**PLSC 304 A – Research Methodology**

Instructor Name: Dr. Abeeda Qureshi

Email: [abeedaqureshi@fccollege.edu.pk](mailto:abeedaqureshi@fccollege.edu.pk)

Student Hours: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 12.00 -12.50 – Office Hour Room E41 Monday, Wednesday and Friday 1pm to2 pm (or by appointment)

Office Location: E-036

**Course Details**

**Course Description/ Aims/ Goals**

The aim of this course is to familiarize students with fundamental concepts and skills in research. The course will cover four broad topics:  the foundations of Qualitative and quantitative research, research design, data collection, and data analysis. It needs practice to learn social research methods, therefore, we will use hands-on approach right from the beginning. During the class activity, students will be asked to demonstrate how they can use the skills in their research assignment that they are required to submit by the end of the course.

**Learning outcome**

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

1. Understand competing epistemological debates in Social Science
2. Select appropriate data collection techniques
3. Collect their own data using a variety of sampling methods.
4. Formulate good research questions and design appropriate research
5. Analyze qualitative data by using appropriate data analysis approaches
6. Critically evaluate their own research and that of other social scientists.

**Required Textbooks**

The readings for this course will be distributed by the instructor through Moodle.

**TEACHING METHODS**

The course will be taught using inquiry-based learning techniques. Students will be asked to study the reading material given in advance, and take an active part in discussions during the class. An environment of close student-teacher interaction encourages students to develop independent analytical perspectives which enable us to identify their academic interests, strengths and weaknesses at a very early stage. With this in mind, teaching approaches are more inductive than expository. This means that students need to come to class prepared to contribute to the learning process through participation in discussions and presentations. The assessment will be research-based, following 6 short assignments (30%), 1 PowerPoint Presentation (10%) on a topic of their choice from those listed in the course outline, and Mid-Term (30%) and Final Term Examinations (30%).

**Power Point Presentation**

Students are required to give a PowerPoint presentation from the topics listed in the course outline. The purpose of the PowerPoint presentations is to keep students engaged in learning from the very beginning, and to ensure a two-way traffic of knowledge. Depending on the class size, the presentation can be individual or in a group of up to 3 students. The PowerPoint presentation by the student or group of students will be followed by a question and answer session. Students will be assessed on the basis of the clarity and coherence of the content, meticulousness in the presentation of the ideas and analysis, as well as the effective use of slides and images. Three marks will be reserved to judge how the student handles and responds to the questions. Students are required to keep their presentation to within 10 minutes. Negative marking will be applied if the student exceeds the time limit. The criteria used for assessing the presentation are as follows:

* The degree of knowledge and understanding of the subject matter;
* The ability to present a coherent and systematic argument;
* The ability to communicate effectively in a clear and cogent manner;
* The extent to which the time limits are observed;
* The effectiveness with which the oral questions are dealt with; and.
* The clarity of delivery (pace, audibility, etc.)

Depending on the size of the class intake, students will be required either to make one individual presentation, or to contribute to one group presentation. If group presentations are required, the student will also need to submit a log of their contribution to the group. Each contributing group member is awarded the same mark, which is 10% of the total mark.

**Short Assignments**

Students are required to complete 6 short assignments related to their research project from the reading matter assigned in advance from the course outline. The purpose of the short assignments is to check the students’ conceptual clarity and to ensure that they are engaged with the reading from the very beginning.

**Mid-Term and Final Term**

The Mid-Term and Final Term Examinations will be held on the university’s prescribed dates. Via online instructions, the student will be assigned the Take-Home Mid-Term examination question by the instructor. The take-home mid-term exam will require students to answer a question by applying the concept that they would have covered in their reading. This paper must be submitted online via Moodle; no other modes of submission are allowed. The grading rubric for the research paper is available on Moodle.

**Grading Legend**

Below is the grading legend of FCCU (published in all catalogues and available on the FCCU website), as approved by the Academic Council. This applies for Fall as well.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Grade | Point value | Numerical value | Meaning |
| A | 4 | 93- 100 | Superior |
| A-  B+  B  B- | 3.7  3.3  3  2.7 | 90-92  87-89  83-86  80-82 | Good |
| C+  C  C- | 2.3  2  1.7 | 77-79  73-76  70-72 | Satisfactory |
| D+  D | 1.3  1 | 67-69  60-66 | Pass |
| F | 0 | 59 or below | Fail |

**Important Course Policies**

**Mode of Instruction:** This course will be taught in person, but will make good use of Moodle and Microsoft Teams (for individual online meetings). Kindly ensure that you are familiar with the use of both.

**Submission of Assignments and Plagiarism**: All written assignments must be submitted through Moodle, and will be checked for plagiarism via Turnitin. This software ensures that the work submitted is the student’s own, and plagiarism and cheating in any class discussion or assignment will be dealt with by giving a fail grade, and further disciplinary action will be taken according to FCC policies. Please read the relevant sections in your Student Handbook for further details.

**Contacting the Instructor:** The best way to contact the instructor is via email. During the scheduled office hours, the instructor will respond within 45 minutes of the query being sent; response time outside office hours is 12 hours max. If a student is participating in the course online, individual meetings can be arranged online via email. The instructor will be readily available for such meetings during office hours (listed above) and all that is required from a student is to send an email request for an individual meeting

**Response Time for Emails:** The instructor will respond to all emails received between 9am to 5pm, Mondays to Fridays, with a maximum reply time of 12 hours. If you have urgent matters that need discussion, try to make contact during the scheduled office hours (in-person or online).

**Submission of Assignments and Plagiarism:** All written assignments must be submitted through Moodle, and will be checked for plagiarism via Turnitin. This software ensures that the work submitted is the student’s own, and plagiarism and cheating in any class discussion or assignment will be given a fail grade, and further disciplinary action will be taken according to FCC policies. Please read the relevant sections in your Student Handbook for further details.

**Late Submissions:** Late submission of the research paper, Mid-Term Exam, and research paper will result in automatic penalties. For each day that passes after the deadline for submission, a 5% overall grade reduction will be incurred.

**Re-take Policies:** Absolutely no re-takes for any assignment are allowed, and no extensions will be given for any assignment. Under extreme circumstances beyond the student’s control - such as electric or internet outages during online quizzes – he/she should inform the instructor.

**Participation Etiquette:** Students are expected to attend classes on time. Personal attacks on other participants - including the instructor - through class discussions or other means, will incur strict punishment. A written warning will be issued after one transgression, and further transgressions will result in an automatic fail grade in the course.

**Electronics Policy:** The use of cell phones and other electronic or recording devices is strictly prohibited in class. If you need to use your laptop or tablet to take notes, please see the instructor to obtain permission beforehand.

**Language of Instruction:** The language of instruction for the course is English, as required by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). As such, the instructor is not responsible for delivering the lecture or disseminating class-related reading material in a language other than English; however, reasonable accommodation can be made on an individual basis. All assignments are to be completed and submitted in English. Students facing difficulty with the medium of instruction should contact the instructor and seek help during office hours (or by appointment).

**Accommodation for Disabled Students:** If a student is facing difficulty with the course due to a disability or handicap, please contact the instructor immediately to arrange for an appropriate instruction method.

**Health Emergencies**: If a student or a student’s family member encounters a health emergency that could have significant impact on the student’s performance in the course, s/he should immediately inform the instructor. Failure to do so will result in absolutely no accommodation being made towards the course assessment.

**Modifications in Syllabus:** This syllabus was designed to convey the course information and its requirements as accurately as possible. It is important to note, however, that it may be subject to change during the course depending on the needs of the class and other situational factors. Such changes would be for the students’ benefit and they will be notified of them as soon as possible.

**COURSE SCHEDULE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

(Note: This course schedule is subject to revisions under some unavoidable circumstances)

**Week 1-2 – Week 1: Introduction**

* What is Social Research?
* Ontological and Epistemological debates
* The Philosophies of Research: Positivist social research, Interpretive Social Research and Critical Social Science

**Required Readings:**

* Neuman, W. Lawrence. *Qualitative Methods. The Meanings of Methodology*. 25-124, 2015.
* Burnham et al. *Research Methods in politics*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 9-30, 2008.

**Recommended Readings**

* Flick, UWE. *Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications, 20-28, 2014.

**Week 2: Literature Review / Research Questions/ Hypothesis**

* How to conduct a Systematic Literature Review?
* Finding Research Gap?
* How to form good research questions?

**Recommended Readings**

* Neuman, W. Lawrence. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* England: Pearson Education, 125-164, 2015.
* Phillip H. Pollock. “Framing Hypothesis” *In the Essentials of Political Analysis*, 5th edition. California: Sage Publications, 2016.

**Week 3:** **Research Design**

**Recommended Readings**

* Klotz, Audie and Prakash, Deepa. *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 11- 43, 2008.
* Martyn Denscombe, *The Good Research Guide For small-scale social research projects,* 4th Edition, 3-137, 2010.

**Suggested Readings**

* Burnham et al. *Research Methods in politics*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 30-94, 2008.
* Marshall, Catherine and Rossman, Gretchen B. *Designing Qualitative Research.* 57-157, 2011.

**Week 5: Data Collection Techniques – Documentary Analysis**

**Essential Reading:**

* Marsh, D. and Stoker, G. *Theories and Methods in Political Science*. 2nd ed. London: Macmillan, 2008.
* Jared, J. Wesley. “Qualitative Document Analysis in Political Science” https://www.poltext.org/sites/poltext.org/files/p2wesley.\_09102010\_131253.pdf

**Recommended Readings**

* Bowen, Glenn. “Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method” https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240807798\_Document\_Analysis\_as\_a\_Qualitative\_Research\_Method

**Week6: Interviews/ Elite Interviews/ Managing, Analysing and Interpreting Qualitative Data**

* How to conduct Interview?
* The Focused Interview
* Expert and Elite Interviews
* How to Analyse Interviews?
* Transcription and Data Management
* Coding the Data
* Generating categories, Themes, Typologies, Matrics and Clusters.

**Recommended Reading**

* Burnham et al. *Research Methods in politics*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 231-246, 2008.
* Denscombe, Martyn. *The Good Research Guide For small-scale social research projects.* Fourth Edition, 172-195, 2010.
* O’Connor, Hélène and Gibson, Nancy. “A Step-By-Step Guide to Qualitative Data Analysis” 2003. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/292432218\_A\_Step-By-Step\_Guide\_To\_Qualitative\_Data\_Analysis

**Recommended Readings**

* Mason, J. *Qualitative Researching*, New York: Sage publication, 2nd ed. chapter 4, 2002.

# Evans, [Ceryn.](javascript:void(0);) “Analysing Semi-Structured Interviews Using Thematic Analysis: Exploring Voluntary Civic Participation Among Adults” 2018. https://methods.sagepub.com/dataset/interviews-thematic-civic-participation

**Week 7: Ethnographic Research / Participant Observation**

* Observation
* Participant Observation

**Recommended Readings**

* Flick, UWE. *Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications. 307-330, 2014.
* Klotz, Audie and Prakash, Deepa. *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 93-114, 2008.

**Week 8: Mid-Term**

**Week 9: Qualitative Content Analysis/ Conversation and Discourse Analysis**

**Recommended Readings**

* Neumann, Iver B. "Discourse Analysis." In *Qualitative Methods in International Relations: A Pluralist Guide*, by Audie Klotz and Deepa Prakash, 61-77. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.
* Neuman, W. Lawrence. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches.* England: Pearson Education, 368-390, 2015.

**Recommended Readings**

* Have, Paul ten. *Doing Conversation Analysis.* 2nd. London: Sage Publications Ltd, 2007, Chapter 1 and 3
* Burnham et al. *Research Methods in politics*, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 248-259, 2008.
* Bernard, H. Russell, and Gery W. Ryan. *Text Analysis: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods.* Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press. 1998. https://www.rand.org/pubs/external\_publications/EP19980030.html.

**Week 10: Mixed Methods/ Process Tracing…..**

**Essential Readings**

* Bryman, Alan. "Breaking down the quantitative/qualitative divide." In *Social Research Methods*, by Alan Bryman. New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

**Suggested Readings**

* O’Cathain, A., Murphy, E. and Nichol.J. “Why and how mixed methods research is undertaken in health services research in England” *BioMed Central Health Services Research*, 2007. [www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6963/7/85](http://www.biomedcentral.com/1472-6963/7/85).
* Denzin, Norman K. "Moments, Mixed Methods, and Paradigm Dialogs." *Qualitative Inquiry* 16 (6): 419–427, 2010. https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1077800410364608.

**Week Eleven: Quantitative Research / Definition of Key Terms**

**Essential Reading**

* Franklin, Mark. "Quantitative Analysis." In *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: A Pluralist Perspective*, by Donatella Della Porta, 240-262. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012.

**Suggested Reading**

* Neuman, W. Lawrence. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Pearson Education, 180-199, 2015.

**Week Twelve: Quantitative Measurements/ Quantitative Data Analysis**

**Essential Readings**

* Neuman, W. Lawrence. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Pearson Education, 393-429, 2015.
* Phillip H. Pollock. “Correlation and Linear Regression.” In *The Essentials of Political Analysis*, 5th edition. California: Sage Publications, 2016.

**Suggested Readings**

* Denscombe, Martyn. *The Good Research Guide For small-scale social research projects.* 4th Edition, 235-308, 2010.

**Week 13: Surveys**

* The logic of Survey Research
* Construction of the Survey
* Types of the Survey
* Strengths and weaknesses
* Survey Interviewing

**Essential Readings**

* Neuman, W. Lawrence. *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Survey Research. Pearson Education, 316-361, 2015.

**Week 12- Selection and Sampling**

**Essential Readings**

* Baker, SE and Edwards, R. “How many qualitative interviews is enough? Expert voices and early career reflection on sampling and cases in qualitative research” *National Centre for Research Methods*, 2012. <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/2273/4/how_many_interviews.pdf>
* Mason, Jennifer. *Qualitative Researching*, London: Sage Publications, chapter 7, 2002.

**Suggested Readings**

* Seale, C. ‘Generalising from Qualitative research’ in C Seale The Quality of Qualitative Research, London: Sage publication, 106-118, 1999.

**Week 14: Ethics and Politics/ Writing the Research Report**

* Presentation of the Problem
* Description of the Methods
* Result
* Discussion

**Essential Readings:**

* Mason, Jennifer. *Qualitative Researching*. London: SAGE Publications, 173-205, 2002.
* Edwards R. and Mauthner M. “Ethics and feminist research: theory and practice” in Mauthner, M, Birch, M. Jessop, J. and Miller, T. (eds). Ethics in Qualitative Research, London: Sage Chapter 2, 2008.

**Recommended Readings**

* Burnham et al. *Research Methods in politics*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 282-303, 2008.
* Flick, UWE. *Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications. 515-522, 2014.

**Week 15: Presentations**

(Note: This course schedule is subject to revisions under some unavoidable circumstances)