Module 2 / Semester 1:	
Title of the course	VU Social Science Research Methods
Coordinator of the course:	Dimitri Prandner
Content/Description	Students learn to design methodologically advanced data collection tools (surveys, interviews, contextual metadata) using appropriate existing resources (e.g.: ZIS/Understanding Society/ISSP-Database), as well as designing their own if necessary. Furthermore, they will gain an understanding regarding how they can apply social scientific methods within the context and constraints of a modern digital society. Thus they will be able to critically reflect on data presented by other researchers or business partners in different settings. To do so the course will start with a short recapitulation of current methodological paradigms found in the social sciences. Afterwards the students will be confronted with the implications of modern digital communication technology and its societal impact (internationalisation, globalisation, big data) regarding methodology. To do so empirical research in the political, economic and academic context will be discussed. This is supplemented via regular tutorial units that provide the students with a chance to not only reflect on the information that was acquired during the lectures, but also solve complex tasks that involve the application of the newly acquired methodological skills. Those short tasks should enable them gain an understanding regarding the challenges that exist when one tries to collect data in intercultural contexts (furthered by the diverse backgrounds of the DClead students themselves) as well as how to collect valid and relevant data within resource-constraint settings, employing modern communication technology to gain insight into developments and extract relevant data from publically available sources. To illustrate this point further guest lectures with representatives of STATISTIK AUSTRIA and IFES are planned, providing insight into the real-world applications of social scientific research methods.
Workload: ECTS	6 ECTS Credits Total student working hours: 150 hours Attendance: 38 hours Mandatory Reading: 32 hours Empirical field work: 20 hours Creating empirical research tool : 20 hours Exam preparation : 20 hours Assignments : 16 hours Exams: 4 hours
Objectives	Fundamental understanding of social science research methods and their relevance in the field of digital communication.
Guest Lecturers (if applicable)	–
Selected References	
Al Baghal, T., & Lynn, P. (2015). Using Motivational Statements in Web-Instrument Design to Reduce Item-Missing Rates in a Mixed-Mode Context. Public Opinion Quarterly, 79(2), 568-579.	

Baldus, B. J., Voorhees, C., & Calantone, R. (2015). Online brand community engagement: Scale development and validation. Journal of Business Research, 68(5), 978-985.

Behr, D. (2015). Translating Answers to Open-ended Survey Questions in Cross-cultural Research A Case Study on the Interplay between Translation, Coding, and Analysis. Field Methods, 27(3), 284-299.

Bryman, A. (2015). Social research methods. Oxford university press.

Callegaro, M., Manfreda, K. L., & Vehovar, V. (2015). Web survey methodology. Sage.

Dana, B., & Kate, C. (2012). 'Critical Questions for Big Data'. Information, Communication and Society, 15, 5.

De Vaus, D. (2013). Surveys in social research. Routledge.

Hargittai, E. (2015). Is bigger always better? Potential biases of big data derived from social network sites. The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 659(1), 63-76.

Nagler, J., & Tucker, J. A. (2015). Drawing Inferences and Testing Theories with Big Data. PS: Political Science & Politics, 48(01), 84-88.

Pick, J. B., & Nishida, T. (2015). Digital divides in the world and its regions: A spatial and multivariate analysis of technological utilization. Technological Forecasting and Social Change, 91, 1-17.

Robson, C., & McCartan, K. (2016). Real world research. Wiley.