

Course Title	:	Engaging the Media and Public Communications
Course Code	:	DPS709
Recommended Study Year	:	Doctor of Policy Studies Year 2
No. of Credits/Term	:	3 Credits/Term 2
Mode of Tuition	:	Lecture, Seminar, and Tutorial
Class Contact Hours	:	3 hours 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 will be based on training students how to assemble quantitative evidence for media and public communications with a specific focus on data presentation and data visualisation. Students will have an opportunity to engage with professionals working in external organisations in Hong Kong to learn about their specific needs for quantitative data analysis. They will also meet representatives of the Hong Kong news media to hear their perspective on the virtues and limitations of quantitative policy research. In reflecting on these discussions, and by using real-world templates and examples, students will learn how to effectively identify non-academic stakeholders that may be interested in their research and how to write-up and circulate research findings in different formats including a policy brief, newspaper columns. Students will also learn the tools to devise a successful social media strategy for research dissemination and impact.

Aims

This course aims to

1. Deepen students' appreciation for the need to convey their research findings differently to different audiences;
2. Provide students an opportunity to reflect on the increased international importance of 'research impact';
3. Enable students to engage in dialogue with selected external organisations and media representatives in Hong Kong about their 'real-world' approaches to quantitative policy research;
4. Provide students with an opportunity to write-up their research findings in a clear and engaging manner for different purposes and audiences; and
5. Further strengthen students' ability to conduct basic data analysis with the aid of the statistical software.

Learning Outcomes (LOs)

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

1. Understand the strategies and practical aspects of engaging external organisations and the media about their research;
2. Demonstrate the knowledge of key data presentations and visualisation techniques for engaging the media and public communications;
3. Acquire practical experience in identifying stakeholder for their research and writing-up an effective policy brief;
4. Acquire practical experience in writing for the media and using social media to circulate their research findings; and
5. Develop stronger networks by enabling them to meet representatives of selected external organisations and media outlets in Hong Kong.

Indicative Contents

1. Principles of ‘impact’ in policy research?
2. Data presentation and visualisation
 - Presenting your literature to non-academic audiences
 - Describing statistics without graphs
 - Describing statistics with graphs
 - League tables and beyond
 - Reporting regression analysis
3. Who may be interested in your research: conducting a stakeholder analysis
4. Towards an effective policy brief
5. Communicating effectively with the media
6. Devising a social media strategy for your research
7. Guest lectures (Office of Communications and Public Affairs (OCPA), Lingnan University; HK-based newspapers and policy organisations)

Teaching Method

Workshops are combined with (guest) lectures and tutorials. Students will analyse pertinent available statistics and identify stakeholders interested in their own personal research topics in hands-on computer workshops. They will listen to external speakers about their experiences with policy research and policy researchers and upon reflecting on this discussions prepare a policy brief, which will also present the basis for devising a social media strategy and newspaper column for to create their own research impact.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Seminar engagement	Stakeholder activity	Policy brief	Social media activity	Newspaper column
1. Understand the strategies and practical aspects of engaging external organisations and the media about their research.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Demonstrate the knowledge of key data presentations and visualisation techniques for engaging the media and public communications.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
3. Acquire practical experience in identifying stakeholder for their research and writing-up up an effective policy brief		✓	✓		
4. Acquire practical experience in writing for the media and using social media to circulate their research findings.				✓	✓
5. Develop stronger networks by enabling them to meet representatives of selected external organisations and media outlets in Hong Kong.	✓	✓		✓	

Assessment

Assessment weightings:

- Seminar engagement 15%
- Stakeholder activity 15%
- Policy brief 30%
- Social media activity 20%
- Newspaper column 20%

Assessmet Rubrics

Seminar Engagement (15%)

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)
Student has made effort to prepare for discussions during class	Expression of ideas is consistently accurate, logical and clear	Expression of ideas is generally accurate, logical and clear. Lapses are rare and minor in nature	Expression of ideas is generally factually accurate, logical and clear, but with a number of minor lapses	Ideas are not expressed logically and are characterised by significant inaccuracies and lack of clarity

Stakeholder Activity (15%) and Social Media Activity (20%)

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)
Interpretation	Makes appropriate inferences based on the information presented	Provides accurate explanations of information presented	Provides accurate explanations of information presented, but occasionally makes minor errors related to inferences based on that information	No attempt to explain information presented
Representation	Skillfully converts relevant information in a way that contributes to a further or deeper understanding	Competently converts relevant information into an appropriate and desired portrayal of social life.	Completes conversion of information but the resulting portrayal of social life is only partially appropriate or accurate.	No attempt to portray social life on basis of information.
Communication	Uses information in connection with the argument or purpose of the work, presents it in an effective format, and explicates it with consistently high quality	Uses information in connection with the argument or purpose of the work, though some may be presented in a less than completely effective format	Uses information, but does not effectively connect it to the argument or purpose of the work	Provides no support for arguments.

Policy brief (30%) and Newspaper Column (20%)

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)	F (0-49)
Understanding of topic	Comprehensive understanding and coverage of issues. Insightful and well-informed. Clearly answers the question.	Clear discussion of relevant issues. Shows good insight into the subject. Answers the question.	Shows some coverage and understanding of main issues. Does not answer the question fully/directly enough.	Very little or no understanding of the issues. Does not answer the question.
Use of evidence	Wide range of evidence used to support arguments. Thoroughly researched. Use of primary sources.	Good use of evidence to support arguments.	Adequate range of evidence used. Could have drawn on more suitable evidence.	Inadequate use of evidence to support argument. No use of evidence to support argument
Critical analysis	Excellent critical awareness of subject matter and current issues. Shows original thinking and analysis.	Goes beyond description. Analyses material to develop argument.	More description than analysis in content. Needs to draw material together to develop argument.	Describes the issues but shows significant misunderstanding of basic issues.
Structure of argument	Clear structure. Presents a convincing and well developed argument.	Clear structure. Develops a sound argument.	Argument needs further development. Structure needs more clarity.	Poor structure. No clear argument No clear linkage from point to point.
Writing and referencing	Uses references correctly. Demonstrates excellent writing skills.	Generally uses references correctly but some parts less well referenced. Competent writing skills.	Some parts not referenced correctly. Writing skills could be improved.	Not referenced correctly. Poor writing skills. Needed proof reading.

Required/Essential Readings

- Reed, M. S. (2016). *The research impact handbook*. Fast Track Impact.
- Bastow, S., Dunleavy, P., & Tinkler, J. (2013). *The impact of the social sciences: how academics and their research make a difference*. Sage.
- Ellen, W., & Stéphan, V. L. (2013). Educational research and innovation art for art's sake? The impact of arts education: The Impact of Arts Education. OECD publishing.
- Britto, P. R., Engle, P. L., & Super, C. M. (Eds.). (2013). *Handbook of early childhood development research and its impact on global policy*. Oxford University Press.

Leith, P., O'Toole, K., Haward, M., & Coffey, B. (2017). *Enhancing science impact: bridging research, policy and practice for sustainability*. CSIRO PUBLISHING.

Additional readings will also be given weekly on a topic by topic basis.

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)