

**City University of Hong Kong  
Course Syllabus**

**offered by Department of Public and International Affairs  
with effect from Semester A 2024/25**

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**Part I Course Overview**

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| <b>Course Title:</b>   | Research Methods in Public Policy and Management         |
| <b>Course Code:</b>  | PIA6603  |
| <b>Course Duration:</b>                                      | One Semester   |
| <b>Credit Units:</b>   | 3  |
| <b>Level:</b>  | P6   |
| <b>Medium of Instruction:</b>                                | English  |
| <b>Medium of Assessment:</b>                                 | English  |
| <b>Prerequisites:</b><br><i>(Course Code and Title)</i>      | Nil  |
| <b>Precursors:</b><br><i>(Course Code and Title)</i>         | Nil  |
| <b>Equivalent Courses:</b><br><i>(Course Code and Title)</i> | POL6603 Research Methods in Public Policy and Management |
| <b>Exclusive Courses:</b><br><i>(Course Code and Title)</i>  | Nil  |

## Part II Course Details

### 1. Abstract

With an emphasis on ability and accomplishment this course aims to provide students with basic knowledge and skills in social research methods so that they can analyse questions in policy and management. Students will be required to devise innovative primary research questions, to collect and interpret data and to contribute constructively and creatively to paired and small group work tasks. Particular emphasis will be placed on the critical evaluation of both published research and raw data as presented in a variety of formats. Students will be able to describe and relate various methodological positions, to justify the rationale for conducting primary research and to compare and contrast different types of research.

### 2. Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

(CILOs state what the student is expected to be able to do at the end of the course according to a given standard of performance.)

| No. | CILOs  | Weighting<br>(if applicable) | Discovery-enriched curriculum related learning outcomes (please tick where appropriate) |    |    |
|-----|--|------------------------------|---|----|----|
|     |  |                              | A1  | A2 | A3 |
| 1.  | Explore the meaning of research, identifying its purpose, key methodological positions and potential contribution to knowledge.  | 15%                          | √   | √  |    |
| 2.  | Conduct a literature review on a relevant subject matter in order to generate appropriate and innovative primary research questions.   | 15%                          | √   | √  |    |
| 3.  | Select the appropriate qualitative and quantitative methods for research design.   | 30%                          |   | √  | √  |
| 4.  | Identify appropriate ways of analysing a given data set to answer a research question.   | 20%                          |   | √  | √  |
| 5.  | Creatively relate the principles of inventory design to the construction of a survey instrument; prepare, design, conduct and analyse an interview; interpret raw and published statistical data, charts and graphs. | 20%                          |   | √  | √  |
|     |  | 100%                         |   |    |    |

*A1: Attitude*

*Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.*

*A2: Ability*

*Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.*

*A3: Accomplishments*

*Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.*

### 3. Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

(LTAs designed to facilitate students' achievement of the CILOs.)

| LTA                             | Brief Description   | CILO No. |   |   |   |   | Hours/week (if applicable) |
|---------------------------------|---|----------|---|---|---|---|----------------------------|
|                                 |   | 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |                            |
| Lectures/Workshops              | Presentation of theories, concepts and ideas based on academic literature (including course readings).<br>Course lecturer responds to questions raised by students attending the workshops and facilitates discussion and class exercises.  | √        | √ | √ | √ | √ |                            |
| Individual and group-based work | Part summative, part formative the work sheets have been created to reinforce and expand learning gained through the content of lectures, workshops, and readings. Students will be required to demonstrate their mastery of a variety of research methods and accomplish set tasks creatively. | √        | √ | √ | √ | √ |                            |
| Canvas                          | Readings, slides, and other materials to support lectures and workshops posted for students to download.  | √        | √ | √ | √ | √ |                            |
| Independent reading             | Readings listed in course outline to be read by every student. The focus of the readings is guided by accompanying worksheets that highlight important concepts and give students an opportunity to apply ideas.  | √        | √ | √ | √ | √ |                            |

### 4. Assessment Tasks/Activities (ATs)

(ATs are designed to assess how well the students achieve the CILOs.)

| Assessment Tasks/Activities  | CILO No. |   |   |   |   | Weighting   | Remarks      |
|--|----------|---|---|---|---|-------------|--------------|
|  | 1        | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |             |              |
| <b>Continuous Assessment: 50%</b>  |          |   |   |   |   |             |              |
| Research proposal: select a topic, develop research question(s), hypothesis and outline the appropriate research methods. (max. 1000 words excluding references) | √        | √ |   |   |   | 30%         | Individual   |
| In-class activities: interview, questionnaire design, and interpreting statistical data.   |          | √ | √ |   | √ | 20%         | Small groups |
| <b>Examination: 50 % (duration: 2 hours)</b>   |          |   |   |   |   |             |              |
| Final examination (closed book)  |          |   | √ | √ | √ | 50%         | Individual   |
|  |          |   |   |   |   | <b>100%</b> |              |

## 5. Assessment Rubrics

(Grading of student achievements is based on student performance in assessment tasks/activities with the following rubrics.)

Applicable to students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter

| Assessment Task                                      | Criterion   | Excellent (A+, A, A-)   | Good (B+, B, B-)  | Fair (C+, C, C-)  | Marginal (D)  | Failure (F)  |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| Research proposal                                    | Design of topic   | A+: High standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.  | B+: Fairly high standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.   | C+: Rudimentary standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.   | Poor standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.  | Almost no standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.  |
| Questionnaire (in-class activity)                    | Design of the questionnaire                             |   |   |   |   |  |
| Interpretation of data (in-class activity)           | Interpretation skills                                   | A: Highly innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.   | B: Fairly innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.   | C: Little innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.   | Very little innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.   | No innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.   |
| Interview questions and analysis (in-class activity) | Analytical skills                                       |   |   |   |   |  |
| Final examination                                    | Methods selection, interpretation and analytical skills | A-: Strong demonstration of critical ability to select the appropriate methodology and interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data. Excellent accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter. Strong ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence. | B-: Fairly good demonstration of critical ability to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data. Good accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter. Fairly strong ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence. | C-: Weak demonstration of critical ability to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data. Basic accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter. Basic ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence. | Poor standard of being able to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data. Weak accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter. Very little ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence. | Almost no demonstration of critical ability to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data. Very inadequate accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter. Almost no ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence. |

Applicable to students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024

| Assessment Task                                      | Criterion   | Excellent (A+, A, A-)   | Good (B+, B)  | Marginal (B-, C+, C)  | Failure (F)  |
|--|---|---|---|---|--|
| Research proposal                                    | Design of topic   | A+: High standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.  | B+: Fairly high standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences. | B-: Fairly good demonstration of critical ability to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data. Good accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter. Fairly strong ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence. | Almost no standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.  |
| Questionnaire (in-class activity)                    | Design of the questionnaire                             |   |   |   |  |
| Interpretation of data (in-class activity)           | Interpretation skills                                   | A: Highly innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.   | B: Fairly innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.               | C+: Rudimentary standard of being able to recognise, explain and compare distinct methodological approaches drawn from social sciences.   | No innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory. Almost no demonstration of critical ability to interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data. Very inadequate accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter. |
| Interview questions and analysis (in-class activity) | Analytical skills                                       |   |   |   |  |
| Final examination                                    | Methods selection, interpretation and analytical skills | A-: Strong demonstration of critical ability to select the appropriate methodology and interpret a broad range of graphs, charts and statistical data. Excellent accomplishment of grounded interview data following preparation and application of interview questions related to critical subject matter. Strong ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence. |   | C: Little innovative ability to relate literature review of cutting-edge topic to creation of primary research inventory.   | Almost no ability to conduct relevant and creative documentary analysis for given set of documentary evidence.   |

### **Part III Other Information** (more details can be provided separately in the teaching plan)

#### **1. Keyword Syllabus**

*(An indication of the key topics of the course.)*

Theory and philosophy of research; quantitative and qualitative research methods; conducting literature review; generating primary research questions; questionnaire design and measurement; data analysis; interpreting graphs and charts, qualitative and quantitative document analysis, interview techniques; focus groups; case study; participant and non-participant observations; research ethics

#### **2. Reading List**

##### **2.1 Compulsory Readings**

*(Compulsory readings can include books, book chapters, or journal/magazine articles. There are also collections of e-books, e-journals available from the CityU Library.)*

*Required reading assignments listed on course outline and provided through Canvas.*

##### **2.2 Additional Readings**

*(Additional references for students to learn to expand their knowledge about the subject.)*

*Optional readings listed on course outline and provided through Canvas.*