

PIA8619: 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

8619

Academic Unit

Public and International Affairs (PIA)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

Two Semesters

Credit Units

4

Level

R8 - Research Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

POL8619 Independent Study

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course is designed to meet the special needs of research degree students for knowledge of direct relevance to their topic of research which is not available through other courses at the university. The course is offered by each supervisor to

one's Ph.D. to improve the student's comprehension of one's relevant research area. It also aims to broaden and deepen the students' grasp of knowledge deemed essential in understanding their proposed area of inquiry as identified by the research supervisor and the student. The course is expected to help students develop critical writing and research skills needed for dissertations and publications. The course could also be used to assist the students to develop academic research papers for possible publication.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 DEC-A2 DEC-A3 app.)			
1	Critically evaluate and synthesize various theories in the proposed area of research		x		
2	Develop research questions, an analytical framework, research strategies with respect to the student's research				x
3	Apply analytic strategies, procedures, and techniques to a selected research topic and produce quality essays to be assessed by the supervisor		x	x	
4	Discover new knowledge or construct new practice in relation to the identified issues in students' respective disciplines to develop academic papers for possible publication				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	Independent Study	Development of a sustained piece of writing that will lead to either a publication or become a significant component of the thesis, reading and writing under the guidance of the supervisor; frequent and regular meetings with the supervisor; learning how to prepare the write-up of research papers; and other learning activities deemed appropriate by the supervisor	1, 2, 3, 4	

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

ATs		CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Written assignment (8000-10000 words)	1, 2, 3, 4	100	-	No

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1. Written Assignment or essay (100%) (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Students are required to submit an individual written assignment as an outcome component for the course. The written piece should be between 8,000 and 10,000 words. The structure and topic of the piece will be developed through discussions with the supervisor and under their guidance. It is expected that students will adhere to good academic writing and research standards with appropriate referencing throughout.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent knowledge of the concepts and theories that apply to the students' specific PhD research topic; Strong ability to identify key challenges; Excellent research and writing skills to organize and generate new perspectives; Highly innovative ideas and critical attitude in analyzing PhD-related research issues; Providing an advanced basis for either a publication or incorporation as a section of the thesis. Appropriate referencing throughout.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Satisfactory performance in applying the knowledge of students' written journal article, in terms of concepts and theories that are evolving in his/her research areas; Fair ability to identify key challenges; Good research and writing with some potential to develop critical, and independent analysis; fairly innovative and new ideas and critical attitude in analyzing PhD relevant research agendas, questions both theoretically and practically; Providing a solid basis for the development of either a publication or incorporation as a section of the thesis. Appropriate referencing throughout.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Basic knowledge demonstrated on students' PhD related research disciplines; Superficial analysis of the basic materials; Generally acceptable standard of research and, writing with some limitations; Very little innovative ideas and critical attitude in analysing PhD relevant research agendas, questions both theoretically and practically; Providing a basis for a possible publication or incorporation as a section of the thesis, with revisions. Appropriate referencing throughout.

Marginal

(D) Almost no knowledge of students' PhD related research disciplines; Almost no ability to identify key challenges; Inadequate research and writing; no innovative ideas and critical attitude in analysing PhD relevant research agendas, questions both theoretically and practically. No basis for incorporation of the assignment into the thesis or as a basis for a journal article. Mostly appropriate referencing throughout.

Failure

(F) Highly unstructured submission with limited utility for development as either a publication or a core component of the thesis. Limited engagement with the key identified disciplines related to the PhD research; Minimal capacity to identify key challenges and issues; Inadequate research and writing; no innovative ideas and critical attitude in analysing PhD relevant research agendas, questions both theoretically and practically. No basis for incorporation of the assignment into the thesis or as a basis for a journal article. Unreferenced or inappropriately referenced.

Assessment Task

1. Written Assignment or essay (100%) (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Students are required to submit an individual written assignment as an outcome component for the course. The written piece should be between 8,000 and 10,000 words. The structure and topic of the piece will be developed through discussions with the supervisor and under their guidance.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Excellent knowledge of the concepts and theories that apply the students' specific PhD research topic; Strong ability to identify key challenges; Excellent research and writing skills to organize and generate new perspectives; Highly innovative ideas and critical attitude in analyzing PhD-related research issues; Providing an advanced basis for either a publication or incorporation as a section of the thesis

Good

(B+, B) Satisfactory performance in applying the knowledge of students' written journal article, in terms of concepts and theories that are evolving in his/her research areas; Fair ability to identify key challenges; Good research and writing with some potential to develop critical, and independent analysis; fairly innovative and new ideas and critical attitude in analyzing PhD relevant research agendas, questions both theoretically and practically; Providing a solid basis for the development of either a publication or incorporation as a section of the thesis.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Basic knowledge demonstrated on students' PhD related research disciplines; Superficial analysis of the basic materials; Generally acceptable standard of research and, writing with some limitations; Very little innovative ideas and critical attitude in analysing PhD relevant research agendas, questions both theoretically and practically; Providing a basis for a possible publication or incorporation as a section of the thesis, with revisions

Failure

(F) Almost no knowledge of students' PhD related research disciplines; Almost no ability to identify key challenges; Inadequate research and writing; no innovative ideas and critical attitude in analysing PhD relevant research agendas, questions both theoretically and practically. No basis for incorporation of the assignment into the thesis or as a basis for a journal article.

Additional Information for AR

Students have to undertake all the learning activities and produce intended outcomes of both written assignment and participation deemed satisfactory by the supervisor

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

analytical framework, literature review, research question, research design and methodology, research findings, critical thinking, independent study, PhD dissertation, ethical requirements, academic publications

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	As each student will be writing from their own perspective compulsory readings will be developed in consultation with the supervisor and/or with additional input from the members of the Qualifying Panel.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	As each student will be writing from their own perspective additional readings will be developed in consultation with the supervisor and/or with additional input from the members of the Qualifying Panel.