations** such as the IMF, OECD, or Eurostat are important sources of data. Often, NGOs also make data available.

Example uses for the social sciences

Below are some examples of how you might use these data. Even if these data are not your main interest, they might provide you with control variables to exclude alternative explanations.

- Information on the ownership structure of firms can be used to identify **networks of firms** or international power structures, see for example [De Graaff \(2013\)](#). The Amadeus data base can provide this type of data.
- Work on **executive compensation** features in economic sociology and political science; see for example [Diprete et al. \(2010\)](#). The Execucomp data base has data for executive compensation.
- **Social determinants** of stock market trades is a central theme in behavioral finance and the sociology of finance. Empirical research in this field often uses data from the Compustat and CRSP databases. See for example [Choi & Sias \(2009\)](#).
- Official statistics from national or international agencies have numerous applications in political economy, public policy, or economic sociology, especially in international or institutional settings. Often, the official statistics are combined with other data. Recent examples include [Rose \(2016\)](#) and [Jacobs & Dirlam \(2016\)](#).