



**UNIVERSITY OF
STIRLING**

*Faculty of Arts and Humanities
Communications, Media and Culture*

Autumn 2016

Module Outline

PREPP64 - Research for Dissertation

PREPP87 - Research Design and the Philosophy of Science

DRAFT: The timetable for these modules has not yet been finalized. All dates times and venues given here are provisional. A finalised timetable will be issued as soon as possible.

Module Information

The information in this Module Outline is specific to this module: you should also access more general information and policies in your Programme Handbook which can be found on the Taught Postgraduate Information Succeed site.

Module Aims

The purpose of the Module is to equip students with an advanced understanding - appropriate to masters level study - of the philosophy of social science and the main techniques used in social sciences and humanities to conduct research. This class requires students to design a research proposal and prepares them to conduct research for dissertation. Students should be able to write an appropriate research proposal on completion of the module.

Learning Outcomes

- Students will develop and extend their understanding of both the philosophy and practice of social research.
- Students will develop their knowledge of different research paradigms and how these relate to the public relations and communication management discipline.
- Ability to apply a broad range of standard social scientific research techniques.
- Demonstrate awareness and critical thinking in developing appropriate research designs to address research questions.
- Demonstrate awareness of the common practical problems associated with the use of specific methods and strategies to deal with these

Workplace skills developed on this module

- Oral and presentation skills
- Time management skills
- Critical and analytical thinking skills.
- Problem solving

Each full time module is worth 20 credits: this means that you are expected to put in 200 hours of work over the course of the semester on this module. This time is made up of timetabled classes and self -study (including writing assessments and revision time) so set aside enough time for reading and research.

Key contacts for this module:

Role	Name	Room	E-mail	Office hours
Module Co-ordinator	Dr Derek Hodge	Pathfoot A27	derek.hodge@stir.ac.uk	Thursday 11.00-13.00 hrs
Programme Administrator	Jane Campbell	Pathfoot A41	jane.campbell@stir.ac.uk sahgs@stir.ac.uk	

Key dates:

Lectures begin	16 th September 2016
Mid-semester reading week	Monday 24 th October 2016 - Friday 28 th October (inclusive)
Brussels fieldtrip	Friday 4 th November (tbc)
Assignment 1 (Ethics Paper, 30%)	Monday 21 st November
Assignment 2 (Research Proposal, 70%)	Monday 12 th December
Assignment 1 feedback	Monday 5 th December
Assignment 2 feedback	Monday 9 th January
Finalised module marks available	Monday 18 th January 2016

Sources of Information:

Routine enquiries	Programme Handbook on TPG Succeed site or Programme Administrator
academic help or feedback	Use the "office hours" to speak to staff – see above
up-to date information and assessments	Succeed
Postgraduate Regulations which apply to this module	http://www.stir.ac.uk/regulations/postgraduate/

Assignments: The overall mark for the module is calculated from the sum of weighted component marks, rounded to the nearest whole number; a pass is not required in each component. This module mark represents a summary of performance on the module.

The method of assessing performance is by the following:

Assessed work	
Paper on Research Design and Ethics (30%)	1,500 words due Monday 23 rd November.
Research Proposal (70%) -	3,000 words. Due Monday 14 th December
You will receive your final grade by	16 January 2017

Detailed assignment briefs and marking grids will be issued later in the semester.

Teaching Schedule¹

Lectures/seminars or workshops are held weekly and are prescribed (see Programme Handbook). All students are expected to contribute to lectures and seminars. Lectures/workshops will be held at the following times:

Day/time/venue
Lectures
Friday 12.00-14.00 Pathfoot LT A96
Friday 30th October: mid semester reading week
Friday 7th November: no lecture (Brussels fieldtrip)
Seminars - Start Week 5 (Friday 16th October) 2 Groups
Friday 09.00-10.30 Pathfoot SC3/4
Friday 10.30-12.00 Pathfoot SC3/4

Teaching Schedule			
Wk	Date	Lectures Pathfoot LT A96 Friday, 12.00-14.00hrs	Seminars – 2 Groups PSC3/4 Friday 09.00-11.00 and 11.00-13.00
1	16 th Sept	Introduction (DH)	
2	23 rd Sept	Conceptual Frameworks and Research Questions. (DH)	
3	30 th Sept	Ethnography and Participant Observation (AJ)	
4	7 th Oct	Interviews and Focus Groups (AJ)	
5	14 th Oct	Qualitative Data Analysis(AJ)	Qualitative Data Gathering (AJ)
6	21 st Oct	The Politics and Ethics of Research (WD)	Qualitative Analysis (AJ)
7	30 th Oct	Reading Week	
8	4 th Nov	Fieldtrip (tbc)	
9	11 th Nov	Introduction to Quantitative Research (DH)	Putting together a Dissertation Proposal (WD)
10	18 th Nov	Quantitative Research 2 - Surveys (DH)	Quantitative Research (DH)
11	25 th Nov	Quantitative Research 3 - Content Analysis (DH)	Dissertation Clinic (DH)
12	2 nd Dec	Writing Up Your Research (TBA)	Dissertation Drop-In Sessions (DH)

DH Dr Derek Hodge, AJ Dr Alenka Jelen, WD – Dr Will Dinan

¹ Subject to change as/when required. Please check Succeed regularly for updates.

READING LIST

This course is organised around the discussion of issues and problems rather than articles or books, but the following reading list is an important first source for the development of your own ideas about research methods.

Recommended Purchases

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social Research Methods* (4th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Daymon, C. & Holloway, I. (2009). *Qualitative research methods in public relations and marketing communication*. (2nd ed) Taylor & Francis. Available as an E-book in the university library.

Punch, K. F. (2006). *Developing Effective Research Proposals* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Useful Books

Becker, H.S. (1998) *Tricks of the Trade: How to think about your research while you are doing it*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Berger, A. A. (1998). *Media Research Techniques* (2nd ed.). London: Sage.

Bertrand, I. & Hughes, P. (2004). *Media Research Methods*. London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Creswell, J. & Clark, V. (2007). *Designing and conducting mixed methods research*. London: Sage.

Deacon, D., Pickering, M., Golding, P. & Murdock, G. (2007). *Researching Communications: A Practical Guide to Methods in Media and Cultural Analysis* (2nd ed.). London: Arnold.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.). (2011). *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage.

Gubrium, J. F., & Holstein, J. A. (Eds.). (2001). *Handbook of Interview Research: Context and Methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Gubrium, J. F., Holstein, J. A., Marvasti, A. B., & McKinney, K. D. (Eds.) (2012). *The SAGE Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, London, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage.

Hart, C. (2005). *Doing your masters dissertation: Realizing your potential as a social scientist*. London: Sage.

Jensen, K. B. & Jankowski, N. W. (Eds.) (1991). *A Handbook of Qualitative Methodologies for Mass Communications Research*. London: Routledge

Kvale, S. & Brinkmann, S. (2009). *InterViews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, New Delhi, London, Singapore: Sage.

Liamputtong, P. (2011). *Focus Group Methodology: Principles and Practice*. London: Sage.

Mason, J. (2002). *Qualitative Researching (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Messenger-Davies, M. & Mosdell, N. (2006). *Practical Research Methods for Media & Cultural Studies: Making People Count*. Edinburgh: EUP.

Oliver, P. (2004) *The Student's Guide to Research Ethics*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Richards, L. (2005). *Handling Qualitative Data: A Practical Guide*. London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage.

Rubin, R. B., Rubin, A. M. & Piele, L. J. (1992). *Communication Research Strategies and Sources (3rd ed.)*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Saunders, M., Thornhill, A. & Lewis, P. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students (5th ed.)*. London: Prentice Hall.

Seale, C. (2004). *Researching Society and Culture (2nd ed.)*. London: Sage.

Silverman, D. (2010). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Practical Handbook (3rd ed.)*. London: Sage.

Silverman, D. (Ed.). (2011). *Qualitative Research: Issues of Theory, Method and Practice*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi: Sage.

Treadwell, D. (2014). *Introducing Communication Research: Paths of Inquiry (2nd ed.)*. Thousand Oaks, London: Sage.

Wimmer, R. D. & Dominick, J. R. (2006). *Mass Media Research: an Introduction (8th ed.)*. Belmont CA: Thomson Wadsworth.

Yin, R. K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods (4th ed.)*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Journal Articles

- Botan, C. & Soto, F. (1998). A semiotic approach to the internal functioning of publics: implications for strategic communication and public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 24(1), 21–44.
- Coombs, T. (1993). Philosophical underpinnings: ramifications of a pluralist paradigm. *Public Relations Review*, 19(2), 111–119.
- Curtin, P.A. (2012). Public relations and philosophy: Parsing paradigms. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 1(1), 31-47.
- Cutler, A. (2004). Methodical failure: the use of case study method by public relations researchers. *Public Relations Review*, 20, 365–375.
- Daymon, C. & Hodges, C. (2009). Researching the occupational culture of PR in Mexico. *Public Relations Review*, 35(4), 429–433.
- Duhé, S. (2015) An overview of new media research in public relations journals from 1981 to 2014. *Public Relations Review*, 41(2), 153-169
- Edwards, L. (2012). Defining the 'object' of public relations research: A new starting point. *Public Relations Inquiry*, 1(1), 7-30.
- Everett, J. L., & Johnston, K. A. (2012). Toward an ethnographic imperative in public relations research. *Public Relations Review*, 38(4), 522-528.
- Gower, K. (2006). Public relations research at the crossroads. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 18(2), 177–190.
- Hallahan, K. (1999). Seven models of framing: implications for public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 11(3): 205–242.
- Hallahan, K. (1999). The paradigm struggle and public relations practice. *Public Relations Review*, 19(2), 197–205.
- Holmstrom, S. (2005). Reframing public relations: the evolution of a reflective paradigm for organizational legitimation. *Public Relations Review*, 31(4), 497–504.
- Holtzhausen, D. (2002). Towards a postmodern research agenda for public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 28(3), 251–264.
- Meadows, C., & Meadows III, C. W. (2014). The history of academic research in public relations: Tracking research trends over nearly four decades. *Public Relations Review*, 40(5), 871-873.

- Olasky, M. (1989). The aborted debate within public relations: an approach through Kuhn's paradigm. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 1(1), 87–95.
- Pasadeos, Y., Berger, B., & Renfro, R.B. (2010). Public relations as a maturing discipline: an update on research networks. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 22(2), 136–158.
- Petelin, R. (2005). Editing from the edge: de-territorialising public relations scholarship. *Public Relations Review*, 31(4), 458–462.
- Pieczka, M. (2007). Case studies as narrative accounts of public relations practice. *Journal of Public Relations Research*, 19(4), 333–356.
- Sharpe, M. (2000). Developing a behavioral paradigm for the performance of public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 26(3), 345–361.
- Toth, E. (2002). Postmodernism for modernist public relations: the cash value and application of critical research in public relations. *Public Relations Review*, 28(3): 243–250.
- Xifra, J. & Castillo, A. (2006). Forty years of doctoral public relations research in Spain: a quantitative study of dissertation contribution to theory development. *Public Relations Review*, 32(3), 302–308.

Journals

Convergence: the International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies
International Journal of Qualitative Methods
Journal of Mixed Methods Research
Journal of Public Relations Research
Media, Culture & Society
Public Relations Inquiry
Public Relations Review
Qualitative Research Journal
The European Journal of Communication

Websites

www.ecrea.eu [Accessed: 2 September 2016]
EUPRERA – European Public Relations Education and Research Association. [online]. Available at: <http://www.euprera.org> [Accessed: 2 September 2016]
International Communication Association. [online]. Available at: www.icahdq.org [Accessed: 2 September 2016]
Institute for Public Relations [online]. Available at: <http://www.instituteforpr.org/> [Accessed: 2 September 2016]

A guide to using the Library can be found at:	http://www.stir.ac.uk/is/student/ .
Report missing library items at:	http://www.stir.ac.uk/is/student/library/about/borrowing/#missing

Submission Instructions

All assignments for this module must be submitted via the Turnitin facility on Succeed and any such copy will be run through plagiarism detection software. In case of technical difficulties, please email assignments to Jane Campbell (jane.campbell@stir.ac.uk) by the deadline.

Extensions: No extensions to deadlines will be granted unless there are extenuating circumstances. It is important to contact your module co-ordinator if you are having any difficulty in meeting a coursework submission deadline. Extenuating circumstances are explained at section 6.2. of the Code of Practice for the Assessment <http://www.stir.ac.uk/quality/academic-policy/assessment/> [Accessed September 5, 2016]. To request an extension please email the module co-ordinator before the deadline.

Late assignments: Assignments which are handed in late without the permission of the Coordinator will be subject to the deduction of marks. Students are responsible for ascertaining and meeting submission deadlines.

If a student fails to submit a piece of coursework on time, work will be accepted up to seven calendar days after the submission date (or expiry of any agreed extension) but the mark will be lowered by **3% per calendar day** or part thereof (including Saturday and Sunday).

After seven calendar days, the piece of work will be deemed a non-submission and will be given 0%. If the piece of work is compulsory, the student will be deemed to have failed the module, due to failure to comply with published requirements.

Word count: The assignments should not exceed the word count if one is given (word count does not include references, footnotes, endnotes, and bibliography). **You are required to provide a word count.** Students who exceed this limit by more than 10% may be awarded a lower grade.

Presentation of work: The assignments must be word-processed and double-spaced. **Please retain a copy of the assignment that you submit.**

Clarity and structure: Your grade on the assignments will take into account clarity and organisation as well as substantive content. You are encouraged to produce several

drafts of your assignment before turning in your final product for grading; editing and re-writing your early drafts will improve the organisation and conciseness of your assignment. The mark sheets that will be used in evaluating your assignments will be attached to the assignment briefs.

Bibliography & References: You will be expected to use the **APA 6th edition system of citation, and to prepare a bibliography**. There may be a **penalty** for failing to provide adequate citations to sources or failing to provide a bibliography, the magnitude of which will be at the discretion of the course coordinator. More information on APA system of citation can be found here: <http://www.apastyle.org> [Accessed September 5, 2016].

Plagiarism

It is generally understood why cheating in examinations is wrong: it is an attempt to gain undeserved credit by presenting the work of another as one's own. For the University not to treat cheating as an extremely serious offence would be unfair to its students and would jeopardise the standard of its awards. Exactly the same is true of coursework submitted for assessment. Plagiarism is the equivalent of cheating in an examination because it involves the reproduction of another's work, whether ideas, data or expressions, without due acknowledgement. This is plagiarism, whether the source is printed, electronic or handwritten, whether it is reproduced verbatim or is paraphrased, and whether it is drawn on extensively or in brief.

The University has an agreed policy setting out procedures and penalties for dealing with academic misconduct. This policy can be found at: <http://www.stir.ac.uk/academicpolicy/handbook/assessment/#q-8> [Accessed September 5, 2016] The policy also gives guidance on proper and adequate acknowledgement of source material, but if students are in any doubt at all about the nature of plagiarism, or the means by which to avoid it, students are strongly advised to consult their tutor. Students should clearly understand that it is their responsibility to be sure they understand these matters. Ignorance is not accepted as a defence for plagiarism.

Feedback

Obtaining feedback is an extremely important part of learning and educational and personal development. Students can receive personal, face-to-face feedback from the lecturers and tutors who assess their work during staff "office hours", which every member of staff schedules each week for this purpose. These office hours are drop-in sessions, and students are encouraged to use them. Written feedback on assessed work is also provided within the period set under University regulations. Students wishing more detailed feedback should **always** have face-to-face discussions with members of staff during their office hours. In addition, if a member of staff uses written feedback to ask a student to meet with them so that more detailed feedback can be provided, **it is**

recommended strongly that the student should make it a priority to do so.

Mark – what does my mark mean?

A Common Marking Scheme is used by all examining committees in the University. A copy of which is attached.

Mark	Equivalent Grade	Descriptor of Attainment of Learning Outcomes
90+	Distinction	Meets all the requirements to attain 80 – 89 but in addition demonstrates an exceptional degree of originality and exceptional analytical, problem-solving and/or creative skills.
80 - 89		Meets all the requirements to attain 70 – 79 but in addition demonstrates outstanding quality evidenced by an ability to engage critically and analytically with source material, exhibits independent lines of argument, is highly original and uses an extremely wide range of relevant sources where appropriate.
70 - 79		Excellent range and depth of attainment of intended learning outcomes, secured by discriminating command of a comprehensive range of relevant materials and analyses, and by deployment of considered judgement relating to key issues, concepts or procedures
60 - 69	Merit	Attainment of virtually all intended learning outcomes, clearly grounded on close familiarity with a wide range of supporting evidence, constructively utilised to reveal appreciable depth of understanding.
50 – 59	Pass	Attainment of most of the intended learning outcomes, some more securely grasped than others, resting on a circumscribed range of evidence and displaying a variable depth of understanding.
40 – 49	Fail -Marginal	Appreciable deficiencies in the attainment of intended learning outcomes, perhaps lacking a secure basis in relevant factual or analytical dimensions.
0 - 39	Fail -Clear	No convincing evidence of attainment of intended learning outcomes, such treatment of the subject as is in evidence being directionless and fragmentary.
X	Fail	Failure to comply with published module requirements

Absences

Compulsory/prescribed classes:

Where you are likely to miss a compulsory or prescribed class, you should use the self-certification form (you will find a link to this on the home page on the university portal)

for medical issues or inform the module coordinator for any other circumstances and seek approval as far in advance as possible.

Where prior approval is not possible (e.g. in event of illness or an emergency), taught students are expected to complete a self-certification form which is available via the portal.

Absences of less than 5 working days do not require supporting evidence and will normally be considered to be 'self-certified'. You are expected to report by completion of a self-certification form as soon as possible and to submit appropriate and relevant supporting documentation as described below. Where an absence is for medical reasons then a medical certificate from a British GP practice is required. Where an absence has occurred for non-medical reasons, students are expected to provide any relevant information/documentation in place of a medical certificate. Examples might include:

- A letter from a counsellor;
- Notification of death;
- Police report;
- Court citation.

Advice on whether the supporting documentation is sufficient can be obtained from Faculty Offices or Registry.

If you are required to include supporting evidence the documents should be submitted to Registry (2Z, Cottrell Building) in a sealed envelope marked 'sensitive information' along with details of the absence and your student ID number. Registry will inform the Faculty that evidence has been submitted.

Coursework: If you are unable to present for any assessed coursework you should contact your module co-ordinator as quickly as possible to discuss their options. If you are seeking an extension for submission of coursework, get the appropriate form from the Programme Administrator in Pathfoot A41 (sahgs@stir.ac.uk) fill it in and return it . as soon as possible This should be done **before** the date of submission. Please note that, if an extension is not granted penalties will apply for late submission of work.

Failing an Assessment

Unless otherwise indicated above, the overall mark for the module is calculated from the sum of weighted component marks, rounded to the nearest whole number and therefore a pass is not required in each component.

If however you fail the module, you will be given the opportunity to resit or resubmit the elements you failed or take a different assignment at the next diet or . Your module co-ordinator will advise you as necessary. Details of the regulations can be

found at:

<http://www.stir.ac.uk/regulations/postgraduate/assessmentandawardofcredit/>

[Accessed September 5, 2016]

Need help?

You can talk to the module co-ordinator or personal tutor. The Programme Handbook also has sections on Sources of Academic and Technical Information Support which gives details on Student Programmes. It also provides details of sources of personal information and support, including information for students with disabilities.

Email calming policy

Please note that CMC operates an email calming policy and staff do not respond to email outside of the hours 7am-7pm Monday-Friday. We will try to respond to emails within 3 working days wherever possible. Do remember that all staff also have office hours when they are available for consultation by phone or in person.

Listening to your views

We are keen to work with you to ensure that we continue to improve and enhance the student experience while maintaining an academically rigorous and challenging programme of study. Ways to give us feedback:

Your Module Co - coordinator	Details above
Student Staff Consultative Committee	Date to be confirmed
Your Student Representative	To be elected at the start of semester
The Student Faculty Officer	TBC
The Module Evaluation Questionnaire	This is issued towards the end of each module

All of our modules are reviewed each year and student feedback from last year has been taken into account in reviewing this module. The timed assignment moved from written closed-book to computer-based open-book form of assessment and academic paper presentations are now a part of the assessment. The content of the module has also been updated and rearranged in line with student feedback.