Description
The purpose of this course is to give students a firm grounding in the fundamentals of social science research, and to familiarize students with a range of typical research designs in the field of management and organization.

The first half of the course introduces the basics of social science research, such as philosophy of science, theory development and testing, sampling, measurement, internal validity and external validity. We then, in the second half, apply these general principles to specific methodological options, including experiment, DID research design, and various quantitative/qualitative research methods. We conclude this course with a “getting your research into journals” workshop based on a real paper at different stages of the review process.

Throughout the course, our focus is on how theoretical insights can be translated into testable hypotheses, and how these hypotheses are best tested. It is important to note that this is not a statistics class, and students are assumed to have acquired basic knowledge of statistics from other courses.

Students completing this course are expected:
1. To understand the logic underlying social science research
2. To become a critical consumer of social science research
3. To be confident in applying appropriate research methods to answer their own research questions

Class Meetings
Weekly three-hour seminars, time and venue to be advised.

Instructor
Dr. Zi-Lin He (Room: K1127, Tel: 466 3260, Office hours: Fridays, 3-5pm, Email: Z.L.He@uvt.nl)

Grading
Note: Illustrative questions below are designed to help you put issues in perspective. No written assignment can be organized in a Q&A style.

1. Weekly summary of 2 key readings (10*2 = 20 marks)
Every week you are expected to study all the readings distributed and write a one-page summary (no more, no less, single-spaced in 11-point or larger font with decent margins) of 2 of the 3 key readings marked with “●”. Place week number and your name in the top right corner. You must submit your summary to the instructor at the beginning of the class.
Your summary should cover two key readings but, given the page limit, you may want to focus your comments and criticisms on one particular key reading.

Depending on different types of readings (book chapter, conceptual or empirical paper, etc.), your summary may include one or more of the following:

- What are the key ideas, concepts and arguments that you find stimulating, worth remembering and building on?
- How ideas or approaches in different readings are connected or contrary to each other?
- How hypotheses/models are logically developed?
- Are research methods appropriate and defendable (research design, measurement, data collection, data analysis, etc.)?
- Are findings and results interpreted convincingly? Can findings and results answer the research questions?
- How could this research be extended or refined?

2. **Contribution to class discussion** ($12 \times 2 = 24$ marks)

Students are expected to come to class fully prepared to discuss weekly readings, especially the 3 key readings marked with “●”. Discussion is interactive and you should avoid reading from your summary.

In advance, one student will be assigned primary responsibility to lead the discussion of one key reading. That person, the “lead discussant” must, in a PowerPoint presentation of no more than 10 slides (slide 1 is the article title and your name), explain to the class the article’s research question, key theoretical arguments, data and methods, key results and findings, and main conclusions. The discussion will then be open to the class.

You will receive preliminary feedback on your contribution to class discussion in week 7.

3. **Essay: making sense of research** (8 marks)

Read Salganik and Watts (2008) *Social Psychology Quarterly* article “Leading the herd astray” and write an essay of no more than 800 words to answer the following questions:

- What theory was tested by the study?
- What are the alternative explanations ruled out by the authors?
- Are there any other alternative explanations not ruled out?
- Did the study provide clear evidence to support the theory being tested? Why or why not?
- How would you improve the research design if you could do this study?

Email your essay to the instructor by **Monday 12 March 2012**.

4. **Journal article analysis** (18 marks)

Select a recent empirical article from a leading journal in your area of interest and give a critical analysis of the research methods reported in the article. Try to find an
article that violates one or more rules of doing exemplary empirical research. Explain in your analysis precisely what was done and why you believe it was done improperly or interpreted incorrectly.

Your analysis report should not exceed 1500 words. Email your report to the instructor by Monday 07 May 2012.

The following questions may be useful to organize your analysis:
- What is the research question? Is this research question important and interesting?
- What is the author’s conceptual model of the phenomenon?
- What are the key empirical indicators of the concepts? Is there a good match between the conceptual model and the empirical design?
- Is there a violation of internal validity such that major alternative explanations are not ruled out? What are the consequences of such a violation?
- Is there a feasible way to address the shortcomings you see in this article, either using the available data or by collecting additional data?

Criticize the article on the basis of what was done, not what was not done (there is always more to be done). Refrain from making trivial comments like a lab study has less external validity than a field study.

5. Research proposal (30 marks)
Each student is to submit a written research proposal by the end of the semester. Your research proposal will:
- Clearly identify a research question that is (theoretically) important and interesting.
- Review the relevant literature to demonstrate the research gap and position your potential contribution in the context of that literature.
- Logically develop specific, testable hypotheses.
- Describe your sample, data collection, measures (independent, dependent and control variables), and analysis method, justifying your decisions along the way.
- Explain what would be the implications and contributions if your hypotheses are (or are not) supported.
- Explain what you see as the limitations of your study.

You should discuss with the instructor your proposal topic as soon as possible. You are allowed to develop your term paper from other courses (e.g. 230245 and 230246) into a research proposal if it has good potential. Feel free to consult faculty members who share your research interests. In all cases, choice of proposal topic is to be approved by the instructor.

A draft research proposal is to be submitted by email to the instructor by Friday 18 May 2012. You will also prepare no more than 15 PowerPoint slides (slide 1 is the proposal title and your name) and present your research proposal to all members of the class in no more than 40 minutes (including Q&A) on Monday 21 May 2012. The instructor and the rest of the class will attempt to give you feedback during the
presentation. Then you will have two weeks to revise your research proposal. Email your final submission to the instructor by **Monday 04 June 2012**. Your marks for this assignment will be based on the final submission.

Follow the *Academy of Management Journal* Style Guide for Authors (http://www.aom.pace.edu/amjnew/style_guide.html) except that you should use A4 page setting instead of $8\frac{1}{2} \times 11$. Your submission cannot be more than 30 pages (double-spaced) for the whole document, including everything from title page, tables, figures and references.

Your work does not end with your final submission for this course. You are encouraged to further develop the proposal into your research master thesis or a full paper for a major conference in your area (e.g. the 2013 AOM Annual Meeting).

**Late Submission**
In keeping with standards of professionalism appropriate to management studies, it is expected that deadlines will be honoured. In fairness to course members who complete on time, work submitted after the due date will incur a penalty for lateness. The penalty is 10% of the maximum marks per day late. In the event of unusual or unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement), you must discuss waiver of the penalty with the instructor at the earliest opportunity and before the submission deadline.

**Dishonest Practice and Plagiarism**
Plagiarism is a form of dishonest practice. Plagiarism is defined as copying or paraphrasing another’s work, whether intentionally or through failure to take proper care, and presenting it as one’s own. In practice, this means plagiarism includes any attempt in any piece of submitted work to present as one’s own work, the work of another (whether of another student or published authority). Any student found responsible for plagiarism shall be subject to the University’s dishonest practice regulations which may result in various penalties, including forfeiture of marks for the piece of work submitted, a zero grade for the course or in extreme cases exclusion from the University. At Tilburg plagiarism is rare, but sadly never quite absent. You need to know that those who plagiarize others’ work will not benefit from their actions.

**STUDENTS SHOULD MAKE SURE THAT ALL SUBMITTED WORK IS THEIR OWN.**

**Problems and Complaints**
If you are dissatisfied with the conduct of the course, you should talk to the instructor concerned, and if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of Department, Professor Arjen van Witteloostuijn (room K-1102A), or the Director of Graduate Studies, Professor Luc Renneboog (room K-908).
## COURSE SCHEDULE

- **Read**
- **Skim**
- **Browse/View**

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▪ http://www.processresearchmethods.org |
○ A paper, and its review reports and response letters will be handed out to students in advance  
▪ http://www.linkscenter.org/materials/asq.ppt (How to Write for *ASQ*)  
▪ http://pages.stern.nyu.edu/~wstarbuc/Writing/Fussy.htm (Fussy Professor Starbuck's Cookbook) |

Draft research proposal due Friday 18 May  
Research proposal presentation on Monday 21 May  
Final submission due Monday 04 June  

Journal article analysis due on this day. NO weekly summary this week.