

## THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

### Honours Project I: Research Methods and Proposal

#### Part I

<b>Programme Title</b>	:	Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Global and Environmental Studies
<b>Programme QF Level</b>	:	5
<b>Course Title</b>	:	Honours Project I: Research Methods and Proposal
<b>Course Code</b>	:	SSC4298
<b>Departments</b>	:	Social Sciences and Policy Studies
<b>Credit Points</b>	:	3
<b>Contact Hours</b>	:	39 contact hours
<b>Pre-requisite(s)</b>	:	Nil
<b>Medium of Instruction</b>	:	English
<b>Course Level</b>	:	4

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#### 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 Sub-degree, Undergraduate, Taught Postgraduate, Professional Doctorate 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 aims to develop students as learners, researchers, inquirers and knowledge creators in the social science disciplines; and prepare them for conducting a research-based or an inquiry-based project in Honours Project II: Research Report. It consists of two parts:

Part A “Generic Research Methods” (1.5 cps) introduces basic research knowledge and principles of research methods for students to use and/or conduct research in the social science disciplines, and ethical issues in the research process. It emphasises students’ roles as users of research as well as researchers themselves. Topics include recognising the value of social science research, understanding the process of research, the search and effective use of literature, identifying research topic and questions, features of research proposal and research report, ethical issues in social science research and reliability and validity of different research methods. Students study short online units and attend face-to-face tutorials in which they are guided to connect and consolidate online learning with in-class learning activities. The assessment tasks include online and in-class exercises on research methods.

Part B “Methods for Specific Area in Preparation of Honours Project” (1.5 cps) prepares students to develop a proposal for conducting a research-based study in their chosen areas. Topics may include understanding the purposes and methods of sampling, quantitative research methods (e.g., survey research, experimental study, descriptive statistics and correlation, inferential statistics and data analysis with SPSS), qualitative research methods (e.g., interview, observation, documents and artefacts, case study), mixed-methods research, research in comparative studies and philosophical methods in social science research. Students will be guided to identify a topic, conduct a literature review, select appropriate methods of data collection and analysis/inquiry, and write a proposal.

## 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

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

- CILO<sub>1</sub> demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of research methods in related social science disciplines, both qualitative and quantitative;
- CILO<sub>2</sub> show analytical skills in research and the awareness of research ethics;
- CILO<sub>3</sub> write a literature review to examine the existing theories and knowledge in relation to the research topic;
- CILO<sub>4</sub> select appropriate methods for the collection and analysis of data;
- CILO<sub>5</sub> write a research proposal to form the basis of the study in Honours Project II: Research Report.

## 3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
Part A “Generic Research Methods” (1.5 cps)		
Fundamental elements in research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to research process</li> <li>• Literature search and review</li> <li>• Identifying research topic and question</li> </ul>	CILO <sub>1</sub>	Online lessons, tutorials, and group discussions
Approaches to research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to social sciences research</li> <li>• Fundamentals of research paradigms (e.g., quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods, action research)</li> <li>• Major methodological approaches to social research</li> </ul>	CILO <sub>1</sub>	

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliability and validity</li> </ul>		
Ethical considerations in the research endeavour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ethics for student research project with a focus on human participants</li> </ul>	<i>CILO<sub>2</sub></i>	Lectures and tutorials
<b>Part B “Methods for Specific Area in Preparation of Honours Project” (1.5 cps)</b>		
Understanding of research methods <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Basic concepts on the procedures, designs and methods, such as sampling methods.</li> <li>Major research methods, such as quantitative research methods (e.g. survey research), qualitative research methods (e.g. interview, observation), and mixed-methods research</li> <li>Skills for data analysis and presentation</li> </ul>	<i>CILO<sub>3-5</sub></i>	Lectures, tutorials, literature review, case studies, group discussions, presentations and self-study
Understanding of research proposal writing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major concerns of proposal writing (content, structure and ethical issues).</li> <li>Research proposal development: statement of the problem, research design and literature review.</li> </ul>	<i>CILO<sub>5</sub></i>	Tutorials, workshops, presentations and consultations

#### 4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
Online exercises and tutorial exercises on “Generic Research Methods”	50%	<i>CILO<sub>1-5</sub></i>
A 2,000-word project proposal which includes the statement of the problem, the design of the research and a review of literature	50%	<i>CILO<sub>1-5</sub></i>

**Please note:** Students are required to obtain a Pass in both Part A and Part B in order to get a Pass in HP I. As HP I is a pre-requisite for HP II, students must obtain a Pass in HP I in a given Specific Area in order to progress to HP II of the same Specific Area. Students who fail either Part A or Part B (but not both Part A and Part B) will be given the opportunity to do the remedial works/assignments.

#### 5. Required Text(s)

Nil

#### 6. Recommended Readings

- Babbie, E. R. (2016). *The practice of social research* (14<sup>th</sup> ed.). Nelson Education.
- Bell, J. (2014). *Doing Your Research Project: A guide for first-time researchers*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2008). *The craft of research* (3rd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Cohen, L., Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. SAGE Publications Limited.
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage.

**7. Related Web Resources**

Nil

**8. Related Journals**

Narrative Inquiry  
Qualitative Research  
Qualitative Research Journal  
Sociological Methods and Research  
Field Methods  
International Journal of Social Research Method  
Journal of Mixed Methods Research  
Quantitative Methods for Psychology  
Survey Research Methods  
Advances in Methods and Practices in Psychology

**9. Academic Honesty**

The University upholds the principles of honesty in all areas of academic work. We expect our students to carry out all academic activities honestly and in good faith. Please refer to the *Policy on Academic Honesty, Responsibility and Integrity* (<https://www.eduhk.hk/re/uploads/docs/000000000016336798924548BbN5>). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

**10. Others**

Nil