

PhD Research Design: Planning a Research Project and Formulating Clear Questions

Taught by Prof. Yvonne Riaño

25 April 2023

9:15 – 17:00

University of Neuchâtel

Limited places, register [here](#) before 15 April



**Swiss National
Science Foundation**

The National Centres of Competence in Research (NCCRs)
are a funding scheme of the Swiss National Science Foundation

This course is part of the third pillar of the Doctoral Program of the nccr – on the move. All members of the NCCR community and doctoral students enrolled in a CUSO program are welcome to attend. For the doctoral students enrolled in the Certificate in Migration and Mobility Studies, the participation in this course is worth 1 ECTS.

General Description

Formulating a coherent research plan is key to targeted and efficient PhD research. This practical course supports PhD students towards this aim by focusing on three key aspects of a research plan: (a) identifying the main research gaps, (b) formulating clear and focused research questions, and (c) preparing a time plan on how to achieve the project's aim in the available time. The course is based on conceptual inputs by the course leader, followed by practical exercises. The latter is based on the specific PhD topic of each participant. The course lasts an entire day. It has four parts. First, participants are reminded about the key components of a research plan. Second, participants reflect on the connection between the research gaps identified so far and the pertinence of their initially formulated research questions. Third, participants evaluate through group work the scientific quality of their research questions in terms of clarity, focus and complexity. Fourth, each participant prepares a time plan including the key phases of planning, executing and monitoring. Its scientific quality is subsequently evaluated by the group. The module concludes with an evaluation of strengths and limitations.

Teacher

Yvonne Riaño (University of Neuchâtel) is an Associate Professor and social geographer specialized in migration studies. She was a Project Leader in the first two phases of the nccr – on the move with one project on international students mobility and one on migrant entrepreneurship. She teaches geography at the University of Neuchâtel and regularly coordinates workshops on the planning of research projects and participatory methodologies.

Practical Information

This course takes place in presence (no online participation) on **Tuesday 25 April 2023** at the **University of Neuchâtel**, Av. Abram-Louis Breguet 2, 2000 Neuchâtel, Room 3.410. Please **register through [this link](#) no later than 15 April 2023**.

Given its practical nature, the number of places for this course is limited to a maximum of 10 participants. Applications by members of the nccr – on the move will be prioritized, and registrations will be treated on a first come first served basis. Lunch is included for all the participants, and travel expenses to and from Neuchâtel will be reimbursed for members of the nccr – on the move.

If you have further questions, please contact Robin Stünzi via [email](#).

Timetable

09:15 – 10:30	Preparing a PhD plan: Why do I need one, and what are its main components?
10:30 – 11:00	Coffee Break
11:00 – 12:30	Is my research project too broad? How to narrow down my research topic
12:30 – 13:30	Lunch Break
13:30 – 15:00	What do I want to understand? Formulating clear and focused research questions
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break
15:30 – 17:00	Keeping my project on track: How to prepare a suitable time plan