

Discipline: Cross-disciplinary

1 Language

The course will be conducted in English.

2 Title

Online Research Methods

3 Lecturer

Prof. Dr. Blagoy Blagoev, Technische Universität Dresden (day 2)

Prof. Dr. Jana Costas, European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder) (day 1 + 4)

Dr. Christian A. Mahringer, Universität Stuttgart

Jana Costas is Professor of Business Administration, in particular People, Work and Management at the European University Viadrina Frankfurt (Oder). She holds a PhD from the University of Cambridge, and has been awarded the EU Marie Curie Fellowship, which she conducted at the Copenhagen Business School. Jana has also been Assistant Professor (Juniorprofessorin) for Qualitative Methods in Management Research at Freie Universität Berlin. Her research interests lie in the area of organization studies, in particular secrecy, digitalization, public affairs, tech companies, work, control, identity, culture, leadership, violence. She has published in and reviews for various journals, such as *Organization Studies*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Human Relations*. Jana is Associate Editor of *Organization* and acts on the Editorial Board of *Organization Theory*. She has published the monograph *Secrecy at Work: The Hidden Architecture of Organizational Life* (with Chris Grey), Stanford University Press, and *Dramas of Dignity – Cleaners in the Corporate Underworld of Berlin*, Cambridge University Press. She is currently working on a research project on the remuneration in the German music streaming market (funded by the Minister of State for Culture and the Media) as well as on public affairs of big tech companies and EU regulations.

Blagoy Blagoev is Professor of Business Administration, especially Organization Studies at Technische Universität Dresden. He received his doctoral degree as a fellow of the DFG graduate school “Research on Organizational Paths” at Freie Universität Berlin (summa cum laude, awarded Freie Universität’s Ernst Reuter Prize for outstanding dissertations). Blagoy’s research draws on a temporal lens to examine the interplay of organizations and society in the context of current technological, ecological, and cultural transformations. Empirically, he draws on qualitative research methods to examine a wide range of organizations, such as multinational corporations, knowledge-intensive firms, museums, and coworking spaces. His current research interests include organizational change, business sustainability, emerging technologies, and new forms of working and organizing. He has published in and reviews for various journals such as *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *Academy of Management Journal*, *Organization Studies*, *Journal of Management Studies*, *Organization* and *Scandinavian Journal of Management*.

Christian A. Mahringer is a research associate at the 'University of Stuttgart' and a project leader at the 'Heidelberg Academy of Sciences and Humanities'. He obtained his PhD from the 'University of Stuttgart' in 2019 with distinction. His research focuses on practices and routines within and across organizations, and how they contribute to organizational change, innovation, and grand challenges. From an empirical perspective, his work focuses on high-tech settings. He draws on the analysis of digital trace data and ethnographic fieldwork, to better understand these phenomena. For instance, he is currently triangulating digital trace data and ethnographic fieldwork to examine how software development teams in a high-tech company used and transferred Scrum-based routines to become more agile. Christian is an active member of the 'Strategizing Activities and Practices Community' and the 'Routines Research Community.'

4 Date and Location

10th-13th October 2023

Harnack-Haus

lhnestr. 16-20

14195 Berlin

5 Course Description

5.1 Abstract and Learning Objectives

The course is designed for doctoral students in business administration who want to learn about and conduct online research as to harness insights from the large amount of (openly available) online data. The aim of the course is to provide students with methodological foundations and advanced knowledge on online research methods in business studies. After attending this course, participants should be able to:

- understand the opportunities and challenges of online research methods
- plan and conduct qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methods online research
- handle data management
- visualize online data
- become sensitive to the specific ethical issues of online research

5.2 Content

Online research methods entail approaches to collecting and analyzing different forms of online data, including openly available textual data (e.g., blogs, online media articles, social media data), digital trace data as well as online ethnography. Such approaches are gaining importance as work and organizing increasingly happen in distributed and virtual settings (e.g., online communities, forums, platforms). The course therefore begins by introducing students to the nature of online data and different research strategies and designs that can be employed in online settings. Students will then learn how to set up and execute both qualitative and quantitative research projects that draw on online data. The course will provide insights into different data collection and data analysis methods that can

be used to handle online data. A special emphasis will be placed on online ethnography as well as the coding of social media data, also with the help of software programs. Different evaluation criteria for how to assess online research methods will be discussed.

5.3 Course Format

The course is designed as a doctorate workshop. Throughout the course, initiative, creativity, and critical thinking on part of the students will be appreciated and encouraged. Please have read the essential readings before coming to class!

5.4 Course Schedule

Day I	J. Costas
1. Welcome and Introduction	10.10.2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approaches to Online Research Methods ▪ From Online, Digital to Virtual Methods 	9.00 – 10.30
– coffee break –	10.30 – 11.00
2. Research Designs	11.00 – 12.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Different Tools ▪ Opportunities and Challenges 	
– lunch break -	12.30 -13.30
3. Group Presentations	13.30-15.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Bot experiments and Spotify ▪ Algorithm and YouTube 	
– coffee break –	15.00-15.30
4. Group Presentations	15.30 – 17.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Platform studies: Twitter as story-telling machine 	
Day II. Qualitative approaches to online research	B. Blagoev
1. Introduction	11.10.2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome ▪ Theoretical foundations of qualitative research ▪ Qualitative research in the digital age: Opportunities and challenges ▪ Overview of qualitative online research methods 	9.00 – 10.30
– coffee break –	10.30-11.00
2. Leveraging online textual data for process research	11.00 – 12.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contextualizing online textual data ▪ Sampling textual data from online sources ▪ Process theorizing from online textual data 	
– lunch break –	12.30-13.30

3. Online ethnography	13.30-15.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Foundations of online ethnography ▪ Locating and defining online fields ▪ Online fieldwork in modern organizational settings 	
– coffee break –	15.00-15.30
4. Analyzing qualitative online data	15.30 – 17.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Analytical strategies for online data ▪ Workshop: Analyzing online meetings ▪ Wrap-up 	
Day III. Analyzing Digital Trace Data	
C. A. Mahringer	
1. Introduction	12.10.2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Welcome ▪ Theoretical foundations of trace data analysis ▪ Opportunities and limitations of trace data analysis ▪ Sources of digital trace data 	9.00 – 10.30
– coffee break –	10.30 – 11.00
2. Refining digital trace data	11.00 – 12.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Defining the lexicon ▪ Cleaning the data ▪ Considering context 	
– lunch break –	12.30 – 13.30
3. Analyzing and visualizing digital trace data (part 1)	13.30 – 15.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overview of software tools ▪ Methods based on whole sequences of events ▪ Workshop: application in ThreadNet 	
– coffee break –	15:00 – 15:30
4. Analyzing and visualizing digital trace data (part 2)	15:30 – 17:00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pattern mining methods ▪ Network methods ▪ Workshop: application in ThreadNet ▪ Wrap-up 	

Day IV	J. Costas
1. Ethics	13.10.2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Old and new ethical considerations ▪ Changing ethical questions 	9.00 – 10.30
– coffee break –	10.30-11.00
2. Ethics	11.00 – 12.30
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ethical considerations of different online research methods ▪ Data issues 	
– lunch break –	12.30-13.30
3. Group Presentations	12.30-15.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group 1: Navigating conflict between research ethics and online platform terms and conditions ▪ Group 2: Legal concerns: The case of Spotify ▪ 	
– coffee break –	15.00-15.30
4. Group Presentations and Reflections	15.30 – 17.00
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group 3: Social Data: Biases, Methodological Pitfalls, and Ethical Boundaries 	

6 Preparation and Literature

Please read the essential readings before coming to class.

6.1 Essential Reading (Day I)

Bruns, A. 2019. After the ‘APIcalypse’: social media platforms and their fight against critical scholarly research. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22 (11), 1543-1566.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1637447>

Nascimento, T., Suarez, M.C. and Campos, R.D. 2022. An integrative review on online ethnography methods: differentiating theoretical bases, potentialities and limitations, *Qualitative Market Research*, 25 (4), 492-510. <https://doi.org/10.1108/QMR-07-2021-0086>

Rogers, R. 2019. *Doing Digital Methods*. London: Sage, chapter 1 & 2.

Further Reading

Hewson, C., 2017. *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*. 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957992>> [Accessed 1 Mar 2023].

Salganik, M. J. 2019. *Bit by Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, chapter 1 & 3.

Group 1: Spotify

Eriksson, M. and Johansson, A. 2017. 'Tracking Gendered Streams', *Culture unbound: Journal of current cultural research*, 9(2), 163-183. doi:[10.25595/1449](https://doi.org/10.25595/1449).

Group 2: YouTube

Airoldi, M., Beraldo, D. and Gandini, A. 2016. 'Follow the algorithm: An exploratory investigation of music on YouTube', *Poetics*, 57, 1-13.

Group 3: Twitter

Rogers, R. 2019. *Doing Digital Methods*. London: Sage, chapter 8.

6.2 Essential Reading (Day II)

Akemu, O., & Abdelnour, S. 2020. Confronting the Digital: Doing Ethnography in Modern Organizational Settings. *Organizational Research Methods*, 23(2): 296–321.

Kozinets, R. V. 2018. Netnography for Management and Business Research. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Business and Management Research Methods: Methods and Challenges*: 384–397. London et al.: Sage.

Levina, N., & Vaast, E. 2015. Leveraging Archival Data from Online Communities for Grounded Process Theorizing. In K. D. Elsbach & R. Kramer (Eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Organizational Research*: 247–256. London and New York: Routledge.

Vesa, M., & Vaara, E. 2014. Strategic ethnography 2.0: Four methods for advancing strategy process and practice research. *Strategic Organization*, 12(4): 288–298.

6.3 Essential Reading (Day III)

Berente, N., Seidel, S., & Safadi, H. (2019). Research commentary—data-driven computationally intensive theory development. *Information Systems Research*, 30(1), 50-64.

George, G., Haas, M. R., & Pentland, A. (2014). Big data and management. *Academy of Management Journal*, 57(2), 321-326.

Mahringer, C.A., Pentland, B.T. (2021). Sequence analysis in routine dynamics. In Feldman, M.S., Pentland, P.T., D'Adderio, L., Dittrich, K., Rerup, C., Seidl, D. (Eds.), *Cambridge handbook of routine dynamics* (pp. 172-183). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Pentland, B., Vaast, E., & Wolf, J. R. (2021). Theorizing process dynamics with directed graphs: A diachronic analysis of digital trace data. *MIS Quarterly*, 45(2).

6.4 Essential Reading (Day IV)

Eynon, R., Fry, J. and Schroeder, R., 2017. *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*. 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957992>> [Accessed 1 Mar 2023].

Puschmann, C. 2019. An end to the wild west of social media research: a response to Axel Bruns. *Information, Communication & Society*, 22 (11), 1582–1589.

Rasmussen, K., 2017. *The SAGE Handbook of Online Research Methods*. 55 City Road, London: SAGE Publications Ltd. Available at: <<https://doi.org/10.4135/9781473957992>>

Further Reading

franzke, aline shakti, Bechmann, Anja, Zimmer, Michael, Ess, Charles and the Association of Internet Researchers (2020). *Internet Research: Ethical Guidelines 3.0*.

Salganik, M. J. 2019. *Bit by Bit: Social Research in the Digital Age*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, chapter 6.

Severson, P. 2020. Applying Critical Digital Method: Ethics, Sampling Strategies and Analysis Methods In: Joacim Hansson and Jonas Svensson (ed.), *Doing Digital Humanities: Concepts, Approaches, Cases* (pp. 81-98). Växjö: Linnaeus University Press.

Group 1: Research ethics and online platform terms and conditions

Chua, S. M., 2022. Navigating conflict between research ethics and online platform terms and conditions: a reflective account. *Research Ethics Review*, 18, 1, 39-50.

Group 2

Eriksson, M., Fleischer, R., Johansson, A., Snickars, P. and Vonderau, P. 2019. *Spotify Teardown: Inside the Black Box of Streaming Music*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, Conclusion.

Group 3

Olteanu, A., Castillo, C., Diaz, F. and Kiciman, E. 2019. Social Data: Biases, Methodological Pitfalls, and Ethical Boundaries, *Frontiers in Big Data*, 2. doi:[10.3389/fdata.2019.00013](https://doi.org/10.3389/fdata.2019.00013).

7 Administration

7.1 Max. number of participants

20 participants

7.2 Preparations and Assignments

Day I

Approximately two weeks before the start of the workshop, we will assign students to groups via e-mail and allocate specific preparation tasks to the groups (for day I & IV).

Day III

Please make sure that you installed the software tool 'ThreadNet', and that it is running on your computer with the provided data set. Please also bring a computer to perform the analysis. More

information on how to install the software tool is available here:
<https://routines.broad.msu.edu/ThreadNet/>. The data set will be provided via email before the workshop.

Day IV

Approximately two weeks before the start of the workshop, we will assign students to groups via e-mail and allocate specific preparation tasks to the groups (for day I & IV).

7.3 Exam

This course is designed as a seminar, which requires preparation by students before each session and dynamic interaction in the classroom. Students are encouraged to debate their particular views, methodological problems, and research issues in class. In order to get a VHB-ProDoc certificate, you have give a group presentation on day 1 and/or day 4 as well as hand in a seminar paper of approx. six pages by e-mail to Dr. Mahringer and Prof. Blagoev & Prof. Costas four weeks after the course finished. Drawing on existing literature on online research methods, the seminar paper shall focus on outlining a research project that is based on online research methods.

7.4 Credits

The course corresponds to a scope of 6 LP/ECTS

8 Working Hours

Aufteilung der Arbeitsstunden / Working Hours	Stunden
<i>Preparations</i>	60 h
<i>Active participation</i>	30 h
<i>Preparation for exam</i>	50 h
<i>Exam</i>	40 h
SUMME	180 h