



Field Research in Development Economics
Georg-August-Universität Göttingen
Winter Semester 2025/2026

TEACHING TEAM

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CONTENT

The course focuses on building up core skills for planning and implementing a research with primary data collection. The students (assigned to small groups of 2-5 students each) set up a research protocol for their own small-scale research project within one of two pre-defined thematic areas.¹ Students will choose between in-person interview-based fieldwork or an online-survey-based study, depending on the research question. Students will write project proposals and terms of reference for funding and overseeing institutions (such as ethical committees). A particular emphasis is placed on research methodology and quantitative skills pertinent to data collection (in-person interviews, online surveys) and evaluation needs, such as sampling methodology (power calculations, sampling design), randomized assignment (units of randomization, balance checks), and causal inference for experimental designs (treatment effect estimation, dealing with treatment noncompliance, attrition, and other threats to internal validity). At the end of the course each student group will have elaborated a project portfolio.

STRUCTURE

The lecturers will provide methodological background information on the essentials of development research with primary data collection. Beyond that, participating students are expected to acquire relevant knowledge, in particular knowledge relevant for their specific group project, independently. This course contains a considerable amount of independent group work, student presentations on their project's progression and feedback sessions with lecturers and students. The structure of the course is such that some of the weekly three hour sessions are input sessions where lecturers provide information and others are presentation and discussion sessions where students present and discuss their group work and receive feedback from lecturers and other participating students.

¹ Thematic area 1: Understanding first-order beliefs of employment challenges among immigrants, and second-order beliefs regarding employers' views of these challenges.

Thematic area 2: Assessing notions of inequality and (in)equity among young adults

REGISTRATION

Participation in the online introductory meeting on 13 October is compulsory. Afterwards, students can sign up via Stud.IP until 14 October. In case more students are interested than slots in the seminar available, slots will be allocated via a lottery. Students will be informed about the outcome on 15 October until 12 noon.

SCHEDULE

1. **Introductory meeting** (13.10., 8:30 am, online via BBB:)
 - Overview of course and organisational matters
2. **Course overview and thematic areas** (27.10.)
 - Short presentation of the thematic areas
 - Formation of student research groups
 - *Homework*: 2-page exposé identifying field of research and research idea (submission until 6 November)
3. **Field project example from the Chair of Development Economics** (03.11.)
 - Presentation of example research project
 - Group work on research ideas
4. **Student presentations of first research ideas** (10.11.)
 - *Student presentations*: 5-minute presentation and subsequent class discussion
 - Revision of research ideas
 - *Homework*: Revision of exposé
5. **Research hypothesis and study design** (17.11.)
 - Overview of research and study design methods, including hypotheses, sampling, and randomization
 - *Homework*: Continue working on proposal and include research hypothesis and study design (submission until 27 November)
6. **Group work** (24.11.)
 - Continue work on proposal, presentations and discussions in groups, feedback
7. **Student presentations of study design** (01.12.)
 - *Student presentations*: 10-minute presentation of extended research idea including research hypothesis and study design; subsequent 10-minute class discussion
 - *Homework*: Continue working on proposal and include feedback
8. **Pre-analysis plan and statistical power** (08.12.)
 - Introduction to pre-analysis plan (outcomes, confounders, mediators, compliance indicators, estimation strategies) and statistical power
 - *Homework*: Analysis plan and power calculation (submission until 22 December)
9. **Group work** (15.12.)

- Continue work on proposal, presentations and discussions in groups, feedback
10. **Holiday – no class** (22.12.)
 11. **Holiday – no class** (29.12.)
 12. **Student presentations of pre-analysis plan** (05.01.)
 - *Student presentations*: 10-minute presentation and subsequent class discussion
 - *Homework*: Continue working on proposal and include feedback
 13. **Research ethics and ethical clearance** (12.01)
 - Introduction to research ethics and ethical clearance proposal
 - *Homework*: Ethical clearance proposal (submission until 15 January)
 14. **Survey instruments and field logistics** (19.01.)
 - Introduction to questionnaires, survey instruments and the planning of field projects
 - *Homework*: Survey instruments and field plan (submission until 29 January)
 15. **Group work and student presentations of work in progress** (26.01.)
 - Continue work on proposal, presentations and discussions in groups, feedback
 16. **Group work** (02.02.)
 - Continue work on proposal, presentations and discussions in groups, feedback
 17. **Final student presentation of complete portfolio** (09.02.)
 - *Student presentations*: 20 minute portfolio presentation and subsequent discussion
 - *Homework*: Finalization of portfolios (graded submission end of February)

GRADING

- Presentations & Assignments – prerequisite for portfolio submission
- Final portfolio submission 100%

SUBMISSIONS

- Deadline for submission is always 23pm.
- All texts should be written in English.
- Use font style “Arial”, font size 12, 1.5 spacing, margins each 2.5cm.
- Details of submissions will be announced in class.
- Please upload your documents in StudIP. There will be specific folders for each submission step. Please name the document as follows: “*Content_GroupNumber*”.

Date	Content	Format	Graded
06.11.	First research idea (exposé)	2-page PDF	No
27.11.	Draft study design	4-page PDF	No

22.12.	Draft pre-analysis plan with power calculation	2-page PDF and commented dofile/excel table	No
15. 01.	Draft ethical clearance proposal	2-page PDF	No
29. 01.	Draft field plan and survey instruments	2-page PDF and unlimited PDF	No
28.02. (preliminary date)	Complete and final portfolio: Study protocol with appendix including ethical clearance proposal, time plan, budget plan, power calculation, survey instruments	10-page PDF and appendix in PDF and/or dofiles/excel table if needed	Yes

Note: This is an intended schedule but will be adjusted to the needs and progression of projects.

CLASS PARTICIPATION

We expect you to be present during all meetings of the seminar and to participate in class discussions. If you are unable to attend please do not register for this seminar.

BACKGROUND LITERATURE

- Duflo, E., Glennerster, R., & Kremer, M. (2007). Using randomization in development economics research: A toolkit. *Handbook of development economics*, 4, 3895-3962.
- Glennerster, R., & Takavarasha, K. (2013). *Running randomized evaluations: A practical guide*. Princeton University Press.
- Haaland, I., Roth, C., & Wohlfart, J. (2023). Designing information provision experiments. *Journal of economic literature*, 61(1), 3-40.
- Stantcheva, S. (2023). How to run surveys: A guide to creating your own identifying variation and revealing the invisible. *Annual Review of Economics*, 15(1), 205-234.
- Haaland, I., Roth, C., Stantcheva, S., & Wohlfart, J. (2024). *Measuring what is top of mind* (No. 298). ECONtribute Discussion Paper.
- TBA