Research Methods: An Introduction to Research in the Social Sciences

Aims
This unit is designed to enable students to develop the abilities to:
1. identify research questions;
2. locate and evaluate critically relevant literature;
3. evaluate a range of data collection instruments with reference to issues such as the reliability and validity of the data, feasibility of use and ethical considerations;
4. interpret data and comment on the conclusions supported;
5. undertake a small-scale research project in an area of professional or personal interest;
6. present a research report on this small-scale research.

Teaching
10 x 2.5 hour sessions plus an element of supported self-study.

Assessment
Each participant will undertake and produce a report on a small-scale investigation (4000 words). The report should include a critical review of the literature in the area and a rationale for the research design adopted.

Content
This will include:
- an overview of types of research
- methods of undertaking literature reviews
- purpose of data collection
- issues of validity and reliability
- presentation of research findings
- stages in planning research
- identification of research questions
- instruments for data collection
- data analysis
Selected Reading