

# PIA4601: UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH PROJECT

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## Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

## Part I Course Overview

### Course Title

Undergraduate Research Project

### Subject Code

PIA - Public and International Affairs

### Course Number

4601

### 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

B1, B2, B3, B4 - Bachelor's Degree

### Medium of Instruction

English

### Medium of Assessment

English

### Prerequisites

Nil

### Precursors

Nil

### Equivalent Courses

Nil

### Exclusive Courses

Nil

### Additional Information

Nil

## Part II Course Details

### Abstract

This course aims to enable students to integrate, consolidate, and apply the theories, knowledge, academic skills acquired in the programme to study practical issues in public affairs. Students will examine research data produced by public and social organisations to produce careful analysis, conclusions and recommendations from such datasets. Students will consider the context, methods and efficacy of such data, and refine skills on working as a group.

### Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

	CILOs	Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Identify real-life problems pertaining to public interests		x	x	x
2	To work as a group to understand and explore a real-life issue using appropriate data sets.		x	x	
3	Apply theories, knowledge, and research skills to address the issues identified.		x	x	x
4	Present the project with clarity, precision and cogency through presentation, writing.		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	Seminars and workshops	Students attend seminars/workshops and engage in tasks such as group discussions, presentation, text/ case analysis.	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Reading	Students read books and articles related to the topics studied.	1, 2, 3	
3	Project	Students will work in small groups to deliver their projects in the form of, but not limited to, written project.	1, 2, 3, 4	

### Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- " for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Written report	1, 2, 3, 4	50	-	No
2	Participation	1, 2, 3	20	-	No
3	Presentation(s)	1, 2, 3, 4	30	-	No

**Continuous Assessment (%)**

100

**Assessment Rubrics (AR)****Assessment Task**

Written report

**Criterion**

Ability to explain with rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organisation, clear and coherent structure; Ability to criticize and analyse with convincing statements and evidence-based arguments.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, coherent structure, cogent composition; critical analysis, convincing analysis using appropriate evidence.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Some evidence of: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, structure, and composition; Critical analysis, use of evidence-based argument.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited evidence of: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition; Critical analysis, and evidence of argument.

**Marginal (D)**

Weak evidence of only one of the following criteria and failure to address the others: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition; Little or week critical analysis and argument.

**Failure (F)**

Limited familiarity with the facts of the reading and its surface relations, unsystematic ideas which cannot express the subject matter or relevant themes; Loose organization, without distinct primary and secondary structure; Devoid of personal comment and/or unreasonable opinion.

**Assessment Task**

Participation

**Criterion**

Ability to explain with rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organisation, clear and coherent structure; Ability to criticize and analyse with convincing statements and evidence-based arguments.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, coherent structure, cogent composition; critical analysis, convincing analysis using appropriate evidence.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Some evidence of: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, structure, and composition; Critical analysis, use of evidence-based argument.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited evidence of: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition; Critical analysis, and evidence of argument.

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Weak evidence of only one of the following criteria and failure to address the others: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition; Little or week critical analysis and argument.

**Failure (F)**

Limited familiarity with the facts of the reading and its surface relations, unsystematic ideas which cannot express the subject matter or relevant themes; Loose organization, without distinct primary and secondary structure; Devoid of personal comment and/or unreasonable opinion.

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**Assessment Task**

Presentation(s)

**Criterion**

Ability to explain with rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organisation, clear and coherent structure; Ability to criticize and analyse with convincing statements and evidence-based arguments.

**Excellent (A+, A, A-)**

Strong evidence of: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, coherent structure, cogent composition; critical analysis, convincing analysis using appropriate evidence.

**Good (B+, B, B-)**

Some evidence of: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, structure, and composition; Critical analysis, use of evidence-based argument.

**Fair (C+, C, C-)**

Limited evidence of: Rich content, excellent grasp of the materials with in-depth or extensive knowledge of the subject matter; Rigorous organization, coherent structure, balanced composition; Critical analysis, and evidence of argument.

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**Failure (F)**

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## Part III Other Information

### Keyword Syllabus

Desk research, evidence, social science research methods, policy, decision making, public management, group work.

### Reading List

#### Compulsory Readings

	Title
1	Booth, W.C., G.G. Colomb and J. M. Williams (2008). <i>The Craft of Research</i> , 3rd edition, University of Chicago Press.
2	Creswell, J.W. (1994). <i>Research Design Qualitative &amp; Quantitative Approaches</i> , Thousand Oaks: Sage.
3	King, Gary, Keohane O. Robert and Verba Sidney (1994). <i>Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research</i> , Princeton: Princeton University Press.
4	Lauro, N. C, Amaturro, E, Grassia, M G, Aragona, B and Marino, M. (2017) <i>Data Science and Social Research. Studies in Classification, Data Analysis, and Knowledge Organization</i> . Cham: Springer International Publishing AG,
5	MacRae, Duncan (1979). "Concepts and Methods of Policy Analysis," <i>Policy Analysis Explosion</i> , 16, 17–23.
6	Rubin, A., (2008). <i>Practitioner' s guide to using research for evidence-based practice</i> 1st ed., New York: Wiley
7	Singleton, R. A. and B. C. Straits (2010). <i>Approaches to Social Research</i> , 5th edition, Oxford University Press.
8	Stoker, G and Evans, M, (2016). <i>Evidence-based policy making in the social sciences</i> 1st ed., Policy Press