

SS8804: ENHANCING SOCIAL SCIENCE COMPETENCE

Effective Term

Semester B 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Enhancing Social Science Competence

Subject Code

SS - Social and Behavioural Sciences

Course Number

8804

Academic Unit

Social and Behavioural Sciences (SS)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

Two Semesters

Credit Units

0-6

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

The course seeks to enhance doctoral students' competence in social science to upgrade their productivity through the lecture, tutorial, and group discussion. It represents a core course to equip doctoral students for excellent performance in social science research. Students can demonstrate their excellence in writing essays, reviews, rejoinders, and discussion reports.

Course Aims:

This course aims to boost students' competence in social science, including its research, reasoning, and production, in a customized way to fit individual students' talents and aspirations. That is, the course is to nurture students to become conversant, vibrant, poised, devoted, accomplished, and thereby excellent social scientists.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Discover their own best ways to conduct social science research	25	x	x	x
2	Solve problems encountered in conducting social science research	25	x	x	x
3	Formulate their own best ways to accomplish social science work	25	x	x	x
4	Enriching their readiness for social science production such as publication	25	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	LTA1: Lecture	Guidelines of conducting literature review and generating research ideas; strategies and procedures in qualitative and quantitative methodology; and research presentations in oral and written formats	1, 2, 3, 4	1.5 hr/wk
2	LTA2: Group and individual tutorial/discussion	Students will have weekly discussions with peers and instructors to practice and exercise their research skills.	1, 2, 3, 4	2 hr/wk

3	LTA3: Assigned readings	Students must read assigned paper(s) and/or chapter(s) before attending each lecture and review learning materials after the class.	1, 2, 3, 4	3 hr/wk
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Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	AT1: Literature review and research ethics	1, 2, 3, 4	20	For literature search, formatting, and editing	Yes
2	AT2: Lab skill assignments	1, 2, 3, 4	40	For literature search, formatting, and editing	Yes
3	AT3: Discussion seminars	1, 2, 3, 4	40	For literature search, formatting, and editing	Yes

Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Examination (%)

0

Minimum Continuous Assessment Passing Requirement (%)

0

Minimum Examination Passing Requirement (%)

0

Additional Information for ATsAT1: Literature review and research ethics (20%)

In semester A, each student is to follow guidelines of research ethics and conduct proper literature review within the ambit. The review shall cover relevant concepts and address knowledge gaps. It is not just a review of existing research, but also a reflection and/or probably innovation on theory (and methodology).

AT2: Lab skill assignments for quantitative research methods (40%)

In-class and take-home skill-based assessments would be given in semester A and semester B. Students need to utilize their knowledge and skills learned in the class to analyze datasets provided by the course instructor. They also will evaluate statistical methods in the selected papers and may propose alternative ways to conduct studies.

AT3: Discussion seminars (40%)

In semester A and semester B, selected articles and questions related to research design would be distributed to students for group discussions and individual presentations. Individual students and groups need to present their evaluations and suggestions in class and respond to comments from the instructors and classmates.

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

1: Literature review and research ethics (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Demonstrate knowledge of ethical issues in the social science research; be able to critically analyse publications; and show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence to demonstrate knowledge of ethical issues in the social science research; be able to critically analyse publications; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good evidence to demonstrate knowledge of ethical issues in the social science research; be able to critically analyse publications; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Fair evidence to demonstrate knowledge of ethical issues in the social science research; be able to critically analyse publications; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Marginal

(D) Limited evidence to demonstrate knowledge of ethical issues in the social science research; be able to critically analyse publications; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence to demonstrate knowledge of ethical issues in the social science research; be able to critically analyse publications; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Assessment Task

2: Lab skill assignments (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Be able to select proper statistical methods to answer research questions and accurately conduct these statistical approaches.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence to demonstrate the ability to conduct proper statistical methods.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good evidence to demonstrate the ability to conduct proper statistical methods.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Fair evidence to demonstrate the ability to conduct proper statistical methods.

Marginal

(D) Limited evidence to demonstrate the ability to conduct proper statistical methods.

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence to demonstrate the ability to conduct proper statistical methods.

Assessment Task

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

Criterion

Demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Good

(B+, B, B-) Good evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Fair evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Marginal

(D) Limited evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Assessment Task

1: Literature review and research ethics (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Demonstrate knowledge of ethical issues in the social science research; be able to critically analyse publications; and show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Good

(B+, B) Good evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student's own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Assessment Task

2: Lab skill assignments (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Be able to select proper statistical methods to answer research questions and accurately conduct these statistical approaches.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student' s own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Good

(B+, B) Good evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student' s own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student' s own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student' s own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Assessment Task

3: Discussion seminars (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student' s own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Strong evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student' s own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Good

(B+, B) Good evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student' s own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Fair to limited evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student' s own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Failure

(F) Insufficient evidence to demonstrate knowledge in the social science research methodology; be able to apply these knowledge and research methods in the student' s own research area and to solve problems encountered in their research areas; show understanding and ability to handle the publication process.

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Philosophic of social science; social science methodology; social science theories; other issues raised by students

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Atkinson, P., Delamont, P., & Delamont, S. (2010). SAGE qualitative research methods (SAGE Benchmarks in Social Research Methods). London: SAGE. (Online Access)
2	Besen-Cassino, Y., & Cassino, D. (2018). Social research methods by example: Applications in the modern world. New York, NY: Routledge.
3	Bickman, L., & Rog, D. (2009). The SAGE handbook of applied social research methods (2nd ed.). Los Angeles: SAGE. (Online Access)
4	Vogt, W. (2011). SAGE quantitative research methods (SAGE Benchmarks in Social Research Methods). London: SAGE. (Online Access)

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Alvesson, M., & Skoldberg, K. (2000). Reflective Methodology: New Vistas for Qualitative Research. London: Sage.
2	Alvesson, M. (2002). Postmodernism and Social Research. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
3	Benton, T. & Craib, I. (2011). Philosophy of Social Science: The Philosophical Foundations of Social Thought. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave.
4	Brinkmann, S. (2018). Philosophies of qualitative research (Series in understanding qualitative research). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
5	Bors, D. (2018). Data analysis for the social sciences: Integrating theory and practice. London: Sage Publications.
6	Gorvine, B., Rosengren, K., Stein, L., & Biolsi, K. (2018). Research methods: From theory to practice. New York: Oxford University Press.
7	Groh, A. (2018). Research Methods in Indigenous Contexts. Cham: Springer International Publishing: Imprint: Springer. (Online Access)
8	Haig, B. (2018). The philosophy of quantitative methods (Series in understanding statistics). New York: Oxford University Press.
9	Caro, S. (2009). How to Publish Your PhD: A Practical Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences. Los Angeles, CA: SAGE.
10	Coghlan, D., Brydon-Miller, M., & Gale Group. (2014). The SAGE encyclopedia of action research (Gale virtual reference library). London: SAGE Reference.
11	Fay, Brian. 1987. Critical Social Science: Liberation and Its Limits. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
12	Gadd, D., Karstedt, S., & Messner, S. (2012). Sage handbook of criminological research methods. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. Gerring, John. 2012. Social Science Methodology: A Unified Framework. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
13	Halfpenny, P. (1982). Positivism and Sociology: Explaining Social Life. London: George Allen & Unwin.
14	Hedstrom, P. (2005). Dissecting the Social: On the Principles of Analytical Sociology. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
15	Hughes, J., & Goodwin, J. (2012). SAGE internet research methods (SAGE Library of Research Methods). London: SAGE. (Library Online Access)

16	Layder, D. (1990). <i>The Realist Image in Social Science</i> . Houndmills, England: Macmillan.
17	Lyons, P. & Howard J. D. (2010). <i>The dissertation: From beginning to end</i> . New York: Oxford University Press.
18	Mithaug, D.E. (2000). <i>Learning to Theorize: A Four-step Strategy</i> . Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
19	Thomson, P. & Walker, M. (eds.) 2010. <i>The Routledge Doctoral Student's Companion: Getting to Grips with Research in Education and the Social Sciences</i> . New York: Routledge.
20	Rosenberg, A. (2012). <i>Philosophy of social science</i> (4th ed.). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.
21	Ruscio, J. (2006). <i>Critical Thinking in Psychology: Separating Sense from Nonsense</i> . Belmont, CA: Thomson.
22	Venkatesh, V. (2011). <i>Road to Success: A Guide for Doctoral Students and Junior Faculty Members in the Behavioral and Social Sciences</i> . Indianapolis, IN: Dog Ear.
23	Wyse, D., Selwyn, N., Smith, E., & Suter, L. (2017). <i>The BERA/SAGE Handbook of Educational Research. 2: Two volume set</i> (1st ed.). London: SAGE Publications.
24	Yegidis, B., Weinbach, R., & Myers, L. (2018). <i>Research Methods for Social Workers</i> (8th ed., Merrill Social Work and Human Services). New York: Pearson.