

EN8015: RESEARCH METHODS IN ENGLISH STUDIES

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Research Methods in English Studies

Subject Code

EN - English

Course Number

8015

Academic Unit

English (EN)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

R8 - Research Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

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.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-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		x	
2	analyse and evaluate a range of research questions in English Studies	10	x	x	x
3	analyse and evaluate a set of basic concepts, theories and research methods in English Studies	20	x	x	x
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	x	x	x
5	apply the knowledge and skills gained from CILOs 2-4 to design a research study	30	x	x	x
6	discuss key ethical issues in research and publication, and apply them in research design	5	x	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	Students will engage in interactive lectures to gain knowledge about research methods in English studies.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
2	Group discussions	Students will engage in small group discussions.	2, 3, 4, 5

3	Analysis tasks	Students will engage in exploratory tasks that involve the use of authentic research texts representing various research methods.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1
4	Reading	Students will engage in out-of-class reading tasks.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	3

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("-" for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Each student will write a part draft of a research proposal or a part draft of a critical survey of the research literature on a chosen topic.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	-	No
2	Each student will write a complete research proposal or a complete critical survey of the literature on a chosen topic.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	70	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Part draft of a research proposal (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

- Topic
- Content & analysis
- Organization
- Language

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Topic

- Shows full understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- Shows full understanding of main concepts and their application
- All relevant information is included in discussion and analysis
- The purpose of the analysis of concepts is completely achieved

Organization

- Effectively sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are highly appropriate

Good

(B+, B, B-)

Topic

- Shows sufficient understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The main concepts are competently discussed and applied
- The information included in discussion and analysis of concepts is sufficient
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is achieved

Organization

- Quite effectively sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are appropriate

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

Topic

- Shows partial understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are sufficient, and partially applied
- Only partial information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts
- Only partial analysis is provided
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is partially achieved

Organization

- Adequately sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are somewhat appropriate

Marginal

(D)

Topic

- Shows inadequate understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are sketchy and inadequate
- Incomplete information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts
- The analysis is not informative or comprehensive
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not adequately achieved

Organization

- Inadequately sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are inappropriate

Failure

(F)

Topic

- Shows inadequate understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are sketchy and inadequate
- Incomplete information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts
- The analysis is not informative or comprehensive
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not adequately achieved

Organization

- Poorly sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are completely inappropriate

Assessment Task

2. A complete research proposal draft (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

- Topic
- Content & analysis
- Organization
- Language

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Topic

- Shows full understanding of the topic;

Content & analysis

- Shows full understanding of main concepts and their application
- All relevant information is included in discussion and analysis;
- The purpose of the analysis of concepts is completely achieved;

- The proposed study is well-designed; the method(s) is thoroughly described, grounded in the literature and well-justified.
- 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

Organization

- Effectively sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are highly appropriate

Good

(B+, B, B-)

Topic

- Shows sufficient understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The main concepts are competently discussed and applied
- The information included in discussion and analysis of concepts is sufficient;
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is achieved;
- 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.
- 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.

Organization

- Quite effectively sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are appropriate

Fair

(C+, C, C-)

Topic

- Shows partial understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are sufficient, and partially applied
- Only partial information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts;
- Only partial analysis is provided; - The purpose of the conceptual analysis is partially achieved;
- 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.
- 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.

Organization

- Adequately sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are somewhat appropriate

Marginal

(D)

Topic

- Shows inadequate understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are sketchy and inadequate
- Incomplete information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts;
- The analysis is not informative or comprehensive;
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not adequately achieved;
- 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.
- 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

Organization

- Inadequately sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are inappropriate

Failure

(F)

Topic

- Shows inadequate understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are sketchy and inadequate
- Incomplete information is incorporated in conceptual analysis;
- The analysis is not at all comprehensible;
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not achieved in any way;
- The proposed study is poorly designed and will not be implementable.
- 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

Organization

- Poorly sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are completely inappropriate

Assessment Task

1. Part draft of a research proposal (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

- Topic
- Content & analysis
- Organization
- Language

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Topic

- Shows full understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- Shows full understanding of main concepts and their application
- All relevant information is included in discussion and analysis
- The purpose of the analysis of concepts is completely achieved

Organization

- Effectively sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are highly appropriate

Good

(B+, B)

Topic

- Shows sufficient understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The main concepts are competently discussed and applied
- The information included in discussion and analysis of concepts is sufficient
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is achieved

Organization

- Quite effectively sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are appropriate

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

Topic

- Shows partial understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are sufficient, and partially applied;
- Only partial information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts;
- Only partial analysis is provided;
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is partially achieved;

Organization

- Adequately sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are somewhat appropriate

Failure

(F)

Topic

- Shows inaccurate understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are highly inadequate;
- Very limited or inaccurate information is incorporated in conceptual analysis;
- The analysis is not at all comprehensible;
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not achieved in any way;

Organization

- Poorly sectioned and organized
 - Style and tone are completely inappropriate
-

Assessment Task

2. A complete research proposal draft (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

- Topic
- Content & analysis
- Organization
- Language

Excellent

(A+, A, A-)

Topic

- Shows full understanding of the topic;

Content & analysis

- Shows full understanding of main concepts and their application
- All relevant information is included in discussion and analysis;
- The purpose of the analysis of concepts is completely achieved;
- The proposed study is well-designed; the method(s) is thoroughly described, grounded in the literature and well-justified.
- 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

Organization

- Effectively sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are highly appropriate

Good

(B+, B)

Topic

- Shows sufficient understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The main concepts are competently discussed and applied
- The information included in discussion and analysis of concepts is sufficient;
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is achieved;

- 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.
- 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.

Organization

- Quite effectively sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are appropriate

Marginal

(B-, C+, C)

Topic

- Shows partial understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are sufficient, and partially applied;
- Only partial information is included in discussion and analysis of concepts;
- Only partial analysis is provided;
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is partially achieved;
- 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.
- 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.

Organization

- Adequately sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are somewhat appropriate

Failure

(F)

Topic

- Shows inaccurate understanding of the topic

Content & analysis

- The concepts selected for analysis are highly inadequate;
- Very limited or inaccurate information is incorporated in conceptual analysis;
- The analysis is not at all comprehensible;
- The purpose of the conceptual analysis is not achieved in any way;
- The proposed study is poorly designed and will not be implementable.
- 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

Organization

- Poorly sectioned and organized

Language

- Style and tone are completely inappropriate

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Literature Searches, Research Questions, Research Paradigms and Methodologies,

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Johnson, D. (1992). Approaches to research in second language learning. White Plains, NY: Longman.
2	Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1995). The substance of study: Framing the research question. In C. Marshall & G. Rossman (Eds.). Designing qualitative research (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.). The handbook to literary research (2nd ed., pp. 9-36). London, UK: Routledge.
4	da Correa Sousa, D. & Owens, W.R. (Eds.). (2010). The handbook to literary research. 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. Writing about literature: A guide for the student critic. (2nd ed., pp. 1- 19). Ontario, Canada: Broadview Press.
6	Eagleton, T. (2008). Introduction: What is literature? In T. Eagleton (Ed.), Literary theory: An introduction (2nd ed. pp. 1 – 14). Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
7	Castle, G. (2007). The rise of literary theory. In G. Castle (Ed.). The Blackwell guide to literary theory (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.). American literary studies: A methodological reader (pp. 1 – 16). New York, NY: New York University Press.
9	Yood, J. (2003). Writing the discipline: A generic history of English studies. College English 65(5), 526-540.
10	Olsen, S. H. (2005). Progress in literary studies. New Literary History 36(3), 341-358.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Marshall, C., & Rossman, G. (1995). The substance of study: Framing the research question. In C. Marshall & G. Rossman (Eds.). Designing qualitative research (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. Cognition and Instruction 2(2), 131-156.
3	Tsui, A. (1985). Analysing input and interaction in second language classrooms. RELC Journal 16(1), 8-32.
4	Lin, A. (1998). Understanding the medium of instruction in Hong Kong schools: What research approaches do we need? Asia Pacific Journal of Language in Education, 1 85-97.
5	Owens, W.R. (2010). Editing literary texts. In D. da Correa Sousa & W.R. Owen (Eds.). The handbook to literary research (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.). The handbook to literary research (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.). The handbook to literary research (2nd ed., pp.131-147). New York, NY: Routledge.
8	Eagleton, T. (2014). How to read literature. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
9	Breger, C. (2012). The return to aesthetics in literary studies. German Studies Review 35(3), 505-509.