

COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT

Academic School / Department:	Humanities & Social Sciences
Programme:	Political Science
FHEQ Level:	5
Course Title:	Research Methods in Political Science
Course Code:	POLS 5301
Total Hours:	160 (Lev 3-5) (4 US Credit)
Timetabled Hours:	45
Guided Learning Hours:	15
Independent Learning Hours:	100
Credit	16 UK CATS credits 8 ECTS credits 4 US credits

Course Description:

Introduces students to research methodology, key research methods, and research practices used in the discipline of Political Science, with an emphasis on qualitative methods. Students will learn research skills that translate directly into the workplace, including in NGOs, charities, the corporate sector, and intergovernmental and development agency contexts. This course also trains students for practically undertaking academic research such as that required to complete a dissertation. Students are prepared to carry out a range of methods (i.e. textual and visual analysis, interviews, focus groups, and ethnography) and learn principles of data collection and analysis. Writing research proposals and literature reviews, and pitching research are both taught and assessed, and students are introduced to widely used and newer creative and participatory modes of research.

Prerequisites:

40 Credits and LIBA 4301 Academic Research and Writing

This course is only open to Political Science students.

Aims and Objectives:

- To introduce the concept of methodology and teach social science research methods and practices including their ethical considerations as they are used in both academic contexts and beyond
- To prepare students for fieldwork, internships, and future employment in an international research setting, as well as for dissertation writing, in part through engaging with consideration of research ethics
- To provide a background for eventual careers in fields (including work in government, international organisations, business, and the media) which require articulate, clear-thinking individuals with a grasp of social science research methods
- To provide a framework to assist concerned citizens to think critically about issues that are of increasing importance in the 21st century
- To promote critical engagement with a wide range of literature, and the development of both a succinct writing style, and the ability to present complex arguments orally

Programme Outcomes:

5AI; 5BI; 5CII; 5DI

A detailed list of the programme outcomes can be found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by Registry and found at:

<https://www.richmond.ac.uk/programme-and-course-specifications/>

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrates the ability to engage in critical reflection on qualitative research methods.
- Demonstrates engagement with the selection, application and utilization of methods appropriate to the study of Political Science.
- Delivers work with limited supervision and/or effectively engage in teamwork according to a given brief.
- Demonstrates critical reflection on ethical principles in the research process, and self-reflection in response to criteria-based evaluation of work.

Indicative Content:

- Overview of core research methods and practices in Political Science
- Preparing for a dissertation in Political Science
 - Research Design and Ethics
 - Information Literacy and Literature Reviews
 - Case studies, empirical evidence and comparison
 - Primary and secondary source engagement
- Qualitative research methods such as:
 - Textual and visual methods: content analysis and critical discourse analysis
 - Interviewing and focus groups
 - Ethnography
 - Creative methods
- Qualitative/Quantitative data analysis and presentation
- Research project cycle (Planning, costing, implementation, evaluation and reflection)

Assessment:

This course conforms to the University Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/university-policies/>

Teaching Methodology:

This course will be delivered face to face through a combination of lectures and interactive sessions. In addition to classroom activities, there are guided learning elements that are tutor led and arranged through Blackboard. These activities can be asynchronous online sessions, flipped classrooms, set readings with discussion boards or set guest lectures for example. Set activities are monitored by the instructor to ascertain student engagement. Students are encouraged to prepare for class and to play an active part, to raise questions, following-up ideas and interact with a wide range of provided material.

Indicative Text(s):

- Choi, S., Selmeczi, A. and Strausz, E. (2021) *Critical Methods for the Study of World Politics*. Routledge.
- Hennink, M., Hutter, I. and Bailey, A. (2020) *Qualitative Research Methods*. 2nd edn. Sage.
- Kara, H. (2020) *Creative Research Methods: A Practical Guide*. 2nd edn. Polity Press.
- Kara, H. (2018). *Research Ethics in the Real World*. Polity Press.
- Lamont, C. (2021). *Research Methods in International Relations*. 2nd edn. Sage.
- Lowndes, V., D. Marsh and G. Stoker (eds.) (2017) *Theory and Methods in Political Science*. 4th edn. Palgrave Macmillan.
- May, T. and Perry, B. (2022) *Social Research: Issues, Methods, and Process*. 5th edn. Oxford University Press.
- Rubin, A. (2021) *Rocking Qualitative Social Science: An Irreverent Guide to Rigorous Research*. Stanford University Press.
- Salmons, J. (2021). *Doing Qualitative Research Online*. 2nd edn. Sage.
- Silverman, D. (2021) *Doing Qualitative Research*, 6th edn. Sage.

See syllabus for complete reading list.

Change Log for this CSD:

Nature of Change	Date Approved & Approval Body (School or AB)	Change Actioned by Registry Services
First edition - November 2024		