B.A. (Honours) in Contemporary English Studies

Course Title : Introduction to Research Methods in English Studies
Course Code : ENG3002
Recommended Study Year : 3rd or 4th Year
No. of Credits/Term : 3
Mode of Tuition : Lecture-tutorial mode
Class Contact Hours : 2-hour lecture per week
   1-hour tutorial per week
Category : Discipline Elective (Contemporary Language Strand)
Prerequisite(s) : Nil
Co-requisite(s) : Nil
Exclusion(s) : Nil
Exemption Requirement(s) : Nil

Brief Course Description

This course provides an introduction to research methodology in English Studies with an aim to familiarize students with basic concepts of research. It also acts as a preparatory course for students undertaking research for their Final Year Project. The course examines current research paradigms, principles of research design, instruments of data collection, and commonly used research methods for small-scale studies, processes involved in the analysis of data, and modes of presenting research findings. By covering a range of theoretical and practical issues related to research in English language studies, the course shall equip students with an appropriate understanding of concepts, tools, and methods to conduct future research in their field of interest.

Aims

The course aims to enable students to:
1. Understand various research paradigms and become aware of theoretical and practical issues related to humanities research especially in contemporary English language studies;
2. Review previously published work in the field, select an appropriate research topic with an awareness of principles in research design;
3. Demonstrate knowledge required to plan and conduct research with an understanding of appropriate research methods for a particular domain;
4. Familiarize themselves with skills to analyse different types of research data and explore various tools and software for the analyses;
5. Consolidate their research and academic skills to present research findings in both spoken and written forms.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:
1. Identify key issues regarding research in current English language studies and develop skills to search online and offline sources to carry out literature review;

2. Define an appropriate research topic by recognizing a suitable research area and thereby, formulate research questions accordingly, by describing the rationale and research design;
3. Distinguish between various aspects of quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods research in English studies;
4. Design and conduct a research study in accordance with the identified research need;
5. Assess ways to collect, compile, and conduct a data analysis by considering the use of various software tools in order to analyse research data;
6. Apply academic skills to present the research study findings in a formal academic oral presentation and a written research paper.

Indicative Contents

The contents introduce students to a variety of concepts related to research in English language studies. By providing an understanding of basic concepts of research, the course contents aim to help students distinguish and critique various research methods and thereby, partake in the process of conducting research from planning to presentation. Indicative content of the course includes the following:

1. Introduction to Research in English Language Studies
   - Nature of research
   - Research traditions and key concepts
2. Research in Context
   - Sample journal articles
   - Useful journals in literature and linguistics
   - Literature review and identifying a research need
3. Components of research
   - Research topic, questions, and hypotheses
   - Data and variables
   - Reliability and validity
4. Research Design and Administration
   - Qualitative research: case studies, ethnography, narrative inquiry
   - Quantitative research: experiment/quasi-experiment, surveys
   - Mixed Methods: triangulation
5. Analysing and Interpreting Data
   - Models or theories for interpreting data
   - Descriptive and inferential data
   - Software tools
6. Presenting Research Findings
   - Oral presentations for research papers
   - Writing research papers

Teaching Method

The course adopts an interactive approach to understanding concepts and topics related to English language studies research. Classes will be conducted in Lecture and Tutorial modes. Students shall actively engage individually, in pairs, and in small groups in a variety of classroom activities, and hands-on exercises. Students shall also

have an opportunity to reflect upon and give feedback on their own and peers' work. Students will be expected to engage in a variety of online learning modes including the university's e-learning platform for accessing course materials, participating in online forums, and submitting coursework assignments.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

The learning outcomes will be measured through continuous assessments which will be both administered throughout the course and at the end of term.
1. Students will take an individual multiple choice in-class test in order to check their understanding of introductory concepts of research. Outcome 1;
2. Students will be required to conduct online and offline literature review, identify a research area and prepare a research proposal in groups of 3-4. Outcomes 1-4;
3. Students will be assessed individually on their deeper understanding of research methods, tools, and research design, via a short-answer in-class test. Outcomes 3,5;
4. Towards, the end of the term, students will be required to give in-class formal group presentations about their conducted research findings. Outcomes 2, 4-6;
5. Finally, students will work in groups to write up a research paper in order to present findings of their research. Outcomes 2, 4-6.

Assessment

No.	Assessment	Type	Percentage
1.	In-class Test 1	Individual	10%
2.	Research Proposal	Group	20 %
3.	In-class Test 2	Individual	10%
4.	In-class Presentation	Group	30%
5.	Final Research Paper	Group	30%

Required Readings

Dörnyei,Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics: Quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methodologies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Griffin,G. (2005). *Research methods for English studies*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Recommended Readings

Brown, J.D., & Rodgers, T. S. (2009). *Doing second language research*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Davis,K.A. (2011). *Critical qualitative research in second language studies: Agency and advocacy*. Charlotte, N.C: Information Age Publishing.
Fraenkel,J.R., & Wallen, N. E. (2007). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. Boston: McGraw-Hill.
Lester,J.D. (2011). *Principles of writing research papers*. Boston: Longman.
Perry,F.L. (2005). *Research in applied linguistics: Becoming a discerning consumer*. Mahwah, N.J: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
Wallwork,A. (2011). *English for writing research papers*. New York: Springer.

Important Notes:
(1) Students are expected to spend a total of 9 hours (i.e. 3 hours of class contact and 6 hours of personal study) per week to achieve the course learning outcomes.
(2) Students shall be aware of the University regulations about dishonest practice in course work, tests and examinations, and the possible consequences as stipulated in the Regulations Governing University Examinations. In particular, plagiarism, being a kind of dishonest practice, is "the presentation of another person's work without proper acknowledgement of the source, including exact phrases, or summarised ideas, or even footnotes/citations, whether protected by copyright or not, as the student's own work". Students are required to strictly follow university regulations governing academic integrity and honesty.
(3) Students are required to submit writing assignment(s) using Turnitin.
(4) To enhance students' understanding of plagiarism, a mini-course "Online Tutorial on Plagiarism Awareness" is available on https://pla.ln.edu.hk/.