

Course Title	: Guided Study in Policy Issues
Course Code	: DPS704
Recommended Study Year	: Doctor of Policy Studies Year 2
No. of Credits/Term	: 6 Credits (3 credits x 2 terms)/Terms 1 and 2
Mode of Tuition	: Individual supervision
Class Contact Hours	: Average 3 contact hours and 9 hours of self-study per week
Category	: Required
Discipline	: Social Sciences
Prerequisite(s)	: N/A
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

The course comprises a one-on-one intensive and systematic retrieval and analysis of bodies of literature that are relevant to a student's research interests and speciality. With guidance from assigned advisors, students will conduct a robust theoretical and empirical literature review on specific policy issues to enable students to formulate initial ideas and plans for their independent research project at the later stage in the programme. Students will be expected to prepare research proposals for the policy studies projects on a chosen topic by the end of this course. The proposals will be orally presented at a seminar where projects will be evaluated by the supervisor and other faculty members.

Aims

This course aims to

1. Prepare students for independent policy research and inquiry
2. Enable students' critical evaluation of relevant literature, theories, methodologies and debates in preferred policy areas; and
3. Identify research gaps and formulate researchable topics and proposals
4. Strengthen students' writing skills

Learning Outcomes (LOs)

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Review relevant literature to identify a research gap
2. Formulate a standard research problem statement
3. Apply appropriate theories and concepts to explain the chosen policy issue.
4. Outline and justify an appropriate method to address identified research gap

Indicative Contents

1. Identifying relevant literature and research gaps
2. Formulating a research problem
3. Literature review and critique : Reading towards writing
4. Writing research proposal
5. Communicating research ideas in oral and written formats
6. Choosing appropriate research methods

Teaching Method

Independent studies (reading and critique of the literature)

Regular meetings and discussion of progress and challenges with assigned supervisors

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Presentation	Research Proposal
1. Review relevant literature to identify a research gap		✓
2. Formulate a standard research problem statement	✓	✓
3. Apply appropriate theories and concepts to explain the chosen policy issue.	✓	✓
4. Outline and justify an appropriate method to address identified research gap	✓	✓

Assessment

- Presentation 30%
- Research Proposal 70%

Assessment Rubrics

Presentation (30%)

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Pass	Failure
		A (85-100) A- (80-84)	B+ (75-79) B (70-74) B- (65-69)	C+ (60-64) C (55-59) C- (50-54)
Content	Comprehensive understanding and coverage of issues. Wide range of evidence used to support arguments and demonstrate critical thinking.	Clear discussion of relevant issues. Good use of evidence support arguments. Go beyond description.	Show some coverage and understanding of main issues. Adequate range of evidence used. More description than analysis in content.	Very little or no understanding of the issues. Inadequate use of evidence to support argument. Describe the issues but show significant misunderstanding of basic issues.
Organisation	Clear structure. Present a convincing and well-developed argument.	Clear structure. Present a sound argument.	Argument needs further development. Structure needs more clarity.	Poor structure and no clear argument.
Style of presentation and effectiveness in leading the discussion	Demonstrate excellent presentation skills and communication with audience.	Demonstrate competent presentation skills and communication with audience.	Demonstrate good presentation skills and communication with audience.	Demonstrate poor presentation skills and communication with audience.

Research proposal (70%)

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Pass	Failure
		A (85-100) A- (80-84)	B+ (75-79) B (70-74) B- (65-69)	C+ (60-64) C (55-59) C- (50-54)
Comprehension of debates in chosen policy issue	Demonstrates a deep insightful level of understanding.	Demonstrates a good surface level of understanding.	Show an adequate level of surface understanding.	Demonstrates an inadequate level of understanding.
Application of concepts to the research problem	Appropriate concepts are all applied correctly, to provide comprehensive solutions to all	Appropriate concepts are correctly applied, to provide solutions to all	Appropriate concepts are, for most part, correctly applied, to provide solutions to all important aspects of the problem.	Concepts are not applied, or are generally applied inappropriately or incorrectly; important aspects

	aspects of the problem.	aspects of the problem.		of the problem remain unaddressed.
Quality of write-up	Expression of ideas were consistently coherent, logical and in standard academic format	Expression of ideas were generally consistently coherent, logical and clear. Lapses were rare and minor in nature.	Expression of ideas were generally consistently accurate, logical and clear, but with a number of minor lapses.	Ideas were not expressed logically, and were characterized by significant inaccuracies and lack of clarity.
Quality of English in the Report	English is consistently excellent.	English is proficient, with no major errors.	English is of a fair standard but minor errors are present.	English is below standard, with many major errors.

Required/Essential Readings

Denscombe, M. (2014) *The Good Research Guide*, Open University Press.

Swales, J. M., & Feak, C. B. (2012) *Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills*. Michigan: University of Michigan Press.

University of Edinburgh, *How to Write a Good Postgraduate Research Proposal*, <http://www.ed.ac.uk/files/imports/fileManager/HowToWriteProposal090415.pdf>

Recommended/Supplementary Reading (on reserve at the Library)

Lewis-Beck, M. S. (1995) *Data Analysis: An Introduction*, Sage.

Additional readings directly relevant to a student's topic or policy interest will be suggested by the supervisor(s) concerned.

Important Notes:

- (1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3* hours of class contact and 6* hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
- (2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity

and honesty.

- (3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
- (4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on <https://pla.ln.edu.hk/>.

* Numbers of hours are subject to adjustment for individual courses.

(20 July 2018)