



Social Work PhD programme

Seminars
Spring Semester 2025-2026

Hes·so
Haute Ecole Spécialisée
de Suisse occidentale

n|w Fachhochschule Nordwestschweiz
Hochschule für Soziale Arbeit

swissuniversities



Programme of Spring Semester 2025-2026

Seminars	Dates	Page
PhD colloquium	Friday February 27 (full day 9h15-17h15)	
Colloquium on Academic Writing	Fridays February 20, March 13 & April 24 (full days 9h00-18h15)	3
Introduction to Survey (Experiment) Methods in Social Science Research	Fridays March 6, March 20, April 17 (full days – 9h15-17h15) Friday May 29 (morning, 9h15-12h45)	8
<i>Qualitative and Mixed Methods:</i> Use of Mixed Methods in Social Work & Social Sciences	Thursday February 19 (afternoon, 13h45-17h15) Thursdays March 5, April 2 & April 23 (full days 9h15-17h15)	10
<i>Current Issues in Social Work:</i> State Intervention in Family and Private Life: Contemporary Dilemmas in Social Work Policy and Practice	Thursdays May 21 & June 4 (full days 9h15-17h15) Monday June 22 (afternoon 13h45-17h15) Tuesday June 23 (full day 9h15-17h15)	12

Colloquium on academic writing (3 ECTS)

Faculty: Emmanuelle Reuter, Professor of Innovation Management, University of Neuchâtel

Venue: D63, 1ier Mars 26, University of Neuchâtel

Language: English

Credits: 3 ECTS

Teaching periods: Fri Feb 20, Fri Mar 13 2026, and Fri Apr 24 (9h00 -18h15)

Evaluation: Individual assignments

Content of the seminar

The seminar focuses on writing academic research for publication in leading academic journals. The course focuses on key elements of academic papers/ research proposals, on writing academic papers, presenting research, as well as on reviewing and responding to reviews. It is particularly suitable for PhD students in the process of developing their research proposals and/ or an academic paper. It aims to provide guidance on the main questions to ask and decisions to make when researchers develop their paper targeted at publication in a leading academic journal. Although the course will rely on examples from particular disciplines, the principles are applicable for PhD students across different domains.

Learning objectives

- Organise the academic writing process
- Review peers' academic papers
- Present an academic paper
- Formulate contributions
- Conceptualize the storyline
- Write different paper sections
- Formulate response to reviews

Transferable skills

- Analyse academic papers
- Organize the writing process
- Present academic work
- Apply principles of academic writing
- Review academic papers

Form of teaching

This course relies on an “active learning” approach. While the course comprises theory input, a major part of this course invites students to become active in the construction of their learning process as they work on refining their working papers or research proposals.

Form of evaluation

The course is based on an internal evaluation based on: revision of a manuscript; peer-reviews; presentation of received feedback and response strategies; final revision of manuscript before submission.

Pre-condition

Students need to submit an extended abstract/ introduction (2 pages) of a working paper prior to participating in class. This forms the basis for in-class writing workshops. The abstract should entail the following elements: real world problem, theoretical lens, shortcoming in the literature, research question, research design (if the paper is empirical in nature), central argument, anticipated contribution(s).

Course schedule

Feb 19 th 26 (noon)	Submission of abstract/ introduction	
Fri Feb 20 th 26 9:00-18.15h	Day I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course overview and administrative details • Theory- vs phenomenon-driven research, originality & convention • Participants' research pitch • Building theory • Form and style 	<u>Course preparation:</u> Mandatory readings <u>Assignments:</u> Pre-course submission of abstract In-class presentations of abstract
Mar 12 ^h 26 (noon)	Submission of a revised introduction	
Fri March 13 th 26 9:00-18.15h	Day II: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key elements of a journal paper • Constructing contributions • Theory development • Research setting, design, methodology and empirical findings • Some notes on reviewing 	<u>Course preparation:</u> Mandatory readings <u>Assignments:</u> Pre-course submission of introduction Submission of peer review In-class presentation of response strategy to the received review
Mar 13 th 26 (in/after class)	Submission of peer review of the introduction	
Mi Apr 22 nd 26	Submission of draft manuscript	
Fri Apr 24 th 26 9:00-18.15h	Day III: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crafting the discussion • Crafting the abstract • Participants outline/ revise the manuscript • The path to publication & review process 	<u>Course preparation:</u> Mandatory readings
May 1 st 26 (noon)	Possibility to re-submit revised draft manuscript	
May 8 th 26 (noon)	Submission of peer review on a peer's manuscript	
May 29 th 26 (noon)	Submission of final revised manuscript	

Preliminary course readings

Day I

- Colquitt, J. A. and George, G., 2011: Publishing in AMJ—Part 1: Topic Choice. *AMJ*, 54, 432–435, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.61965960>
- Dorobantu, S., Marc Gruber, Davide Ravasi, and Ned Wellman, 2024: The AMJ Management Research Canvas: A Tool for Conducting and Reporting Empirical Research. *AMJ*, 67, 1163–1174, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2024.4005>
- Kumar, V., Mittal, V., and Morgan, N. 2018, Reflections on Publishing in the Journal of Marketing, *Journal of Marketing*, 82:6, 1-9, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242918805485>
- Tihanyi, L. and DeCelles, K. A. 2021: Publishing Original Research in AMJ: Advice to Prospective Authors. *AMJ*, 64, 679–683, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2021.4003>
- Von Krogh, G., Rossi-Lamastra, C. & Haefliger, S. 2012. Phenomenon-based research in management and organisation science: When is it rigorous and does it matter?, *Long Range Planning*, 45(4), pp. 277-298. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lrp.2012.05.001>
- Whetten, 1989: What Constitutes a Theoretical Contribution?. *AMR*, 14, 490–495, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.1989.4308371>

Days II

- Fernandez, K. V. (2020). PROVE It! A Practical Primer to Positioning Theoretically. *Australasian Marketing Journal*, 28(1), 57-64. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ausmj.2019.12.001>
- Bono and McNamara, G. 2011: Publishing in AMJ—Part 2: Research Design. *AMJ*, 54, 657–660, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.64869103>
- Grant, A. M. and Pollock, T. G., 2011, Publishing in AMJ—Part 3: Setting the Hook. *AMJ*, 54, 873–879, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.4000>
- Locke, K., & Golden-Biddle, K. 1997. Constructing Opportunities for Contribution: Structuring Intertextual Coherence and “Problematizing” in Organizational Studies. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40(5), 1023–1062. <https://doi.org/10.2307/256926>
- MacKenzie, S. B. 2003. The Dangers of Poor Construct Conceptualization. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 31(3), 323-326. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0092070303031003011>
- Sparrowe, R. T. and Kyle J. Mayer, 2011: Publishing in AMJ—Part 4: Grounding Hypotheses. *AMJ*, 54, 1098–1102, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2011.4001>

Day III

- Geletkanycz, M., & Tepper, B. J. (2012). Publishing in AMJ—Part 6: Discussing the Implications. *Academy of Management Journal*, 55(2), 256–260. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2012.400>
- Feldman, D. C. (2005). Conversing With Editors: Strategies for Authors and Reviewers. *Journal of Management*, 31(5), 649-658. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279051>
- Kohli, A. K. (2011). From the Editor: Reflections on the Review Process. *Journal of Marketing*, 75(6), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.1509/jm.75.6.editorial>

Supplementary literature

- Corley, K. J. and Gioia, D. A. (2011). 'Building theory about theory building: What constitutes a theoretical contribution?'. *Academy of Management Review*, 36, 12–32. <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2009.0486>
- Crane A., Henriques I., Husted B. W., Matten D. (2016a). Publishing country studies in Business & Society or, do we care about CSR in Mongolia? *Business & Society*, 55, 3-10. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0007650315619507>
- Chrisman, J. J., Sharma, P., & Chua, J. (2017). The Mind-Set of Editors and Reviewers. *Family Business Review*, 30(3), 211-218. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894486517708377>
- Cummings, Frost, 1995, Publishing in the Organizational Sciences <https://sk.sagepub.com/books/publishing-in-the-organizational-sciences-2e>
- Fisher, G., Mayer, K. and Morris, K. 2021: From the Editors—Phenomenon-Based Theorizing. *AMR*, 46, 631–639, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2021.0320>
- Gulati, R. 2007: Tent Poles, Tribalism, and Boundary Spanning: The Rigor-Relevance Debate in Management Research. *AMJ*, 50, 775–782, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2007.26279170>
- Huff, A. S., 1998. Writing for Scholarly Publication. Sage.
- Joireman, and Van Lange. 2015. How to publish high-quality research. American Psychological Association.
- Parmigiani, A., & King, E. (2019). Successfully Proposing and Composing Review Papers. *Journal of Management*, 45(8), 3083-3090. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0149206319874875>
- Patriotta, G. 2017, Crafting Papers for Publication: Novelty and Convention in Academic Writing. *Journal of Management Studies*, 54: 747-759. <https://doi.org/10.1111/joms.12280>
- Piedra, L. M. (2022). The mighty abstract: An overlooked element of peer review. *Qualitative Social Work*, 21(3), 475-482. <https://doi.org/10.1177/14733250221095125>
- Zhang, Yan (Anthea) and Jason D. Shaw, 2012: Publishing in AMJ—Part 5: Crafting the Methods and Results. *AMJ*, 55, 8–12, <https://doi.org/10.5465/amj.2012.4001>

N.B. This course outline builds in part on a course by Prof. S. Floyd previously taught at the University of St Gallen.

Course assignments

Before Day I: Pre-course submission of extended abstract/ introduction and presentation in class

- Students need to submit an extended abstract/ introduction of a working paper before class and present it in class. Please submit the extended abstract/ introduction to lali.giorgidze@unine.ch by **Feb 19th 2026 noon**.

The extended abstract/ introduction (2 pages, Times New Roman, single-spaced) of a working paper forms the basis for in-class writing workshops. It should entail the following elements: real world problem, theoretical lens, shortcoming in the literature, research question, research design (if the paper is empirical in nature/ it can be conceptual only), central argument, anticipated contribution(s).

The research pitch: 5 min. – elevator pitch. Suggested structure of the pitch/ presentation

- 1 slide: Real world problem
- 2 slide: State of the literature, gap, research question
- 3 slide: Research design, method, etc.

For Day II: Pre-course submission of introductions

- Students need to submit a (revised) introduction of a working paper. It should follow the structure introduced in class. Please submit the document to lali.giorgidze@unine.ch by **March 12th 2026 by noon**.

After Day II: Submission of peer review of a peer's revised introduction

- Students need to submit a peer review to their assigned peer. Please submit the document to the assigned peer with lali.giorgidze@unine.ch in CC: **by March 13th 2026 (in/ after class)**.

Before Day III: Pre-course submission of draft manuscript

- Students need to submit a (revised) version of the working paper. It should follow the structure introduced in class. Please submit the document to lali.giorgidze@unine.ch: **by April 22nd 2026 by noon**.
- Students can re-submit a (revised) version of the working paper. It should follow the structure introduced in class. Please submit the document to the assigned peer with lali.giorgidze@unine.ch in CC: **by May 1st 2026 by noon**.
- Students need to submit a peer review to the assigned peer with lali.giorgidze@unine.ch in CC: **by May 8th 2026 by noon**.

After the course: Submission of final revised manuscript

- Students need to submit a revised version of the working paper. Please submit the document to lali.giorgidze@unine.ch **by May 29th 2026 by noon**.

Introduction to Survey (Experiment) Methods in Social Science Research (3 ECTS)

Teaching periods

Fridays 06.03.2026 (fd), 20.03.2026 (fd), 17.04.2026 (fd), 29.05.2026 (am)
(am = half-day 09:15–12:45; fd = full-day 09:15–17:15)

Venue

Room B29, Main Building of the University of Neuchâtel, Avenue du 1er mars, 26

Teaching team

Michaela Slotwinski, Professor ITTS, UniNE & Guest Expert

Content of the lecture

Survey methods are a cornerstone of quantitative research in the social sciences, offering valuable insights into human behavior, attitudes, and social trends. As experiments become more prevalent, they complement surveys by enabling researchers to test causal relationships and deepen our understanding of complex social phenomena. This course provides an introduction to both approaches from an applied design perspective.

It is designed for PhD (and Master's) students interested in mastering survey methods and experimental techniques in quantitative social science research. Topics covered include basic experimental design, survey experiments, questionnaire construction, sampling strategies, and the empirical analysis of survey and experimental data. Students will gain the skills necessary to design their own research studies and critically evaluate academic publications that use these methods.

Form of evaluation

The examination will take place during the semester (Examen Intermédiaire).

During the semester, students will develop their own survey experimental design which might be related to their research. They will receive feedback on an initial presentation and submit a term paper that incorporates this feedback.

Presentation: Students will present their design in class. The design, presentation slides, and performance in the Q&A session will be graded.

Project: After receiving feedback, students will submit a final term paper (maximum 15 pages) describing their research design, which will be graded.

Grades will be composed of students participation during the lectures and the presentations (5%), the design presentation (50%) and the submitted term paper (45%).

Transferable skills

- Critically evaluate survey and experimental methodology
- Adopt proper technical language when reading, analyzing, and presenting survey based research
- Acquire basic skills to implement survey (experiments)
- Acquire presentation skills.

Pre-condition and registration

This course requires prior experience with quantitative methods in the social sciences. Participants should have at least passed the 'Making Sense of Data' course offered in the fall or demonstrate an equivalent level of knowledge like an introductory course in Econometrics.

Open to: Registered PhD students (ITTS and others); Registered Master's students; Notified future PhD students of the ITTS. The number of participants is limited to 15.

Documentation & literature

All the documentation will be available on Moodle.

Use of Mixed Methods in Social Work and Social Science Research (3 ECTS)

Teaching periods

Thursdays 19/02/2026 (hd), 05/03/2026 (fd), 02/04/2026 (fd), 23/04/2026(fd)
(pm = half-day 13:45-17:15, fd = full-day 09:15-17:15)

Venue

Main building, University of Neuchâtel, Avenue du 1er mars 26
19/02/2026, 05/03/2026 and 02/04/2026 : Room D63 ; 23/04/2026: Room D71

Teaching team

Colleen Henry, MSW, PhD
Honorary Fellow, School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh,
Faculty Affiliate, Mack Center, School of Social Welfare, University of California Berkeley

Content of the seminar

Social work researchers seek to explore, identify, explain, and address a range of social problems. Mixed methods research—integrating quantitative and qualitative methodologies—can be used by social work scholars and practitioners to deepen understanding of complex human phenomena and social issues. Mixed methods approaches generate both statistical and narrative data that, when integrated and analyzed, offer a more comprehensive understanding of how intersecting social, cultural, economic, and political factors contribute to human well-being and pressing social problems, and can inform the design and implementation of effective interventions.

This introductory course reviews the fundamentals of mixed methods research design and the general assumptions underlying mixed methods procedures (parallel, explanatory, and exploratory). Students will critically examine mixed methods studies and models that have been employed in social work and related fields, reflect on the utility of mixed methods research in practice settings, and develop the foundational skills needed to design their own mixed methods study.

Form of evaluation

Students are expected to be active participants in class and to complete all assignments:

- **25% - Active participation in seminar discussions**
Evaluation will be based on consistent attendance, evidence of thorough preparation, and meaningful contributions that demonstrate critical engagement with assigned readings, research paradigms, and peers' perspectives.
- **25% - In-class presentations of a mixed methods study**
Each student will select a peer-reviewed mixed methods research article from social work or a related social science discipline. The presentation should provide a concise overview of the study, critically assess its research design, integration of qualitative and quantitative components, and methodological rigor, and reflect on its relevance to social work scholarship and practice.
- **50% - Mixed methods study proposal and related assignments**
Students will develop a draft proposal for a mixed methods study in an area relevant to their research interests. The project will include formulation of a research question, justification for a mixed methods design, description of data collection and integration strategies, and discussion of ethical and practical considerations. The proposal will be presented and discussed during the seminar.

Learning outcomes

Students successfully completing this course will be able to:

- Identify and critically assess the history and philosophical foundations of mixed methods research;
- Describe major mixed methods approaches—including parallel, explanatory, and exploratory designs—and explain their use in social work research;
- Determine when the use of mixed methods is appropriate;
- Identify and utilize software tools for mixed methods data analysis; and
- Formulate research questions and design a mixed methods study.

Transferable skills

By the end of this course, doctoral students will have developed transferable skills in:

- Designing and integrating mixed methods research;
- Critically evaluating empirical studies with particular attention to methodological fit;
- Applying analytical and data integration tools; and
- Communicating and justifying research designs effectively in research and practice settings.

Pre-condition and registration

Registered PhD students in Social Work or in Social Sciences, or auditors as prospective ITTS PhD student.

Documents & literature

Select texts. Additional course materials will be available on Moodle.

State Interventions in Family and Private Life: Contemporary Dilemmas in Social Work Policy and Practice (3 ECTS)

Teaching periods

Thursdays 21/05/2026 (fd) & 04/06/2026 (fd), Monday 22/06/2026 (hd), Tuesday 23/06/2026(fd)
(pm = half-day 13:45-17:15, fd = full-day 09:15-17:15)

Venue

Main Building, University of Neuchâtel, Avenue du 1er mars 26
Rooms to be determined

Teaching team

Colleen Henry, MSW, PhD
Honorary Fellow, School of Social and Political Science, University of Edinburgh,
Faculty Affiliate, Mack Center, School of Social Welfare, University of California Berkeley

Content of the lecture

Social work practice is grounded in a commitment to human dignity, social justice, and the right to self-determination—so long as this right does not infringe upon the rights or legitimate interests of others. Social workers are ethically obligated to advocate for and engage in practices that protect and promote these principles. Yet profound ethical and practical dilemmas emerge when social workers, acting as agents of the state, are required to intervene in the private lives of individuals and families. This doctoral seminar critically examines contemporary dilemmas surrounding state intervention in family and private life. Drawing on scholarship from social work, sociology, and criminology, the course explores the coercive and regulatory dimensions of social policy and professional practice across key domains such as child welfare, domestic violence, mental health, and housing. Through case analysis, international comparison, and theoretical reflection, students will interrogate how social workers navigate the tension between care and control, and will consider policy and practice reforms that seek to uphold human rights while responding effectively to diverse and complex social needs.

Form of of evaluation

Students are expected to be active participants in all seminars and to complete the following assignments:

- **25% – Active participation in seminars and discussions**
Evaluation will be based on regular attendance, evidence of thorough preparation, and meaningful contributions that demonstrate critical engagement with assigned readings and peers' perspectives.
- **25% – In-class case presentation**
Each student will deliver a critical presentation analyzing a case or example of state intervention in a specific social work domain (e.g., child welfare, domestic violence, mental health, housing). Presentations should integrate theoretical, ethical, and policy perspectives, highlighting the tensions between care, control, and human rights.
- **50% – Final analytical paper**
The final paper (approximately 10–15 pages) will critically examine a key area of state intervention in family or private life. Students are expected to draw on interdisciplinary scholarship to analyze the ethical, social, and policy dimensions of the chosen issue and to propose directions for policy or practice reform that align with social work's commitment to human dignity and justice.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this course, doctoral students will be able to:

- **Critically analyze** the ethical, legal, and political foundations of state intervention in family and private life within contemporary welfare systems.
- **Evaluate** how social work policy and practice mediate the tension between care and control in varied social service contexts.
- **Synthesize** interdisciplinary perspectives from social work, sociology, and criminology to understand the coercive and regulatory functions of the modern welfare state.
- **Apply** human rights and social justice frameworks to assess current policies and propose equitable and ethical reforms in social service systems.

Transferable skills

Doctoral students successfully completing this course will strengthen their ability to:

- **Conduct critical policy and ethical analysis**—examining how state structures shape professional decision-making and individual rights.
- **Engage in advanced ethical reasoning**—balancing competing values of autonomy, protection, and justice in professional contexts.
- **Communicate complex ideas effectively**—articulating critical analyses and policy arguments in scholarly writing and oral presentation.
- **Translate theory into practice**—connecting conceptual debates about governance and rights to applied strategies for reforming social work policy and service delivery.

Pre-condition and registration

Registration as a PhD student at the ITTS, graduate student in law or the social sciences.

Documentation & literature

Select texts. Additional course materials will be available on Moodle.