UNIVERSIDADE LUSÍADA
LISBOA

Course Unit Program
Social Reality Observatory

Academic Year 2025/2026

1. Organic Unit

Higher Institute of Social Work

2. Course

SOCIAL WORK

3. Cycle

1st

4. Course Unit

Social Reality Observatory (L4509)

5. Scientific Area

6. Curricular Year

1st

7. Type of Curricular Unit / Semester

2nd Semester

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8. Class type and workload (work time)

Theoretical classes:	30,00
Practical classes:	
Theoretical-Practical Classes	
Tutorial Guidance:	20,00

9. ECTS Credits

6,00

10. Scientific Area Coordinator

11. Regent

Prof. Doutora MARIA ISABEL DE JESUS SOUSA

12. Assistants

13. Teaching Language

Portuguese

14. General Objectives

Promote the introduction to the study, research, data recording and interpretation of social reality, within the scope of Social Work.

15. Specific Objectives

- Develop the ability to observe contemporary social phenomena, from the perspective of Social Work;
- Learn different techniques for gathering information and experience their use;
- Learn to systematize, organize and analyze data on social reality;
- Develop students' social sensitivity to the ethical and deontological principles of Social Work and social research.

16. Skills to be acquired

It is intended that students at the end of this CU will be able to:
- Recognize the importance of studying and analyzing social reality for professional intervention;
- Collect and systematize relevant data for professional practice, through the application of scientific methods, respecting the ethical principles of social research and Social Work;
- Analyze the social reality and problematize the intervention of Social Work in different contexts.

17. Teaching Methodology

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Teaching-learning, valuing autonomous and shared learning, based mainly on:
- Theoretical exposition of the syllabus;
- Information research and data collection by students;
- Analysis and interpretation of data by students;
- Systematization and presentation of results by students.

18. Course Unit Program

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1. Introduction: basic principles of intellectual work organization.
1.1. Summary presentation of the Knowledge Architecture Portal
1.2. Ethical issues related to the reuse of information.

2. The importance of observation in reading social reality and its impact on social worker intervention

3. The observation of social reality
3.1. What do we know? How do we build this knowledge? What obstacles can we encounter in this knowledge process?
3.2. The objective and subjective dimensions of social reality
3.3. The 'invisibility' of everyday life
3.4. The construction of a scientific view of social reality

4. Introduction to different paradigms, methodologies, and research methods in social sciences
4.1. Quantitative and qualitative perspectives
4.2. Practice-oriented perspectives: action research
4.3. Methodological integration
4.4. Triangulation

5. Sources used in the observation of social reality
5.1. Primary and secondary sources
5.2. Direct and indirect sources
5.3. Critical Analysis of the Sources
5.4. Citation and bibliographical references

6. Data collection techniques
6.1. The documentary research
6.2. Direct observation
6.3. The interview
6.4. Life stories and biographical approaches
6.5. The focus group
6.6. The questionnaire surveys.

7. Instruments for analysis and registering social reality applied by Social Work
7.1. Drawing up and keeping Social Work records: why? What for?
7.2. Main types of records. The importance of the Field Diary.
7.3. Data analysis.
7.4. Skills to be developed/mobilised.

8. Professional contexts as social reality observatories
8.1. Observation and analysis of Intervention Units
8.2. Systematization of information, problematization and production of useful knowledge for

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social intervention

9. Ethical and deontological issues associated with social research.

19. Assessment Methods

According to the general regulation of disciplines, continuous assessment will consist of:
- 2 individually written tests - weighting factor 3
- Oral intervention (includes scheduled oral intervention: presentation and discussion of data resulting from observation exercises) - weighting factor 2.5
- Other Elements - weighting factor 1

20. Didactic Resources

- Reference bibliographic documents;
- Computer and multimedia projector;
- Digital platforms (Moodle & Teams);
- Database "Carta Social";
- Internet

21. Sustainability Objectives

SDG 16
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

22. Keywords

Observation
Social Reality
Methods and techniques of research
Social Work
Ethics and deontol

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23. Main Bibliography

Author(s):	Joubert, Lynette & Martin Webber		
Title:	The Routledge Handbook of Social Work Practice Research		
Edition:	1st	Year:	2020
Local:	London		
Publisher:	Routledge		

Author(s):	Rubin, Allen & Earl R Babbie		
Title:	Essential research methods for social work		
Edition:	9th	Year:	2017
Local:	Boston		
Publisher:	Cengage		

Author(s):	COUTINHO, Clara P.		
Title:	Metodologia de Investigação em Ciências Humanas		
Edition:	2.ª	Year:	2022
Local:	Coimbra		
Publisher:	Almedina		

24. Complementary Bibliography

Author(s):	FLICK, Uwe		
Title:	Métodos qualitativos na investigação científica		
Edition:	1.ª	Year:	2005
Local:	Lisboa		
Publisher:	Monitor		

Author(s):	Dawson, Catherine		
Title:	Introduction to research methods : a pratical guide for anyone undertaking a research project		
Edition:	5.ª	Year:	2019
Local:	London		
Publisher:	Robinson		

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Ficha técnica MIP / MIP Datasheet	
Título / Title	Course Unit Program 'OBSERVATÓRIO DA REALIDADE SOCIAL': Academic Year 2025/2026
Autor / Author	Prof. Doutora MARIA ISABEL DE JESUS SOUSA
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Descritores / Descriptors	-
Colaborador(es) / Colaborator(s)	-
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