

NASP - Network for the Advancement in Social and Political Studies
PhD PROGRAMME in Sociology and Methodology of Social Research (SOMET)

Academic Year 2018-2019

PROJECT COLLOQUIUM
(20h- 3 cfu)

Instructors

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Objectives

The Project Colloquium is a seminar designed to help PhD students define and improve their thesis proposals.

Program

During the first year, students are offered repeated opportunities to discuss their thesis proposals with the Project Colloquium instructors and the other students from the same cohort. These preliminary meetings will help them better circumscribe their projects, both theoretically and methodologically.

At the end of the first year, students submit a proposal including a statement of the research topic and its sociological relevance; definition of the central research question and a (limited) set of sub-questions; a brief review of the relevant literature, from which broader theoretical expectations or more specific research hypotheses can be drawn (“theoretically-guided empirical research”); description of the proposed research methodology; a selected bibliography. The proposal should not exceed 3.500 words (plus references).

Students will present their proposal orally, around two weeks after submission. They will have up to 15 minutes for their presentations. Besides the instructors of the Project Colloquium, the thesis supervisors and other members of the Faculty will also attend the presentations, ask questions and offer critical advice. The other students, in particular, are expected not only to encourage, but also to engage critically with their colleagues.

At a further stage, students are required to submit an extended version of the proposal, after

taking into account the indications provided by the faculty members and emerged from group discussions. Even more importantly, the extended/revised version of the project will incorporate new information and knowledge emerging from the first field and research experiences which PhD students will have started conducting. In addition to the PhD supervisor, a small advisory committee of experts will provide new feedback on the revised thesis proposals.

Requirements and examination information

Submission of the thesis project; oral presentation; participation in group discussion.

Reference materials

Bourdieu, Pierre and Loïc Wacquant (1992). “The Paris Workshop”, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Cambridge: Polity Press, pp. 218-235.

Dunleavy, Patrick (2003). “Envisioning the thesis as a whole”, in *Authoring a PhD: How to plan, draft and finish a doctoral thesis or dissertation*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, chapter 2, pp. 18-42.

Silverman, David (2014). “Taking theory too far?”. *Journal of Information Technology*, 00, 1–3.

Watts, Michael (2006). “Essentials for research designs - In search of the Holy Grail: projects, proposals, and research designs, but mostly about why writing a dissertation proposal is so difficult”. In E. Perelman and S. Curran (Eds.), *A Handbook for social science field research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage, pp. 175-197.