

CCSS 3110: Social Science Research Methods and China Studies¹

CUHK 2020-21 Term 1

Time: Wednesday 14:30-17:15
Venue: FYB_405 or Zoom
Instructor: Prof. LING Minhua (mhling@cuhk.edu.hk)
Office: Rm1106, Centre for China Studies, Yasumoto International Academic Park
Office hours: By email appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course prepares advanced CCS major undergraduate students on the social science stream to research for their final year capstone research projects. The main product of the course will be a research proposal that will be ideally followed through to develop the final year paper to be submitted at the end of Term II. There are three aims to the course: 1) to gain familiarity with research methods of the various disciplines in the humanities; 2) to explore several styles of scholarship; 3) to learn how to undertake an advanced university-level research project and produce an interesting, productive research proposal.

This workshop-style class will guide students to reach this objective step by step. Students will be introduced to fundamental concepts in qualitative and quantitative research methods and designs in the social sciences. These concepts will be discussed practically, by making students begin thinking about their own research topic, and by conducting data collection and analysis exercises. The mode of instruction is highly interactive and require students to actively participate in class discussions, complete research exercises, make presentation, conduct peer review, and continuous work on their own projects. In the end of this course, students are required to present a revised research proposal, identifying interesting topics, compiling references, making bibliographies, formulating research questions, choosing appropriate research methods, and writing up research plans and goals.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the term students should have a working knowledge of:

- Nature of research
- Principles of research ethics
- Major qualitative and quantitative empirical research methods
- Techniques of organizing and analysing data
- Academic writing
- Skills in presenting research ideas and plans



¹ Depending on the progress of learning, this syllabus may change during the course. Changes will be announced by the instructor.

ASSIGNMENT & ASSESSMENT

Class attendance & participation	20%
Research Assignments	30%
Presentation on Academic Writing	5%
Project Presentation and Peer Review	10%
Research Proposal	35%

If the course has to be held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic or other emergency, students are required to turn on the camera throughout Zoom classes. Students can complete all assignments on computer and submit the WORD files via Blackboard for assessment.

Class Attendance & Participation

Regular class attendance is required. Active participation in class discussion is strongly encouraged. Reading of required literature for every week is mandatory and will be discussed in class. Every student will be assigned to introduce his/her reflections on one piece of assigned reading with the class.

Research Assignments

There will be six small assignments that aim to hone your research skills and facilitate the steps towards finishing your final proposal. Students are required to submit these assignments ON TIME. Feedback will be provided on these assignments in class.

Presentation on Academic Writing

The to-be-analyzed academic writings will be provided by the instructor. Students will summarize and present the author(s)' research questions, research methods, data analysis, and argument development within 5 minutes. Detailed guidelines will be disseminated in class.

Proposal Presentation and Peer Review

Students are required to present in five minutes their project proposal, assisted with PPT slides, that contains:

- 1) Statement of research problem: identify a research topic, introduce the context, articulate one key research question, and explain why this question is worth asking.
- 2) Brief literature review: summarize and synthesize the key arguments and evidences of at least three major scholarly articles or books or more that are relevant and timely for your topic, discuss briefly how your research can build on or differ from these studies.
- 3) Research plan: discuss the methods you plan to use and explain your rationale for such choices.

Students are also expected to critically comment on others' proposals by asking questions and making suggestions.

Research Proposal

Each student needs to write a research proposal that clearly sets out:

- 1) the research project title;
- 2) the research question(s);
- 3) a concise preliminary literature review that synthesizes and discusses in relation to key issues and debates the major studies of the topic to date (in English and/or Chinese

language scholarship);

4) a description of the research and analytical/interpretive methods to be used and the types of sources to be drawn upon;

5) a brief statement on the significance of the research;

6) a schedule for researching and writing the paper in the Term II Capstone course;

7) a bibliography that lists, according to an **accepted standard form**, all: 1) "Primary Sources" (primary, textual and non-textual sources to be drawn upon); 2) "Secondary Sources" (scholarly books and articles consulted or to be consulted for the project).

Following discussion and critique of the proposal presentations, students will have an additional week to revise and submit their final version. More instructions will be delivered in class.

The final version of the proposal should be about 2500 words, **1.5-spaced** with standard margins and in **12-point Times New Rome** font. A **soft copy** of the paper (.doc, .docx) and a **signed Veriguide receipt** must be submitted by **5pm on Dec. 9 (Wednesday), 2020** to the **Blackboard** System. Soft copies without the Veriguide receipt will **NOT** be graded. See the website:

https://services.veriguide.org/academic/login_CUHK.jspx

Grade Descriptors

Grade	Overall course
A	Outstanding performance on all learning outcomes.
A-	Generally outstanding performance on all (or almost all) learning outcomes.
B	Substantial performance on all learning outcomes, OR high performance on some learning outcomes which compensates for less satisfactory performance on others, resulting in overall substantial performance.
C	Satisfactory performance on the majority of learning outcomes, possibly with a few weaknesses.
D	Barely satisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes
F	Unsatisfactory performance on a number of learning outcomes, OR failure to meet specified assessment requirements.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Attention is drawn to University policy and regulations on honesty in academic work, and to the disciplinary guidelines and procedures applicable to breaches of such policy and regulations. Details may be found at <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/policy/academichonesty/>.

Course Announcement

This course uses the CUHK eLearning system, which can be found at <https://elearn.cuhk.edu.hk> Make sure to check this system and your CUHK email regularly.

Students are more than welcome to ask questions or offer comments by emailing (anonymous emails are welcome) or by approaching the instructor individually.

REQUIRED READINGS

- All required articles or chapters are uploaded in PDF files to the Blackboard system for students to download and print out.

- A list of recommended readings will be available on Blackboard's Reading List. Students are encouraged to check out the additional readings for references.

You can access hard copies or read e-copies of the three major useful textbooks via the CUHK library system:

- Babbie, Earl. 2016. *The Practice of Social Research*. 14th edition. Belmont: Cengage Learning.
- Bryman, Alan. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. International edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2016. *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

LECTURE SCHEDULE & REQUIRED READINGS

Week 1 (Sep. 9) Introduction: Research on China

- Harrell, Stevan. 2001. "The Anthropology of Reform and the Reform of Anthropology: Anthropological Narratives of Recovery and Progress in China." *Annual Review of Anthropology* no. 30:139-161.

➤ **Research Exercise I: Library Research**

Please follow the instructions in the Library Search Tutorial and submit your completed sheet with your name and student ID (WORD file, .doc) to Blackboard by noon, **Sept. 14** (Mon), 2020.

Week 2 (Sep. 16) Research Matters

- Babbie, Earl. 2016. Chapters 1 & 2. *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont: Cengage Learning.

➤ **Research Exercise II: Research ethics training**

CUHK Research Ethics Training website: <http://www.research-ethics.cuhk.edu.hk/web>

Please complete the **Survey and Behavioral Research Ethics training**

(<https://www.research-ethics.cuhk.edu.hk/web/quiz/survey>) and submit your e-certificate to Blackboard by **noon, Sept. 21 (Mon)**, 2020.

Week 3 (Sep. 23) Academic Writing

- Ng, Pedro Pak-tao. 2003. Ch2 "Characteristics of Academic Writing," In *Effective Writing: A Guide for Social Science Students*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2016. "Making a Claim and Supporting It," In *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

➤ **Presentation on Academic Writing:** students will present **in class in 5-min assisted with PPT slides** a summary of a research article from various disciplines (sociology, anthropology, economics, political science, urban studies, etc.; articles will be provided by the instructor). Detailed guideline will be distributed in class.

Week 4 (Sep. 30) Designing a Research Project

- Babbie, Earl. 2016. Chapter 4 "Research Design." In *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont: Cengage Learning
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2016. Chapter 3 "From Topics to Questions." In *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of

Chicago Press.

Week 5 (Oct. 7) Literature Review and Finding Sources

- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2016. Chapters 5 & 6 “From Problems to Sources,” “Engaging Sources.” In *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bryman, Alan. 2012. Chapter 5 “Getting Started: Reviewing the Literature”. *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- **Research Exercise III:** List summaries of three scholarly articles relevant to your self-chosen topic, and notes on research gap. Please submit your summary in a **WORD document (.doc)** to **Blackboard by noon on Oct. 12 (Mon), 2020.**

Week 6 (Oct. 14) Survey Research

- Babbie, Earl. 2012. Chapter 7 “Survey Research.” In *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont: Cengage Learning.
- **Research Exercise IV:** Design a short survey questionnaire on a given research question. Please bring your survey sheet in an **e-copy** to **Blackboard on Oct. 19 (Mon), 2020** for exchange and discussion in next class.

Week 7 (Oct. 21) Interview

- O’ Reilly, Karen. 2005. Ch5 “Interviews” In *Ethnographic Methods*. Oxford: Routledge.
- Hennink, Monique, Inge Hutter and Ajay Bailey. 2011. Ch. 6 “In-depth Interviews”. In *Qualitative Research Methods*. London: SAGE Publications.
- **Research Exercise V:** Interview a classmate in person or via video-call, transcribe the interview, and write brief reflection, and email the transcript in a **WORD document** to **Blackboard in WORD format (.doc) by noon on Nov. 2 (Mon), 2020.**

Week 8 (Oct. 28) Data Analysis I

- Bryman, Alan. 2012. Chapters 7 & 15. *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Week 9 (Nov. 4) Data Analysis II

- Bryman. 2012. Chapters 23 & 24. *Social Research Methods*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- **Research Exercise VI:** Find and read closely a few paragraphs of a primary text or a small set of quantitative data on a selected topic and analyze the data in a **WORD document** (around 600 words, no less than 500 words) to **Blackboard in WORD format (.doc) by noon on Nov. 9 (Mon), 2020.**

Week 10 (Nov. 11) Academic Writing

- Ng, Pedro Pak-tao. 2003. Ch5 “Writing Effective Paragraphs,” In *Effective Writing: A Guide for Social Science Students*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press.
- Booth, Wayne C., Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. 2016. Ch13 “Drafting Your Report,” and Ch14 “Revising Your Organization and Argument.” In *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press

An e-copy (.doc) of **Project Outline** to be submitted to **Blackboard by noon, Nov. 16 (Mon), 2020.**

Week 11 (Nov. 18) Individual Consultation

Week 12 (Nov. 25) Proposal Presentation & Feedback I

Students are expected to ask questions or make comments on others' presentations, which will be assessed as **peer review exercise.**

Week 13 (Dec. 2) Proposal Presentation & Feedback II

Students are expected to ask questions or make comments on others' presentations, which will be assessed as **peer review exercise.**

Final proposal to be submitted to Blackboard by 5pm, Dec. 9, 2020!

NO late submissions will be accepted.