

**IPSA Antalya Summer School 2023**  
**Focus Group Study in Social Sciences**  
**Course Syllabus**  
(Draft Version)

**Instructor:**

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**Course Description and Objectives:**

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This graduate-level course is a general introduction to focus group study in social sciences. The course is designed to enhance the research skills of graduate students as social scientists. The course will delve into the logic and practice of focus group study by covering the following specific issues: definition of focus groups; strengths and weaknesses of focus group study; designing and implementing a decent focus group study; analyzing focus group data and presenting the results; and examining some best practices. Ultimate objective of the course is to provide students with the skills that are necessary to: 1) read, understand and evaluate the academic literature that uses focus group study; 2) design and conduct a decent focus group research. After attending this course, the students will not only learn when and how to use focus groups but also increase their awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of this particular data collection technique.

**Course Format:**

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This is a five-day intensive course that will take place in a hybrid format (i.e., face-to-face and online). Each day, there will be 4 hours of class meeting. From Monday to Thursday, we will have intensive lectures and discussions on various aspects of focus group study. On Friday, we will analyze some examples of best practice, and have some in-class exercises. In addition, the students, who would like to get detailed feedback on their own research, will be able to briefly present their research on the final day of the course. Students can present either a research proposal, research design or an ongoing research project that involves a focus group study.

**Course Readings:**

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**Required:**

- Cyr, Jennifer. 2019. *Focus Groups for the Social Science Researcher*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Barbour, Rosaline S. 2018. *Doing Focus Groups*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Hennink, Monique M. 2014. *Focus Group Discussions*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

**Suggested:**

*Books:*

- Barbour, Rosaline S, and David L Morgan. 2017. *A New Era in Focus Group Research: Challenges, Innovation and Practice*. UK: Palgrave.
- Potter, Jonathan, and Claudia Puchta. 2003. *Focus Group Practice*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

- Bloor, Michael, Jane Frankland, Michelle Thomas, and Kate Robson. 2001. *Focus Groups in Social Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.

*Articles and Book Chapters:*

- Van Ingelgom, Virginie. 2020. "Focus Groups: From Qualitative Data Generation to Analysis." In *The Sage Handbook of Research Methods in Political Science and International Relations*, eds. Luigi Curini and Robert Franzese. London: Sage. 1190-1210.
- Kamberelis, George, and Greg Dimitriadis. 2014. "Focus Group Research: Retrospect and Prospect." In *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative Research*, ed. Patricia Leavy. Oxford: Oxford University Press. 315-41.
- Jarvis, Sharon E., and Laura Barberena. 2008. "Focus Groups." In *Encyclopedia of Survey Research Methods*, ed. Paul J Lavrakas. Thousand Oaks: Sage. 286-89.
- Morgan, David L. 1996. "Focus Groups." *Annual Review of Sociology* 22: 129-52.

**Course Schedule:**

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Day 1 (Monday) (September 11):

- Defining Focus Groups
- When to Use Focus Groups
- Advantages and Disadvantages of Focus Group Study

Day 2 (Tuesday) (September 12):

- Designing Focus Groups
- Preparing for the Focus Groups

Day 3 (Wednesday) (September 13):

- Conducting Focus Groups

Day 4 (Thursday) (September 14):

- Analyzing Focus Group Data
- Presenting the Results

Day 5 (Friday) (September 15):

- Some Examples of Best Practice
- Exercises
- Presentations