

## **COURSE SPECIFICATION DOCUMENT**

**Academic School / Department:** CASS

**Programme:** BA Development Studies  
BA International Relations, BA Political Science

**FHEQ Level:** 6

**Course Title:** Research Methods and Practices: Social Sciences

**Course Code:** DEV 5200

**Course Leader:** Dr Michael F. Keating

**Student Engagement Hours:** 120 (standard 3- credit BA course)

Lectures: 15

Seminar / Tutorials: 20

Case Study Sessions: 10

Independent / Guided Learning: 75

**Semester:** Fall, Spring, Summer

**Credits:** 12 UK CATS credits

6 ECTS credits

3 US credits

### **Course Description:**

Engages students with key research methods and research practices used in the social sciences, with an emphasis on qualitative methods. Students will learn skills that translate directly into the workplace, specifically in an international NGO, charity, corporate, intergovernmental or development agency context. Students are prepared to undertake fieldwork, and learn principles of data collection and analysis. Writing research proposals, undertaking project costing, and writing funding applications are all addressed, and students are introduced to widely used approaches such as the Logical Framework Analysis/Approach, Stakeholder Analysis, and Participatory Approaches.

### **Prerequisites:**

GEP 4180

### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To teach core research practices for social science disciplines as they are used in an international context
- To teach core methods used in development projects and project evaluations
- To teach transferrable skills and enhance employability
- To prepare students for fieldwork, internships and future employment in an international research setting, as well as for dissertation writing
- To critically engage with core practices in the social sciences
- To familiarize students with processes and procedures associated with international development assistance and grant writing for overseas aid organisations

**Programme Outcomes:**

5A(iii); 5B(ii); 5B(iii); 5C(i); 5C(ii); 5C(iii); 5D(i); 5D(ii); 5D(iii)

A detailed list of the programme outcomes are found in the Programme Specification.

This is located at the archive maintained by the Academic Registry and found at: <http://www.richmond.ac.uk/admitted-students/programme-and-course-specifications/>

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, successful students should be able to:

- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of and critical engagement with key debates and paradigms with regard to research methods and practices
- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of key research methods and practices in the social sciences
- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of qualitative research methods, and issues of research design
- Complete assigned work with a degree of clarity, technical competence and critical thinking, and a degree of independence and capacity for self-evaluation, appropriate for a 5000-level course
- Demonstrate well-developed control of research methods and that will translate into the workplace, including the ability to present research in a manner suitable to a range of audiences and changing contexts.
- Demonstrate the ability to use information communication technology (ICT) in the research process

**Indicative Content:**

- Overview of core research methods and practices in social sciences and questions of research ethics
- Research design, literature reviews and theoretical frameworks
- Case studies and comparison
- Qualitative research methods (i.e.):

- Interviews and focus groups
- Archival research/policy documents
- Surveys/Polls
- Participatory research methods
- Content/Discourse analysis
- Qualitative/Quantitative data analysis and presentation
- Logical Framework Analysis/Approach
- Project design, costing, implementation and evaluation

**Assessment:**

This course conforms to the Richmond University Writing Intensive Assessment Norms approved at Academic Board and located at: <https://www.richmond.ac.uk/policies/>

**Teaching Methodology:**

This course will be taught through a combination of lectures and seminar-type activities, including group work, sub-group activities, classroom discussion, and the showing of documentaries. The general approach to classes is informal, and discussion is viewed as an essential part of an interactive and participatory learning program. Audio-visual aids, study materials and electronic learning resources will be used as appropriate.

Lectures provide a framework for the course, and are designed to ensure students have an overview of main issues and concerns on a particular topic, receive clarification on the major points of debate understand the broad dimensions of core problems, and are aware of relevant literature in the specific area of concern. It is essential that lectures are supplemented with assigned readings; together, the readings and the lectures are designed to provide guidance for seminar discussion.

Seminar classes are based on the principle of active and student-directed learning, and are designed to be **Safe, Enjoyable, Managed, Inclusive, Necessary, Academic, Respectful & Stimulating**. The seminars provide an opportunity for discussion of contentious issues, addressing questions and exploring academic debates in more depth, group and sub-group discussion. They are encouraged to share their opinions freely, but must also maintain respect for the opinions of others. It is expected that students will participate regularly in discussions in a creative, competent and critical way, as the formulation of their own thoughts and clarification of their assumptions, often in contradiction to other students' thoughts and assumptions, form a crucial part of the learning process. Students are expected to come to seminar classes prepared.

**Bibliography:**

- Sumner, A., & Tribe, M. A. (2008). *International development studies: Theories and methods in research and practice*. (London: SAGE).
- Holland, J., & Campbell, J. (2005). *Methods in development research: combining qualitative and quantitative approaches*. (London: DFID).

