

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Course Outline

Part I

Programme Title	: Master of Public Policy and Management
Programme QF Level	: 6
Course Title	: Research Methods for Policy Analysis and Evaluation
Course Code	: PPG6001
Department	: Department of Asian and Policy Studies
Credit Points	: 3
Contact Hours	: 39
Pre-requisite(s)	: Nil
Medium of Instruction	: EMI
Course Level	: 6

Part II

The University's Graduate Attributes and seven Generic Intended Learning Outcomes (GILOs) represent the attributes of ideal EdUHK graduates and their expected qualities respectively. Learning outcomes work coherently at the University (GILOs), programme (Programme Intended Learning Outcomes) and course (Course Intended Learning Outcomes) levels to achieve the goal of nurturing students with important graduate attributes.

In gist, the Graduate Attributes for Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate and Research Postgraduate students consist of the following three domains (i.e. in short "PEER & I"):

- Professional Excellence;
- Ethical Responsibility; &
- Innovation.

The descriptors under these three domains are different for the three groups of students in order to reflect the respective level of Graduate Attributes.

The seven GILOs are:

1. Problem Solving Skills
2. Critical Thinking Skills
3. Creative Thinking Skills
- 4a. Oral Communication Skills
- 4b. Written Communication Skills
5. Social Interaction Skills
6. Ethical Decision Making
7. Global Perspectives

1. Course Synopsis

This course will review the literature, tools, and strategies that inform quantitative and qualitative methods of research in public policy. The focus of the course will be on generating and using evidence in public policy.

Lectures will cover the following topics:

1. Understanding policy research
 - Four levels of policy research
 - Basic component of a study: research question, research hypothesis, independent variable, dependent variable, population, sample, and sampling method
 - Characteristics of a good sample: Representativeness, sufficient sample size, and acceptable response rate
2. Population, sample, and sampling error
 - Population, sample, parameter, and statistics
 - Sampling error and its measurement
 - Relationship between sample size and sampling error
 - Relationship of sampling error with population size, estimated parameter and confidence level
 - Justification of sample size in proposal
3. Sampling method
 - Random sampling vs non-random sampling
 - Simple random sampling, systematic random sampling, multi-stage cluster random sampling, stratified random sampling
 - Convenience sampling, snowball sampling and quota sampling
4. Questionnaire design and method data collection
 - Design a good questionnaire
 - Face-to-face interview, phone interview, and self-administration questionnaire or mail survey
5. Quantitative data analysis with SPSS
 - Introduction to SPSS
 - Descriptive statistics: Frequency distribution, mean, mode, median, range, standard deviation, and standard error
 - Level of measurement:
 - Bivariate data analysis: Chi-square test, t-test, and correlation
 - Multivariate data analysis: Regression
6. Qualitative method
 - In-depth interview, focus group and observation
 - Sampling
 - Design (single case or multiple cases)
 - Qualitative data analysis: Coding, interpreting, analysing, triangulation, verification, rigour, theory building and use of NVIVO
7. Policy evaluation design
 - Introduction to policy evaluation design
 - Single group post-test design
 - Single group pre- and post-test design
 - Internal validity of the design
 - Experimental and control group pre- and post-test design
 - Randomized clinical trial
8. Data analysis in policy evaluation
 - Data analysis for single group post-test design
 - Data analysis for single group pre- and post-test design

- Data analysis for randomized clinical trial: Attrition analysis, evaluation of randomized group assignment, main analysis

9. Proposal and report writing

- Introduction: Literature review, strategies for justifying the study, objectives and hypotheses
- Method: Design, sampling and sample size, data collection, questionnaire, and statistical analysis
- Ethical approval and budget in proposal
- Result and discussion in report

This course will last for the whole academic year. The course will start with 13 lectures in the first semester. The students with similar research interests will also form into groups of four to five by the end of the first semester. Under the same broad topic, each student in the group will identify a different research question in the second semester. A faculty member will be assigned to guide their projects. Students will have an oral presentation on the proposal and their findings of the broad topic as a group in Week 13 of the second semester. At the end, students will submit the individual report. Similarity on the write-up among students should be minimal since each student has a different research question.

The research group project is intended to provide students the opportunity to integrate analytical skills and specialized knowledge gained in the MPPM programme and to apply them to analysing and addressing real-world policy problems. Conducting the project will consist of describing the scope and magnitude of the chosen problem, analysing its causes, proposing solutions, and assessing the implications of the proposed solutions. The topics students choose are expected to be in an area with which students have some practical or academic familiarity.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

Upon completion of this course, students will be able to:

- CILO₁: Formulate appropriate research questions and set research hypotheses.
- CILO₂: Develop an appropriate research design.
- CILO₃: Justify the sample size and determine the sampling method.
- CILO₄: Collect data by using structured interviewing, questionnaire and observation techniques.
- CILO₅: Analyse quantitative data using SPSS.
- CILO₆: Conduct and analyse qualitative study.
- CILO₇: Prepare a research proposal and report.
- CILO₈: Appreciate and critically evaluate social research methods.
- CILO₉: Conduct a group policy study independently.

3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
Formulate appropriate research questions and set research hypotheses	CILO ₁	➤ Lectures, group discussion, and group exercise
Develop an appropriate research design	CILO ₂	➤ Lectures, group discussion, and group exercise
Justify the sample size and determine the sampling method	CILO ₃	➤ Lectures, group discussion, and group exercise
Collect data by using structured interviewing, questionnaire and observation techniques	CILO ₄	➤ Lectures, group discussion, and group exercise

Conduct and analyse qualitative study	CILO ₅	➤ Lectures, group discussion, and group exercise
Analyse quantitative data using SPSS	CILO ₆	➤ Lectures, group discussion, and group exercise
Prepare a research proposal and report	CILO ₇	➤ Lectures, group discussion, and supervision
Appreciate and critically evaluate social research methods	CILO ₈	➤ Lectures, group discussion, and group exercise
Conduct a group policy study independently	CILO ₉	➤ Lectures, group discussion, and supervision

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
(a) Group Work ➤ Group research project proposal (25%) ▪ <i>Groups of students need to identify social/policy problems concerned, specify research questions, conduct a summary of the literature, and lay out methodology in the written proposal.</i> ➤ Group research finding presentation (15%) ▪ <i>Groups of students are required to present the project findings in front of a panel consisting of at least two faculty members.</i>	40%	CILO ₁₋₉
(b) Individual final project report ▪ <i>All students are required to submit an individual report that must be developed from the group project. The final individual report should be within 6,000 and 7,000 words exclusive of title, tables/figures, references, notes and appendices.</i>	50%	CILO ₁₋₉
(c) Class participation and discussion ▪ <i>Attendance (5%) and class participation (5%) will be assessed based on students' engagement. Details will be given in the course syllabus.</i>	10%	CILO ₁₋₉

5. Required Text(s)

Babbie, E.R. (2016). *The Practice of Social Research* (14th ed.). Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth Cengage.

6. Recommended Readings

B. Guy Peters, Guillaume Fontain (Eds) (2020). *Handbook of research methods and applications in comparative policy analysis*. Edward Elgar Publishing. Available at: <https://ezproxy.eduhk.hk/login?url=http://www.lib.eduhk.hk/cgi-bin/ebookcentral?6190748>.

Bardach, E. (2011). *A practical guide for policy analysis: The eightfold path to more effective problem solving* (4th ed.). Los Angeles: CQ Press.

- Bell, J. (2005). *Doing your research project: A guide for first-time researchers in education, health and social science* (4th ed.). Maidenhead, England: Open University Press.
- Blanksby, P. E., & Barber, J. G. (2006). *SPSS for social workers: An introductory workbook*. Boston: Pearson.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C., & Tight, M. (2001). *How to research*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2003). *The craft of research* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: US: University of Chicago Press.
- Crewell, J.W. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. (5th ed.). SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Della Porta, D., & Keating, M. (2008). *Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences: A pluralist perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dunn, W. N. (2008). *Public policy analysis: An introduction* (4th ed.). Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Gerald, S. K. (2009). *Evidence and explanation in social science: An interdisciplinary approach*. London: Routledge.
- Harvey, F. P., & Brecher, M. (Eds.). (2002). *Evaluating methodology in International studies*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Kirkpatrick, L. A., & Feeney, B. C. (2013). *A simple guide to IBM SPSS statistics for versions 20.0*. Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth.
- Marsh, D., & Stoker, G. (Eds.). (1995). *Theory and methods in political science*. Basingstoke, England: Macmillan.
- Pallant, J. (2010). *SPSS survival manual: A step by step guide to data analysis using SPSS*. Maidenhead: Open University Press/McGraw-Hill.
- Seidman, I. (2019). *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences* (5th ed.). Teachers College Press.
- Tracy, S. J. (2013). *Qualitative research methods: Collecting evidence, crafting analysis, communicating impact*. New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

7. Related Web Resources

World Bank data base <http://databank.worldbank.org>

National Bureau of Statistics, PRC <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/>

Census and Statistics Department, HKSAR <http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/home/index.jsp>

8. Related Journals

Use as necessary

9. Academic Honesty

The University adopts a zero tolerance policy to plagiarism. For the University's policy on plagiarism, please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity with Specific Reference to the Avoidance of Plagiarism by Students* (<https://www.eduhk.hk/re/modules/downloads/visit.php?cid=9&lid=89>). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

10. Others

Nil

Updated as of 10 August 2018