

PIA6019: DS CAPSTONE PROJECT

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

DS Capstone Project

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

6019

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

Two Semesters

Credit Units

0-4

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

PIA6015 Master's Thesis
PIA6021 DC Master's Thesis

Additional Information

Notes: Students who intend to write a "Master's Thesis" (PIA6015) in lieu of the Capstone Project (PIA6019) must complete PIA5026 Research Design for the Social Sciences in semester A, with a grade of A or above.

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to enable students to undertake an original piece of group research in development studies, to integrate problems identified in the development studies field with different theoretical perspectives in a creative and innovative way, and to apply theories and research techniques to a chosen subject matter. Students will work in groups on a topic of their choice.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Discover new knowledge by identifying and formulating a research project on a development related topic at master degree level;	20	x	x	x
2	Work and communicate effectively and creatively with others;	20	x	x	
3	Critically analyse a specific topic in development studies;	20	x	x	
4	Seek and apply quantitative or qualitative data and materials relevant to the project objectives; and	20	x	x	
5	Identify and critically analyse, synthesise and evaluate knowledge and theories relating to development studies.	20	x	x	

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 real-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.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	1	<p>Supervised group capstone project: Students will be asked to identify a development related research topic to be studied with a small group of fellow students. The principal function of the supervision is to keep the capstone project work focused, relevant and productive. The development of the capstone project includes the following stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · approval of a project topic (in the beginning of Semester B); · approval of a project outline/interim report (by supervisor in Semester B); · approval of the draft project report (by supervisor); and · submission of the completed project. <p>Each group of students is required to submit the draft project report before the examination week of Semester B; the completed project must be submitted by examination week of the Summer Term. The project's findings may be conveyed through a variety of outputs/media, though in every case an accompanying written research report shall be submitted as well.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
2	2	<p>Peer assessments: Each student must complete a peer review of his/her group members by the course's end.</p>	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

3	3	Reflective essay: Each student must complete a reflective essay on participation in the group research project.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Group research project: Each group must submit a completed research project presenting the group's findings. In consultation with the group's supervisor, the project's findings may be conveyed through a variety of outputs/ media, though in every case an accompanying written research report shall be submitted as well.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	70	-	No
2	Reflective essay: Each student must complete a Reflective Essay which reflects upon the experience of conducting the project and lessons learnt from the course.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	15	-	No
3	Peer assessments: Each student must submit a peer assessment of each of his or her group members.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	15	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Group research project (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Ability to demonstrate knowledge and skills required to undertake an original discovery research project; quality of critical thinking, review of literature, analysis and evaluation, written communication, and creative findings; ability to integrate theory and practice.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Knowledge and skills required to undertake an original discovery research project is excellently demonstrated and applied. Very high quality of critical thinking, review of literature, analysis and evaluation, written communication, and creative findings. Demonstrate ability to integrate theory and practice.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Knowledge and skills required to undertake an original discovery research project is well demonstrated and applied. Good quality of critical thinking, review of literature, analysis and evaluation, written communication, and creative findings. Some Indication ability to integrate theory and practice

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Knowledge and skills required to undertake an original discovery research project is rudimentarily demonstrated and applied. Fair quality of critical thinking, review of literature, analysis and evaluation, written communication, and creative findings. Limited ability to integrate theory and practice.

Marginal

(D) Knowledge and skills required to undertake an original discovery research project is limited. Superficial critical thinking and limited effort in the review of literature, analysis and evaluation and poor written communication, and limited creative findings. Minimal ability to integrate theory and practice.

Failure

(F) Unable to demonstrate and apply knowledge and skills required to undertake an original discovery research project. No critical thinking and little effort in the review of literature, analysis and evaluation and very poor written communication, and very limited creative findings. No demonstration of the ability to integrate theory and practice.

Assessment Task

Reflective essay (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Ability to consider and evaluate one's own research experience in a critically reflective manner.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrate ability to integrate theory and practice.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Some Indication ability to integrate theory and practice

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Limited ability to integrate theory and practice.

Marginal

(D) Minimal ability to integrate theory and practice

Failure

(F) No demonstration of the ability to integrate theory and practice.

Assessment Task

Peer assessments (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Ability to make valid contribution to the group research project

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Outstanding evaluation results

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good evaluation results

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Fair evaluation results

Marginal

(D) Marginal evaluation results

Failure

(F) Below the marginal level

Part III Other Information**Keyword Syllabus**

Supervised group project; literature review; problem identification; qualitative and quantitative research methods; research and writing.

Reading List**Compulsory Readings**

	Title
1	Creswell, John W. 2009. Research Design. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
2	Hall, Peter. 2005. "The Elements of a Good Dissertation Prospectus or Research Proposal." Cambridge, MA: Harvard University.
3	Gray, David E. 2009. Doing Research in the Real World. London: SAGE.
4	Oliver, Paul. 2010. "The Student's Guide to Research Ethics." Maidenhead: Open University Press.
5	Ridley, Diana. 2012. "The Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students." London: SAGE.
6	Roberts, C.M. 2004. "The Dissertation Journey: A Practical and Comprehensive Guide to Planning, Writing, and Defending your Dissertation." Thousand Oaks: Corwin Press.
7	Sharp, John A., John Peters, and Keith Howard. 2002. The Management of a Student Research Project. Burlington, VT: Gower.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Brady, Henry E. and David Collier. 2004. Rethinking Social Inquiry. London: Rowman & Littlefield.
2	City University of Hong Kong. (N/A) "Academic Honesty: Fundamental Principles for Knowledge Discovery and Innovation." Accessed online on 14 June 2020 at: http://www6.cityu.edu.hk/ah/
3	Elster, Jon. 2007. Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts for the Social Sciences. New York: Cambridge University Press.

4	Geddes, Barbara. 1990. "How the Cases You Choose Affect the Answers You Get: Selection Bias in Comparative Politics." <i>Political Analysis</i> 2: 131-150.
5	George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. <i>Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences</i> . MIT Press.
6	Gerring, John. 2001. <i>Social Science Methodology: A Criterial Framework</i> . Cambridge University Press.
7	Gerring, John. 2007. <i>Case Study Research: Principles and Practices</i> . Cambridge University Press.
8	Johnson, Janet Buttolph, H.T. Reynolds, and Richard Joslyn. 2001. <i>Political Science Research Methods</i> . Washington, D.C.: CQ Press.
9	King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba. 1994. <i>Designing Social Inquiry</i> . Princeton University Press.
10	The University of Hong Kong. (N/A). "What is Plagiarism?" Accessed online on 14 June 2020 at: http://www.rss.hku.hk/plagiarism/