



The University of Southern Queensland

## Course specification

The current and official versions of the course specifications are available on the web at <http://www.usq.edu.au/coursespecification/current>.  
Please consult the web for updates that may occur during the year.

### Description: Research Methodology for the Human Sciences

Subject	Cat-nbr	Class	Term	Mode	Units	Campus
HSC	8050	74284	1, 2008	EXT	1.00	Toowoomba

<b>Academic group:</b>	FOSCI
<b>Academic org:</b>	FOS004
<b>Student contribution band:</b>	National Priority Nursing
<b>ASCED code:</b>	060399

## STAFFING

Examiner: Cath Rogers-Clark

## RATIONALE

Nurses and midwives need to be able to read and critique research. They therefore need to develop the ability to be a critical consumer of research and to be able to apply this to their own areas of practice. It is particularly important that nurses and midwives base their practice on research evidence and can provide health care consumers with researched evidence when they seek to make informed decisions.

## SYNOPSIS

This course will develop students' abilities to be critical consumers of research. Studies will focus on extending students' knowledge about the purpose of research, research design and various methodologies including empirical, interpretive, critical and feminist approaches. Through examination of past research students will distinguish the hallmarks of effective research design including ethical considerations. They will learn about evidence based practice and write a critical literature review for their own area of practice.

## OBJECTIVES

On completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Critically analyse the current methodological debates taking into consideration the different philosophical bases of different scientific approaches to research (Assignment 1; Report - online group discussion);
2. Explain the varying ways the term "theory" is used in each of the research paradigms (Assignment 1);
3. Discuss the centrality of theory to research and describe how each paradigm claims to demonstrate the theory-evidence link (Assignment 1);
4. Discuss the benefits and limitations of the evidence-based practice movement in health care (Assignment 1);
5. Discuss ethical considerations which arise in research design and conduct (Assignment 1, Report - online group discussion);

6. Demonstrate the ability to take an area of research concern and refine it by framing a researchable problem or question (Assignment 2); and
7. Demonstrate the ability to analyse and critique the literature in a field of specific interest (Assignment 2).

## TOPICS

	Description	Weighting (%)
1.	Methodological Debate - What is Science? and What is Research?	30.00
2.	Theory-Practice-Research - Meanings of theory in each paradigm, Evidence-based practice	15.00
3.	Research Design - Selecting an appropriate method, Review of quantitative methods, Evidence-based practice, Overview of qualitative methods, eg. - semi-structured interviewing	30.00
4.	Research Ethics - Informed consent, Safety, The researcher/participant relationship, The impact of the researcher	5.00
5.	The Critical Practitioner - Conducting a literature search, Selecting an appropriate tool for critique, Critically reviewing the literature	20.00

## TEXT and MATERIALS required to be PURCHASED or ACCESSED

ALL textbooks and materials are available for purchase from USQ BOOKSHOP (unless otherwise stated). Orders may be placed via secure internet, free fax 1800642453, phone 07 46312742 (within Australia), or mail. Overseas students should fax +61 7 46311743, or phone +61 7 46312742. For costs, further details, and internet ordering, use the 'Textbook Search' facility at <http://bookshop.usq.edu.au> click 'Semester', then enter your 'Course Code' (no spaces).

Roberts, K & Taylor, B 2006, *Nursing research processes: an Australian perspective*, 3rd edn, Nelson, Melbourne.

## REFERENCE MATERIALS

Reference materials are materials that, if accessed by students, may improve their knowledge and understanding of the material in the course and enrich their learning experience.

Anderson, J M 1991, Reflexivity in Fieldwork: Towards a Feminist Epistemology, *Image: Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, Vol 23, no.2, pp115-118.

Carryer, J 1995, Feminist research: strengths and challenges, *Contemporary Nurse: A Journal for the Australian Nursing Profession*, Vol 4, no.4, pp180-186.

Colquhoun, D & Kellehear, A 1993, *Health Research in Practice: Political, Ethical and Methodological Issues*, Chapman and Hall, London.

Cozby, P 2004, *Methods in Behavioural Research*, 8th edn, McGraw Hill, Boston.

Creswell, J W 1998, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing Among Five Traditions*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.

- Crotty, M 1998, *The Foundations of Social Research*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney.
- Denscombe, M 1998, *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*, Open University Press, Buckingham.
- Denzin, N & Lincoln, Y (eds) 2000, *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Dey, I 1993, *Qualitative Data Analysis: A User-Friendly Guide for Social Scientists*, Routledge, United Kingdom.
- Emden, C 1998, Conducting a narrative analysis, *Collegian*, Vol 5, no.3, pp34-39.
- Emden, C & Sandelowski, M 1999, The good, the bad and the relative, part two: Goodness and the criterion problem in qualitative research, *International Journal of Nursing Practice*, Vol 5, no. , pp2-7.
- Feyerabend, P 1993, *Against Method*, 3rd edn, Routledge, Verso, New York.
- Foddy, W 1993, *Constructing Questions for Interviews and Questionnaires: Theory and Practice in Social Research*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Fonow, M & Cook, J (eds) 1991, *Beyond Methodology: Feminist Scholarship as Lived Research*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington.
- Grbich, C 1999, *Qualitative Research in Health: An Introduction*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney.
- Habermas, J 1974, *Theory and Practice*, Beacon Press, Boston.
- Lincoln, Y S & Denzin, N K 2003, The fifth moment, *In the Landscape of qualitative research: theories and issues*, N K Denzin and Y S Lincoln, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.
- Marshall, C & Rossmas, G 1999, *Designing Qualitative Research*, 3rd edn, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks.
- Omery, A, Kasper, C & Page, G G 1995, *In Search of Nursing Science*, Sage, Thousand Oaks.
- Polgar, S & Thomas, S A 2000, *Introduction to Research in the Health Sciences*, 4th edn, Churchill Livingstone, Edinburgh.
- Polit, D F, Tatano Beck, C & Hungler, B P 2006, *Essentials of Nursing Research: Methods, Appraisal and Utilization*, 6th edn, Lippincott, Philadelphia.
- Reinharz, S 1992, *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Yin, R K 2003, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, 3rd edn, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, Vol 5.  
(Applied Social Research Methods Series)

## STUDENT WORKLOAD REQUIREMENTS

ACTIVITY	HOURS
Assessments	12.00
Directed Study	50.00
Private Study	110.00

## ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Description	Marks out of	Wtg (%)	Due date
ASSIGNMENT 1 - S/ANS QUESTIONS	100.00	40.00	23 May 2008
ASSIGNMENT 2	100.00	50.00	13 Jun 2008
RPT - ONLINE GRP DISCUSSION	10.00	10.00	13 Jun 2008

## IMPORTANT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- 1 Attendance requirements:**

There are no attendance requirements for this course. However, it is the students' responsibility to study all material provided to them or required to be accessed by them to maximise their chance of meeting the objectives of the course and to be informed of course-related activities and administration. This course contains a discussion forum where students' participation is formally assessed and successful participation in that discussion group is required to complete the requirements to be awarded a passing grade in the course.
- 2 Requirements for students to complete each assessment item satisfactorily:**

To satisfactorily complete an assessment item a student must achieve at least 50% of the marks or a grade of at least C-. Students do not have to satisfactorily complete each assessment item to be awarded a passing grade in this course. Refer to Statement 4 below for the requirements to receive a passing grade in this course.
- 3 Penalties for late submission of required work:**

If students submit assignments after the due date without prior approval then a penalty of 5% of the total marks gained by the student for the assignment will apply for each working day late.
- 4 Requirements for student to be awarded a passing grade in the course:**

To be assured of receiving a passing grade a student must achieve at least 50% of the total weighted marks available for the course.
- 5 Method used to combine assessment results to attain final grade:**

The final grades for students will be assigned on the basis of the weighted aggregate of the marks obtained for each of the summative assessment items in the course.
- 6 Examination information:**

There is no examination in this course.
- 7 Examination period when Deferred/Supplementary examinations will be held:**

There will be no Deferred or Supplementary examinations in this course.
- 8 University Regulations:**

Students should read USQ Regulations 5.1 Definitions, 5.6. Assessment, and 5.10 Academic Misconduct for further information and to avoid actions which might contravene University Regulations. These regulations can be found at the URL <http://www.usq.edu.au/corporateservices/calendar/part5.htm> or in the current USQ Handbook.

## **ASSESSMENT NOTES**

- 9 The due date for an assignment is the date by which a student must despatch the assignment to the USQ. The onus is on the student to provide proof of the despatch date, if requested by the Examiner.
- 10 Students must retain a copy of each item submitted for assessment. This should be sent to USQ within 24 hours of receipt of a request from the Examiner to do so.
- 11 The examiner may grant an extension of the due date of an assignment in extenuating circumstances.
- 12 Students who have undertaken all of the required assessments in a course but who have failed to meet some of the specified objectives of a course within the normally prescribed time may be awarded the temporary grade: IM (Incomplete - Make up). An IM grade will only be awarded when, in the opinion of the examiner, a student will be able to achieve the remaining objectives of the course after a period of non directed personal study.