

**City University of Hong Kong**

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

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**Part I**

**Course Title:** Dissertation

**Course Code:** COM5603

**Course Duration:** 1 semester  
(Maximum Duration: 3 semesters (Summer Term, Semester A & Semester B). After which, no further extension is permitted.) (Dissertation-type)

**Credit Units:** 3

**Level:** P5

**Medium of Instruction:** English

**Prerequisites:** Nil

**Precursors:** Nil

**Equivalent Courses:** Nil

**Exclusive Courses:** Nil

**Part II**

**Course Aims**

This course is designed to allow students to demonstrate their abilities to carry out independent research and project involving original research and to develop expertise in a chosen area of media and communication through the application of theories and techniques they have learned in the coursework. The research may be quantitative or qualitative in nature, but must include original inquiry and analysis in addition to a review of the literature. In undertaking the dissertation, students take initiatives and demonstrate intellectual achievements through their work reflecting the understanding of the subject matter, and of the theories and professional skills being applied.

Students will also develop and demonstrate the ability to present the result of the investigation in a precise and persuasive manner in the form of a dissertation.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

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

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)
1.	design, conduct, manage and report a substantial piece of individual research or a project involving original research;	
2.	pursue a subject area of the programme to substantial depth;	
3.	critically assess literature and material relevant to the chosen topic of study;	
4.	apply appropriate research methods and sound scholarly principles to the chosen topic; and	
5.	present the results of the research effectively in a logical, precise and coherent manner in the form of a dissertation.	

### 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)
1-5	The student is required to undertake an individual piece which uses the subject matter and skills developed in the programme to work on his/her own dissertation. The individual student will be required to be self-motivated and to set his/her own goals, and to develop a plan to monitor his/her own schedules.	3 hours/week x 13
1-5	Individual consultation with the supervisor: Students are expected to work independently on their dissertation, while continuous guidance will be given by the supervisor to help the student focus on the topic in preparing and developing the dissertation.	1 hour/week x 13

## 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)*

There are four stages in the dissertation:

Stage	Normal Completion Week
Approval of the dissertation title	2
Approval of an interim report (by supervisor)	6
Approval of the completed draft (by supervisor)	11
Submission of the completed dissertation	13

The dissertation will have a reasonable length in accordance with the specific research project, usually 10,000 to 15,000 words of main text (excluding figures, tables and references). The main text may be supplemented by appendices.

The written dissertation will be evaluated independently by the supervisor and by a second assessor, who will also be a member of academic staff of the department. The two assessors will each mark to a maximum of 45%, giving a total maximum mark of 90% for the written dissertation. Of the remaining 10% mark for the dissertation course, the quality and timeliness of the interim report will account for 5% and continuous assessment by the supervisor will account for 5%.

The dissertation as a whole will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Project management: ability to plan, monitor and maintain a viable work schedule.
- Dissertation scope: the extent to which it addresses issues and problems of the chosen subject area, and hence the worth of the topic.
- Standard of execution: the quality of the work done including (where appropriate) literature review, the evaluation and execution of research methodology, analysis, design, implementation, depth and validity of conclusions.
- Dissertation goal attainment: success in meeting the criteria and achieving the objectives.
- Quality and clarity of the written presentation: success in communicating the conduct and results of the work by the quality and clarity of the written report.
- Style: follow an academic style strictly in writing the dissertation
- In addition, each student may be required to make an oral presentation of the dissertation. The oral presentation will not be graded. It will be used to confirm that the work presented in the written dissertation was that of the student, to clarify points of concern in the written dissertation, and to moderate individual marks across the student cohort. The presentation shall normally last for 30 minutes.

## Grading of Student Achievement

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 CILOs developed through the TLAs will be used to assess the final dissertation that the student submits. There is no formal rubric for assessment because the quality of work achieved and so the appropriate grade to be awarded will depend on both the complexity of the topic and the extent to which the student is able to achieve it. Nevertheless, supervisors are expected to be able to differentiate dissertations in terms of their relative merits. In general, the following descriptions may provide a useful basis for assessing dissertations:

An **excellent (A+)** dissertation should be thoroughly researched (background literature) and conducted (methodology), with detailed consideration of the impact of the dissertation (if implemented) on various relevant stakeholders. As a document, it should be of publishable quality – both in terms of content and presentation – in a suitable academic or practitioner outlet such as journal or edited book. All ethical issues should be documented and resolved.

A **very good (A to A-)** dissertation should adhere to the standard for an excellent dissertation in most respects, yet may also fall short in some areas, such as literature review (may not be complete), methodology (may have some flaws), ethical issues (may be identified but not addressed), implications for stakeholders (may not be fully considered) and presentation (may not be of sufficient quality to publish without additional editing). However, a very good dissertation should not have examples of plagiarism or incomplete referencing.

An **adequate (B-range grades)** dissertation would be substantially weaker than a very good dissertation, with perhaps only 1-2 aspects of the dissertation being done well. In addition, there are likely to be inconsistencies in referencing, limitations in literature review and methodology. The final dissertation might form the basis for a publication if extensively revised.

A **marginal (C-range grades)** dissertation will scarcely be acceptable. It should cover all the major dissertation areas, but these will be partially complete at best. The student may demonstrate some knowledge of the dissertation area, as well as of dissertation management techniques, but the end product will not be publishable in any form (even with editing).

A **failing (D and below)** dissertation will exhibit very weak characteristics in several areas. For instance, the literature review may be restricted to a few items, the methodology may be incorrectly applied, the presentation may be both inconsistent and incomplete, references may be missing or incorrect, and there may be examples of plagiarism (intentional or unintentional). Overall, the dissertation will be largely uninformative or else not a document upon which one can place any degree of reliance.

The course falls under the academic regulations for dissertation-type courses (Academic Regulations 11.4) Students are not permitted to repeat a dissertation-type course.

### **Part III**

#### **Keyword Syllabus**

As an individual dissertation, there is no keyword for the syllabus. The supervisor may advise a student to read materials in his/her chosen area – but this will be on a case by case basis.