City University of Hong Kong

Information on a Course
offered by Department of Media and Communication
with effect from Semester A in 2014 / 2015

Part I

Course Title: Research Methods for Communication and New Media

Course Code: COM5104

Course Duration: 1 semester

Credit Units: 3

Level: P5

Medium of Instruction: English

Prerequisites: Nil

Precursors: Nil

Equivalent Courses: Nil

Exclusive Courses: Nil

Part II

1.   Course Aims:

This course is designed to provide training on research methods in communication and new media. It aims to

1) examine basic concepts of communication research;

2) introduce specific data collection methods such as survey, content analysis, experimental design and qualitative methods;

3) practice statistical techniques including sampling, descriptive and inferential analyses; 4) oral and written presentation of research results.

By the end of the course, students are expected to be able to read and evaluate professional and academic research reports; design and implement research projects; perform statistical data analysis; write up research reports; and present research findings in a professional manner.

2.   Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)
Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)
1.	Design and execute simple yet rigorous research for academic, marketing, or other purposes; and deliver oral presentation and written reports on the research findings.	40%
2.	Conduct a range of basic statistical analyses with SPSS and understand the key concepts of research methods.	30%
3.	Critically evaluate and discuss various kinds of published research findings	30%

3.   Teaching and learning Activities (TLAs)
(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No	TLAs	Hours/week (if applicable)
1, 2, 3	Lectures: On the main concepts and principles in research design and statistical analysis	2 (for 13 weeks)
2	In-class exercises, with students working on real data sets.	1 (for 7 weeks)
1, 3	Group discussions on research projects and existing studies	1 (for 3 weeks)

4.   Assessment Tasks/Activities
(Indicative of likely activities and tasks designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs. Final details will be provided to students in their first week of attendance in this course)

CILO No	Type of assessment tasks/activities	Weighting (if applicable)	Remarks
1, 2	Research proposal development. Students will form into groups to design a survey questionnaire or a content analysis coding scheme aiming at addressing a research problem.	15%	
1, 2	Research paper and presentations: Students will work in groups on research projects investigating important issues in the area of communication. Students will present their research findings in class.	25%	

2, 3	Two quizzes will be conducted to test students' understanding of the class contents	20%	
2, 3	A final exam (Two hours)	40%	

5. **Grading of Student Achievement:** Refer to Grading of Courses in the Academic Regulations for Taught Postgraduate Degrees.

Grading pattern: Standard (A+, A, A-….F). The overall grade is based on student's overall performance in all assessment tasks/activities considered together. The meanings of the overall letter grades will be in line with those listed in the Academic Regulations.

More specific grading criteria for selected assessment tasks/activities are as follows:

Research proposal development:
- Originality
- Logical coherence and clarity
- Appropriateness of the designed items
- Participation in the group research activities

Research paper and presentation:
- Quality of the ideas – originality, significance, etc.
- Appropriateness and logical coherence of the arguments and hypotheses
- Appropriateness of the analysis and the interpretations of the results
- Format, style, writing and length of paper
- Presentational skills

Weighting of the different criteria and other details will be given to the students during the class.

Courses are graded according to the following schedule:

Letter Grade	Grade Point	Grade Definitions	
A+ A A-	4.3 4.0 3.7	Excellent:	Strong evidence of original thinking; capacity to design the research and analyse the data; good team work; critical understanding on key concepts; active participation in class discussion; creative oral and written presentation; and evidence of extensive knowledge base. (with a total score of 90-100 weighted points).

B+ B B-	3.3 3.0 2.7	Good:	Evidence of grasp of research methods, some evidence of critical capacity and analytic ability; contribute to the group project; solid understanding of key concepts; involving in class discussion and clear oral and written presentation. (with a total score of 80-89 weighted points).
C+ C C-	2.3 2.0 1.7	Adequate:	Student who is profiting from the university experience; basic understanding of the subject; ability to define simple problems and develop solutions to them in the paper; and involving in the group project. (with a total score of 70-79 weighted points)
D	1.0	Marginal:	Sufficient familiarity with the research methods to enable the student to progress without repeating the course; and minimum involvement in the group project. (with a total score of 60-69 weighted points).
F	0.0	Failure:	Little evidence of familiarity with the key research methods; weakness in critical and analytic skills; limited contribution to the group project and the class discussion. (with a total score of 59 or lower weighted points).
P		Pass:	"Pass" in a pass-fail course. Courses to be graded on a pass-fail basis for a programme are specifically identified under the programme in the course catalogue.

Part III

Keyword Syllabus:

Quantitative research method, sampling, survey, content analysis, experiment, descriptive statistics, hypothesis-testing, ANOVA, SPSS

Recommended Reading

Texts:
Babbie, Earl (2007). *The Practice of Social Research, 11th Edition*. Belmont: Wadsworth Publishing Company.

Further reference / online resources
Agresti & Finlay (1997). *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences.* New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.
Wimmer, Roger D., and Joseph R. Dominick (2006). *Mass Media Research: An Introduction*. CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.
Merrigan, Gerianne, and Carole Logan Huston (2004). *Communication Research Methods*. CA: Thomson/Wadsworth.