

Hong Kong Shue Yan University
Department of English Language & Literature
Master of Arts in Interdisciplinary Cultural Studies
2020-2021

Course Title : Research Methodology

Course Code : ENG 504

Number of Credits : 3

Duration in weeks : 15

Contact Hours Per Week : Lecture (2 Hours)

Tutorial (1 Hour)

Pre-requisite(s) : Nil

Prepared by : Dr. Sherman LEE

Course Aims

Research Methodology is a core course intended for students who plan to enrol in ENG 513 MA Dissertation. The aims of the course are to introduce students to the various stages of the research process and provide them with an understanding of the different approaches and methods in research, as well as raise their awareness of ethical issues in research. The course will ultimately equip students with the skills needed to conduct their own independent research. Students will learn to read critically, select and review relevant literature, and design a research study that addresses some topic or problem in the arts and humanities.

Course Outcomes, Teaching Activities and Assessment

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOs)	
Upon completion of this course students should be able to:	
ILO1	identify the various stages of the research process
ILO2	recognise the key features, strengths and limitations of different research methods
ILO3	read critically and synthesise ideas
ILO4	write a well-structured and well-argued research proposal
ILO5	conduct independent research

Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)	
TLA1	Lectures discussing and exemplifying major research issues and techniques
TLA2	In-class discussions and oral presentation
TLA3	Writing components of a research proposal
TLA4	Reading research articles/materials critically
TLA5	Library visit for research work
TLA6	Online information search

Assessment Tasks (ATs)		
AT1	<p>Research Task</p> <p><i>Each student will conduct library and online searches to find relevant materials for their intended research topic. The resulting list of materials will eventually be presented in APA format and incorporated into their final research proposal.</i></p>	20%
AT2	<p>Literature Review</p> <p><i>Each student will write a critical literature review on their intended research topic, based on the list of resources produced from AT1. This task will familiarise them with knowledge of their research area as well as skills in critiquing and synthesising information. The literature review will also be incorporated into the final research proposal, but will be independently assessed.</i></p>	30%
AT3	<p>Presentation and Writing of Research Proposal</p> <p><i>Each student will write a research proposal by the end of the course stating their intended topic of research, research question(s), plan and methodology, expected findings and/or implications (30%). Prior to submission, the student will orally present their research plan for discussion among the class (20%).</i></p>	20%+30% = 50%
	TOTAL	100%

Alignment of Course Intended Learning Outcomes, Teaching and Learning Activities and Assessment Tasks		
Course Intended Learning Outcomes	Teaching and Learning Activities	Assessment Tasks
ILO1	TLA1,2,3,4,5,6	AT1,2,3
ILO2	TLA1,2,3,4,5,6	AT1,2,3
ILO3	TLA1,3,4	AT1,2,3
ILO4	TLA1,2,3,4,5,6	AT1,2,3
ILO5	TLA1,2,3,4,5,6	AT1,2,3

Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction

- Course introduction; 'What is research?'

Blaxter, L., Hughes, D., & Tight, M. (2010). Ch 1: All at sea but learning to swim; Ch 2: Getting started.

Pickering, M. (2008). Introduction.

Week 2: Research fundamentals

- Ethical issues; the research process; planning research

Blaxter, L., Hughes, D., & Tight, M. (2010). Ch 1-2; Ch 6 (pp.155-169): Access and ethical issues.

Creswell, J. W. (2018). Ch 4: Ethical issues to anticipate.

Silverman, D. (2017). Ch 4: Ethical research.

Week 3: Research resources / Library workshop

- Finding the right materials for your research; library and online resources

Blaxter, L., Hughes, D., & Tight, M. (2010). Ch 1-2; Ch 4: Reading for research.

Creswell, J. W. (2018). Ch 2: Review of the literature.

Week 4-5: Reading, reviewing and evaluating literature

- Access to literature; selection of relevant literature; reading critically; research reliability and validity

Blaxter, L., Hughes, D., & Tight, M. (2010). Ch 4; Ch 9 (pp.242-245): Interpretation.

Locke, L. F., Silverman, S. J., & Spirduso, W. W. (2010). Ch 2: When to believe what you read; Ch 3: How to select and read research reports; Ch 4: The use, misuse and misunderstanding of research; Ch 5 (pp. 76-79): Generic issues in research.

Week 6: Reading / research week

Weeks 7-8: Dissertation Writing

- Components of a dissertation; academic writing conventions: avoiding plagiarism, APA style and format; interpreting data and making claims, revising and editing
- [Submit AT1]

Blaxter, L., Hughes, D., & Tight, M. (2010). Ch 9 (pp.242-245); Ch 10: Writing up.

Cooley, L., & Lewkowicz, J. (2003). Ch 1: Identifying the research gap; Ch 2 (pp.37-60): Making use of source materials; Ch 3: Stating facts, interpreting data and making claims.

Week 9: Overview of research designs; survey research; questionnaire design

- Strengths and weaknesses of various research designs; qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches; survey studies; issues in questionnaire design

Blaxter, L., Hughes, D., & Tight, M. (2010). Ch 3: Thinking about methods; Ch 7: Collecting data.

Creswell, J. W. (2018). Ch 1: The selection of a research approach; Ch 8: Quantitative methods (Surveys).

Week 10-11: Quantitative research

- Experimental studies; correlational studies; dealing with basic statistics

Blaxter, L., Hughes, D., & Tight, M. (2010). Ch 3.

Creswell, J. W. (2018). Ch 8: Quantitative methods (Experiments).

Deacon, D. (2008). Why counting counts. In M. Pickering (Ed.), pp.89-104.

Lewis, J. (2008). Thinking by numbers: Cultural analysis and the use of data. In T. Bennet & J. Frow (Eds.), pp. 654-473.

Week 12: Qualitative research; the relevance of theory in research

- Focus groups; ethnographic research; case studies; the relevance of theory in research
- [Submit AT2]

Creswell, J. W. (2018). Ch 9: Qualitative methods.

Nightingale, V. (2008). Why observing matters. In M. Pickering, (Ed.), pp.105-122.

Silverman, D. (2017). Ch 2: What you can (and can't) do with qualitative research; Ch 9: Choosing a methodology; Ch 14: Collecting your data.

Wilkinson, S. (2016). Analysing focus group data. In D. Silverman, (Ed.), Ch 6.

Week 13: Reading / research week

Blaxter, L., Hughes, D., and Tight, M. (2010). (Ch 2); Ch 11: Finishing off.

Silverman, D. (2017). Ch 10: Writing a research proposal.

Week 14: Research plan presentation and discussions / Student consultations

Week 15: Summary and review

- [Submit AT3]

Academic Honesty

You are expected to do your own work. Dishonesty in fulfilling any assignment undermines the learning process and the integrity of your college degree. Engaging in dishonest or unethical behaviour is forbidden and will result in disciplinary action, specifically a failing grade on the assignment with no opportunity for resubmission. A second infraction will result in an F for the course and a report to College officials. Examples of prohibited behaviour are:

- Cheating – an act of deception by which a student misleadingly demonstrates that s/he has mastered information on an academic exercise. Examples include:
- Copying or allowing another to copy a test, quiz, paper, or project
- Submitting a paper or major portions of a paper that has been previously submitted for another class without permission of the current instructor
- Turning in written assignments that are not your own work (including homework)
- Plagiarism – the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving credit.
- Failing to give credit for ideas and material taken from others
- Representing another's artistic or scholarly work as one's own
- Fabrication – the intentional use of invented information or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive

To comply with the University's policy, written assignments have to be submitted to VeriGuide.

Resources

Primary Text:

Blaxter, L., Hughes, D., & Tight, M. (2010). *How to research, 4th edition*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Supplementary Texts:

Allen, M., Titsworth, S., & Hunt, S. K. (2009). *Quantitative research in communication*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

American Psychological Association (2020). *Frequently asked questions about sixth edition APA style*. Retrieved from: <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/faqs/index.aspx>

Bennett, T., & Frow, J. (Eds.) (2008). *The Sage handbook of cultural analysis*. London: Sage.

Cooley, L., & Lewkowicz, J. (2003). *Dissertation writing in practice: Turning ideas into text*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.

Creswell, J. W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches, 5th edition*. California: Sage Publications.

Flick, U. (Ed.) (2014). *The Sage handbook of qualitative data analysis*. London: Sage.

Johnson, D. M. (1992). *Approaches to research in second language learning*. New York: Longman.

Locke, L. F., Silverman, S. J., & Spirduso, W. W. (2010). *Reading and understanding research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Pickering, M. (Ed.). (2008). *Research methods for cultural studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Silverman, D. (Ed.). (2016). *Qualitative research, 4th edition*. London: Sage Publications.

Silverman, D. (2017). *Doing qualitative research, 5th edition*. London: Sage Publications.

Swales, J., & Feak, Christine. (2012). *Academic writing for graduate students, 3rd Edition*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Assessment Rubrics

AT1 Research Task (20%)

		Exemplary	Competent	Marginal	Unsatisfactory
Rationale	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selects a clear, focused and engaging topic. • Background information outlines the importance or significance of the selected topic. • Presents a specific, worthy and manageable research question or problem for the selected topic. 				
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The library search results in a working bibliography which comprises 15 to 20 items including scholarly and internet sources. • The sources are relevant, up-to-date and cover sufficient ground. • Annotations of 8 to 10 key items from the list of sources are presented. • The annotations provide clear and informative summaries and evaluations of the selected items (in the writer's own words, and not merely copied verbatim from the sources themselves) thus showing evidence of preliminary reading and understanding of the topic area and materials. 				
Language and organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The writing is clear, coherent and free from errors in grammar, usage and mechanics. • The working bibliography is clearly and systematically presented with all necessary details given (but fully correct APA format is not crucial at this stage). 				

AT2 Literature Review (30%)

		Exemplary	Competent	Marginal	Unsatisfactory
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly outlines and explains focus and scope of paper. Paper shows evidence of wide and relevant reading. Paper demonstrates clear and thorough understanding of research area and relevant issues. Paper provides comprehensive and up-to-date, critical and balanced review of literature, with information from various sources or perspectives effectively synthesized. All information is factually correct. 				
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paper contains clear and informative title that effectively captures its topic and content. Paper is effectively structured from introduction to body to conclusion with clear paragraphs or (sub)sections, each clearly linked to focus of paper. Review of literature is thematically organised (around similar themes) (rather than, e.g. chronologically); connections between cited sources, and between sources and topic are made clear. Text is generally cohesive and coherent, with logical flow of information; good use of transitions and cohesive devices. Paper is brought to a close in clear and logical conclusion. 				
Language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly appropriate academic style and tone that is appropriate for purpose and audience. Good grammatical accuracy; strong and varied sentence structure. Good range of vocabulary including topic specific vocabulary, appropriately used. Errors in usage, spelling and punctuation are few and minor. Resulting text is clear and succinct; meaning is explicit. 				
Academic Writing Conventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information taken from other sources is well integrated into paper (using effective paraphrasing, summarising and/or quoting, and appropriate use of signal phrases and reporting verbs). Quotations (long / short) are used sparsely, accurately and effectively, and properly signalled. All sources are properly acknowledged in in-text citations using APA format. All sources are properly listed in References using APA format (in-text citations and reference entries correspond). Errors in formatting are few and minor. 				

AT3 (i) Oral Presentation of Research Plan (20%)

		Exemplary	Competent	Marginal	Unsatisfactory
Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clearly states focused topic area and identifies research question(s) / problem. Defines key terms and concepts. Provides appropriate contextual background for audience to understand proposed study. Justifies research by explaining significance of study (e.g. filling some research gap). Outlines proposed methodological design and research procedures. Considers expected findings, contributions and limitations of study. Overall presentation is informative, relevant and stimulates interest. 				
Organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fluent and clear flow of ideas. Overall presentation well structured. 				
Language and Delivery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective and accurate use of language (spoken / written). Use of subject-specific terminology. Effective and enthusiastic delivery. 				
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective use of visual aids Appropriate length and pace of presentation. Responds appropriately and knowledgeably to audience's questions and comments. 				

AT3 (ii) Written Research Proposal (30%)

		Exemplary	Competent	Marginal	Unsatisfactory
Content (Weighting: 60%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper clearly defines a researchable topic area and identifies key aims of study: research problem / research question(s). • Paper appropriately contextualises proposed study within relevant field of literature. • Paper identifies a research gap from the literature review and proposes how study will fill this gap. • Overall methodological design is clear and appropriate for answering the RQ; includes discussion of ethical issues, reliability/ validity etc. where applicable. • Research methods, instruments and procedures are clearly and thoroughly explained; research plan is realistic. • Demonstrates understanding of expected findings, and awareness of the implications / impact and limitations of proposed study. 				
Organisation (Weighting: 10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paper contains clear and informative title that effectively captures its topic and content. • Paper is effectively structured with clear paragraphs or (sub)sections, each clearly linked to focus of paper. • Text is generally cohesive and coherent, with logical flow of information; good use of transitions and cohesive devices. 				
Language (Weighting: 20%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly appropriate academic style and tone that is appropriate for purpose and audience. • Good grammatical accuracy; strong and varied sentence structure. • Good range of vocabulary including topic specific vocabulary, appropriately used. • Errors in usage, spelling and punctuation are few and minor. • Resulting text is clear and succinct; meaning is explicit. 				
Academic Writing Conventions (Weighting: 10%)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information taken from other sources is well integrated into paper • All sources are properly acknowledged in in-text citations using APA format. • All sources are properly listed in References using APA format (in-text citations and reference entries correspond). • Errors in formatting are few and minor. 				