

**City University of Hong Kong**  
**Course Syllabus**

**offered by the Department of English**  
**with effect from Semester A 2022/23**

---

---

**Part I      Course Overview**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Course Title:</b>   | <u>Research Methods in English Studies</u> |
| <b>Course Code:</b>  | <u>EN8015</u>                              |
| <b>Course Duration:</b>                                      | <u>1 semester</u>                          |
| <b>Credit Units:</b>   | <u>3</u>                                   |
| <b>Level:</b>  | <u>R8</u>                                  |
| <b>Medium of Instruction:</b>                                | <u>English</u>                             |
| <b>Medium of Assessment:</b>                                 | <u>English</u>                             |
| <b>Prerequisites:</b><br><i>(Course Code and Title)</i>      | <u>Nil</u>                                 |
| <b>Precursors:</b><br><i>(Course Code and Title)</i>         | <u>Nil</u>                                 |
| <b>Equivalent Courses:</b><br><i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | <u>Nil</u>                                 |
| <b>Exclusive Courses:</b><br><i>(Course Code and Title)</i>  | <u>Nil</u>                                 |

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

This course will teach students to research, analyze, evaluate, and apply critical approaches and methods in the field of English studies. The main aim is to prepare them to conduct their own independent research study.

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

| No. | CILOs   | Weighting*<br>(if applicable) | Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate) |    |    |
|-----|---|-------------------------------|---|----|----|
|     |   |                               | A1  | A2 | A3 |
| 1.  | make use of library and online resources to conduct literature searches and to review the literature in order to guide the direction and the design of a study                          | 5%                            |   | ✓  |    |
| 2.  | analyse and evaluate a range of research questions in English Studies   | 10%                           | ✓   | ✓  | ✓  |
| 3.  | analyse and evaluate a set of basic concepts, theories and research methods in English Studies  | 20%                           | ✓   | ✓  | ✓  |
| 4.  | analyse, evaluate, compare and contrast both the advantages and disadvantages of different research methods, with reference to different kinds of research questions in English Studies | 30%                           | ✓   | ✓  | ✓  |
| 5.  | apply the knowledge and skills gained from CILOs 2-4 to design a research study   | 30%                           | ✓   | ✓  | ✓  |
| 6.  | discuss key ethical issues in research and publication, and apply them in research design   | 5%                            | ✓   | ✓  | ✓  |
|     |   | 100%                          |   |    |    |

**A1: Attitude**

*Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.*

**A2: Ability**

*Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to self-life problems.*

**A3: Accomplishments**

*Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.*

### 3. Teaching and Learning Activities (TLAs)

| TLA               | Brief Description   | CILO No. |   |   |   |   |   | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|-------------------|---|----------|---|---|---|---|---|----------------------------|
|                   |   | 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |                            |
| Lectures          | Interactive lectures delivered by the instructor and guest speakers   | ✓        | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | 2                          |
| Group discussions | Guided small group discussions  |          | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   | 1                          |
| Analysis tasks    | Guided exploratory tasks that involve the use of authentic research texts representing various research methods | ✓        | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   | 1                          |
| Reading           | Guided out-of-class reading tasks   | ✓        | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |   | 3                          |

#### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

[illegible]

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

Applicable to students admitted in Semester A 2022/23 and thereafter

| Assessment Task                       | Criterion   | Excellent<br>(A+, A, A-)  | Good<br>(B+, B)  | Marginal<br>(B-, C+, C)   | Failure<br>(F)  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|---|
| 1. Part draft of a research proposal  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic</li> <li>Content &amp; analysis</li> <li>Organization</li> <li>Language</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows full understanding of the topic;</li> <li>Shows full understanding of main concepts and their application;</li> <li>All relevant information is included in discussion and analysis;</li> <li>The purpose of the analysis of concepts is completely achieved;</li> <li>Effectively sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are highly appropriate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows sufficient understanding of the topic;</li> <li>The main concepts are competently discussed and applied;</li> <li>The information included in discussion and analysis of concepts is sufficient;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is achieved;</li> <li>Quite effectively sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are appropriate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows partial understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are sufficient, and partially applied;</li> <li>Only partial information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts;</li> <li>Only partial analysis is provided;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is partially achieved;</li> <li>Adequately sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are somewhat appropriate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows inaccurate understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are highly inadequate;</li> <li>Very limited or inaccurate information is incorporated in conceptual analysis;</li> <li>The analysis is not at all comprehensible;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not achieved in any way;</li> <li>Poorly sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are completely inappropriate</li> </ul> |
| 2. A complete research proposal draft | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic</li> <li>Content &amp; analysis</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows full understanding of the topic;</li> <li>Shows full understanding of main concepts and their application;</li> <li>All relevant</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows sufficient understanding of the topic;</li> <li>The main concepts are competently discussed and applied;</li> <li>The information</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows partial understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are sufficient, and partially applied;</li> <li>Only partial</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows inaccurate understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are highly inadequate;</li> <li>Very limited or inaccurate information is</li> </ul>   |

| Assessment Task | Criterion  | Excellent<br>(A+, A, A-)  | Good<br>(B+, B)   | Marginal<br>(B-, C+, C)  | Failure<br>(F)  |
|-----------------|--|---|---|--|---|
|                 |  | <p>information is included in discussion and analysis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the analysis of concepts is completely achieved;</li> <li>• The proposed study is well-designed; the method(s) is thoroughly described, grounded in the literature and well-justified.</li> <li>• Gives a thorough discussion, grounded in the scholarly literature on ethics, of the ethical considerations relevant to the project and clearly explaining how they could be addressed</li> </ul> | <p>included in discussion and analysis of concepts is sufficient;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the conceptual analysis is achieved;</li> <li>• The proposed study is quite well-designed; the method(s) is quite thoroughly described and justified in some parts. Some parts of the design is grounded in the literature.</li> <li>• Gives a generally clear discussion, grounded in the scholarly literature on ethics, of the ethical considerations relevant to the project and explaining how they could be addressed.</li> </ul> | <p>information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only partial analysis is provided;</li> <li>• The purpose of the conceptual analysis is partially achieved;</li> <li>• A few major parts of the proposed study need to be elaborated, redesigned or justified. There is a need to refer to the literature for some parts of the design.</li> <li>• Gives a rather brief discussion of the ethical considerations relevant to the project and explaining how they could be addressed, with some reference to the scholarly literature on ethics.</li> </ul> | <p>incorporated in conceptual analysis;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The analysis is not at all comprehensible;</li> <li>• The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not achieved in any way;</li> <li>• The proposed study is poorly designed and will not be implementable.</li> <li>• Does not discuss ethical considerations relevant to the project and/or does not describe how they could be addressed and/or is not informed by the scholarly literature on ethics</li> </ul> |
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organization</li> <li>• Language</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectively sectioned and organized</li> <li>• Style and tone are highly appropriate</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quite effectively sectioned and organized</li> <li>• Style and tone are appropriate</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adequately sectioned and organized</li> <li>• Style and tone are somewhat appropriate</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poorly sectioned and organized</li> <li>• Style and tone are completely inappropriate</li> </ul>   |

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23

| Assessment Task                       | Criterion   | Excellent<br>(A+, A, A-)  | Good<br>(B+, B, B-)  | Fair<br>(C+, C, C-)   | Marginal<br>(D)  | Failure<br>(F)  |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|--|---|
| 1. Part draft of a research proposal  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic</li> <li>Content &amp; analysis</li> <li>Organization</li> <li>Language</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows full understanding of the topic;</li> <li>Shows full understanding of main concepts and their application;</li> <li>All relevant information is included in discussion and analysis;</li> <li>The purpose of the analysis of concepts is completely achieved;</li> <li>Effectively sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are highly appropriate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows sufficient understanding of the topic;</li> <li>The main concepts are competently discussed and applied;</li> <li>The information included in discussion and analysis of concepts is sufficient;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is achieved;</li> <li>Quite effectively sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are appropriate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows partial understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are sufficient, and partially applied;</li> <li>Only partial information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts;</li> <li>Only partial analysis is provided;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is partially achieved;</li> <li>Adequately sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are somewhat appropriate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows inadequate understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are sketchy and inadequate;</li> <li>Incomplete information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts;</li> <li>The analysis is not informative or comprehensive;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not adequately achieved;</li> <li>Inadequately sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are inappropriate</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows inaccurate understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are highly inadequate;</li> <li>Very limited or inaccurate information is incorporated in conceptual analysis;</li> <li>The analysis is not at all comprehensible;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not achieved in any way;</li> <li>Poorly sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are completely inappropriate</li> </ul> |
| 2. A complete research proposal draft | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Topic</li> <li>Content &amp; analysis</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows full understanding of the topic;</li> <li>Shows full understanding of main concepts and their application;</li> <li>All relevant information is included in discussion and</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows sufficient understanding of the topic;</li> <li>The main concepts are competently discussed and applied;</li> <li>The information included in discussion and analysis of</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows partial understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are sufficient, and partially applied;</li> <li>Only partial information is included in discussion and</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows inadequate understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are sketchy and inadequate;</li> <li>Incomplete information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts;</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shows inaccurate understanding of the topic</li> <li>The concepts selected for analysis are highly inadequate;</li> <li>Very limited or inaccurate information is incorporated in conceptual analysis;</li> <li>The analysis is not at</li> </ul>  |

| Assessment Task | Criterion  | Excellent<br>(A+, A, A-)  | Good<br>(B+, B, B-)  | Fair<br>(C+, C, C-)  | Marginal<br>(D)  | Failure<br>(F)   |
|-----------------|--|---|--|--|--|--|
|                 |  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analysis;</li> <li>The purpose of the analysis of concepts is completely achieved;</li> <li>The proposed study is well-designed; the method(s) is thoroughly described, grounded in the literature and well-justified.</li> <li>Gives a thorough discussion, grounded in the scholarly literature on ethics, of the ethical considerations relevant to the project and clearly explaining how they could be addressed</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>concepts is sufficient;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is achieved;</li> <li>The proposed study is quite well-designed; the method(s) is quite thoroughly described and justified in some parts. Some parts of the design is grounded in the literature.</li> <li>Gives a generally clear discussion, grounded in the scholarly literature on ethics, of the ethical considerations relevant to the project and explaining how they could be addressed.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>analysis of concepts;</li> <li>Only partial analysis is provided;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is partially achieved;</li> <li>A few major parts of the proposed study need to be elaborated, redesigned or justified. There is a need to refer to the literature for some parts of the design.</li> <li>Gives a rather brief discussion of the ethical considerations relevant to the project and explaining how they could be addressed, with some reference to the scholarly literature on ethics.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The analysis is not informative or comprehensive;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not adequately achieved;</li> <li>Many major parts of the proposed study need to be reconsidered or elaborated. There is a general lack of referencing to the existing literature for the design of the study.</li> <li>Raises some ethical considerations relevant to the topic but gives an inadequate discussion of them and/or inadequately describes how they could be addressed and/or makes insufficient reference to the scholarly literature on ethics</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>all comprehensible;</li> <li>The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not achieved in any way;</li> <li>The proposed study is poorly designed and will not be implementable.</li> <li>Does not discuss ethical considerations relevant to the project and/or does not describe how they could be addressed and/or is not informed by the scholarly literature on ethics</li> </ul> |
|                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Organization</li> <li>Language</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effectively sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are highly appropriate</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quite effectively sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are appropriate</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adequately sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are somewhat appropriate</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequately sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are inappropriate</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Poorly sectioned and organized</li> <li>Style and tone are completely inappropriate</li> </ul>  |

## Part III Other Information

### 1. Keyword Syllabus

Literature Searches, Research Questions, Research Paradigms and Methodologies,

### 2. Reading List

#### 2.1 Compulsory Readings

|     |  |
|-----|--|
| 1.  | Johnson, D. (1992). <i>Approaches to research in second language learning</i> . White Plains, NY: Longman.   |
| 2.  | Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1995). The substance of study: Framing the research question. In C. Marshall & G. Rossman (Eds.). <i>Designing qualitative research</i> (2nd ed., pp. 15-37). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.                            |
| 3.  | Towheed, S. (2010). Tools and techniques for literary research: Using online and printed sources. In D. da Correa Sousa & W.R. Owens (Eds.). <i>The handbook to literary research</i> (2nd ed., pp. 9-36). London, UK: Routledge.              |
| 4.  | da Correa Sousa, D. & Owens, W.R. (Eds.). (2010). <i>The handbook to literary research</i> . London (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.  |
| 5.  | Garrett-Pretts, W.F. (2013). Getting started: From personal response to field stance. In W.F. Garrett-Pretts. <i>Writing about literature: A guide for the student critic</i> . (2nd ed., pp. 1- 19). Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press.        |
| 6.  | Eagleton, T. (2008). Introduction: What is literature? In T. Eagleton (Ed.), <i>Literary theory: An introduction</i> (2nd ed. pp. 1 – 14). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.   |
| 7.  | Castle, G. (2007). The rise of literary theory. In G. Castle (Ed.). <i>The Blackwell guide to literary theory</i> (pp. 15 – 57). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.   |
| 8.  | Elliott, M.A. & Stokes, C. (2003). Introduction: What is method and why does it matter? In M. A. Elliott, & C. Stokes (Eds.). <i>American literary studies: A methodological reader</i> (pp. 1 – 16). New York, NY: New York University Press. |
| 9.  | Yood, J. (2003). Writing the discipline: A generic history of English studies. <i>College English</i> , 65(5), 526-540.  |
| 10. | Olsen, S. H. (2005). Progress in literary studies. <i>New Literary History</i> , 36(3), 341-358.   |

#### 2.2 Additional Readings

|    |   |
|----|---|
| 1. | Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1995). The substance of study: Framing the research question. In C. Marshall & G. Rossman (Eds.). <i>Designing qualitative research</i> (2nd ed., pp. 15-37). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. |
| 2. | Bereiter, C. (1985). Use of thinking aloud in identification and teaching of reading comprehension strategies. <i>Cognition and Instruction</i> , 2(2), 131-156.  |
| 3. | Tsui, A. (1985). Analysing input and interaction in second language classrooms. <i>RELJ Journal</i> , 16(1), 8-32.  |
| 4. | Lin, A. (1998). Understanding the medium of instruction in Hong Kong schools: What research approaches do we need? <i>Asia Pacific Journal of Language in Education</i> , 1, 85-97.                                 |
| 5. | Owens, W.R. (2010). Editing literary texts. In D. da Correa Sousa & W.R. Owen (Eds.). <i>The handbook to literary research</i> (2nd ed., pp. 69-86). New York, NY: Routledge.                                       |
| 6. | Gutpa, S. (2010). The place of theory in literary disciplines. In D., da Correa Sousa & W.R., Owens. (Eds.). <i>The handbook to literary research</i> (2nd ed., pp.109-130). New York, NY: Routledge.               |
| 7. | Johnson, D. (2010). Literary research and interdisciplinarity. In D. da Correa Sousa & W.R. Owens (Eds.). <i>The handbook to literary research</i> (2nd ed., pp.131-147). New York, NY: Routledge.                  |
| 8. | Eagleton, T. (2014). <i>How to read literature</i> . New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.  |
| 9. | Breger, C. (2012). The return to aesthetics in literary studies. <i>German Studies Review</i> , 35(3), 505-509.   |