



## Research Methods Course Descriptor

---

Course Title	Research Methods	Faculty	Politics & IR
Course code	NCHPIR779	Course Leader	Dr Pablo Calderon-Martinez
Credit points	15	Teaching Period	Either
FHEQ level	7	Date approved	January 2021
Compulsory/ Optional	Compulsory		
Pre-requisites	None		
Co-requisites	None		

### COURSE SUMMARY

This course is aimed at developing the student's ability in researching and writing up a high-quality dissertation (Extended Dissertation, 60 credits). The course focuses on research methods. Students will engage in specific research problems as part of it.

### COURSE AIMS

Students will participate in a research methods course, the aim of which is to develop specific methodological skills, focused on independent research in Political Science and International Relations, so as:

- To introduce students to complex research method frameworks within digital politics, sustainable development, security studies and other relevant disciplines.
- To encourage students to think reflectively and critically about the arguments presented in the texts.
- To understand some of the ways in which specific events may be compared across time.
- To develop frameworks within which to enrich our understanding of contemporary global politics through analyses.
- To introduce students to research methods with which they will pursue their own independent research.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

On successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

### KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

- K1d Demonstrate a systematic knowledge of research methods relating to the themes of digital politics, sustainability and security studies.
- K2d Situate these themes within complex theoretical issues surrounding digital politics, sustainability and security studies.
- K3d Demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the key theories and methods utilised to analyse and understand the critical relationships between digital politics, sustainability and security studies.

### SUBJECT SPECIFIC SKILLS

- S1d Critically appraise the ways in which the theoretical cornerstones of this course intersect with and help to inform the core issues outlined in the other courses on the programme.
- S2d Be able to critically analyse the evolution of different theories and methods in the fields of digital politics, sustainability and security studies.
- S3d Develop a comprehensive understanding of the frameworks within which scholars approach concepts in the relevant disciplines.

### TRANSFERABLE AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

- T1d Synthesize and analyse large amounts of information from different disciplinary and methodological perspectives related to the fields of digital politics, sustainability and security studies.
- T2d Gain an appreciation for interdisciplinary collaboration.
- T3d Contributed towards a permissive learning environment in which students are encouraged to formulate and debate ideas on research methods and frameworks.
- T4d Consistently apply an excellent level of technical proficiency in written English, using an advanced application of scholarly terminology, that demonstrates the ability to deal with complex issues both systematically and with sophistication.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching and learning strategies for this course will include:

- Full-cohort lectures
- Full-cohort seminars
- Office hours

Course information and supplementary materials are available on the College's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

Students are required to attend and participate in all the formal and timetabled sessions for this course. Students are also expected to manage their directed learning and independent study in support of the course.

### EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS

- Work independently, creatively, and to deadlines
- Conduct independent research and explore relevant existing knowledge
- Analyse, contextualise, and interpret complex policy issues and multiple sources of evidence
- Synthesise and evaluate information against a backdrop of uncertainty
- Develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills

### ASSESSMENT

#### FORMATIVE

Students will be formatively assessed during the course by means of set assignments. These do not count towards the end of year results, but will provide students with developmental feedback, for example projects and short research pieces.

#### SUMMATIVE

AE:	Assessment Activity	Weighting (%)	Online submission	Duration	Length
1	Dissertation proposal	100%	yes		5,000 words

### FEEDBACK

Students will receive formal feedback in a variety of ways: written (including via email correspondence); oral (e.g. on an *ad hoc* basis) and indirectly through discussion during group tutorials/seminars. Students will also attend the formal meeting, Collections, in which they will receive constructive and developmental feedback on their performance.

Feedback is provided on summative assessment and is made available to the student either via email, the VLE or another appropriate method.

### INDICATIVE READING

Note: Comprehensive and current reading lists for courses are produced annually in the Course Syllabus or other documentation provided to students; the indicative reading list provided below is used as part of the approval/modification process only.

#### BOOKS

Ackerly, B. A., Stern, M., & True, J. (eds.) (2006), *Feminist methodologies for international relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

Franklin, A., & Blyton, P. (eds.) (2013), *Researching sustainability: a guide to social science methods, practice and engagement* (London: Routledge).

Landman, T. (2008) *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: An Introduction* (London: Routledge).

Marsh, D. and Stoker, G. (2010) *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan).

## **JOURNALS**

West European Politics

European Journal of Political Research

European Journal of International Relations

Comparative Political Studies

American Political Science Review

British Journal of Political Science.

British Journal of Politics and International Relations

Journal of Common Market Studies

Nations and Nationalism

Democratization

Political Science Research and Methods

International Journal of Social Research Methodology: Theory and Practice

## **ELECTRONIC RESOURCES**

Foundations of political theory, organised by APSA

Available from: [www.political-theory.org/](http://www.political-theory.org/)

UN-DESA. (n.d.) Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform. [Online]. Division for Sustainable Development (DSD), United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA).

Available from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/>

APSA'S QUALITATIVE AND MULTI-METHOD RESEARCH SECTION

Available from: [https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/cqrm/APSA\\_s\\_Qualitative\\_and\\_Multi-Method\\_Research\\_Section/](https://www.maxwell.syr.edu/moynihan/cqrm/APSA_s_Qualitative_and_Multi-Method_Research_Section/)

UNDP Library

Available from: <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage.html>

---

<b>Title: NCHPIR779 Research Methods</b>					
<b>Approved by: Academic Board</b>					
<b>Location: Academic Handbook/Programme specifications and Handbooks/ Postgraduate Programme Specifications/MSc Digital Politics and Sustainable Development Specification/Course Descriptors</b>					
Version number	Date approved	Date published	Owner	Proposed next review date	Modification (As per AQF4) & category number
2.0	February 2022	May 2022	Dr Pablo Calderon-Martinez	January 2026	Category 3: Changes to Learning Outcomes
1.0	January 2021	May 2021	Dr Pablo Calderon-Martinez	January 2026	