

The Theory and Practice of Social Research

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is designed to introduce you to research methods in social science. Upon completion of this class you will be well equipped to undertake your own research in Business and better able to understand and evaluate the research you find in all other fields, including Anthropology, Communications, Economics, Education, Medicine, Political Science, Social Work and Sociology. Perhaps most importantly, you will attain the skills needed to demonstrate why you are right and everyone else is wrong during conversations and writings with friends, family and instructors.

The course provides relevant comprehensive guide to the content and process of academic research. It covers such critical areas as:

- How to select a suitable researchable topic;
- Conduct an appropriate review of the literature;
- Build arguments;
- Collect and manage data, and
- Report the research findings.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To provide participants with an understanding of the process of research methods;
2. To equip participants with the knowledge and understanding of important concepts, tools and techniques required to be able to appreciate the importance of Research Methods in academic pursuit;
3. To provide participants with the skills to describe and employ various research strategies (e.g. experiment, surveys, case studies, historical processes, comparative research) and techniques available for data gathering (e.g. interview, questionnaire, document, observation, field notes).
4. To enable students understand the various strengths and weaknesses of the above listed methods.
5. To help participants appreciate the conditions which make selection among the above listed methods appropriate for different research questions.

6. To enable and encourage participants to benefit from the course through designing their own research proposals for their research projects.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

On completing the course participants should be able to:

1. Acquire the basic skills in analyzing research reports from various fields of Social Sciences, to identify the strengths and weakness of the reports and to extract usable knowledge from scholarly journal.
2. Acquire skills in developing research strategies to answer questions of concern to the profession.
3. Develop the necessary skills required in writing their long essays.

Research Design Project:

Each student is required to complete a 10 page research design paper- their original research proposal. This research design provides students with an opportunity to more closely explore one research question in particular, review the relevant literature, develop a theoretical framework, derive hypotheses and design a study that will test these hypotheses. This assignment is designed to test students' abilities to apply the concepts learned in the first third of the course (about the research process) in a practical manner to a research question of their own. The goal is to develop and hone the skills of the students to design doable research projects, including their independent study projects.

Course Requirements:

Students are required to read course materials and attend all class sessions and complete all assignments on time.

Readings

- Baxter, P and Jack, S (2008), "Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers". *The Qualitative Report*, 13(4), 544-559.
- Creswell, J. W (2009), "Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods Approaches", London: Sage Publications.
- Gerring, J (2001), "Social Science Methodology: A Critical Framework", Cambridge University Press: UK
- Janet, B. Johnson and Joslyn A. Richard (1986), "Political Science Research Methods", Congressional Quarterly Press, Washington.
- King, G., Keohane, R.O., and Verba, S. (1994), "Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research", Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press

Landman, T (2003), "Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction", Routledge, Oxford: London.

Noor, K. B. M (2008), "Case Study: A Strategic Research Methodology", American Journal of Applied Sciences, 5(11): 1602-1604

Opoku, J.Y (2000), "A Short Guide to Research Writing in the Social Sciences and Education", Ghana Universities Press, Accra.

Seltiz, C, Wrightsman L.S and Cook, S.W. (1976), "Research Methods in Social Relations", Rinehart & Winston, Holt, New York.

Yin, R (2003), "Case Study Research: Design and Methods", California: Sage.

