



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 Design

Subject	Cat-nbr	Class	Term	Mode	Units	Campus
HMT	4005	87186	1, 2009	ONC	1.00	Toowoomba

Academic group:	FOART
Academic org:	FOA003
Student contribution band:	1
ASCED code:	100700

STAFFING

Examiner: Brian Musgrove
Moderator: Catherine Dewhirst

REQUISITES

Pre-requisite: Students must be enrolled in one of the following Programs: BAHN or MEL1

RATIONALE

Honours level students currently undertaking communications, humanities and social sciences dissertations and research projects require knowledge of a range of techniques for researching and writing the dissertation. The student needs to be able to survey a field of literature, identify a research problem, decide on research objectives and select appropriate method/s to carry out the research. Students also need to ensure epistemological consistency between their aims, methodologies, data collection and analysis of results in a manner appropriate to their discipline areas.

SYNOPSIS

This course examines different methods of approaching a review of literature relevant to a research topic, culminating in the identification and refinement of research questions or hypotheses. It looks at how to select appropriate methods for answering the research question or testing hypotheses. Finally it discusses different approaches to presenting research data.

OBJECTIVES

On successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. define their chosen dissertation topic
2. present a thorough review of existing literature related to their chosen dissertation topic
3. present and defend a methodology of research appropriate to their chosen dissertation topic
4. evaluate the epistemological consistency of their proposed methodology, data collection and analysis of results with their research aims

5. provide a substantial outline of their proposed dissertation, including timelines
6. demonstrate an understanding of the use of a range of electronic databases and/or a range of primary sources
7. demonstrate an understanding of appropriate use of informed consent and ethical clearance documentation
8. critique existing research reports from a range of critical perspectives
9. demonstrate an understanding of how academic dissertations are presented
10. demonstrate an awareness of at least one accepted referencing system

TOPICS

	Description	Weighting (%)
1.	Reviewing the literature	20.00
2.	Research in the discipline areas	20.00
3.	Refining a topic	15.00
4.	Selecting a methodology	15.00
5.	Sources and argument	15.00
6.	Presenting the dissertation	15.00

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).

Texts and Materials will be advised by staff in the Honours program.

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 & Poole, M 1994, *Thesis and Assignment Writing*, 2nd edn, John Wiley & Sons, Milton, Qld.

Ballenger, B 1994, *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers*, Allyn & Bacon, Needham Heights, MA.

Barzun, J & Graff, H 2004, *The modern researcher*, 6th edn, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, San Diego.

Burkle-Young, FA & Maleny, SR 1997, *The Research Guide for the Digital Age: A New Handbook for Researching and Writing for the Serious Student*, University Press of America, Lanham, MD.

Clarke, A 1999, *Evaluation Research: An Introduction to Principles, Methods and Practice*, Sage, London.

Cooper, H 1989, *Integrating Research: A Guide for Literature Reviews*, 2nd edn, Sage, Newbury Park, CA.

Fitzpatrick, J, Secrist, J & Wright, DJ 1998, *Secrets for a Successful Dissertation*, Sage Publications, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Glathorn, AA 2005, *Writing the Winning Dissertation: A Step-by-Step Guide*, 2nd edn, Corwin Press Inc, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Piantanida, M & Garman, NB 1999, *The Qualitative Dissertation: A Guide for Students and Faculty*, Corwin Press Inc, Thousand Oaks, CA.

Selden, A (ed) 1988, *Contemporary history: practice and method*, Blackwell, Oxford.

Shafer, RJ 1980, *A guide to historical method*, 3rd edn, Wadsworth, Belmont.

STUDENT WORKLOAD REQUIREMENTS

ACTIVITY	HOURS
Directed Study	16.00
Private Study	149.00

ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Description	Marks out of	Wtg (%)	Due date
CRITICAL ESSAY	100.00	40.00	22 May 2009 (see note 1)
LIT REVIEW & METHODOLOGY	100.00	60.00	12 Jun 2009 (see note 2)

NOTES

1. This assessment item relates to Objectives 4, 8 & 10.
2. This assessment item relates to Objectives 1,2,3,5,6,7,9 & 10.

IMPORTANT ASSESSMENT INFORMATION

- 1 Attendance requirements:
Students are required to participate in online seminar discussions in this course. It is the student's 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.
- 2 Requirements for students to complete each assessment item satisfactorily:
To successfully complete an individual assessment item, a student must achieve at least 50% of the marks or a grade of at least C-. This statement must be read in conjunction with Statement 4 below.
- 3 Penalties for late submission of required work:
If students submit assignments after the due date without extenuating circumstances and without prior approval, then a penalty of a maximum of 5% of the assigned mark may apply for each working day late, up to a maximum of 10 working days, at which time a mark of zero can be recorded for that assignment.
- 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 exam for this course.
 - 7 Examination period when Deferred/Supplementary examinations will be held:
Given the details under (6) above, there are no deferred exams for this course. However, if any deferred/makeup work is granted, it would have to be submitted by a date set by the examiner.
 - 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>

ASSESSMENT NOTES

- 9 (a) 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. (b) Students must retain a copy of each item submitted for assessment. This must be despatched to USQ within 24 hours if requested by the Examiner. (c) In accordance with University's Assignment Extension Policy (Regulation 5.6.1), the examiner of a course may grant an extension of the due date of an assignment in extenuating circumstances such as documented ill-health. (d) In the event that a due date for an assignment falls on a local public holiday in their area, such as a Show holiday, the due date for the assignment will be the next day. Students are to note on the assignment cover the date of the public holiday for the examiner's convenience. (e) Students who do not have regular access to postal services or who are otherwise disadvantaged by these regulations may be given special consideration. They should contact the examiner of the course to negotiate such special arrangements. (f) Students who have undertaken all of the required assessments in the course but who have failed to meet some of the specified objectives of the course within the normally prescribed time may be awarded the temporary grade: IM (Incomplete-Makeup). 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. (g) Students who, for medical, family/personal, or employment-related reasons, are unable to complete an assignment or sit for an examination at the scheduled time, may apply to defer an assessment in the course. Such a request must be accompanied by appropriate supporting documentation. One of the following temporary grades may be awarded: IDS (Incomplete - Deferred Examination); IDM (Incomplete Deferred Make-up); IDB (Incomplete - Both Deferred Examination and Deferred Make-up).
- 10 Students will require access to email and have internet access to USQConnect for this course.
- 11 Students are strongly advised to maintain regular contact with their supervisor.