



Course and Examination Fact Sheet: Spring Semester 2025

8,391: Consultancy Project: How Journalists Combat Fake News in Conflict

ECTS credits: 4

Overview examination/s

(binding regulations see below)

decentral - Active participation, Analog, Individual work individual grade (25%)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Written work, Digital, Group work group grade (30%)

Examination time: Term time

decentral - Written work, Digital, Group work group grade (45%)

Examination time: Term time

Attached courses

Timetable -- Language -- Lecturer

[8,391,1.00 Consultancy Project: How Journalists Combat Fake News in Conflict](#) -- English -- [Smidt Hannah](#)

Course information

Course prerequisites

Students must have an interest in academic research on media effects because they will write a literature review with the practical implication of that research for their 'client', i.e., the Swiss NGO "Fondation Hironnelle".

Moreover, students also must have a profound interest in quantitative (statistical) data collection and analysis. It is beneficial if students have basic skills with R or Stata.

Finally, students must have a great interest and some experience in working in diverse teams towards an agreed upon solution. Thus, it is strongly recommended that students complete the relevant MIA Morning courses prior to taking the Consultancy Project course.

Learning objectives

During a Consultancy Project course, students

- acquire and foster skills in the application of theoretical concepts to real-life situations;
- gain experience with actual issues in the practitioners' world that arise in the course of the consultancy project;
- foster various professional soft skills, including teamwork, project management, communication, as well as hard skills, such as practice-oriented research, data analysis, writing, and presentation.

Students who participate in this course will, afterwards, be able to

- understand the media environment in the Sahel region and in West Africa and how it may contribute to resolving (or exacerbating) violent conflict;
- come up with research designs and analyses for evaluating possible solutions to practical problems (e.g., how independent media can become a trusted source of information and how independent radio stations can use the internet to enlarge their audience and interact with listeners);
- translate academic findings to the policy world by learning how to write a policy brief;



- reflect critically on the links between theory and practice and how each relates to the other in the fields of peace and conflict studies and media effects research.

Course content

Students will work for the Swiss NGO Fondation Hirondelle. The mission of the Swiss NGO Fondation Hirondelle is to provide information to populations faced with crisis, empowering them in their daily lives and as citizens. More information can be found here: <https://www.hirondelle.org/en/who-we-are>

They will assist their client to answer the following questions:

- When, why and how do radio stations use mobile phones and digital technologies to increase their audience and interact with their listeners?
- How do audiences evaluate these modes of bringing radio to them (e.g., mobile phones and digital technologies)?
- Where are the possible dangers and risk in deploying these tools in armed conflict-affected environments?
- What is trust in media outlets?
- Why do some media outlets gain more trust from their audience than others?
- Why do some people develop more trust media outlets than other people?
- Which research designs could be used to assess the individual-level and media outlet-related determinants of trust in media outlets?

To answer the above questions, students will conduct in-depth reviews of academic literature as well as policy-oriented literature, collect their own statistical data on radio programs of the client.

Course structure and indications of the learning and teaching design

The course starts off with two introductory lectures that discuss in-depth the expectations of the course and provide the context of the demands of the 'client', i.e., the Swiss NGO Fondation Hirondelle.

In week 3, students are also introduced to their 'client' and are briefed on the specific problem. This session also serves the formation of student groups.

In the following two weeks, student groups will work on the specific problem given by their 'client'.

At mid-term (week 6), student groups present their literature reviews and reflect on their results and progress (as well as roadblocks and difficulties).

In the second half of the term, groups then continue to work on an in-depth statistical analysis of the problem and their recommendations for the 'client'.

In week 11, the results are presented to the instructor of the course. Students receive feedback for adjustments. In week 12, the results are presented to the 'client'.

Students then work independently on their project in their groups. They are responsible for the product that is delivered to the 'client'. Nevertheless, the student and the instructor will meet each week to give updates on progress and discuss directions.

Course literature

Course instructors will provide recommended references, including academic journal articles, on relevant topics during the course.

Additional course information

None.

Examination information



Examination sub part/s

1. Examination sub part (1/3)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Active participation
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Oral examination
Examination mode	Analog
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Synchronous
Examination location	On Campus
Grading type	Individual work individual grade
Weighting	25%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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2. Examination sub part (2/3)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	30%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision



Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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3. Examination sub part (3/3)

Examination modalities

Examination type	Written work
Responsible for organisation	decentral
Examination form	Written work
Examination mode	Digital
Time of examination	Term time
Examination execution	Asynchronous
Examination location	Off Campus
Grading type	Group work group grade
Weighting	45%
Duration	--

Examination languages

Question language: English
Answer language: English

Remark

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Examination-aid rule

Free aids provision

Basically, students are free to choose aids. Any restrictions are defined by the faculty members in charge of the examination under supplementary aids.

Supplementary aids

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Examination content

Examination Part 1: Develop a ca. 3000 words literature review on the topic of interest of the 'client'. (30%)

Examination Part 2: Engage constructively in weekly meetings of your group (70minutes) and together with the instructor (20minutes). Be ready to orally present your work results and plans. (25%)

Examination Part 3: Conduct a statistical data collection and a statistical data analysis for your 'client'. Develop a write-up for your client ("policy brief") of the results of your data collection and analysis. Give recommendation that are relevant for the work of your 'client'. (45%)

Examination relevant literature

Students are asked to search for literature themselves with guidance by the instructor.



Please note

Please note that only this fact sheet and the examination schedule published at the time of bidding are binding and takes precedence over other information, such as information on StudyNet (Canvas), on lecturers' websites and information in lectures etc.

Any references and links to third-party content within the fact sheet are only of a supplementary, informative nature and lie outside the area of responsibility of the University of St.Gallen.

Documents and materials are only relevant for central examinations if they are available by the end of the lecture period (CW21) at the latest. In the case of centrally organised mid-term examinations, the documents and materials up to CW 13 (Monday, 25 March 2025) are relevant for testing.

Binding nature of the fact sheets:

- Course information as well as examination date (organised centrally/decentrally) and form of examination: from bidding start in CW 04 (Thursday, 23 January 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for decentralised examinations: in CW 12 (Monday, 17 March 2025);
- Examination information (supplementary aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised mid-term examinations: in CW 14 (Monday, 31 March 2025);
- Examination information (regulations on aids, examination contents, examination literature) for centrally organised examinations: two weeks before ending with de-registration period in CW 15 (Monday, 07 April 2025).