In partnership with CAPA International Education

Research Methods: Directed Research Project

COURSE DESIGNATOR: LNDN 3650  
NUMBER OF CREDITS: 3  
LANGUAGE OF INSTRUCTION: English  
CONTACT HOURS: 42

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides undergraduate students with the opportunity to undertake a research project in the context of their international education experience. Students opting for this course will be guided towards opportunities recommended by CAPA and determined by local resources and expertise. In most cases, CAPA will define potential projects generated by senior academic staff and faculty on site and suggest relevant sources: students will apply to do those projects. This would not preclude student proposals or projects suggested by home universities for individual or group study. Students will be introduced to core research concepts and will develop research skills through designing, executing, writing, and presenting their own research project within frameworks designed by CAPA. The topics that students will explore will be consistent with their majors and their own individual interests but will exploit the overseas experience.

A variety of research methods employed in geographical, historical, political, sociological, cultural studies, and digital humanities will be introduced that may be applied to multidisciplinary topics, including qualitative and quantitative methods as well as mixed methods research as appropriate to students’ research themes. In collaboration with their instructor, students will develop appropriate research methodologies that will engage with a range of local sources, as well as online resources. These will include archival documents such as official records, maps, and personal accounts as well as basic ethnographic techniques such as questionnaires, interviews, and oral histories. Students will also be introduced to contemporary social investigation and the use of artistic/fictional representations of place and environment, and the use of photographs and other multimedia sources as tools for analysis.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The very essence of international education is that of learning through experience, that is, learning by doing, observing, and reflecting. This course aims to enhance the student learning experience abroad by emphasizing independent learning and thinking, decision-making, and problem solving, through an in-depth engagement with local issues and topics of current concern. The course is designed for students contemplating postgraduate study or a career in fields which will involve research and analysis. In addition to providing the opportunity to undertake a research project and develop or enhance (depending on prior knowledge) their understanding of the fundamentals of research, the course aims to stimulate in-depth critical enquiry into the chosen thematic area. The course aims to give students a basic familiarity with key concepts and theories of fieldwork and methodologies in social, historical, and cultural analysis; practical experience using quantitative and qualitative research methods and fieldwork techniques in constructing their own research projects, using a variety of sources; and improved analytical, essay-writing, and problem-solving skills.

Students should demonstrate: responsibility and accountability, independence and interdependence, goal orientation, self-confidence, resilience, and appreciation of differences.

At the end of this course, students will have the skills and knowledge to:

• Complete a research project, under supervision
• Exhibit a basic working knowledge of research skills, including those required for research design, execution, and report writing
• Demonstrate decision-making and problem solving skills associated with conducting independent research
• Speak clearly and confidently about their own research
• Gain expertise in a particular topic within their field of study
• Write in an appropriate formal register for academic work
METHODOLOGY

This course blends seminars and practical workshops with experiential learning through guided and independent field research. Students will have the opportunity to discuss their research and receive guidance on appropriate literature review, sources, and the analysis and write-up of their own research project. Learning outcomes will be evaluated through project consultation, preparation and discussion, a research proposal, final research essay, and research presentation. Scheduled classes will introduce key theoretical and methodological perspectives, introducing an aspect of the research process and applying this content to student projects. On successful completion of this segment of the course, each student will meet the instructor in scheduled tutorial hours to discuss choice of project, research and writing progress. At the end of the semester, a colloquium will take place at which students will present and discuss their research projects as posters and/or papers. Students must be self-motivated and organized in order successfully to complete this class, although close guidance in topic selection, research methodologies, and write-up will be provided by the instructor.

Independent research projects might include thematic foci in globalization, urbanization, social dynamics and diversity, such as the history of philanthropy in London’s East End; comparative studies in global health; the development of the medical marketplace in Bloomsbury; comparative studies in education: pedagogy, classroom management, curriculum studies; topics in human and civil rights; intersectionality of class, gender, sexuality, and ethnicity in urban communities, such as postcolonialism and national identity; metropolarities and LGBTQ communities; commuting and the housing market; homelessness in cities; as well as studies of the interplay of the built and social environments of the city: such as urban change and social identities or dynamics of urban decline and regeneration: topics might include the expansion of the ‘City’, waterfront redevelopment on the Thames; social polarization and gentrification; landscapes of privilege and exclusion; multiculturalism and the development of immigrant communities; impacts of global tourism, place-marketing strategies and the consumption of ‘place’; heritage management and cultural industries; historic buildings and the politics of heritage, nostalgia and preservationism; local museums and community memory and identity; environmental change, sustainability and conservation; environmental activism; voting behaviour and political protest.

*These examples are not intended to be prescriptive, but represent a very selective sample of potential project foci.*

FIELD COMPONENTS

CAPA provides the unique opportunity to learn about the city through direct, guided experience. Participation in fieldwork activities and research for this course is required. Students will actively explore the Global City in which they are currently living. Furthermore, they will have the chance to collect useful information that will be an invaluable resource for the essays/papers/projects assigned in this course.

The assigned field component(s) are:

Initial field studies will be made to observe and practice research strategies, for example at selected local archives, and pilot key fieldwork techniques as indicated in the class schedule below.

Students are also strongly encouraged to participate in co-curricular program activities. See the termly *MyGlobalEd* schedule.

COURSE PREREQUISITES

This course is open to all students in the CAPA London Program. It will be of interest to students in both the humanities and social sciences, including geography, sociology, economics, political science, anthropology, history, art history, and cultural and area studies, particularly those contemplating a career in historical or contemporary social research.

REQUIRED READINGS/ MATERIALS

REQUIRED READING


RECOMMENDED READINGS


Axel, B.K., ed. (2002): From the Margins: Historical Anthropology and Its Futures, Duke UP, Durham, NC


Judah, B. (2016): This Is London: Life and Death in the World City, London, Picador


Taylor, C. (2011): Londoners, Granta Cambridge,


SELECTED WEB RESOURCES

BBC Online London Archive: http://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcfour/collections/p00synd3/london

London Mapper: http://www.londonmapper.org.uk/ a social atlas of London

London Metropolitan Archives: https://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/things-to-do/london-metropolitan-archives/Pages/default.aspx

Museum of London website: http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/

National Archives, Kew, London http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/


Research Methods Knowledge Base http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php

The National Art Library, London http://www.vam.ac.uk/nal/


# Grading Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.</td>
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## Summary of How Grades are Weighted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation/small group discussion</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oral presentation of research (week 12)</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research record (bi-weekly)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final research project</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research proposal and literature review (week 4)</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Research paper (week 14)</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
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</tbody>
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## Assessment Details

### Class Participation/Small Group Discussion (20%)

Initial scheduled classes will introduce key theoretical and methodological perspectives. Active participation in these seminars, workshops, and field studies is an expected component of the course and will enhance students’ understanding of the material for their research projects, paper, and presentation. Classroom sessions and field studies encourage discussion based on students’ observations as well as insights from course materials. Students are expected to have completed the readings prior to each class and to contribute to discussion in an informed manner through relevant comments, questions, and analysis. Silent attendance of class will not result in a strong participation grade. It is students’ responsibility to ensure on the day that they are included on the register for classes and field studies. Tutorial sessions will focus on students’ specific research projects. Students should come prepared to each of these meetings, ready to discuss progress, findings, and emerging conclusions from data analysis. The precise content of these tutorials will vary depending on where a student is in the project cycle; however, the meeting is for the student’s benefit, which will depend on the level of preparation. Students should proactively advise their instructor of areas where they would like some guidance.
In addition to workshops and consultation time, it is expected that students will spend on average 1.5–2 days per week on this project undertaking and writing up their research.

PRESENTATION (15%)
Dissemination is a critical component of any research. Students will present their individual projects and be subject to questions from staff, faculty and students. This will be a presentation of 10–12 minutes based on the research essay, plus five minutes allowed for questions from attending CAPA faculty, staff and students. This will be conducted as a mini research conference or colloquium. Grading is based on clarity of presentation, structure, depth of analysis and use of visual materials (where appropriate). Students will have the opportunity to incorporate feedback and suggestions into their final project write-up.

RESEARCH RECORD (25%)
Students will complete a research record as they progress through the course and their project, which will be submitted online via Canvas bi-weekly (500 words per entry). This assessment tool is meant to record the student’s reasoning with regard to decisions made and challenges overcome and will demonstrate the student’s understanding of the core concepts of research, as well as form the basis for scheduled tutorial discussions.

FINAL RESEARCH PROJECT (40%)

a) Proposal and Literature Review: Due week 4 (10%)
Students will write a research proposal for approval. Students will be provided a proposal guide, setting out all the required components of the proposal. The research proposal should firstly set out the research topic, the purpose and objectives of the research, key research questions, the role of theory, methodology (approach to analysis), proposed research methods and tools, and draft outline of the final research paper (major sections/headings). In addition, the proposal should contain a brief review of the literature relating to the research topic and situate the research in relation to the existing literature. A minimum of ten academic sources should be employed here.

b) Final written report (5,000 words): Due week 14 (30%)
The research essay will contain a detailed discussion and analysis of the research data. In addition, the conclusion will be a substantive section which addresses the research questions with clear, well-argued answers. Students will be provided with a guide and a “research rubric.” The report guide will assist students in organizing their written report and laying out the required sections. A rubric will present the expectations for grading (e.g., number/type of references used, originality of research question, chain of evidence).

ASSIGNMENTS POLICY
Students must complete all required components by the established deadlines. Late submission will incur a 5% per day penalty without the instructor’s prior approval of extension and may result in a grade of F for the course. If all work is not submitted by the end of the program, students will receive an F for the course.

COURSE CONTENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction to the course; topic structure. Introduction to research design. Initial discussion of research topic and questions; preparation for individual tutorials. Doing fieldwork; the politics and ethics of research in historical, cultural and social studies; issues of reflexivity and subjectivity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reading:
Independent work:
Draft research design

WEEK 2: RESEARCH ETHICS AND METHODS

Workshop: Writing a research proposal. Research ethics, data collection methods (selected based on student project needs), and tools; developing a strategy and suitable instruments for dealing with any ethical issues. Role and purpose of literature review. Evaluating the quality of sources of information: web resources, scholarly journals, government reports, and books. Searching on databases: limiting the field with keywords and using Boolean searches

Reading:

WEEK 3: USING TEXTS AND ARCHIVES

Workshop: Using newspapers; letters and diaries. Coping with archival and textual data

Reading:

WEEK 4: ORAL HISTORY AND SOCIAL INVESTIGATION

Workshop: research project progress; representing research, handling case studies and creating a final text. Using subjective histories; structured and semi-structured interviews and focus groups; polyphony and authority
Guest Speaker: TBD

Reading:

Proposal and Literature Review due in class
WEEK 5: USING IMAGES: ART, PHOTOGRAPHS, FILMS

Workshop: Making sense of representations; iconography and symbolism; visual narratives and media; practicing visual methodologies – field workshop.

Reading:

WEEK 6: DIGITAL HUMANITIES

Workshop: In this session we will explore different approaches in the digital humanities, including digitization, data and text mining, spatial analysis and network analysis. We'll discuss how these approaches might enhance the research projects students are developing and students will practice some simple digital humanities techniques.

Reading:

WEEK 7: WRITING UP RESEARCH

Workshop: Different writing styles for presenting qualitative research; find your own voice; the process of writing up. Drawing conclusions and differentiating between findings and conclusions. Making recommendations for action or further research. Students will do some writing exercises based on their research using different styles and will also bring a sample of their writing to class for discussion and feedback. Citations and references.

Reading:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>MID-TERM BREAK – NO CLASS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9-11</td>
<td>INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Scheduled weekly meetings with instructor). Students should be prepared to discuss their analysis and, if possible, tentative conclusions. The instructor will discuss the work with the student, test out the rigour of their analysis and suggest strategies for strengthening the analysis and conclusions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>INDEPENDENT RESEARCH PROJECTS: RESEARCH COLLOQUIUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students present their ongoing research findings, analysis and conclusions and are examined orally by faculty and staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13-14</td>
<td>INDEPENDENT WORK AND CONSULTATIONS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Final tutorials; research paper due Week 14.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the onsite syllabus for specific class requirements.

**UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

**SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:**

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.
STUDENT CONDUCT:

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.