



ERASMUS UNIVERSITY ROTTERDAM

Faculty of History and Arts

International Bachelor in Communication and Media

Course Guide

Research workshop 1:

Cross-National Comparative Research

CM1011

Academic Year 2009/2010, Term 4

Lecturers:

Prof. Dr. Jeroen Jansz (coordinator)

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Dr. Isabel Awad

Christine Lohmeier, MSc

Patrick McCurdy, PhD

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1. COURSE DETAILS

Course title	Research workshop 1: Cross-National Comparative Research
Course identifier	CM 1011
Contact person	Prof. Dr. Jeroen Jansz Room L2-33 / jansz@fhk.eur.nl / 408 2453
Lecturers	Payal Arora, PhD Dr. Isabel Awad Christine Lohmeier, MSc Patrick McCurdy, PhD Joyce Neys, MSc
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Period	2009/2010, Term 4
ECTS	5
Structure	Weekly 3 hour tutorial/workgroup, no lectures
Assessment	Individual assignments and team assignments on a week to week basis. A final (team)paper to complete the course. No exam.
Compulsory readings	1) Book sections and articles from online resources (<i>Repub</i> and digital library). 2) extra academic and other relevant sources to be found by participants themselves as part of the literature research assignments.

WORKLOAD

This is a 5 ECTS course. According to the norms of European Credit Transfer System, this course thus involves a $5 \times 28 = 140$ hours workload for students. The course runs for 10 weeks (8 weeks containing tutorials and 2 weeks for assessment). Hence, you are expected to spend on average 14 hours per week on this course.

Task		Hours
Participating in tutorials	8 meetings x 3 hrs	24
Assigned Readings	50 pages (± 5 pages per hour)	10
Readings in literature reviews	250 pages	50
Individual assignments (2 small + 1 large)	$(2 \times 3) + 8$	14
Team presentations (2)	2 x 4	08
Team literature review (1) Team reports (2)	12 6 + 6	24
Final paper (team)		10
Total		140

TIME SCHEDULE

For the location of tutorial meetings (and other possible updates), please subscribe to SIN-Online and check the information.

The EUR is closed on Friday 30 April (Queen's holiday). This has consequences for the schedule of tutorial E. The EUR is also closed on Thursday 13 June (Ascension Day) (Consequences for A B C D F). *Note:* Tutorial E has a class on Friday 14 June.

Thursday				
09:00-11:45	T3-40	CM1011-09/A	Workgroup A	Jansz
09:00-11:45	T3-13	CM1011-09/B	Workgroup B	Arora
09:00-11:45	H4-10	CM1011-09/C	Workgroup C	McCurdy
12:00-14:45	L1-102	CM1011-09/D	Workgroup D	Neys
12:00-14:45	H4-10	CM1011-09/F	Workgroup F	Awad
Friday				
09:00-11:45	T3-34	CM1011-09/E	Workgroup E	Lohmeier

2. COURSE OVERVIEW

Wk	Phase			Topic	In class	Assignment	Hand in
1	Instruction	1	Individual	Introduction	Interactive classroom: What is comparative research? What would you like to study? Aim: Building a bridge to previous courses (topics, concepts)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read Course Guide 2. Read May (1993) 3. IA-1: Select of topic of study and embed this using May and material from earlier courses. 	Begin class
2		2	Ind	Methods	Discuss method. Link to ISSR course (design issues)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IA-2: Read assigned methods papers/texts 2. Identify two problems in comp research and propose solution 	Begin class
3	Design	1	Ind	Research question	Discuss RQ and outline of design. Create (mixed) teams	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. IA-3: formulate RQ + brief outline of design of study (what, how) 2. find three articles about topic 3. prepare oral presentation 	1 day before tutorial (lecturer can read in advance)
4		2	Team	RQ	Discuss RQ and details of design. Identify problems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TA-1 teams present 2. hand in Ppt/notes 	Begin class
5	Execution	1	Team	Literature	Teams present report on literature. Exchange insights from literature.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TA-2 write report covering 6 scientific sources and 4-6 other sources 2. prepare presentation 	Begin class
6		2	Team	Data	What data do we need? Their value?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TA-3 gather a set of relevant data (on the Internet) 2. report about the data 	Begin class
7	Reporting	1	Team	Fine tuning	Identified problems and solutions are discussed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TA-4 progress report (includes revision of RQ and detailing design) 2. identification of problems by each team + proposed solutions 	1 day before tutorial (lecturer can read in advance)
8		2	Team	Presenting	Oral presentation of research proposals Guided discussion of proposals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. TA-5 prepare presentation 2. hand in Ppt/notes 	Begin class
9			Team	Submit	Final research proposal	TA-6	18 – 6, 12h

3. COURSE ORIENTATION

The research workshop Cross-National Comparative Research (CnCR) introduces you to the main principles and methods of cross-national comparative research in communication and media, while it also offers advanced training in writing a comprehensive literature review on a research topic of your own choosing. In addition, you will produce a comparative research proposal and do exploratory data gathering.

In other words, this workshop is about preparing comparative empirical research. In the ISSR course you have learnt that empirical research unfolds as a process in different phases: research question (RQ), literature research, operationalization of concepts, data gathering, data analysis and reporting your results (see the ISSR textbook (Babbie, 2008) Chapter 4, pgs. 96-125). In this workshop the focus is on the first part of the research process: from formulating a research question to (exploratory) data gathering.

The position in the IBCoM program

The CnCR workshop is scheduled at the end of BA-1. Comparative research in the workshop continues issues covered in CM1006 (Communication in International Comparative Perspective) and CM1008 (Media Systems). The workshop is meant as a practical sequel to these theoretical courses. In CM1006 and CM1008 (as well as in some previous courses) you studied many concepts with respect to media in a diverse, globalized world (a few examples: globalization, localization, glocalization, media imperialism, media flow, media classification and, of course, media comparison). In the workshop you are supposed to re-use your theoretical knowledge translating a few important concepts practically. You will complete the workshop by submitting a Research Proposal for a comparative media and/or communication study.

Your research proposal will be developed stepwise. After an instruction meeting you will formulate a research question. The RQ will guide the literature review. Next, you will propose a design for the study, and also take your first steps in executing comparative research by gathering a set of comparative data. The final phase is revising the earlier elements (RQ, literature, design) in writing up the final version of your research proposal.

The subject matter of the workshop

Now, at the end of the first year of the IBCoM program (BA-1) you have completed a range of theoretical courses that can be subsumed under IBCoM's Focus Areas. Your courses were for example concerned with the Focus Areas *International and Global Communication* and

Communication and Politics. Other courses addressed issues in *Media and Entertainment* and *New Media Technologies*.

As the focus areas as such are rather wide in scope, we propose a further limitation on the topics of research in the workshop. The following list provides examples of specified topics that could be addressed in this workshop. You can either choose a topic offered here, or propose another specific topic.

1. Public concerns about the effects entertainment media (examples: violent games; (online) game addiction; music videos and eating disorders).
2. Public concerns about the effects of social media (examples: Internet addiction; SNS and privacy issues).
3. National (or any other kind of local) differences in the critical appraisal of entertainment media content. This could include differences and communalities in popularity of particular formats or titles (examples: Idols across the world; global success of Oprah Winfrey; Big Brother; Lord of the Rings; soaps/telenovelas; from gypsy street bands to Balkan Beats).
4. Controversies (from critical discussions to scandals) in national/local contexts about particular media entertainment content (examples: Borat, Slumdog Millionaire, Jarhead).
5. National (or any other kind of local) differences in media coverage of (distant) disasters (examples: the Christmas tsunami in Asia; hurricane Katrina; terrorist attacks).
6. National (or any other kind of local) differences in media coverage of politics or (distant) political events (examples: scandals in the press; the Obama campaign; citizen protest in Iran; Geert Wilders and the Fitna movie).
7. National differences in the funding of public service broadcast media (direct government funding, license fee, advertising revenue, mixed model etc.).
8. National differences in the regulation of domestically produced media content (television, radio, music or film).
9. A media corporation's glocal strategies and/or their effects in different local contexts.
10. An advertising campaign's glocal strategies and/or their effects in different local contexts.
11. Professional practices and/or organizational structures in different local contexts (i.e., journalism in two different countries).
12. Differences between countries in content of private and public media groups (censorship, children's programming, advertising etc)

You may also profit from checking the activities of a few large scale cross-national comparative media projects and how they organize their research. Here are three examples:

EU Kids Online (about threats and opportunities of the Internet for children; across Europe). <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/EUKidsOnline/>

Worlds of Journalism (a collaboration of journalism researchers on a world scale). <http://www.worldsofjournalisms.org/>

Rings around the world. Research among different national audiences of *Lord of the Rings*. http://www.participations.org/volume%203/issue%202%20-%20special/3_02_eganbarker.htm

The four phases

The workshop unfolds in a step by step fashion. Students will work individually in the first three weeks. From week 4 onwards, teams (3 students) will work on the assignments.

1. Instruction (week 1-2)

In the first phase (including Introduction and Methods), the class will discuss in detail comparative methodologies. The discussion is based on close reading of papers and chapters about comparative media and communication research, including texts taking a critical perspective.

2. Design (week 3-4)

Now a research question will be developed. First, individually. This is based on a small literature review. Next, the teams will formulate a RQ and propose a design. In week 4 all teams present their RQ and design.

3. Execution (week 5-6)

The teams are supposed to conduct a substantial review of previous theories and research about their topic of interest. This implies that teams must cover theories about the topic they study, as well as the results of comparative research about that topic. For example, if a team aims to study local reactions to music videos they must include theories about media effects, and theories about gender representation in media in their literature review.

Comparative studies may not be readily available. In that case teams must creatively translate what was found with respect to a similar phenomenon to the topic under investigation. It is also helpful when comparative studies are lacking to incorporate (national) studies on how an audience in a particular country appreciated this kind of media content.

Additionally, it is also necessary to include ‘other sources’ in the literature research. For example, IMDb figures about local success of Hollywood movies, attendance figures of TV shows, information about the local political system, sales figures of games, etc.

In week 5 the teams will complete a report covering the results of their literature review. They will also report about their findings and insights in class.

In week 6 the workshop turns even more practical: the teams will actually gather a set of data. This practical exercise confronts students with the hassles of empirical research. The teams will profit from IBCoM’s multicultural population. Given the diversity amongst students each team will be able to gather a set of data from very different (national) contexts. It is fortunate that you can share your specific (language/cultural) expertise in the mixed research teams and in the multicultural class. The source of data is of course dependent on the RQ, but in general it may be wise to concentrate on data sources that are available online.

4. Reporting (week 7-9)

In week 7, the teams will compose a progress report. They will also prepare a short presentation about the problems they ran into and the solutions found. The last meeting in the course (week 8) is dedicated to presenting the Research Proposals in class. Comments will be invited. Class discussion will also be used as critical input for the final version of the research proposal (to be submitted in week 9).

4. COURSE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

CONTENT

This research workshop introduces students to the main principles and methods of cross-national comparative research in communication and media, while it also offers them advanced training in writing a comprehensive literature review on a research topic of their own choosing. In addition, students will be required to write a comparative research proposal which is grounded in their review of the literature. Special attention will be paid to the development of a relevant comparative research problem, a coherent set of research questions and an appropriate comparative research design.

AIMS

Students have knowledge and understanding of:

- The main principles and methods of cross-national comparative research in the field of media and communication and related social sciences;

- The principles, possibilities and limitations of literature reviews.

Students have the ability to and/or an awareness of:

- Conduct a systematic analysis and critical evaluation of the secondary literature on selected issues or topics in the field of communication and media;
- Write a clear literature review, presenting the state of knowledge regarding their chosen research topic;
- Write a basic comparative research proposal informed by their review of the literature;
- The role and importance of contextual and cultural variables in communication and media research

5. COURSE ELEMENTS

Tutorials

In the IBCoM program, the tutorial is the principal didactic tool to engage you in deep processing of the course material. Therefore, you are expected to be present and actively participate in all tutorial sessions. This requires a thorough preparation of the reading materials at home. In this workshop, the weekly tutorial meetings also function as a platform to report on your progress as well as to exchange experiences with your classmates. This also requires a thorough preparation of your practical (team)work before coming to class.

The practical aspects of the Research Workshop incorporate and expand on issues dealt with in previous courses. In particular, Introduction to Social Science Research (ISSR) and Communication Workshop 1: Information and Communication Skills (Skills). We now discuss the practical elements in more detail.

Research Question and Design

In ISSR you learnt about the importance of a clear research question (RQ). You also studied the crucial role of a research design for empirical investigation. RQ and Research Design guide your research. They function as instruments to focus your work, i.e., limiting the topic you study and the ways in which you approach that topic.

Literature Review

The Skills course provided basic instructions in searching and finding scientific publications. The Skills course included the booklet *How To Build a Search Strategy* by Boet-Foley and Jongbloed of the EUR library staff. It gives a practical overview of searching [we republish it on the Blackboard site of this workshop].

Now, you are supposed to use what you learnt in the Skills course and expand your procedural and practical knowledge by executing a serious piece of literature research. You will report the results in a literature review. We will present a brief step by step summary of doing literature research.

1. The literature research is guided by your RQ.
2. Literature research requires that you translate your RQ into 5-10 key terms (e.g., media, entertainment, terrorism, gender differences, media effect, comparative, the name of a country, a media title, etc).
3. The key terms must be chosen in such a way that they address both earlier theorizing on the topic you plan to study and previous comparative research. Note: not all topics have been studied comparatively, so you need creativity to translate what was found in one local context into a comparative research design.
4. The scientific literature is available in electronic databases. There are several ways to gain access to these databases.
 - a. *Google Scholar* could be used as a first entry. But its coverage is limited in our field of media and communication research. A second problem is that Google Scholar results in too many sources that are not properly academic. Additionally, Google Scholar does not always give you access to free downloads of the pdfs of the publications.
 - b. Our University Library offers you privileged access to the most relevant databases for media and communication. These can first be accessed through the new search engine *sEURch*. Please note, that *sEURch* produces rather general results as the engine is not targeted specifically at media and communication.
 - c. A second, more specific step is necessary: searching in the dedicated databases for media and communication (see button Reference Library / Databases /Alphabetical list).
 - i. Start with CMMC, *Communication Mass Media Complete*.
 - ii. If your results are not satisfactory, use *Communication Abstracts*.
 - iii. If your RQ is about media effects, or psychological processes in media use and reception, searching *psychINFO* is a good additional choice as it includes many communication journals and media psychological publications.
5. Titles provide of course an entry into what is covered in the publication. Next, the Abstract informs you in more detail. A quick scan of the complete article often is helpful to come to a final decision about including the article in your review or not.

6. Once you identified the articles you will discuss in your review, it is necessary to organize your references. Erasmus University Library offers you free access to the reference management system *Refworks*, see:
http://www.eur.nl/ub/english/services/information_literacy/refworks/
7. Now you have the publications you selected on your screen or on your desk. You are ready to start reading the works in detail and develop a review reporting what you found.

Blackboard

We will use the Blackboard online learning environment to communicate additional information before and during the course, including:

- Teaching materials (such as slides and hand-outs) will be posted onto Blackboard.
- Administrative information about this module (assignments, readings, changes and additions) will be communicated via Blackboard.
- Additional information relevant to the course, such as links to online resources will be made available via Blackboard.
- Assignments should be uploaded digitally on Safe Assignments through Blackboard (as well as handed in on paper at the beginning of the tutorial meeting).
- The *Group Pages* (under the button COMMUNICATION) provide the link to each tutorial-group.

6. ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

General

- It is compulsory to attend all tutorial meetings, to arrive on time, and to participate actively in the discussions. This obligation includes the preparation and timely submission of all assignments (individual work and group work).
- Part of the work in this workshop is done in small teams of 3 members. Each member is supposed to contribute actively to the teamwork and is responsible for the team's products.

Rules about absence

- If you are unable to attend a tutorial meeting, you must inform the lecturer of your tutorial in advance by email.
- Absence is only allowed for legitimate reasons. Judgments about the validity of the reason for your absence are the prerogative of the lecturer.

- If you have missed two tutorials for valid reasons, the lecturer will ask you to produce an extra assignment which is to be submitted at the beginning of the following tutorial.
- Missing three tutorial meetings will result in exclusion from the course.
- Overall, you should immediately contact your lecturer if there are any circumstances that might seriously affect your work.

Elements of assessment

During the workshop, your individual, active participation in class is assessed. You are also required to complete three individual assignments (IA). Team assignments are diverse: a presentation, a literature review, a data report, and a progress report. The final team paper concludes the course.

Active Participation (individual)

Students in this workshop are obliged to participate actively in class. This implies a good preparation and the active sharing of well argued views, ideas, experiences and knowledge in class. At the end of the course the level of participation will be graded by the lecturer.

Individual Assignments (IA)

You must complete three individual assignments for this course. The first and second one are small, the third one is large. The assignments want you to start working on products that you will also produce with your team later on. We planned the individual assignments early in the course to be able to diagnose immediately problems with fulfilling the assignments.

Formal requirements for individual assignments

- Length: 800 words for the small IA, 1200 words for the large IA (apart from references and footnotes).
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Include page numbers
- Margins: Top and bottom: 2,5 cm. Left and right: 3 cm.
- Font: 12 in Times New Roman or similar (e.g., 11 in Arial)
- Keep it simple: no cover, no graphic illustration, no plastic folders, etc.
- State in a first line / header line:
 - name
 - student number
 - course code > CM1011
 - your tutorial (A-F) + name lecturer

- word count
- Make sure you save some time to revise your assignment before submission: Check the spelling, the structure, the use of references, the reference list, etc.
- Submit a file of your work to Safe Assignment on Blackboard before the tutorial. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Hand in a paper copy of the assignment at the beginning of the tutorial.

Team Assignments (TA)

TA-1 and TA-5: presentation

The presentations are meant to inform the other teams about what you plan to study and how you will execute your research. Make sure you engage the rest of the class in a discussion at the end of your presentation. Exchanging questions and insights about each other's work is obviously beneficial to all teams.

Formal requirements for presentations:

- Length: The presentation should last max 10 minutes. The group should then trigger and moderate a discussion.
- Supporting material: Students are welcome to use handouts, Powerpoint slides, and/or other supporting material. If you plan to use ppt, make sure you save your presentation in Windows .ppt format and not in Windows Vista .pptx format as EUR laptops and computers often have difficulties opening the Vista format.
- A paper copy of the supporting materials (handouts; ppt slides) is due before the start of the presentation.

TA-2: literature report

Each team produces a report covering the results of their literature research.

Formal requirements for the literature report

- Length: 1600 words (apart from references and footnotes).
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Include page numbers
- Margins: Top and bottom: 2,5 cm. Left and right: 3 cm.
- Font: 12 in Times New Roman or similar (e.g., 11 in Arial)

- Keep it simple: no cover, no graphic illustration, no plastic folders, etc.
- State in a first line / header line:
 - team number
 - names of all team members + student numbers
 - course code > CM1011
 - your tutorial (A-F) + name lecturer
 - word count
- Make sure you save some time to revise your assignment before submission: Check the spelling, the structure, the use of references, the reference list, etc.
- Submit a file of your work to Safe Assignment on Blackboard before the tutorial. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Hand in a paper copy of the report at the beginning of the tutorial.

TA-3: Data report

TA-4: Progress report

The two reports (to be handed in in subsequent weeks) are meant to communicate the team's activities.

Formal requirements for the team's data report and progress report

- Length: 800 words (apart from references and footnotes).
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Include page numbers
- Margins: Top and bottom: 2,5 cm. Left and right: 3 cm.
- Font: 12 in Times New Roman or similar (e.g., 11 in Arial)
- Keep it simple: no cover, no graphic illustration, no plastic folders, etc.
- State in a first line / header line:
 - team number
 - names of all team members + student numbers
 - course code > CM1011
 - your tutorial (A-F) + name lecturer
 - word count
- Make sure you save some time to revise your assignment before submission: Check the spelling, the structure, the use of references, the reference list, etc.
- Submit a file of your work to Safe Assignment on Blackboard before the tutorial. Late assignments will not be accepted.
- Hand in a paper copy of the report at the beginning of the tutorial.

TA-6: Research Proposal

The workshop is completed by writing a research proposal. This final paper incorporates elements you worked on earlier in the workshop (RQ, design, literature review).

Formal requirements for the Research Proposal

- Length: 2400 words (apart from references and footnotes).
- Line spacing: 1.5
- Include page numbers
- Margins: Top and bottom: 2,5 cm. Left and right: 3 cm.
- Font: 12 in Times New Roman or similar (e.g., 11 in Arial)
- Present a neat report
- State on the title page:
 - team number
 - names of all team members + student numbers
 - course code > CM1011
 - your tutorial (A-F) + name lecturer
 - word count
- Make sure you save some time to revise your final paper before submission: Check the spelling, the structure, the use of references, the reference list, etc.
- Submit a file of the final paper to Safe Assignment on Blackboard before the deadline. Late assignments will not be accepted.

Assessment criteria

Individual Assignments are graded individually. The teamwork produced for Team Assignments are graded collectively: team members receive the same grade. The lecturer can deviate from collective grading if this is necessary.

The course is graded on a scale from 0 points (theoretical minimum) to 100 points (theoretical maximum). The table below shows the relative weight of the assignments during the course and the final paper at the end of the course. The final grade is 10 percent of the points obtained. So, 79 points results in a grade of 7.9.

A final grade below 5.5 means that the student fails the course. An individual resit of the workshop is necessary. The resit amounts to writing an individual research proposal about a new topic. Students who fail the resit must take the course once more in 2010-2011. A final grade of 5.5 or higher means passing the course. 7.0+ is satisfactory; 8.0+ is good; 9.0+ is excellent.

There is no resit for insufficient individual or team assignments during the course.

Overview of the different elements

Individual assignments	points	Team assignment	points
IA-1 Introduction	5	TA-1&5: Presentation (2*5)	10
IA-2 Method	5	TA-2: Literature review	10
IA-3 RQ	10	TA-3: Data report	5
Participation	10	TA-4: Progress report	5
		TA-6: Research Proposal (Final paper)	40
	30		70

Criteria

The following criteria are used for grading the assignments and the lecture.

1. Literature: appropriate discussion of what previous publications about theory, methods and research results have to offer.
2. Analysis: concerns the critical interpretation of the available material (literature, other sources) as well as the critical interpretation of one's own (research) activities.
3. Reasoning: proper construction of the argument (sentences, sections, chapters).
4. Neatness: spelling, grammar, writing style, lay out, and references.

The following weights are given to the criteria:

Assignment	Max	Literature	Analysis	Reasoning	Neatness
IA-1 & 2	5	1	2	1	1
IA-3	10	2	4	3	1
TA-1 & 5	5	1	2	1	1
TA-2	10	4	3	2	1
TA-3	5	-	1	3	1
TA-4	5	1	2	1	1
TA-6	40	20	10	5	5

Plagiarism

All assignments must refer carefully to the sources used. Copying the ideas and results of other authors (either word for word, or as a paraphrase) without explicit reference to the source is

considered plagiarism. Please note that attribution of sources is also necessary in oral presentations and Powerpoint (or other kinds) of slides and posters.

Individual assignments are individual products. It is not allowed to use work from other students. It is permitted, though, to discuss each other's work. Team assignments are a product of collaboration in a team. It is not allowed to use work from other groups. Note that all members of a group are responsible for all elements in a group project.

The submission of electronic versions of the assignments in Blackboard's Safe Assignment is necessary to facilitate (automatic) checks on plagiarism.

Plagiarism is reported to the *Examination Board*, which may decide to expel a student from this course, or from the curriculum. It is your responsibility to familiarise yourself thoroughly with the faculty's policy on unfair practices, fraud and plagiarism.

More information on this policy can be found at

http://www.fhk.eur.nl/english/ibcom/student_information_2009_2010/oer/plagiarism/

7. Course outline and week-by-week description

The following week-by-week description is a guide for you to keep track of the preparation needed for each session and of the different deadlines and assignments. This description does not include all in-class activities and tutorial discussions.

Week 1 (April 15-16): Instruction 1: Introduction

Preparation (readings)

May (1993) is available in *RePub*. The link is: <http://lcms.eur.nl/fhkw/docent> You log in with your ERNA account. Once there you search for the tag ‘Jansz’ and you will find the material.

- Read the *Course Guide* carefully and prepare questions to rise in class.
- The chapter ‘Comparative research: potential and problems’ from May, T. (1993). *Social research. Issues, Methods and Process*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Individual Assignment 1 (small)

Cross-national comparative research was already addressed in previous courses. May (1993) gives a brief overview of comparative research in the social sciences. Now it is time to translate the knowledge you acquired creatively to a new project. You can choose any topic with respect to media and communication you like. Describe briefly a topic that you would like to investigate comparatively. Explain why you have chosen this topic. Connect your arguments to May’s chapter and to concepts and theories from previous (comparative and/or international) courses. Hand in: begin of class (print and Safe Assignment)

Tutorial

The meeting has different parts.

1. The lecturer will present a general outline of the workshop.
2. An interactive session will be devoted to disentangling what comparative research is about.
3. We will use your IA-1 to discuss your ideas on or preferences for topics to investigate.
4. Practical issues with respect to conducting online literature research.

Week 2 (April 22-23): Instruction 2: Methods

Preparation (readings)

May (1993) and Hepp & Couldry (2009) are available in *RePub*. The link is:

<http://lcms.eur.nl/fhkw/docent> You log in with your ERNA account. Once there you search for the tag 'Jansz' and you will find the material.

- The chapter 'Comparative research: potential and problems' from May, T. (1993). *Social research. Issues, Methods and Process*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Hepp, A. & Couldry, N. (2009). What should comparative media research be comparing? Towards a transcultural approach to 'media cultures'. In D.K. Thussu (Ed.), *Internationalizing media studies* (pp. 32-47). New York: Routledge.
- Livingstone, S. (2003). On the challenges of cross-national comparative media research. *European Journal of Communication*, 18(4), 477-500.

Individual Assignment 2 (small)

Explain in a few sentences what we mean by comparative media research (May, Livingstone).

Use the chapters by May and Hepp & Couldry to identify two problems in comparative media research. Describe briefly how you would solve these problems in your own research.

Hand in: begin of class (print and Safe Assignment).

Tutorial

We will list the problems and discuss the most important ones and their solutions systematically.

We will also address comparative methods one could use.

Week 3 (Apr 29; May 7): Design 1: Research Question

Preparation (readings)

- The three academic sources (articles, chapters) you found about the topic you plan to investigate.

Individual Assignment 3 (large)

Choose a topic for comparative media research. Formulate a research question that will guide your investigation. Explain briefly the design of your investigation. Find three academic sources (articles, chapters) about the topic you plan to investigate. Write a short memo presenting the theoretical background of your study, your RQ and the design.

Hand in: Wednesday 28 April, 12.00h; Thursday 6 May, 12.00h (print and Safe Assignment).
Be prepared to present and explain your work in class.

Tutorial

1. share and discuss each other's projects.
2. in-class exercise(s) to improve RQ and design.
3. composition of the mixed research teams.

Week 4 (May 6; May 14): Design 2: Research Question

Preparation (readings)

- The six academic sources (articles, chapters) you found about the topic you plan to investigate.

Team Assignment 1: Presentation

This meeting each team will present its RQ and research design. Both are of course supposed to be embedded in a theoretical frame. RQ and design also need to take previous research into account. It is therefore necessary to dedicate substantial time to your literature research when you prepare your presentation on RQ and design. Refer briefly to theory and previous research in the presentation. Discussing the results of your literature research in detail is not yet necessary. Preparing a report about your literature research is next week's assignment.

Tutorial

1. each team presents its RQ and design.
2. in an interactive session, the class will draw general conclusions from what was presented.
3. we will discuss each team's progress with respect to the literature search.

Week 5 (May 20; May 21): Execution 1: Literature research

Preparation (readings)

- The six academic sources (articles, chapters) you found about the topic you plan to investigate.
- The 4-6 'other sources' providing (background) information about your topic.

Team Assignment 2: literature report

1. each team writes a report covering the academic and ‘other sources’.
2. all team members prepare themselves to be able to present and discuss the team report’s contents in class (no formal presentation required).

Hand in: Wednesday 19 May, 12.00h; Thursday 20 May, 12.00h.

Tutorial

1. This week’s tutorial is dedicated to a discussion about the (theoretical) substance of the topics investigated by the teams.
2. Additionally, we will ascertain in an interactive session what teams can learn from each other with respect to theory, as well as practical aspects of comparative literature research.
3. A (practical) discussion of next week’s assignment about gathering data.

Week 6 (May 27; May 28): Execution 2: Gathering data

Preparation (readings)

- none

Team Assignment 3: A data report

1. each team identifies relevant data (-sources) for answering their RQ.
2. each team gathers a set of these comparative data.
3. the data-sources are given and briefly described in the data report.
4. the report also describes how the data will be analyzed.
5. each team member is prepared to present the contents of the report in class.

Hand in: begin of class.

Tutorial

Teams present their data. Why did they choose this set and where did they find it? Problems in gathering comparative data are discussed. Solutions will be developed interactively.

Week 7 (June 3; June 4): Reporting 1: Fine tuning RQ and design

Preparation (readings)

- none

Team Assignment 4: Progress report

In the past weeks you have heard other teams reporting on their work. You also experienced what gathering comparative data amounts to. We identified thorny issues in class and talked about possible solutions for problems identified. Now, it is time to use this varied input for fine tuning your RQ and design. We want each team to write a progress report covering problems and solutions as well as the revision of the RQ and design.

Hand in: Wednesday 2 June, 12.00h; Thursday 3 June, 12.00h

Tutorial

All teams will report on their progress. General problems will be identified. Solutions will be proposed and discussed critically in an interactive session.

Week 8 (June 10; June 11): Reporting 2: Research Proposals

Preparation (readings)

- none

Team Assignment 5: Presenting the research proposal

1. each team presents its Research Proposal.
2. each team presents 1 issue to discuss in class that is drawn from their own Research Proposal.

Hand in: notes/Ppt slides at begin of class.

Tutorial

1. presentations and discussions.
2. discussion of final steps to be taken in writing the Research Proposal (final paper)
3. oral evaluation in class and the FHKW formal evaluation in print.

WEEK 9: DEADLINE FOR RESEARCH PROPOSAL FRIDAY 18 JUNE, 12.00H.

WEEK 10: GRADING OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL AND CALCULATION OF FINAL GRADE

INDIVIDUAL RESIT: DEADLINE FOR INDIVIDUAL RESEARCH PROPOSALS 9 JULY 2010