

THE EDUCATION UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

Course Outline

Part I

Programme Title	: Master of Public Policy and Management
Programme QF Level	: 6
Course Title	: Advanced Thesis in Public Policy and Management
Course Code	: PPG6032
Department/Unit	: Department of Social Sciences 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 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 builds on PPG6001 Research Methods for Policy Analysis and Evaluation, a core course for all MPPM students; students may take PPG6001 concurrently with this course. Whereas PPG6001 builds core research-methods knowledge through lectures and a guided group policy study, this course is the individual capstone: each student independently applies and extends those methods, under close supervision, to produce a full-length, original thesis.

This course provides advanced guidance and supervision for students undertaking an individual thesis project in public policy and management. The course aims to consolidate students' research skills and facilitate the production of a substantial thesis based on independent inquiry. Through lectures, consultations and peer sharing, students will refine their research questions, conduct a critical review of the literature, apply appropriate methodologies, and collect and analyse data to produce theoretically informed and practically relevant findings.

The course supports students in contributing new insights to public policy and management scholarship and practice. Students will work individually to write and submit their own thesis addressing a distinct research question. The course also develops students' capacity for the ethical, responsible and transparent use of generative artificial intelligence (AI) in research.

2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

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

- CILO₁* : Formulate a coherent and researchable problem in public policy or management.
- CILO₂* : Conduct a comprehensive and critical review of relevant academic and policy literature.
- CILO₃* : Design and implement an appropriate research methodology for policy inquiry.
- CILO₄* : Analyse empirical data and draw meaningful conclusions that inform theory and practice.
- CILO₅* : Produce and present a well-structured academic thesis that meets professional and scholarly standards.
- CILO₆* : Apply principles of academic integrity and research ethics, including the ethical, responsible and transparent use of generative AI, in conducting and reporting research.

3. Content, CILOs and Teaching & Learning Activities

Course Content	CILOs	Suggested Teaching & Learning Activities
Formulating a policy research problem	<i>CILO₁</i>	Individual supervision, lectures, consultations, peer feedback
Reviewing relevant literature	<i>CILO₂</i>	Guided reading, discussions, literature mapping
Designing research strategy and methodology	<i>CILO₃</i>	Research design workshops, one-on-one consultations

Data collection and analysis	<i>CILO₄</i>	Fieldwork, supervisor guidance, analytical exercises
Structuring and writing the thesis	<i>CILO₅</i>	Writing workshops, thesis outline feedback, presentations
Ethical and responsible use of generative AI in research; academic integrity	<i>CILO₆</i>	Seminar and hands-on workshop on the ethical use of AI in research, with case discussions, disclosure/acknowledgment practices, and verification of AI-assisted work

4. Assessment

Assessment Tasks	Weighting (%)	CILO
(a) Participation Students are assessed on their attendance and active engagement across the course's scheduled sessions – the individual and group consultations with the course instructor (demonstrating steady progress, responsiveness to feedback, and constructive engagement with peers), the guest speaker session, and three research seminars.	25%	<i>CILO_{1, 2}</i>
(b) Progress presentation and discussion Held around the middle of the course, each student presents the progress of their individual thesis – the refined research question, the methodology now in use, data collection and analysis under way, and emerging findings – and responds to questions from the course instructor and peers. Any use of AI assistance should be disclosed and acknowledged.	25%	<i>CILO_{1,3,4}</i>
(c) Final thesis (8,000 – 10,000 words) Each student submits an individual thesis of 8,000–10,000 words presenting an original, theoretically informed and methodologically sound inquiry in public policy or management, with full acknowledgment of any generative-AI assistance. Each student must address a distinct research question.	50%	<i>CILO₁₋₆</i>

5. Use of Generative AI in Course Assessments

Please select one option only that applies to this course:

☐ **Not Permitted:** In this course, the use of generative AI tools is not allowed for any assessment tasks.

☑ **Permitted:** In this course, generative AI tools may be used in some or all assessment tasks. Instructors will provide specific instructions, including any restrictions or additional requirements (e.g., proper acknowledgment, reflective reports), during the first lesson and in relevant assessment briefs.

This course adopts the “Permitted” option: students may use generative AI in their assessment tasks provided that such use is disclosed and properly acknowledged, and that students verify and take full responsibility for the accuracy and integrity of their work. A dedicated session on the ethical and responsible use of AI in research supports this policy.

6. Required Text(s)

No single textbook is prescribed. Students are expected to identify key references based on their research topics in consultation with their supervisors.

7. Recommended Readings

Biggam, J. (2021). *Succeeding with your Master's Dissertation: A Step-by-step Handbook* (5th ed.). Open University Press.

Bui, Y. N. (2020). *How to Write a Master's Thesis* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Dwivedi, Y. K., Kshetri, N., Hughes, L., et al. (2023). Opinion Paper: “So what if ChatGPT wrote it?” Multidisciplinary perspectives on opportunities, challenges and implications of generative conversational AI for research, practice and policy. *International Journal of Information Management*, 71, 102642.

Punch, K. F. (2016). *Developing Effective Research Proposals* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Thomas, G. (2017). *How to Do Your Research Project: A Guide for Students in Education and Applied Social Sciences* (3rd ed.). SAGE Publications.

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case Study Research and Applications: Design and Methods* (6th ed.). SAGE Publications.

8. Related Web Resources

- EdUHK Library Research Support: <https://www.lib.eduhk.hk>
- Zotero Reference Management Tool: <https://www.zotero.org>
- Grammarly Academic Writing Support: <https://www.grammarly.com>

9. Related Journals

Public Administration Review

Journal of Public Policy

Governance

Policy Studies Journal

International Review of Administrative Sciences

Journal of European Public Policy

Regulation & Governance

Policy & Politics

Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis

10. 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.

11. Others

This is a research-based course delivered through regular lecture-based teaching with compulsory consultation sessions. The course instructor supervises all students and delivers all 39 contact hours through lectures and individual and group consultations across the semester. Students work independently to develop research questions, conduct fieldwork, analyze data, and write their theses.

Students applying for this course are required to submit a research proposal of approximately 1,000 words during course selection; the proposal serves as the starting point for supervision and will be further refined during the course.

Updated as of 13 July 2026