

PIA8127: INDEPENDENT STUDY

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Independent Study

Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

Course Number

8127

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

R8 - Research Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course aims to enable students to engage in a critical review of the literature as a foundation to conduct analysis of theoretical frameworks and research methodologies in relation to their proposed area of studies. Supervision will be provided in relation to their proposed area of studies.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Form independent evaluation of both theories and research methods in their selected fields of studies		x	x	
2	Formulate research questions		x	x	
3	Select correct approaches for their research questions		x	x	

4	Formulate innovative hypotheses addressing their research questions		x	x	x
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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	Individual Supervisions		1	2 hrs
2	Individual Discussions		2, 3, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Essay (7,000 – 9,000 words)	1, 2, 3, 4	75	-	No
2	Participation	1, 2, 3, 4	25	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Essay (75%)

Criterion

Theoretical basis for writing, Incorporation of case study materials, Engagement with key readings and secondary literature, spelling and grammar, Analysis of topic

Excellent

Demonstrates high level of analytical thinking. Evidence of ability to fully comprehend and critique materials. The student is able to utilise theoretical concepts in critically explaining case study materials and extrapolate these materials into new areas. No spelling or grammatical mistakes. Excellent range of source materials.

Good

Demonstrates good level of analytical thinking. Evidence of ability to fully comprehend and critique materials. The student is able to utilise theoretical concepts in critically explaining case study materials and extrapolate these materials into new areas. No spelling or grammatical mistakes. Good use of source materials.

Fair

Demonstrates poor level of analytical thinking, mostly descriptive. Evidence of ability to partially comprehend and critique materials. The student is able to utilise theoretical concepts in a limited way in explaining case study materials and has a

restricted ability to extrapolate these materials into new areas. Some spelling or grammatical mistakes. Restricted and/or inappropriate references.

Marginal

Demonstrates very limited or no analytical thinking, largely descriptive. Limited ability to comprehend and critique materials. The student is unable to utilise theoretical concepts in explaining case study materials and has a restricted ability to extrapolate these materials into new areas. Spelling or grammatical mistakes. Highly restricted or inappropriate references.

Failure

Demonstrates no analytical thinking, entirely descriptive. Limited ability to comprehend and critique materials. The student is unable to utilise theoretical concepts in explaining case study materials. Spelling or grammatical mistakes. Highly restricted and inappropriate references.

Assessment Task

Participation (Discussions in Research Seminar) (25%)

Criterion

Engages in discussions, able to address issues from both theoretical and empirical perspectives. Does not miss any seminars or meetings.

Excellent

The student has not missed any seminars or meetings and has regularly contributed to discussions at a high level.

Good

The student has missed 1-2 seminars or meetings without explanation and/or has regularly contributed to discussions but only at a discursive level.

Fair

The student has missed 2-3 seminars or meetings without justified explanation and has infrequently contributed to discussions at a discursive level.

Marginal

The student has missed three seminars or meetings without justified explanation, but has generally contributed to discussions. Or the student has not missed more than three seminars or meetings without justified explanation, but has failed to contribute to discussions.

Failure

The student has missed more than three seminars or meetings without justified explanation, generally failed to contribute to discussions.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Individualized learning -- with supervisor and concerned students. Consultation with members of the Qualifying Panel. A list of required readings forming the basis of an advanced literature search.

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Brew, Angela (2001) The nature of research : inquiry in academic contexts. London ; New York : RoutledgeFalmer.
2	Clough, Peter and Cathy Nutbrown (2002) A student's guide to methodology : justifying enquiry. London ; Thousand Oaks, CA : SAGE.
3	Craswell, Gail (2005) Writing for academic success : a postgraduate guide. London ; Thousand Oaks : SAGE.
4	Hantrais, Linda and Steen Mangen (1996) Cross-national research methods in the social sciences. London ; New York : Pinter.
5	Locke, Lawrence F., Waneen Wyrick Spirduso and Stephen J. Silverman (2000) Proposals that work : a guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals. Thousand Oaks, Calif. : Sage.
6	Newman, Isadore, et. al. (1997) Theses and dissertations : a guide to writing in the social and physical sciences. Lanham, Md. : University Press of America.
7	Potter, Stephen (ed.) (2002) Doing postgraduate research. London : SAGE Publications in association with the Open University.
8	Wisker, Gina (2001) The postgraduate research handbook : succeed with your MA, MPhil, EdD and PhD. Basingstoke, Hampshire : Palgrave.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Research Methodology and Statistics http://www.sociosite.net/topics/research.php
2	Sociology Internet Resources http://vax.wcsu.edu/socialsci/socres.html
3	Web Center for Social Research Methods http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/