

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Course Outline

Part I

Programme Title	: Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Global and Environmental Studies
Programme QF Level	: 5
Course Title	: Honours Project
Course Code	: INS4901
Department	: Social Sciences, and Science and Environmental Studies
Credit Points	: 6
Contact Hours	: 39 (Phase I)
Pre-requisite(s)	: Nil
Medium of Instruction	: EMI
Course Level	: 4

Part II

The University's 4Cs Learning Framework 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 attributes embodied in the 4Cs.

The 4Cs are:

- Character and moral responsibility
- Competence and professional excellence
- Cultivation of wisdom and intellectual engagement
- Civic-mindedness & social responsibility

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. Synopsis

This 6-credit Honours Project course comprises the following two phases:

Phase I : Research Methods (to be taken before end of Year 3)

Phase II : Project (to be completed by May in Year 4)

Phase I

This phase builds upon the introduction to research methods from the course “Introduction to Sociology and Social Research” which focused on reading and interpreting research. It will draw students’ attention to the major components of a research report and project (for example, topic, research question, methodology, findings, discussion) and will discuss in further depth the two general research approaches, qualitative and quantitative, helping students understand the strengths and shortcomings of each type for answering particular types of research questions. Students will be encouraged to analyse selected research papers to highlight the decision-making which led to the approach adopted and discuss its strengths and weaknesses. In addition, students will be engaged in group exercises to assist them in choosing a topic, formulating a research question, and selecting appropriate methods for answering the question.

Phase II

By Phase II, students will be expected to be able to identify the topic for their Project relevant to globalization, development, and environmental change, drawing upon their earlier programme coursework and experiences. The topic may be related to broad, relevant issues, or how these main themes relate to a particular societal context. In this phase they will begin the process of literature review and research design, and follow through with data collection and analysis and the drafting of the final report.

The course is distinctive for the following characteristics:

- (a) While drawing upon group-work throughout the first phase of the Project, the Project itself is an individual piece of work in an area of students’ choice within the parameters of the Programme Learning Outcomes.
- (b) It leads to a reflective inquiry project that serves as a capstone for the honours degree programme. Students’ learning experiences accumulated through their undergraduate studies will be consolidated in this project.
- (c) It helps students integrate and synthesize prior knowledge and learning across areas. It enables them to further develop their subject knowledge and may extend their scope of exposure in work-related settings.
- (d) It further develops and consolidates students’ competencies including numeracy and communication skills, for further academic pursuits and lifelong learning.
- (e) Criterion-based continuous assessment will be used for the course whilst the report demonstrates a range of skills and understanding. It is normally prepared under the supervision of a lecturer, who advises the student on the work, and provides feedback at different stages of its development.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

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

- CILO₁ understand the basic principles (including ethics) and the various qualitative and quantitative techniques used in conducting research.
- CILO₂ comprehend and critically evaluate the methodologies of research publications relating to global and environmental studies.
- CILO₃ identify and pursue a topic/issue of interest arising from the Major.
- CILO₄ select and utilize the research method appropriate to their own investigation.
- CILO₅ systematically conduct their investigation, analyses and interpretations.
- CILO₆ report on the processes and results of the investigation.

3. Content, CILOs & Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
Phase I <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of quantitative and qualitative research approaches Choosing a topic and drafting research questions Literature searching and review Research design Data collection Research ethics Qualitative and quantitative data analysis Case studies of qualitative and quantitative research Research article analysis 	<i>CILO</i> _{1, 2, 3}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lectures building on assigned readings Guest lectures describing the research process behind pieces of qualitative and quantitative research Individual/group activities for students to apply course topics to their own potential research topic
Phase II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings with supervisors Drafting of proposals for the study, including topic, research question, and methods of investigation. Systematically conducting the proposed study. 	<i>CILO</i> _{3,4,5}	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group or individual consultation with advisor throughout the process. Students working on related topics will meet regularly in support groups.
Phase II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Writing report and presenting findings. 	<i>CILO</i> ₆	

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILOs
A written assignment in which students describe alternative research questions and appropriate qualitative or quantitative methods for research on one broad topic of interest (Approximately 1,000 words)	40%	<i>CILO</i> _{1,2} <i>Demonstrates understanding of the principles and techniques of research</i>
Project Proposal (Approximately 600 words)	10%	<i>CILO</i> _{3,4} <i>Demonstrates ability to identify a topic, write an appropriate research question, and plan appropriate research methods</i>
Project Presentation	10%	<i>CILO</i> _{5, 6} <i>Demonstrates capacity to carry out and report (verbally and in writing) on research</i>
Report (Approximately 6,000 – 8,000 words)	40%	

5. Required Text(s)

Fairbrother, G. P. (2007). *Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches to Comparative Education*. In M. Bray, B. Adamson, & M. Mason (Eds.), *Comparative Education*

Research: Approaches and methods (39-62). Hong Kong: The University of Hong Kong.

Guthrie, G. (2010). *Basic Research Methods: An Entry to Social Science Research*. New Delhi: Sage Publications. This is an electronic book accessible from <http://library.ied.edu.hk/record=b1945962~S5>

May, T. (2011). *Social Research Issues, Methods and Process*. Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill/Open University Press. This is an electronic book accessible from <http://library.ied.edu.hk/record=b1873015~S5>

Smith, K. (2009). *Doing your Undergraduate Social Science Dissertation*. London: Routledge. This is an electronic book accessible from <http://library.ied.edu.hk/record=b1781821~S5>

Walliman, N.S.R. (2011). *Research Methods: The Basics*. New York: Routledge. This is an electronic book accessible from <http://library.ied.edu.hk/record=b1945965~S5>

6. Recommended Readings

Hancke, B. (2009). *Intelligent Research Design: A Guide for Beginning Researchers in the Social Sciences*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social Research (3rd Edition)*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sprinz, D.F. & Wolinsky-Nahmias, Y. (Eds.). (2004). *Models, Numbers and Cases: Methods for Studying International Relations*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

Staines, G.M., Johnson, K, and Bonacci, M. (2008). *Social Sciences Research: Research, Writing, and Presentation Strategies for Students*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Thomas, D.R. and Hodges, I.D. (2010). *Designing and Managing Your Research Project: Core Skills for Social and Health Research*. Los Angeles: Sage.

White, P. (2009). *Developing Research Questions: A Guide for Social Scientists*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

7. Related Web Resources

Internet for Social Research Methods

<http://www.vts.intute.ac.uk/tutorial/socialresearchmethods/>

Research Methods Knowledge Base: Road Map

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/kbroad.php>

8. Related Journals

Nil

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