Academic and Professional Skills (K001402)

Course size   *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 6.0   **Study time 180 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Verhelst, Tom	PS03	lecturer-in-charge
De Cordier, Bruno	PS05	co-lecturer
Goeminne, Gert	PS03	co-lecturer
Goutry, Willem	PS03	co-lecturer
Haesebrouck, Tim	PS03	co-lecturer
Kern, Anna	PS03	co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027   **crdts**   **offering**

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

political sciences, literature review, professional competences

Position of the course

The first goal of this course is to familiarize the student with the most important literature in political science. In other words, it is an important training in writing academic papers where the student is often confronted with the question: where can I find the information I need? To this end, it is necessary to learn about the theoretical and applied way of using literature in political-scientific research (searching, processing and referring to literature).

Furthermore, this course deals with the essentials of academic writing. Several elements are discussed:
- How to design a good status questionis?
- How to situate your own research in the wider research field?
- How to compose a good research question?
- How to develop research questions theoretically?

Throughout these phases, the course integrates the responsible use of Generative AI.

The content of the course is applied in several practical exercises. The most important assignment consists of writing a scientific paper on a theme in political science chosen by the student.

Finally, an alumnus lecture and a workshop (with collective reflection) familiarize students with the application of the skills and knowledge of political scientists on the job market.

Relationship with the training competences:

- Competences in political science: B.1.1; B.1.6 and B.1.7
- Scientific competences: B.2.1; B.2.2 and B.2.5
- Intellectual competence: B.3.1 and B.3.3

- Competent in collaboration and communication: B.4.1. and B.4.3.
- Social competence: B.5.2.
- Profession-specific competence: B.6.1.

Contents

This course consists of a theoretical part and a practical part (including exercises). In the theoretical part, attention is paid to the use of literature in political sciences and the different elements of scientific research. What is the role of literature research in the context of scientific knowledge development? Why is it necessary to use and refer to literature when conducting scientific research? Which factors should be taken into account when trying to arrive at a critical assessment of political-scientific literature? What defines a good reserarch problem and research question? Etc.

In this context, the main types of literature (books, journals, newspapers, databases and catalogues, sources of government institutions, etc.) from the political sciences and their possible repositories (libraries, archives and electronic information carriers) are examined in more detail. We also offer the students an overview of the most important literature in political science, both from the perspective of general politics and from a more domain-specific approach. Lastly, the ethical dimension of academic research is discussed throughout the course (including the responsible use of GAI).

The practical part of the course consists of a number of specific exercises:
- formulating a research question and developing a strategy for the literature review
- conceptualising political concepts
- analysing academic research
- applying the APA reference system

Next to this, students write an academic paper that consists of a research question and a literature review. The selected literature will be discussed per discipline studied in the department of Political Sciences. This way, students can select a specific research topic within their field of interest. The paper will also be assessed and periodically evaluated within that discipline.

Finally, this course involves a few practical classes: a public lecture by an alumnus about worklife as a political scientist, a session on GAI and the APA reference system, and a workshop in which students experience the possible applications of the skills and knowledge of political scientists on the job market. This includes writing a brief reflection report and a collective feedback moment.

Initial competences

'Political Science' (1BA)

Final competences

1 Being able to find and evaluate the most relevant literature in political science
2 Being able to compose a solid research statement and research question
3 Being able to incorporate literature correctly in a paper
4 Being able to critically discuss academic literature in a paper
5 Being able to write a paper using a concise and fluid academic style
6 Mastering the professional competences of the curriculum

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Group work, Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- General lectures + thematic sessions
- Interactive session on electronic literature search, GAI, reference systems, and writing skills
- Lecture and workshop on professional competences
- 3 assignments and 1 paper (independent work) + reflection report on the lecture and workshop
- Due to COVID19 changes in the work forms can be made if necessary

Study material

Type: Syllabus

Name: A GPS for the political scientist: manual of the most important sources, literature review, and referencing in political science
Indicative price: € 19
Optional: yes
Number of Pages : 282
Oldest Usable Edition : 2024
Available on Ufora : No
Online Available : No
Available in the Library : Yes
Available through Student Association : Yes
Additional information: The syllabus is purchased in Ba1 as part of the course APP, and is used the following year in APV.

References

Course content-related study coaching

- Interactive support through Ufora
- By appointment
- Department-related support

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Assignment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Assignment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

- Due to COVID19 changes in the assessment forms can be made if necessary
- If a student does not participate in one or more of the evaluation moments (3 assignments, lecture, workshop, reflection report, and 1 paper), she/he cannot pass this course and will his/her final score, shoud it be above 7/20 will be reduced to 7/20.

Calculation of the examination mark

Combination of continuous (55%) and periodic (45%) assessment.