

PIA6603: RESEARCH METHODS IN PUBLIC POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Research Methods in Public Policy and Management

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

6603

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

POL6603 Research Methods in Public Policy and Management

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

With an emphasis on ability and accomplishment this course aims to provide students with basic knowledge and skills in social research methods so that they can analyse questions in policy and management. Students will be required to devise innovative primary research questions, to collect and interpret data and to contribute constructively and creatively to paired and small group work tasks. Particular emphasis will be placed on the critical evaluation of both published research and raw data as presented in a variety of formats. Students will be able to describe and relate various methodological positions, to justify the rationale for conducting primary research and to compare and contrast different types of research.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Explore the meaning of research, identifying its purpose, key methodological positions and potential contribution to knowledge.	15	x	x	
2	Conduct a literature review on a relevant subject matter in order to generate appropriate and innovative primary research questions.	15	x	x	
3	Select the appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods for research design.	30		x	x
4	Identify appropriate ways of analysing a given data set to answer a research question.	20		x	x
5	Creatively relate the principles of inventory design to the construction of a survey instrument; prepare, design, conduct and analyse an interview; interpret raw and published statistical data, charts and graphs.	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	Lectures/Workshops	Presentation of theories, concepts and ideas based on academic literature (including course readings). Course lecturer responds to questions raised by students attending the workshops and facilitates discussion and class exercises.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5

2	Individual and group-based work	Part summative, part formative the work sheets have been created to reinforce and expand learning gained through the content of lectures, workshops and readings. Students will be required to demonstrate their mastery of a variety of research methods and accomplish set tasks creatively.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
3	Canvas	Readings, slides and other materials to support lectures and workshops posted for students to download.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	
4	Independent reading	Readings listed in course outline to be read by every student. The focus of the readings is guided by accompanying worksheets that highlight important concepts and give students an opportunity to apply ideas.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Research proposal: select a topic, develop research question(s), hypothesis and outline the appropriate research methods. (max. 1000 words excluding references)	1, 2	30	Individual - summative	No
2	In-class activities: interview, questionnaire design, and interpreting statistical data.	2, 3, 5	20	Small groups - summative	No
3	In-class test	3, 4, 5	50	Individual - summative	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

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

Criterion

Design of topic

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) A+: High standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.

A: Highly innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.

A-: Strong demonstration of critical ability to select the appropriate methodology and interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data.

Excellent accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter.

Strong ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.

Good

(B+, B, B-) B+: Fairly high standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.

B: Fairly innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.

B-: Fairly good demonstration of critical ability to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data.

Good accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter.

Fairly strong ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) C+: Rudimentary standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.

C: Little innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.

C-: Weak demonstration of critical ability to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data.

Basic accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter.

Basic ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.

Marginal

(D) Poor standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.

Very little innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.

Very little demonstration of critical ability to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data.

Weak accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter.

Very little ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.

Failure

(F) Almost no standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.

No innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.

Almost no demonstration of critical ability to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data.

Very inadequate accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter.

Almost no ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.

Assessment Task

Questionnaire (in-class activity) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Design of the questionnaire

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) A+: High standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.

A: Highly innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.

A-: Strong demonstration of critical ability to select the appropriate methodology and interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data. Excellent accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter.

Strong ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.

Good

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Very inadequate accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter.

Almost no ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.

Assessment Task

Interpretation of data (in-class activity) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Interpretation skills

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) A+: High standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.

A: Highly innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.

A-: Strong demonstration of critical ability to select the appropriate methodology and interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data.

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Assessment Task

Interview questions and analysis (in-class activity) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Analytical skills

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) A+: High standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.

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Very inadequate accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter.

Almost no ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.

Assessment Task

In-class test (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Methods selection, interpretation and analytical skills

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) A+: High standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.

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Almost no ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.

Assessment Task

Research proposal (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Design of topic

Excellent

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Assessment Task

Questionnaire (in-class activity) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Design of the questionnaire

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Assessment Task

Interpretation of data (in-class activity) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Interpretation skills

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Assessment Task

Interview questions and analysis (in-class activity) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Analytical skills

Excellent

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Assessment Task

In-class test (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Methods selection, interpretation and analytical skills

Excellent

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Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Theory and philosophy of research; quantitative and qualitative research methods; conducting literature review; generating primary research questions; questionnaire design and measurement; data analysis; interpreting graphs and charts, qualitative and quantitative document analysis, interview techniques; focus groups; case study; participant and non-participant observations; research ethics

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Required reading assignments listed on course outline and provided through Canvas.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Optional readings listed on course outline and provided through Canvas.