THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

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Course Outline

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Part I

Programme Title	:	Bachelor of Social Sciences (Honours) in Sociology and Community Studies
Programme QF Level	:	5
Course Title	:	Capstone Project I: Research Methods and Proposal
Course Code	:	SSC4297
Department	:	Social Sciences and Policy Studies
Credit Points	:	3
Contact Hours	:	39 contact hours
Pre-requisite(s)	:	Nil
Medium of Instruction	:	English
Course Level	:	4

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"):
- **P**rofessional **E**xcellence;
- **E**thical **R**esponsibility; **&**
- **I**nnovation.

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 social science disciplines; and prepare them for conducting a research-based or an inquiry-based project in Capstone Project II: Project Output. 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 social science disciplines, and ethical issues in the research process. It emphasises students' roles as users of research as well as researchers themselves and the process of action research and/or action learning. 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 Capstone Project" (1.5 cps) prepares students to develop a proposal for conducting a project-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, write a proposal, and create a demonstration/ visualization of the project idea.

2. **Course Intended Learning Outcomes** (CILOs)

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

   CILO$_1$ Demonstrate an understanding of the basic principles of research methods in related social science disciplines, both qualitative and quantitative;

   CILO$_2$ Show analytical skills in research and the awareness of research ethics;

   CILO$_3$ Write a literature review to examine the existing theories and knowledge in relation to the Capstone Project topic;

   CILO$_4$ Select appropriate methods for the collection and analysis of data and/or creating a project output;

   CILO$_5$ Write a proposal and conduct a demonstration/ visualization of the project idea to form the basis of implementation in Capstone Project II: Project Output.

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 • Introduction to research process • Literature search and review • Identifying research topic and question	$CILO_1$	• Online lessons • Tutorials • Group discussions
Approaches to research • Introduction to social science research • Fundamentals of research paradigms (e.g., quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods, action research) • Major methodological approaches to social science research • Reliability and validity	$CILO_1$	
Ethical considerations in the research endeavour • Ethics for student research project with a focus on human participants	$CILO_2$	• Lectures • Tutorials
Part B "Methods for Specific Area in Preparation of Capstone Project" (1.5 cps)*		
Understanding of research methods • Basic concepts on the procedures, designs and methods, such as sampling methods. • Major research methods, such as quantitative research methods (e.g. survey research), qualitative research methods (e.g. interview, observation), and mixed-methods research • Skills for data analysis/ inquiry and demonstration/ visualization	$CILO_{3-5}$	• Lectures • Tutorials • Literature review • Case studies • Group discussions • Presentations • Self-study

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
Understanding of project proposal writing • Major concerns of proposal writing (content, structure and ethical issues). • Project proposal development: statement of the problem, project design and literature review.	*CILO5*	• Tutorials • Workshops • Presentations • Consultations

*The topics of research methods are to be selected with reference to the Specific Area of the Capstone Project

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
(a) Online exercises and tutorial exercises on "Generic Research Methods"	50%	*CILO1-5*
(b) A 1,200 to 1,500-word project proposal which includes the statement of the project issue/ problem, the justification and expected outcomes of the project (25%); also, a demonstration/ visualization of the project idea (25%)	50%	*CILO1-5*

Please note: Students are required to obtain a Pass in both Part A and Part B in order to get a Pass in CP I. As CP I is a pre-requisite for CP II, students must obtain a Pass in CP I in a given Specific Area in order to progress to CP 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. (2015). *The practice of social research*. Nelson Education.

Bell, J. (2014). *Doing Your Research Project: A guide for first-time researchers*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Blaxter, L. (2010). *How to research*. McGraw-Hill Education (UK).

Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (2008). *The Craft of research* (3rd

ed.).Chicago, Il: US: University of Chicago Press.

Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry & research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2017). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sage publications.

Silverman, D. (2013). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. SAGE Publications Limited

*Detailed reading list will be provided by individual discipline areas.

7. Related Web Resources

Nil

8. Related Journals

Narrative Inquiry
Qualitative Research
Qualitative Research Journal

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/0000000016336798924548BbN5). Students should familiarize themselves with the Policy.

10. Other

Nil

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