

SM8402: RESEARCH SKILLS AND METHODS

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Research Skills and Methods

Subject Code

SM - School of Creative Media

Course Number

8402

Academic Unit

School of Creative Media (SM)

College/School

School of Creative Media (SM)

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

In this course, students will learn how to plan, develop, and conduct research for their PhD thesis. Students will learn the central importance of research methodology, the role of theory in research, the role of method in research and the basic

forms of research design: qualitative, quantitative, mixed-method, arts-based, and community-based. Students will be introduced to research best practices through an online class and in-class tutorials covering literature review, bibliographic search, footnoting and citation, journal publishing, and research ethics, including software applications for reference management and data analysis. Faculty from the school will join the seminar to introduce, through example, a wide range of qualitative and quantitative research designs and methods in arts-based research, the humanities, social sciences, and computer science. To aid students in the development of their research skills, learning activities will include exercises in summarising and analysing exemplary papers and presenting their own proposed research to the group.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if DEC-A1 app.)		DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Develop a rigorous research design for doctoral academic research.		x	x	
2	Conduct literature search effectively and review the literature critically.		x	x	
3	Build an understanding of appropriate procedures for collecting and analysing data and addressing ethical concerns.			x	
4	Critically assess the quality of research papers in chosen field.			x	
5	Deliver oral presentations and written reports on research design.		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	Discussion of the main concepts and principles in doctoral research design and writing	1, 2, 3, 4	1.5 hours/week (for 12 weeks)
2	Workshops	Workshop on an in-depth subject as determined by class needs and interests	1, 2, 3	3 hours (for 1 week)

3	In-class Exercises	Hands-on exercises by students on elements of research design, such as development of interview protocol, creation of survey questionnaire, and processing of qualitative and quantitative data	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	1 hour/week (for 12 weeks)
4	Group Discussions	Group discussions on research projects	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	0.5 hour/week (for 12 weeks)

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	In-class Participation, including Discussions: The seminar will be designed to enable students to explore and discuss various issues associated with research design and methods.	1, 2, 3, 4	20	-	No
2	Critical Analysis: Each student is required to present a critical analysis of three research papers.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	Students will be required to write two papers. The first will be without AI. The second will be with AI. They will then be in a position to properly analyze the research benefits.	Yes
3	Research Proposal: Students are required to submit a research proposal in which a relevant research methods are applied in a specific research context.	1, 2, 3, 4, 5	30	AI allowed for literature review	Yes

4	Presentation: Students will produce an illustrated 20-minute presentation tailored to a professional academic conference.	5	20	AI may aid in slide presentation	Yes
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Assessment Rubrics (AR)

Assessment Task

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

Criterion

Ability to explore and discuss different methodological issues associated with research problems

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Below marginal levels

Assessment Task

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

Criterion

Ability to critique research papers constructively and effectively

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Below marginal levels

Assessment Task

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

Criterion

Ability to propose a research investigation design that includes the key elements of scholarly research design (title, background, objectives, methodology, ethical considerations, and references)

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Below marginal levels

Assessment Task

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

Criterion

Ability to organise a coherent structure and systematic exposition with appropriate time management

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B, B-) Significant

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Moderate

Marginal

(D) Basic

Failure

(F) Below marginal levels

Assessment Task

Discussion and Participation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Ability to explore and discuss different methodological issues associated with research problems

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

Good

(B+, B) Significant

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Basic

Failure

(F) Below marginal levels

Assessment Task

Critical Analysis (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Ability to critique research papers constructively and effectively

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) High

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(B+, B) Significant

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(B-, C+, C) Basic

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Ability to organise a coherent structure and systematic exposition with appropriate time management

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(B-, C+, C) Basic

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(F) Below marginal levels

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Research design, methods, methodology, theory, data collection and analysis, academic writing

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Bauer, M. W., Gaskell, G., & Allum, N. C. (2000). Quality, quantity and knowledge interests: Avoiding confusions. Qualitative researching with text, image and sound: A practical handbook, 3-17.
2	Gibson, J. J. (1977). The theory of affordances. 1(2), 67-82.
3	Kuhn, T. S. (2012). The structure of scientific revolutions: University of Chicago press.
4	Borgdorff, H., & Schwab, M. (2014). The exposition of artistic research: publishing art in academia. Leiden: Leiden University Press.
5	Burns, R. B., & Bursn, R. B. (2000). Introduction to research methods.
6	Charmaz, K. (2006). Constructing grounded theory: A practical guide through qualitative analysis. London: Sage.
7	Leavy, P. (2017). Research design: Quantitative, qualitative, mixed methods, arts-based, and community-based participatory research approaches. New York: Guilford Publications.
8	Rodgers, P., & Yee, J. (2014). The Routledge companion to design research. Abingdon: Routledge.
9	Smith, H. (2009). Practice-led research, research-led practice in the creative arts. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
10	Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. M. (1997). Grounded theory in practice: Sage.

11	Taylor, S. J., Bogdan, R., & DeVault, M. (2015). Introduction to qualitative research methods: A guidebook and resource: John Wiley & Sons.
12	Belcher, W. L. (2019). Writing your journal article in twelve weeks: A guide to academic publishing success: University of Chicago Press.
13	Dunleavy, P. (2003). Authoring a PhD: How to plan, draft, write and finish a doctoral thesis or dissertation. Basingstoke: Macmillan International Higher Education.
14	Kelsky, K. (2015). The professor is in: The essential guide to turning your Ph. D. into a job: Three Rivers Press (CA).
15	Murray, R. (2011). How to write a thesis: McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
16	Phillips, E., & Pugh, D. (2010). How to get a PhD: A handbook for students and their supervisors: McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
17	Benesch, S. (2001). Critical English for academic purposes: Theory, politics, and practice. London: Routledge.
18	Cotrell, S. (2005). Critical thinking skills: Developing effective analysis and argument. In: New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
19	Fairbairn, G., & Winch, C. (2011). Reading, writing and reasoning: a guide for students: McGraw-Hill Education (UK).
20	Lunenburg, F. C., & Irby, B. J. (2008). Writing a successful thesis or dissertation: Tips and strategies for students in the social and behavioral sciences: Corwin press.
21	Metcalfe, M. (2006). Reading critically at university. London: Sage.
22	Wallace, M., & Wray, A. (2016). Critical reading and writing for postgraduates. London: Sage.

Additional Readings

	Title
1	Nil