

City University of Hong Kong

**Information on a Taught Postgraduate Course
offered by Department of Public Policy
with effect from Semester A in 2014 / 2015**

Part I

Course Title: Doing Research in China

Course Code: POL 5706

Course Duration: one semester

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 aims to introduce to students the major research methods of social sciences, in the context of China. In particular, students will appreciate the challenges and promises of China research, the circumstances upon which these arise, and the coping strategies adopted by researchers active in the field. The course will also enhance students' knowledge on the major research methods of social science, qualitative and quantitative, in the context of China research in particular. Researchers (faculties and doctoral candidates working on China) will be invited to discuss their actual research experience with students.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

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

No.	CILOs	Weighting (if applicable)
1.	Design their own research effectively.	30%
2.	Evaluate critically the research designs of others.	20%
3.	Learn various methods, assess the appropriateness of different methods for different research questions, and the standards by which each method should be evaluated.	10%
4.	Identify the major dimensions of challenges in China research and assess the coping strategies in different circumstances.	20%
5	Develop hands-on skills and a good intellectual foundation for conducting research in China	20%

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)
CILO 1,2,3,4	Weekly in-class seminars (part lectures, part instructor-led interactive discussion sessions)	3
CILO 1,2,3,4	Guided reading (students are required to complete reading of assigned materials according to the seminar schedule before each seminar)	3
CILO 3, 4, 5	In-class tests (students are to take two tests during the semester to assess their understandings of the uses for different research methods)	
CILO 3, 4, 5	Sharing and discussion with active researchers' actual research experience (in class and part of the seminars)	
CILO 1, 4, 5	Students work in small groups to develop a research design proposal – concepts, rationale, data, execution plan; and a self-appraisal: estimates of difficulties, possible coping strategies (out-of-class) Students' progress will be guided closely during the weekly seminars	3 or more
CILO 2, 4, 5	End-of-term Workshop in which students present their research design proposal and self-appraisal, and respond to appraisals and comments by other groups of students; guided discussion by instructor	3

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
CILO 3, 4, 5	Reading, class presentation, participation.	40%	Students are required to critically read assigned materials and actively participate in class discussion. Students will be tested on their understandings of different methods and research skills. Students are also expected to make presentations to show their critical understanding and evaluation of class materials.
CILO 1,2, 5	Research design proposal	60%	Students are required to design a research project to demonstrate their abilities to identify original research topics, apply various research methods and discover innovative research strategies.

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

Letter Grade	Grading criteria in relation to CILOs
A+ A A-	Excellent demonstration of knowledge and skills required for original and creative research and very high quality of critical thinking, review of literature, analysis and evaluation, written communication, and creative findings.
B+ B B-	Good demonstration of knowledge and skills required for original and creative research and good quality of critical thinking, review of literature, analysis and evaluation, written communication, and creative findings.
C+ C C-	Adequate demonstration of knowledge and skills required for original and creative research and average effort and ability to think critically, review literature, analyze and evaluate material, communicate, and discover creative findings.
D	Limited demonstration of knowledge and skills require for original and creative research. Superficial understanding of the research process, inadequate literature review, insufficient effort to analyse and evaluate material, poor quality written communication, and little creative findings.
F	Almost no standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct theoretical approaches to cross-national studies, policy transfer and learning. Almost no demonstration of critical ability to interpret data and argument.

Part III

Keyword Syllabus

Research, science and social science inquiry; China studies – state of the field; the China research ‘field’ – characteristics, challenges and resources; qualitative and quantitative studies and methods in use in China studies; the usual ‘textbook advice’ and presentation of research outputs and conclusions; the ‘actual’ research process; coping strategies; evolving research design; exploratory study; ethical issues; researcher’s role and methods; what research is and what defines a contribution.

Recommended Reading

Text(s)

Earl Babbie (2013) *The Basics of Social Research*, (Belmont: Wadsworth)

Maria Heimer and Stig Thøgersen (2006) *Doing Fieldwork in China*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.