RESEARCH PARADIGMS IN MASTER THESIS PROJECT

Course code	Course group	Volume in ECTS credits	Course valid from	Course valid to	Reg. No.
SOD6017	SW	6	2016	2019	

Course type (compulsory or optional)	Compulsory
Course level (study cycle)	Second cycle (Master studies)
Semester the course is delivered	Third
Study form (face-to-face or distant)	Face-to-face

Course title in Lithuanian

TYRIMO PARADIGMOS MAGISTRO BAIGIAMOJO DARBO PROJEKTE

Course title in English

RESEARCH PARADIGMS IN MASTER THESIS PROJECT

Short course annotation in Lithuanian

Kursas skirtas padėti studentams rengti socialinio darbo magistro baigiamojo darbo tyrimą pasirinkus atitinkamą tyrimo paradigmą ir padėti suteikti tyrimui sistemingo projekto formą. Studentai susipažins su pagrindinėmis tyrimo paradigmomis – post/pozityvizmas, kritinė/ transformacinė, interpretatyvinė/ konstruktyvistinė paradigmos bei susijusiomis teorijomis, tyrimo strategijomis ir technikomis. Kurso metu studentai suformuluos tyrimo problemas, pasirinks ir pagrįs tyrimo strategijas, tyrimo kokybės standartus, tyrimo parametrus, suplanuos magistro baigiamojo darbo empirinio tyrimo įgyvendinimo planą ir planuojamus naudoti tyrimo metodus.

Short course annotation in English

The course helps students to design research project of Master thesis by choosing relevant research paradigm. The students will become familiar with main research paradigms (post/positivism, critical/ transformative, interpretative/ constructivist) and corresponding research strategies and techniques. The students will design research project by defining theoretical framework, raising research problems and questions, choosing research strategy and techniques, describing sampling, etc.

Prerequisites for entering the course

Courses on theories of social work and research methods

Course aim

The aim of the course is to improve students' abilities and skills to plan and design research in social work. The course will help students to carry out research project of Master thesis by defining research problem and raising research questions, defining role of researcher, choosing research strategy, participants and resources and creating a detailed research design.

Links between study programme outcomes, course outcomes and criteria of learning achievement evaluation

Study programme outcomes	Course outcomes	Criteria of learning achievement evaluation
Design and conduct rights-based research of social work practice and its context using quantitative and qualitative research methodologies for substantiating solutions with arguments and making assumptions for installation of innovations and its control in micro, mezzo, and macro levels for an implementation of human rights and social justice.	1. Apply systemic approach in research by choosing relevant research paradigm and providing ontological, epistemological and methodological framework of the research.	In assignments of the course and in final project description students are able to define theme and subject of Master thesis project by referring to research paradigm, raise research questions, define and describe reality of social work by referring to ontology of social work, theories and ideas. In assignments of the course and in final project description define researchers' role and carry out positioning of the researcher, describe

		nature of knowledge process, interplay and interaction of subjectivity and objectivity
	2. Design and plan research project by choosing research paradigm, defining research problems and raising research questions, reflecting on researcher's role, choosing research strategy, participants and resources and by designing detailed research plan.	Able to reason and substantiate choice of research strategy, parameters of research, research participants and resources
Systemize theoretical approaches about changes and perspectives of social work theories paying a special attention to critical and social constructionism paradigms substantiating application of innovative social work practice methods and interventions in professional contexts and creation of new social services and programmes.	3. Define main paradigms in social work and recognize main strategies and research practices in social work.	Able to recognize, explain and interpret min. 3 paradigms, reveal their peculiarities, differences and specific research and social work practices.
Summarize analysis outcomes of policy, resource and social structure links preparing recommendations for social policy improvement, social services and sustainable social development in the aspect of comparative social policy.	4. Define interrelation between research paradigm applied and improvement of social policy and social services.	Able to define subject of research in relation to main issues of social policy and social services improvement.
Substantiate human rights standards and importance of social work values for development empowering social services innovations.	5. Apply chosen research paradigm to substantiate human rights discourse and other values of social work.	Able to reflect, define and describe one's own values, attitudes and subjectivity, to carry out positioning of researcher and to connect this positioning with paradigm chosen

Link between course outcomes and content

Course outcomes	Content (topics)
1. Be able to define main paradigms in social work and recognise main strategies and research practices in social work	Overview of paradigms in social work. Ontological, epistemological and methodological dimensions of paradigms. Ontology: defining a nature of social reality and reality of social work. Epistemology – defining a nature of knowledge and role of researcher. Methodology: defining strategies, methods and techniques of building knowledge. Taxonomies of paradigms (Guba and Linkoln, 1994; Howe, 2008). Positivist/ post positivist, critical/ transformative, constructivist/ interpretative, pragmatism paradigms. Objective versus subjective. Social order versus social change. Critical paradigm (neomarxism, Frankfurt School, feminist perspective in social work, Foucauldian social work (Foucault, 1998; Chambon, et al, 1999, P.Bourdieu, P.Freire theories). Feminist social work and feminist epistemology. Constructivist paradigm: social constructivism/ constructionism, social phenomenology (Berger and Luckmann, Schuetz). Postmodern social work and postmodern epistemology.

2. Be able to apply systemic approach in research by choosing relevant research paradigm and providing ontological, epistemological and methodological framework of the research.	Positivist/ postpositivist paradigm in social work and research (ontology-epistemology-methodology). Research questions. Defining role of researcher in positivist paradigm. Methodological principles of positivist paradigm. (strategies – survey, secondary data analysis, experiments and quasi-experiment, quantitative observation, content analysis). Critical/ transformative paradigm (ontology-epistemology-methodology). Research questions. Defining role of researcher in critical paradigm. Dialogical methods (observation, interview, conversation, reflection). Methodological principles of positivist paradigm (strategies – action research, critical discourse analysis, critical ethnography, critique of ideology) Constructivist/ Interpretative paradigm (ontology-epistemology-methodology). Research questions. Defining role of researcher in constructivist paradigm. Methodological principles of positivist paradigm (strategies – biographical, phenomenological, ethnographic, auto-ethnographic, case study, grounded theory, hermeneutic research, heuristic, narrative, feminist research). Pragmatism paradigm.
3. To be able to design and plan research project by choosing research paradigm, defining research problems and raising research questions, reflecting on researcher's role, choosing research strategy, participants and resources and by designing detailed research plan.	Sampling, selection of research participants and resources in qualitative and quantitative research and in different research strategies. Structural parts of research design/ plan and its logic. Analysis of master thesis projects. Positioning of researcher and situated knowledge.
4. Be able to define interrelation between research paradigm applied and improvement of social policy and social services.	Role of post/positivist paradigm in promoting evidence-based improvement of social policy and social services (survey, secondary data analysis, analytic reviews, experiments and quasi-experiments). Empowering disadvantaged groups by improving social policy and social services: a role of critical/ transformative paradigm. Deinstitutionalisation and critiques of institutional social care by critical paradigm (action research, critical discourse analysis, critiques of ideologies (i.e. neoliberalism), critical ethnography). Local subjective perspectives of clients and service users in interpretative/ constructivist paradigm (biographical, phenomenological, ethnographic, auto-ethnographic, case study, grounded theory, hermeneutic research, heuristic, narrative, feminist research)
5. Be able to apply chosen research paradigm to substantiate human rights discourse and other values of social work.	Human rights discourse and anti-discriminatory practises by applying critical paradigm. Universal versus anthropological/ social constructivist definition and substantiation of human rights: contradictions and tensions. Role of different research paradigm in promotion of human rights and social justice.

Study (teaching and learning) methods

Teaching methods– lectures, explanations, demonstration, feedback, moderation, organization of discussions, learning in Moodle, preparation of assignments with the use of films, movies and other visual materials.
Learning methods – lectures, learning in Moodle, discussions, autonomous learning by reading, watching movies, carrying out assignments. Preparation of research project.

Methods of learning achievement assessment

Evaluation of assignments and final research project in Moodle according to criteria; feedback, formative and summative oral and written evaluation.

Distribution of workload for students (contact and independent work hours)

Lectures	15 val.

Seminars	30 val.
Work in groups	15 val.
Individual work	100 val.
Iš viso	160 val.

Structure of cumulative score and value of its constituent parts

Home work and other assignments – 30 %, Midterm exam (interim presentation of master thesis research project) – 20 %, Final exam (preparation and presentations of master thesis research project) – 50 %.

Recommended reference materials

				Number of units	
			Basic materials		
No	**Year**	**Authors and title**	**Editor**	*At University library*	*Kitose bibliotekose*
1	2014	Creswell J.W. Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.	Sage Publications.	1	
2	2013	Creswell J.W., Poth C.N. Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design. Choosing Among Five Approaches. Third Edition	Sage Publications	1	
3	2008	Howe, David. An introduction to social work theory.	Ashgate	1	
4	2009	Gray M. and Webb S.A. *Social Work, Theories and Methods*	Los Angeles (Calif.): Sage	1	
5	2005	Healy K. Social Work Theories in Context: Creating Frameworks for Practice.	Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan	1	
6	1998	M.Foucault. Disciplinuoti ir bausti. Kalėjimo gimimas.	Vilnius: Baltos lankos	8	
7	1999	Berger P.L., Luckmann Th. (1999). Socialinis tikrovės konstravimas: žinojimo sociologijos traktatas.	Vilnius: Pradai	5	
Supplementary readings:					
1.	2005	Payne M. Modern Social Work Theory. 3rd ed. Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan			
2.	2003	Critical Social Work: an Introduction to Theories and Practices ed. June Allan, Bob Pease and Linda Briskman. Crows Nest (Australia): Allen and Uhwin.			
3	2000	Hollis M. (2000). Socialinių mokslų filosofija. Vilnius: Lietuvos rašytojų sąjungos leidykla			

Course programme designed by

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