Course description

Students preparing to embark on undertaking their master's dissertation need to be prepared in both theoretical and practical aspects of research methodology and methods. Through this process they also gain a greater understanding of the substantive literature in their specific area of study. However, when it comes to conceptualising, planning, implementing and locating their own research within the relevant literature students require specific skills and advice.

Learning Outcomes

On completion of the course students will have

1. identified appropriate research questions and how they might be addressed by particular methodological approaches and data collection methods
2. planned a programme of research, showing an appropriate level of critical awareness of issues relating to research reliability and validity, and ethical considerations
3. articulated clearly the kinds of conclusions and recommendations they will be able to make given the research design choices they have made
4. presented a proposal for a research project in accord with the relevant academic conventions.

Indicative Content

- Stages in planning research and issues in research design, key terms and texts
- Approaches to the identification of appropriate research questions
- Research design - the spectrum to consider, sampling
- Strategies and instruments for data collection $ú interviews, questionnaires, documentation, focus groups
- Issues of validity and reliability and the evaluation of evidence.

Assessment

2,000 words

Each student will produce a proposal that should specify his/her research question, or a set of related research questions, and justify its/their practical, professional and theoretical significance. It will include a strategy and design for collecting and analysing evidence that is suitable for the research question. Provision for philosophical studies and empirical research will be made.
Reading List


