



UNIVERSITÀ  
DEGLI STUDI  
FIRENZE

**DIDA**  
DIPARTIMENTO DI  
ARCHITETTURA



GRAN SASSO  
SCIENCE INSTITUTE  
CENTER FOR ADVANCED STUDIES

HOW DO RESEARCHERS  
GENERATE AND DEFEND  
IDEAS IN THE  
PLANNING FIELD?

4<sup>TH</sup> JOINT  
MEETING

on research methodology in the field of  
planning and urban studies



## University of Florence

PhD Program on Urban and Regional Planning  
Doctoral School of Architecture

### WITH THE SUPPORT OF

## Gran Sasso Science Institute

Doctoral programme in Urban Studies and Regional Science

### ORGANISED BY A NETWORK OF ITALIAN UNIVERSITIES

University of Florence, University of Cagliari, Gran Sasso Science Institute - L'Aquila,  
IUAV - Venice, Polytechnic University of Milan, Polytechnic University of Turin,  
Sapienza University of Rome, University of Molise, University of Naples,  
University of Palermo, University of Sassari

**JANUARY 26-27 | 2017**

## DIDA - Dipartimento di Architettura

via della Mattonaia, 6 | 50121 Firenze - Italy

### REGISTRATION

Attendees are asked to register as soon as possible – and, in any case, by the 8<sup>th</sup> of January 2017 – by sending an email to [researchmethodologyschool@gmail.com](mailto:researchmethodologyschool@gmail.com) specifying the following details:

- Name, Surname, Affiliation and Role;
- Which workshop s/he would like to attend;
- Interest in sending a product to be discussed during the selected workshop. This product could be a paper, a research question, a research programme, a chapter of a thesis, a formulation of a research issue. In any case, the submitted document must not exceed 2,000 words.

The deadline for submission is **31<sup>st</sup> December 2016**

The workshop will provide students with **4 credits** (to be agreed with the sending schools).

HOW DO RESEARCHERS  
GENERATE AND DEFEND  
IDEAS IN THE  
PLANNING FIELD?



A network of scholars from a number of Italian universities, engaged with doctoral courses, have voluntarily set up a PhD learning project on research methodology in the field of planning and urban studies, based at the University of Florence.

The initiative was inaugurated in 2011. The opening was the “First Research Methodology Day”, offered to PhD candidates and young Italian researchers. From year to year, topics, issues, research challenges have been covered, enabling an open and dialectic dialogue between both PhD students and scholars as well as between young and senior academics. This year this initiative has successfully reached its fourth edition.

The initiative was originally intended as an annual meeting. But it has slowly been converted into a project structured as a “research methodology school” that offers graduate students, PhD candidates, young academics and scholars on Italian doctoral courses the opportunity to interactively build learning and training paths in research methodology. It also simplifies the sharing of resources (in terms of people, lectures, expertise, knowledge etc.), opportunities for debate, as well as alignment among research programs also in regard to the international research context. The initiative is repeated every year and is organized on a two days basis. The first (whose format has remained unchanged) is devoted to workshops on three major areas of commitment in research methodology in order to discern questions and problems. They are: researching/ investigating difference; doing research in different cultural contexts; and writing. The workshops are intended to address questions related to methods of qualitative and quantitative research and to the research-action approach; the challenge of working with comparative approaches beyond the stereotyped ‘divides’ that have influenced international research (north/south divide; formal/informal etc.); especially the effort to tackle the big question of the subject/object relationship and interference in research work, as well as the difference between heuristic and epistemological research work at different stages of building a research project and conducting the research itself. The second day addresses a different issue each year, selected with reference to requests and the needs of Italian doctoral programs within the wider international research context.

This year, the second day will develop a major theme of research in all its stages: *How do researchers generate and defend ideas in the planning field?* The idea comes from the work of Ann Forsyth, professor of urban planning at Harvard University, Graduate School of Design – on different ways of planning research. In particular, this event has been designed around Forsyth’s question “How do Planners Generate Ideas (?)”, which sheds light on some crucial aspects of the researchers’ scientific and ethical contribution with reference to the exchange between researchers and practitioners in urban planning.

Three speakers who, over the time, have shared ideas and key-contributions in the field of research methodology, have been invited to discuss this issue in dialogue with Ann Forsyth (Harvard Graduate School of Design). They are Francesco Lo Piccolo (University of Palermo), Stefano Moroni (Polytechnic of Milan), and Elisabete A. Silva (University of Cambridge).

The initiative is open to PhD candidates and young Italian researchers and academics engaged in the field of planning and urban studies. The commitment of all interested colleagues who perform tutoring, evaluation and review of all types of research products (books, articles, doctoral theses, case studies etc.) is very welcome.

# PROGRAM

JANUARY 26

## 9.30 | WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

**Prof. Saverio Mecca**  
*Head of Department*

**Prof. Camilla Perrone**  
*Coordinator of the PhD Program on Urban and Regional Planning*

## 10.00 | PARALLEL WORKSHOP (SESSION I)

### 1 ► Research/Investigating

This year the workshop on “Research/ Investigating” will be focused on qualitative methodologies for research with particular attention to policy analysis, the construction and use of case-studies and ethnographical approaches. The false opposition between qualitative and quantitative approaches will also be explored. The workshop will try to unpack various issues related to qualitative methodologies of research, such as: what are the potentialities and limits of qualitative research approaches in the urban/ planning field? What convergences, divergences, possible integrations exist between qualitative and quantitative research? Can qualitative research methodologies be reproduced in different territorial and policy contexts?

**Organised by:** Giovanni Attili *Sapienza - University of Rome* | Paola Briata *Polytechnic of Milan* | Anna Maria Colavitti *University of Cagliari* | Lidia Decandia *University of Sassari* | Barbara Pizzo e Alberto Budoni *Sapienza - University of Rome* | Filippo Schilleci *University of Palermo*

### 2 ► Alternative Cultures in Planning Research

The current global challenges in cities and regions require different forms of knowledge, if not collective kinds of intelligence. They can therefore take advantage of the internal diversity of the “alternative cultures” existing in planning research. However, to provide a useful contribution, as well as not to discriminate against each other, planning researchers, beginning with doctoral students, must recognize the complementarity of those cultures, so that a social responsive planning research “meta-culture” can emerge.

**Organised by:** Luciano De Bonis *University of Molise* | Carlo Cellamare e Daniela De Leo *Sapienza - University of Rome* | Laura Lieto *University of Naples - Federico II*

### 3 ► Academic Writing

The aim of the workshop is to help PhD candidates to develop as writers within the academic community by reflecting upon the conventions of written texts, with particular reference to essays for international scientific journals in English. The workshop will offer insights in particular on: the international journal ranking system; the submission and review process in international journals; choosing the most appropriate journals and on framing and revising papers according to journals. The workshop will introduce also the specificities of the Italian academic context related to scientific journals and the national ranking system.

**Organised by:** Francesco Chiodelli *Gran Sasso Science Institute of L'Aquila* | Stefano Moroni *Polytechnic University of Milan*

## 13.00 | LUNCH BREAK

## 14.00 | PARALLEL WORKSHOP (SESSION II)

## 17.00 | INPUT FOR A HANDBOOK ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGY [PLENARY INTERACTIVE SESSION]

**Organised by:** Francesco Lo Piccolo, Filippo Schilleci *University of Palermo*

# PROGRAMME

JANUARY 27

## 9.30 | INTRODUCTION: WICKED PROBLEMS WHILE DOING PLANNING RESEARCH

Prof. Camilla Perrone

*Coordinator of the PhD Program on Urban and Regional Planning - University of Florence*

## HOW DO RESEARCHERS GENERATE AND DEFEND IDEAS IN THE PLANNING FIELD?

Prof. Ann Forsyth

*Harvard Graduate School of Design*

## 11.00 | COFFEE BREAK

### ETHICS AND PLANNING RESEARCH

Prof. Francesco Lo Piccolo

*University of Palermo*

### PLANNING RESEARCH METHODS

Prof. Elisabete A. Silva

*University of Cambridge*

### FACTS AND VALUES

Prof. Stefano Moroni

*Polytechnic of Milan*

## 13.30 | LUNCH BREAK

## 15.00 | PARALLEL WORKSHOP (SESSION III)

► reviewing PhD works with key-note speakers

## 17.15 | REPORT FROM THE WORKSHOPS ORGANISERS

## 18.00 | CONCLUSIONS

Prof. Camilla Perrone

*University of Florence*

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## ORGANISING COMMITTEE

Camilla Perrone | *University of Florence*  
Francesco Chiodelli | *Gran Sasso Science Institute*  
Barbara Pizzo | *La Sapienza - University of Rome*

## INFO CONTACTS

[researchmethodologyshcool@gmail.com](mailto:researchmethodologyshcool@gmail.com)