

COURSE MANUAL

FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIETAL RESILIENCE

S_FSR

2021-2022

YEAR 1, PERIOD 2, NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2021

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Course name	Foundations of Societal Resilience	
Executed by	Sociology, Organization Science, Anthropology, Public Administration & Political Science	
Course code	S_FSR	
Level	400	
Academic Year	2021-2022	
Period	Y1, P2 (November-December)	
EC	6 EC, 168 hours	
Teaching Staff	René Bekkers, r.bekkers@vu.nl (coordinator) Kees Boersma, f.k.boersma@vu.nl Dimitris Dalakoglou, d.dalakoglou@vu.nl Wolfgang Wagner, w.m.wagner@vu.nl	
Mode of instruction	Lectures and workshops	
Mode of assessment	Written exam	
Open to	Students in the Research Master Societal Resilience (Y1)	
Frequency p/w	2 meetings, Tuesday and Thursday	
Study load allocation	Per week	Total
1. Lectures, workshops	2.8	22
2. Reading	13.2	106
3. Assignments	3.9	31
4. Preparation for the exam	0	9
5. Total		168

GENERAL AIM OF THIS COURSE

This course aims to discuss the key theories and approaches to resilience in different academic disciplines. You also learn to critically reflect on the construct of societal resilience. With this course, you lay the foundation for their future work on societal resilience, both in the thematic courses in P4 as well as in Writing a Research Proposal in P5 and the internship and master thesis in the second year.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Societal resilience refers to responses and strategies at the individual, group, institutional and societal level, that are innovative and effective and that contribute to 'a better world'. A resilient society not only tries to respond to disruption and crisis by trying to bring the system *back* into balance, but rather tries to develop solutions that bring a system in *a new state* that is capable of dealing with present and future challenges. In this course, you learn to critically reflect on the concept of societal resilience. You will reflect on the ways resilience has been conceptualized in different disciplines and how the concept of resilience has been used to inform viable solutions to the wicked problems that present day society faces. You will read theory papers on resilience as well as empirical papers in which individual, organizational and societal resilience is investigated using both theoretical and empirical, and both quantitative and a qualitative research approaches.

In this course, we discuss theories on resilience. Societal resilience is a complex construct because it has a functional definition. Also the term has been applied in many contexts. The wide range of application possibilities makes resilience useful for researchers in different disciplines. We discuss the approaches to resilience in different disciplines. Also the construct raises questions from a meta science perspective. We discuss questions on resilience from the philosophy of science and the sociology of knowledge.

This course consists of three parts.

1. First we discuss the concept of resilience. You discover the ways in which societal resilience emerges at the micro-, meso- and macro-level, in the actions of citizens, groups and nations. You learn about theories that explain when and why resilience emerges, and about the consequences of resilience.
2. Then we discuss theories on resilience from different disciplines in the social sciences, broadly conceived: psychology, political economy, political science, public administration, organization sciences, anthropology, and sociology. Also we discuss theories on resilience from other disciplines: behavioural genetics, evolutionary biology, and the natural sciences.
3. Finally, we apply the theories to two cases: disaster responses, and immigration and in a field visit to the 510 project at the Red Cross Head Quarters.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge and Understanding. By the end of this course, you are able to:

- (1) interpret societal problems related to the ISR themes dynamics of interconnectedness, forms of governance, social diversity and issues of care and well-being from the perspective of resilience (KU1, KU2);
- (2) recognize resilience at the individual, community, organizational, and national level (KU1, KU2);

Application. You have acquired the competences to:

- (3) discern theories on resilience in sociology, governance, psychology, and organization science research (A6);
- (4) apply theories on resilience from different disciplines and at different levels of analysis to cases of resilience (A6);

Making judgements. You are able to:

- (5) recognize the distinctive elements of different disciplinary perspectives on resilience, their strengths, weaknesses and interrelations (JF9);
- (6) reflect critically on the scientific and societal relevance of research on resilience in different disciplines (JF10);

Communication. You have acquired the skills to:

- (7) present theories and interpretations of results of research on resilience in a clear manner; (C13)

Learning skills. You are able to:

- (8) use insights from peers in a multidisciplinary group in the analysis of a case (LS15).

With this course, you gain specialist knowledge of and insight into contemporary research questions regarding complex societal problems (KU1) and societal resilience (KU2). You learn to analyse societal problems and societal resilience employing knowledge from various disciplines (AK6) and learn to reflect on different perspectives (JF9). By discussing research presented in the course, you learn to evaluate the scientific and societal relevance of research (JF10). In the assignments, you learn to present research results and interpretations in a clear manner (C13) and process insights from peers in your team (LS15).

PLACE OF THE COURSE

This course prepares for the P4 courses on themes in societal resilience by discussing the concept of resilience and applying it in multiple areas. The course includes examples from the P4 themes diversity and inclusive communities, and markets, identity and governance challenges. The course runs parallel to Big Data / Small Data, a methods course in which you learn to collect and analyse empirical data. The current course does not have a data component.

REQUIRED LEVEL OF ENTRANCE

This course builds on the course Big Problems (BP) in P1, in which you have become acquainted with the complexity of societal challenges. The skill to investigate societal issues from multiple perspectives is trained further in the current course. Knowledge about the complexity of societal challenges and examples of societal resilience with respect to these challenges from Big Problems is not a prerequisite, but will facilitate the application of theories on resilience discussed in the course.

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

In this theory course you read a lot of articles. We meet twice a week on campus for workshops. In the Tuesday meetings we have time from 15:30 to 19:00. Thursday meetings are from 13:30 to 17:00. The workshops are interactive. We discuss the readings and the assignments in a constructive and critical way.

Before each meeting, you read the literature and submit the assignment. We start each meeting with a brief presentation of the readings by one of the participants in the course (see below). Other participants also think about and prepare questions on the readings for the presenter. Relevant questions include clarification questions (e.g., the meaning of terms), theory questions (e.g., on the relation between constructs), methods questions (e.g., on data collection and analytical procedures), discussion questions (e.g., on limitations of the research), and meta questions (e.g., on distinctive characteristics of the disciplinary approach).

After the presentation, we discuss the assignments with each other in two stages. First we split up in breakout groups of 4-5 students. Teaching staff go around the rooms. Next, we come back in a plenary session to hear back from all groups and discuss views. Teaching staff actively participate in the plenary discussion, and connect ideas and theories discussed in the meeting with related constructs in other research and reflect on disciplinary differences in the approach to resilience.

MODE OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment will take place through written assignments and an exam. The course grade is based on an evaluation of the exam at the end of the course (50%) and the final paper (50%).

Written assignments. For each meeting, you write a one pager responding to the question(s) about the readings for that particular meeting, and summarize your thoughts on a single slide that you can share in class. The instructions for assignments are provided in Appendix A. The assignments are not graded. To pass the course, you have to submit each assignment before the meeting begins in which it is discussed. The lecturers use this information to structure the lectures and the discussion.

Presentations. We discuss the readings in breakout rooms through short presentations. The goal of the presentation is to provide a clear and short summary of the reading. The presentation is 3 minutes (max) and uses only one slide / image. At the first meeting, we create a schedule for the presentations. The presentation is not graded.

Final paper. In the last week of the course, there are no meetings. You can work on your final assignment, which requires you to review the readings and insights from the preceding weeks.

Exam. The exam takes place at the end of the course. You will receive a mock exam one week before the written exam. The mock exam is a diagnostic test, consisting of questions that are similar to the questions in the written exam.

The exam consists of open questions. The questions test your performance in understanding ideas and concepts, applying them to new materials, analyzing connections between ideas and materials, and evaluating arguments based on theories and results. The questions do not test your recall of facts and concepts. To answer the questions, you are allowed to consult the readings, slides, and other materials available on the web. The questions presuppose that you understand the theories and hypotheses discussed in the readings and in course meetings. The prototypical question starts with a piece of new material: a quote, a cartoon, a news item, a table or a figure from an article not discussed in class. You should be able to interpret the new material and explain it from theories and concepts covered in readings and class meetings. Questions of a second type work in the reverse order, and ask you to first draw connections between theories and hypotheses, and then invite you to present examples from new materials you collect yourself.

General guidelines for assignments:

- The final paper should be typed in Times New Roman, 11 pt, 1,5 line spacing. Use page numbers. Always mention your name, your student number, title of the paper, the name of the course, your e-mail address and a word count.
- Use a consistent style for references.
- Check your English!
- Plagiarism is absolutely not allowed. For more information: http://www.fsw.vu.nl/nl/Images/RR%20excie%20FSW%202012-13_tcm30-246808.pdf

ASSESSMENT MATRIX

Learning goals: you are able to...	Exit qualification:	Assessment in assignment
1. interpret societal problems related to the ISR themes dynamics of interconnectedness, forms of governance, social diversity and issues of care and well-being from the perspective of resilience	KU1, KU2	1, 12, 14
2. recognize resilience at the individual, community, organizational, and national level	KU1, KU2	1, 4, 14
3. discern theories on resilience in sociology, anthropology, political science, psychology, and organization science research	A6	1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 14
4. apply theories on resilience from different disciplines and at different levels of analysis to cases of resilience	A6	3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13
5. recognize the distinctive elements of different disciplinary perspectives on resilience, their strengths, weaknesses and interrelations	JF9	1, 3, 5, 7, 10, 14
6. reflect critically on the scientific and societal relevance of research on resilience in different disciplines	JF10	2, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14
7. present theories and interpretations of results of research on resilience in a clear manner	C13	Presentations, 13, 14, 15
8. use insights from peers in a multidisciplinary group in the analysis of a case	LS15	4, 6, 12, 14

SCHEDULE

Meeting	1: 2 NOV, 15.30-19.00, 5A32	2: 4 NOV, 15:30-17:00, 5A32	3: 9 NOV, 15.30-19.00, 0G10	4: 11 NOV, 15.30-17.00, 1G08	5: 16 NOV, 9.00-12.30, NU-4B17	6: 18 NOV, 15.30-17.00, 1G08	7: 23 NOV, 15.30-19.00, 0G10	8: 25 NOV, 15.30-17.00, 1G08
Title	Conceptualizations	Meta questions and disciplinary approaches	Sociological approach	Case: disaster resilience	Anthropological approach	International Development	Psychological approach	Critical approach
Reading	- Bekkers 2016 - Mohaupt 2009 - Norris et al. 2008	- Baggio, Brown & Hellebrandt, 2015 - Hoffman, Sharma & Watts, 2017 - Xu & Kajikawa, 2018	- Adger, 2000 - Aldrich & Meyer, 2015 - Portes, 1998	- Abramson et al 2015 - Cutter et al, 2010 - Papadopoulos et al., 2017 - Paton & Johnston, 2007 - Tierney, 2015	- Barrios, 2016 - Bollig, 2014 - Dalakoglou, 2016 - Pike, 2018	- Barrett & Constas, 2014 - Bénét et al., 2014 - Chugani et al., 2021 - Gaillard, 2010 - Keating & Hanger-Kopp, 2020	- Amstadter et al., 2016 - Chabris et al., 2013 - Luthar, 2006 - Rutter, 2006	- Joseph, 2013 - Juncos, 2018 - Wagner & Anholt, 2016
Assignment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

Meeting	9: 30 NOV, 15.30-19.00, Red Cross HQ, The Hague	10: 2 DEC, 15.30-17.00, 1G08	11: 7 DEC, 09.00-12.30, NU-2B12	12: 9 DEC, 15.30-17.00, 1G08	13: 14 DEC, 15.30-19.00, 0G10	14: 16 DEC, 15.30-17.00, 1G08	15: 21 DEC, 12:15-14:30, 1A38
Title	Field visit: the 510 project	Ecological approach	Resilience Grassroots and Social Movements	Case: acceptance of immigrants	Conclusion	Course Review	Exam
Reading	- Red Cross	- Boyd et al., 2015 - Brown 2014 - Lebel et al. 2006 - Rigaud et al., 2018	- Cretney & Bond, 2014 - Davidson, 2010 - Kousis & Paschou, 2017 - MacKinnon & Derickson, 2013 - Parker & Hackett, 2012	- Bakker et al., 2018 - Ceobanu & Escandell, 2010 - Van der Meer & Tolsma, 2014	- Bonanno et al., 2010 - Holling, 1973 - Healy, 2017 - Infurna & Lothar, 2016 - Luthar & Cicchetti, 2000		
Assignment	9	10	11	12	13	14	15

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1. Recognizing and classifying resilience

a. Every day you can find examples of societal resilience in the daily news, even when the term is not explicitly used. Select an article from this week’s news that discusses a case of resilience. Describe who is resilient to what and why according to the article. Include a proper reference to the news source. Present your example on a single slide that you can share in the meeting.

b. Read Bekkers (2016), Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum (2008), and Mohaupt (2009). The authors discuss a large number of approaches to resilience from different disciplines. Identify three approaches, and place them in the 9 cells of the 3 level ABC model below.

	Antecedents	Behaviors	Consequences
Macro-level: Government policies	1	2	3
Meso-level: Organizational capacities	4	5	6
Micro-level: Citizen’s resources	7	8	9

How do researchers in different disciplines approach resilience? Discuss the differences in the kind of research questions that researchers try to answer in different disciplines. Finally, discuss the research methods that are used in these disciplines. Present your example on a single slide that you can share.

2. Meta questions: philosophy of science and approaches to resilience

Aside from the ideological underpinnings of the concept and the challenge of reliable and valid measures of resilience, the concept raises questions from a philosophy of science perspective. To what extent can resilience be predicted? In the absence of adversity, how can we tell whether actors are resilient?

- a. Baggio, Brown & Hellebrandt (2015) and Xu & Kajikawa (2018) present network analyses of the research on resilience. The topic is present in many disciplines, without much cross-fertilization in terms of theories or approaches. Formulate testable hypotheses that explain clustering of citation networks and knowledge fragmentation.
- b. Read Hoffman, Sharma & Watts (2017). Predictions on systemic changes due to exogenous shocks such as natural disasters, terrorist attacks, or financial crises rely on mathematical models that do not offer explanations for resilience. What do you make of the argument of Hoffman, Sharma & Watts against the assertion that “an emphasis on predictive accuracy leads to complex, uninterpretable models that generalize poorly and offer little insight”?

3. Sociological approaches to resilience

Adger (2000) asks how social and ecological resilience are related. Aldrich & Meyer (2015) argue that social capital should be the basis for policy on disaster survival and recovery. Link their arguments to at least two different theories of social capital discussed by Portes (1998).

4. Case: disaster resilience

Suppose a hurricane like Katrina would hit the coasts of New York or Amsterdam. What would you predict would be the result in terms of damage, government response, and child outcomes? How would the consequences be different between these cities? To what extent are these differences caused by mechanisms at the macro, meso, and micro-level?

To answer these questions, read Abramson et al. (2015) and reread Norris, Stevens, Pfefferbaum, Wyche, & Pfefferbaum (2008). Apply insights from these papers and other theories or authors discussed in the previous weeks that you think may be relevant.

For your final assignment: draft a research question using the rules in [https://maken.wiki-wijs.nl/178152/Better Academic Research Writing A Practical Guide#!page-6746835](https://maken.wiki-wijs.nl/178152/Better%20Academic%20Research%20Writing%20A%20Practical%20Guide#!page-6746835).

5. An anthropological approach to resilience

Read "What is Anthropology?" at: <https://www.americananthro.org/AdvanceYourCareer/Content.aspx?ItemNumber=2150> and the articles by Barrios (2016), Dalakoglou (2016), Bollig (2016) and Pike (2018) for today's meeting.

- a. Discuss and explain briefly what is distinctive about the anthropological perspective of the concept of resilience in comparison to other disciplinary approaches, and where you see similarities.
- b. Anthropology is often described as a discipline that deals with 'exotic' and small -relatively isolated- communities in the Global South. Can you discuss the uses of anthropological approaches in Western contexts in reference to resilience?

6. Resilience in International Development

With references to Chugani et al. (2021) along the rest of the articles that take a more critical approaches to development and resilience, please debate whether resilience is a useful concept for international development practice and policies if yes, explain in what ways, and if not, why not.

7. Psychological approaches to resilience

In this meeting, we discuss approaches from psychology. First read Luthar (2006) and Rutter (2006), then Amstadter et al. (2016). Finally, read Chabris et al. (2013). In your weekly assignment, answer the following questions:

- a. What in your view is distinctively psychological about the definitions of resilience by Amstadter et al. (2016) "adaptive functioning in the aftermath of adversity, stress, and trauma" and Rutter (2006) "a relative resistance to environmental risk experiences, or the overcoming of stress or adversity"?
- b. Chabris et al. (2013) provide arguments why it is unlikely that researchers find genes related to social science traits ('complex phenotypes'). Apply the arguments to the concept of resilience. In your view, what can we learn from twin studies and from behavioural genetics in general on social causes of resilience?

Search the academic record of published and unpublished research for studies that report genetic loci associated with resilience. Describe which strategy you have used (search engine, keywords), and the results you found. Enter the bibliographic details of the studies you found in the database prepared on Canvas.

8. Positioning resilience in political debates

The concept of resilience is used in political debates on the future of crisis management and interventions in conflict zones. The 2016 Global Strategy of the European Union is a prominent example. The paradigm shift to resilience has been accompanied by criticism according to which responsibility is shifted to individuals and resilience is used as a pretext to scale down expectations and resources (Joseph, 2013; Wagner & Anholt, 2016; Juncos 2018). Discuss these arguments, and defend your position in the debate (max 1 page).

9. Revise research question

Revise the research question for your final assignment, benefiting from the feedback you received.

10. Ecological approach: resilience in response to climate change

Lebel et al. (2006) present a set of case studies of regional sustainability problems. Brown (2014) presents an analysis of global environmental change.

- a. What theories do the authors present on resilience? Which are the core propositions of the theories?
- b. In what ways are the views of the authors divergent? Are they complementary or mutually exclusive?
- c. The Groundswell report by the World Bank (Rigaud et al., 2018) predicts massive intracontinental migration as a result of climate change in the next three decades. Identify the models used in the report and discuss the assumptions that they rely on. What do the assumptions tell us about the nature of resilience, according to the authors?

11. Resilience and Grassroots Social Movements

With references to the readings of this week analyze what is the relationship between grassroots social movements and resilience. Debate whether we can have a radical version of resilience as discussed by Cretney and Bond (2014).

12. Case: acceptance of immigrants

In this meeting, we discuss attitudes towards immigrants of citizens in destination countries and policy choices in relation to integration from a sociological perspective. Support for and acceptance of immigrants is important for their integration in the destination country.

The meeting serves the goal that you learn facts and theories on integration of immigrants from sociology and social policy. Secondary goals are that you learn to (a) apply theories on integration and (b) to analyse social phenomena from methodological principles on clustering of data and causal inference. The questions that we will investigate during the meeting are the following:

1. Which countries and which groups have a higher rate of acceptance of immigrants?
2. How can differences between countries and groups in acceptance of immigrants be explained?
3. Which characteristics of immigration policies increase the chances on the labour market and social integration of immigrants?

To answer these questions, we discuss theories on trust, relative deprivation, discrimination, labour market policy, ethnic diversity and social cohesion, and compare the Netherlands with other countries in Europe and with the US and Canada.

Assignment: suppose another 'refugee crisis' emerges: climate change in sub-Saharan Africa forces millions to seek asylum in Europe. Predict for which social groups in host countries immigration is likely to feel like a threat. Based on the theories you have learned in this course, how can these tensions be reduced?

13. Conclusion

- a. In 1973, Holling stated that "A quantitative view of the behavior of the system is essential". Revisit Luthar's 2006 review against the background of the research agenda for research on resilience (Luthar, 2000). What is your view on the progress in the past 45 years?
- b. Healy (2017) advocates against nuance. Which of the theories discussed in the course do you think is most promising? Does that theory follow Healy's recommendations?
- c. Bonanno et al. (2010) argue that resilience is the common outcome after disasters. In contrast, Infurna & Lothar (2016) provide evidence that resilience is actually much less common and Doré & Bolger (2017) provide evidence about changes in well-being after stressful life events. Which theories on resilience are inconsistent with the findings of Infurna & Lothar (2016) and Doré & Bolger (2017)? Why?

14. Final paper

Revisit the theories on resilience that you have studied in this course. Formulate a substantive research problem on societal resilience, and show how you can apply three different theories as discussed in the course to this research problem. In which cells of the 3 level ABC model do the theories belong? Contrast the perspectives on resilience from these theories with each other. Focus on the following questions: What is the scope and the explanatory power of the theories? What are their mutual relationships? Are they mutually exclusive, or complementary? Finally, reflect on the ISR themes by discussing the strengths and weaknesses of multidisciplinary research for your research question. Submit the final paper ultimately on 17 December 2021.