



FREIE UNIVERSITÄT BOZEN
LIBERA UNIVERSITÀ DI BOLZANO
FREE UNIVERSITY OF BOZEN - BOLZANO

Fakultät für
Wirtschaftswissenschaften

Facoltà di
Economia

School of
Economics and Management

Social Science Research Methods Course Description

TEACHING LANGUAGE: English

SEMESTER: Summer session, academic year 2010-2011

TOTAL LECTURE: 15 (+ 5 office hours)

CREDIT POINTS: 2,5

SCIENTIFIC FIELD: SECS-S/05

LECTURER: Prof. Dr. Stanley R Thompson

PREREQUISITE:

COURSE DESCRIPTION: *[Precise enough to allow comparison with courses of other universities]*

Course Outline:

I. Foundations of Effective Scientific Research

- A. What is good research?
- B. Guidelines for conducting scientific research
- C. problem statement, objectives, hypothesis formulation, collecting data, analytical methods, interpreting results, and inferential conclusions

II. Model specification, data collection and analysis (Excel-based examples)

- A. Sampling, surveys, interviews, etc.
- B. Experimental versus observational data (correlation *vs.* causality).
- C. Stochastic models of analysis, namely regression.
- D. Non-parametric data analysis, namely Chi-Square tests.

III. Guidelines for communication research results. Even the best research is useless unless results are communicated effectively

- A. Requirements for effective communication.
- B. A checklist for preparing a research report.



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LIST OF TOPICS COVERED:

EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES: *[reflecting the knowledge and skills the students are expected to acquire, intended audience, etc.]*

While the overall focus is on quantitative methods of data analysis, objectives 1 and 2 below provide the essential framework for understanding the power and contribution of effective empirical research. The course emphasizes the interface between research methodology and quantitative methods:

- 1. To develop a coherent viewpoint about the purpose of research, appropriate approaches and methods for performing research, and the criteria by which research procedures and results are evaluated.*
- 2. To become familiar with applied social science research procedures: problem identification, development of research hypotheses, model specification, data collection and analysis, statistical inference, and communication of results.*
- 3. To obtain an understanding of sampling and survey design, data types (nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio), and a working knowledge of basic parametric and non-parametric data analysis techniques. For instance, what are the appropriate methods to assess Likert scale (Chi-square) and ratio (t-tests) data? A focus will be on regression analysis, arguably the most widely used method for analyzing business and economic data. A liberal use of real world examples will illustrate each concept.*

TEACHING FORMAT:

ASSESSMENT:

REQUIRED READINGS: *[No textbook required.]*

The course will be based on lecture notes and class handouts within an interactive-student engaged classroom learning environment.

SUPPLEMENTARY READINGS: *[None]*