

Course Title	: Junior Research Project
Course Code	: SSC3319
Recommended Study Year	: 3
No. of Credits/Term	: 3
Mode of Tuition	: Individual supervision with optional Service-Learning component
Class Contact Hours	: Regular Meetings
Category in Major Prog.	: BSocSc Common Foundation (Required Course)
Discipline	: Social Sciences
Prerequisite(s)	At least one research methods course offered in the programme
Co-requisite(s)	: N/A
Exclusion(s)	: N/A
Exemption Requirement(s)	: N/A

Brief Course Description

The ability to conduct independent research is an important learning outcome for any social science graduate. This course provides a platform for students to employ and develop their research skills. Students will receive individual supervision from instructors and work towards the production of a project which incorporates key elements of a social science research project. These elements include (but are not limited to) a literature review, development of a theoretical framework, and the formulation of appropriate research questions and methods of data analysis etc. This project could be further developed to form part of students' (optional) Senior Thesis. Students who choose to do a Senior Thesis may submit a complete research project (with data and policy analysis, etc.) but is not a requirement for the overall assessment of the project.

Aims

This course aims to provide students with the knowledge and opportunity to prepare a research project which incorporates the fundamental elements of a full-fledged research project (e.g. a Senior Thesis).

Learning Outcomes (LOs)

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. recall and list the requirements of an academic research project;
2. formulate sound research questions;
3. conduct a comprehensive literature review on a specific research topic with effective use of library, Internet, and other research resources;
4. plan and organise a research design; develop and apply appropriate research

methodologies; work independently to conduct original research within a manageable scope and time frame;

5. be alert on ethical issues when conducting research;
6. produce a research project which incorporates (but is not limited to) key elements of a full-fledged research project, and complies with the basic requirements and format of academic research.

Indicative Contents

- I. Basic format of an academic research project
- II. Formulating research questions

Teaching Method

1. Individual consultation/supervision – students will have regular meetings (at least 4 times) and exchanges with their project supervisors throughout the term.
2. Departments will provide teaching and learning resources such as self-access materials, workshops or briefings for students.

Service-Learning option:

Students have the option to include a S-L component in their project. The student will work with a suitable community partner in consultation with the supervisor to incorporate their research needs into the project.

Measurement of Learning Outcomes

1. Mid-term progress report (30%) (LOs 1-5).
A mid-term progress report will measure how well students are able to formulate their research question, conduct basic literature review and design research methodology as originally planned. Students are expected to demonstrate research progress on schedule to their supervisors.
This report should include the following elements:
 - a. a well-defined and sound research question
 - b. rationale for choosing the research question and potential contribution of the project
 - c. a summary of the references and sources used in preparing the research question
2. Final report (70%) (LOs 1-6).
At the end of the semester, students are required to submit their final project. Assessment is based on both research design and the standard and style of report writing.

This report (with no more than 30 pages) should include, but is not limited to, the following (i.e. data analysis and discussion of findings can also be included if they wish to write up findings from pilot tests, or if they opt to submit a full-fledged research report):

- a. a well-defined and sound research question
- b. a comprehensive and critical literature review on the topic
- c. a conceptual framework derived from the literature review
- d. proposed data collection and data analysis methods designed to address the research question based on c.
- e. a fully referenced bibliography of sources consulted

Service-Learning option:

For students taking this option, their mid-term progress report and their final reports should take into account the research needs as agreed upon with the community partner in consultation with the supervisor. 10% of the mid-term progress report goes to community partner ratings and another 20% incorporated into the final report. Please refer to the assessment rubrics for details.

Assessment

Continuous assessment :	100%	
	mid-term progress report	– 30%,
	final report	– 70%)

Required/Essential Readings

Berry, Ralph, *The Research Project – How to write it*, London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Machi, Lawrence A., and Brenda, T. McEnvoy, *The Literature Review: Six Steps to Success*, Corwin Press, 2008.

Recommended/Supplementary Readings

Supplementary readings are topic specific and are to be advised by the instructors concerned.