



International Research Course

Introduction to research and case studies is a three-credit course, designed for undergraduate students in the social sciences, business studies, and the humanities. Students will be introduced to core research concepts and will develop research skills through designing, executing, writing, and presenting their own research project. The framework for the project will be the case study. The case study approach provides a focused way for students to view a phenomenon and to apply a set of methods, including ethnographic observation, in-depth interviewing, and document review. The case study is applicable across many fields and topic areas and pays particular attention to the context in which the phenomenon in question operates. The topics that students will explore will be consistent with their own individual interests but will exploit the overseas experience. Topics will centre on British cultural, historical, political, or contemporary contexts and may have a comparative dimension.

Rationale

The very essence of study abroad is that of learning through experience, that is, learning by doing, observing, and reflecting. Hence, the involvement of an undergraduate study abroad student in an individual research project is a means of enhancing their academic programme while abroad, emphasising independent learning and thinking, decision-making, and problem solving, as well as engagement in the host culture and community. It will provide students a sense of ownership over their academic work, requiring students to justify their thought processes and actions over the course of the project. At the same time, the foundation in the tools of research will benefit students as they undertake their undergraduate thesis, graduate studies, or as they move into the world of work.

Objectives

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

- 1) Exhibit basic research skills, including those required for research design, execution, and report writing
- 2) Demonstrate decision-making and problem solving skills associated with conducting independent research
- 3) Speak clearly and confidently about their own research
- 4) Gain expertise of a particular topic within their field of study

Method

Conducting research, unlike some other forms of learning, is highly individual and can be very challenging. However, despite the individual nature of much of the research process, it is critical that students have a firm foundation in the basic concepts and tools of research. Further, the research process is enriched by the feedback provided by fellow students and small group approaches can emulate the 'real world' in which researchers often work in teams or seek insights from colleagues. Hence, the course will employ some lecture and discussion of readings and examples of research at the early stages, and as students begin to design and carry out their research, some small group class activities will allow students to talk through experiences and challenges of the research. Third, individual tutorials will provide individual support and advice for students as they move through the project.

Materials

Students need exposure to examples of real research to guide them in their understanding of the research process. Varied examples of research, across methods and fields will be employed in the classroom. Further, sample topics and research questions will be presented and discussed. Readings will be assigned in the early stages of the course. A sample bibliography is attached from which the readings might be selected.

Assessment

- 1) (30%) Research record: Students will complete a research record as they progress through the course and their project. 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. This will be a guided process in which student will be asked a set of key questions to reflect upon as they make record entries. (Examples: *How did you arrive at your research question? What is it that you really want to know by the end of the research? At the _____ stage of the project, what did you find the most challenging? Why, and how did you overcome it? Choose a segment of data that you have analysed. Describe the mental process you went through in analysing this data).*
- 2) (40%) Research project
 - a. Proposal: Students will write a research proposal for approval. Students will be provided a proposal guide, setting out all the required components of the proposal.
 - b. Final written report: Students will be provided a guide and a 'research rubric'. The report guide will assist students in organising their written report, 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)
- 3) (15%) Presentation: Dissemination is a critical component of any research. Students will present their individual projects and be subject to questions from staff and students. This will be conducted as a mini research conference.
- 4) (15%) Attendance

Topics/Sessions

- 1: **Introduction to the course**
Basic concepts and terminology
 - What is research? What is *academic* research?
 - Do journalism and research differ?
 - Epistemology: examining positivism and post-positivism
 - Research ethics: the use of human subjects**Different types of research**
 - Quantitative and qualitative research
 - Research as argument
 - Using the case study approach: what is a case? Setting boundaries and level of analysis
 - Methodology within the case study approach: general qualitative methods, ethnography, life history, market research, action research and evaluation
- 2: **The research question and the literature search and review**
 - Identifying a topic area and researchable and answerable research question (or questions): thinking *small!*

- Using the literature review to identify a question and to develop the conceptual framework
 - Evaluating the quality of sources of information: web resources, scholarly journals, government reports, and books.
 - The literature search: what materials are available and how to access them.
 - Formatting references and citations
 - Searching on databases: limiting the field with keywords and using Boolean searches
- 3: **Research design**
- Theory & the conceptual framework
 - Validity/Reliability: differences between qualitative and quantitative forms
 - Writing a research proposal
- Research pitfalls**
- Gaining access to data and limiting the scope of the project: identifying key informants, documentary evidence, and observational situations.
 - The researcher as research tool: Hawthorne effect, halo effect and bias
 - Review of ethics: how does it apply to the chosen topics and approaches?
- 4: **Data & data collection**
- Types of data: identifying data to be collected and aiming for triangulation of evidence
- Observation
 - Documents
 - Interviews
 - Secondary statistical data
- 5: **Data analysis**
- Research as a deductive and inductive process
 - Coding data: category construction, constant comparative method and ethnographic analysis
 - Interpreting coded data and determining findings
- 6: **Report construction & writing**
- Organising your report: required sections
 - Using an appropriate writing style
 - Drawing conclusions and differentiating between findings and conclusions
 - Making recommendations for action or further research

Internet Resources

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.htm>

Council on Undergraduate Research: www.cur.org

<http://www.socsciresearch.com/>

<http://library.furman.edu/resources/subject/human/humanities.htm>

Required Readings

Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Case study research in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

- Robson, C. (1993). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Additional Resources

- Alasuutari, P. (1998). *An invitation to social research*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. J. (1975). *Introduction to qualitative research methods: A phenomenological approach to the social sciences*. London: Wiley-Interscience.
- Bryman, A., & Burgess, R. G. (1994). Developments in qualitative data analysis: An introduction. In A. Bryman & R. G. Burgess (Eds.), *Analyzing qualitative data*. London: Routledge.
- Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative & quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Denzin, N. (1984). *The research act*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Emmison, M., & Smith, P. (2000). *Researching the visual: Images, objects, contexts and interactions in social and cultural inquiry*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Gall, M. D., Borg, W. R., & Gall, J. P. (1996). *Educational research: An introduction* (6th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman Publishers.
- Gibbs, G. R. (2002). *Qualitative data analysis*. Buckingham, UK: Open University Press.
- Gillham, B. (2000). *Case Study Research Methods*. London: Continuum.
- Goulding, C. (2002). *Grounded theory: A practical guide for management, business and market researchers*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Hamel, J., Dufour, S., & Fortin, D. (1993). *Case study methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Hammersley, M. (1998) *Reading Ethnographic Research*, Second Edition, Longman.
- Hobbs, D. & May, T. (Eds) (1993) *Interpreting the Field: Accounts of Ethnography*, Oxford University Press.
- Kools, S., McCarthy, M., Durham, R., & Robrecht, L. (1996). Dimensional analysis: Broadening the concept of grounded theory. *Qualitative Health Research*, 6(3), 312-330.
- McNeil, R. (2005). *Business to Business Market Research: Understanding and Measuring Business Markets*. London: Kogan Page.
- Merriam, S. B. (1998). *Case study research in education*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Prosser, J., & Schwartz, D. (1998). Photographs within the sociological research process. In J. Prosser (Ed.), *Image-based research: A sourcebook for qualitative researchers*. London: RoutledgeFalmer.
- Richards, L. (2000). *Using NVivo in qualitative research* (2nd ed.). Doncaster, Victoria: Australia: QSR International Pty. Ltd.
- Robrecht, L. (1995). Grounded theory: Evolving methods. *Qualitative Health Research*, 5(2), 169-178.
- Robson, C. (1993). *Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.
- Silverman, D. (1993). *Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Silverman, D. (2000). *Doing qualitative research: A practical handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

- Strauss, A., & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Taylor, S. (Ed) (2001) *Ethnographic Research. A Reader*, Sage.
- Tesch, R. (1990). *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. Bristol, PA: The Falmer Press.
- Travers, M. (2001). *Qualitative research through case studies*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Wengraf, T. (2001). *Qualitative research interviewing: Biographic narrative and semi-structured methods*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.
- Wilson, A. (2003). *Marketing Research: An Integrated Approach*. Pearson Education.
- Yin, R. K. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Research Area: Politics

British and American politics are often regarded as very similar. However, in reality there are a number of notable features of British politics that are unfamiliar to American students. These include the existence of an unwritten constitution, a hereditary monarchy, the question of devolution (akin to the concept of states rights in the US constitution), and Britain's relations with the European Union (EU). These are the sort of issues that are commonly found in leading academic journals in the field.

There are, therefore, several aspects of British politics that could be examined by a student who is new to the subject. These include:

- Public attitudes towards the EU
- The future of the House of Lords
- Electoral reform

Given that students will have access to the Birkbeck library they will be able to utilise a wide range of textbooks, academic journals along with electronic sources. Below you will find a list of articles from several academic journals that students would be expected to employ during the course of their research.

In terms of research methods, besides, qualitative methods, students could make use of other research methods such as interviews and the conduct of limited surveys.

Barker, David, 'Britain and Europe: The Argument Continues', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 54, 2001, pp. 276-288.

Barker, David, Britain and Europe: Treading Water or Slowly Drowning, Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 56, 2003, pp. 257-275

Barnett, Anthony, 'The Constitutional Crisis and the Monarchy', Politics Review, Vol. 5, No. 1, September 1995, pp. 1-4.

Bogdanor, Vernon, 'Devolution: Decentralisation or Disintegration?', The Political Quarterly, Vol. 70, No. 2, April-June 1999, pp. 185-194.

Bogdanor, Vernon, 'Reform of the House of Lords: A Sceptical View', The Political Quarterly, Vol. 74/ 4, October-December 1999, pp. 375-381.

Bogdanor, Vernon, 'The Constitution and the party System in the Twentieth Century', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 57/4, 2004, pp. 717-733.

Bradbury, Jonathan and James Mitchell, 'Devolution: New Politics for Old?', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 54, 2001, pp. 257-275.

Byrne, Iain and Stuart Weir, 'Democratic Audit: Executive Democracy in War and Peace', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 57/2, 2004, pp. 453-468.

Cowley, Philip, 'The Commons: Mr Blair's Lapdog', Parliamentary Affairs, 54 (2001), pp. 815-828.

Crowe, Brian, 'A common European foreign policy after Iraq?', International Affairs, 79, 3 (2003), pp. 533-546.

Danchev, Alex, 'On Specialness', International Affairs, 72, 4 (1996), pp. 737-750.

Danchev, Alex, 'On friendship: Anglo-American Relations at fin siecle', International Affairs, 73, 4 (1997), pp. 747-759

Donnelly, Katy, 'Parliamentary Reform: Paving the Way for Constitutional Change', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 50, 1997, pp. 246-262.

Dunne, Tim, 'When the Shooting Starts: Atlanticism in British Security Strategy', International Affairs, 80, 5 (2004), pp. 893-909.

Flinders, Matthew, 'Shifting the Balance? Parliament, the Executive and the British Constitution', Political Studies, 50, 2002, pp. 23-42.

Grant, Alan, 'Party and Election Finance in Britain and America: A Comparative Analysis', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 58/1, 2005, pp. 71-88.

Hazell, Robert, 'Labour's Constitutional Revolution', Politics Review, November 1999, pp. 2-5.

Hazell, Robert, 'Reforming the Constitution', The Political Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 1, January-March 2001, pp. 39-49.

Hazell, Robert, Meg Russell, Jeremy Croft, Ben Seyd and Roger Masterman, 'The Constitution: Rolling out the New Settlement' Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 54, 2001, pp. 190-205.

Hazell, Robert, Meg Russell, Jeremy Croft, Ben Seyd and Roger Masterman, 'The Constitution: Consolidation and Cautious Advance', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 56, pp. 157-169.

Heffernan, Richard, 'Why the Prime Minister cannot be a President: Comparing Constitutional Imperatives in Britain and America', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 58/1, 2005, pp. 53-70.

Hennessy, Peter, The Hidden Wiring (London: Victor Gollancz, 1995).

Hennessy, Peter, The Prime Minister: The Office and its Holders since 1956 (London: Allen Lane Press/Penguin, 2001).

Hennessy, Peter, 'Rulers and Servants of the State: The Blair Style of Government 1997-2004'. Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 58/1, 2005, pp. 6-16.

Hennessy, Peter, 'Informality and Circumspection: the Blair Style of Government', The Political Quarterly, 2005, pp. 3-11.

Jones, Erik, 'Debating the Transatlantic Relationship: Rhetoric and Reality', International Affairs, 80, 4 (2004), pp. 595-612.

Kellner, Peter, 'Britain's Culture of Detachment', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 57/4, 2004, pp. 830-843.

Prince, Sue, 'The Law and Politics: Upsetting the Judicial Apple-Cart', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 57/2, 2004, pp. 288-300.

Riddell, Peter, 'Prime Ministers and Parliament', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 57/4, 2004, pp. 814-829.

Seaton, Janet and Barry K. Winetrobe, 'Modernising the Commons', The Political Quarterly, Vol. 70/2, April-June 1999, pp. 152-160.

Shaw, Malcolm, 'The British Parliament in International Perspective', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 57/4, 2004, pp. 877-889.

Smith, Julie, 'A Missed Opportunity? New Labour's European Policy 1997-2005', International Affairs, 81, 4 (2005), pp. 703-721.

Stephens, Philip, 'The Blair Government and Europe', The Political Quarterly, Vol. 72, No. 1, January-March 2001, pp. 67-75.

Theakston, Kevin, 'Prime Minister's and the Constitution: Attlee to Blair', Parliamentary Affairs, Vol. 58/1, 2005, pp. 17-37.

Wallace, William, 'The Collapse of British Foreign Policy'. International Affairs, 82, 1 (2005), pp. 53-68.

Williams, Paul, 'Who's Making British Foreign Policy', International Affairs, Vol. 80, No. 5 (2004), pp. 909-929.

Research Area: Performing Arts

The term *performing arts* has historically referred to the four disciplines of theatre, music (usually classical music), opera and dance. In recent years, a broader definition has emerged that encompasses any art form requiring live performance. This includes avant-garde performance-art as well as entertainment-orientated mediums such as comedy, magic and marching bands. Fundamentally, the performing arts are distinguished from other art forms such as literature and sculpture, in that they are time-based and typically require performers to bring work into being.

Within the performing arts, research by specialists for an academic context generally deals with artistic and aesthetic issues pertaining to the given art form. The performing arts, however, are often the subject of study by scholars from other fields. This is reflected in the two possible topics presented below. The first relates to economics and government policy, and the second to marketing and sociology.

Below is a list of general sources of information about music. In the text for each topic, you can use the terms that are underlined to search books, scholarly journals and search engines on the Internet.

- Music dictionaries.
- The Grove Encyclopedia of Music
- Wikipedia web encyclopedia
- Roger Scruton, *The Aesthetics of Music* (Oxford University Press)
- Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford University Press)
- General popular music magazines: New Music Express, The Observer newspaper's monthly Music Magazine, Q, Mojo, and Kerrang.
- Specialist popular music magazines: The Wire (experimental), RWD Magazine (hip hop, garage, rap), F Roots Magazine (world and folk music).
- Classical Music journals / magazines: The Musical Times, BBC Music Magazine, and Gramophone.

TOPIC 1: Should the state contribute funding for the arts?

In the USA, arts organisations operate (with the benefit of a long history of endowments) almost entirely in the private sector. In Britain, a mixture of private and government subsidies fund the performing arts; contributions from private benefactors are less prevalent. Since 1994, the government has primarily supported the arts through revenue raised by the National Lottery. Examples of heavily state subsidised organisations are The Royal Opera and Ballet at Covent Garden and London's South Bank Centre, which includes three theatres and three concert halls. The training of performing artists reflects the same situation: in the USA artists usually attend privately funded institutions, whereas in the UK the state significantly contributes to the funding of schools such as the Royal Academy of Music, The Royal Ballet School and the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art.

For this topic you will research by what means and to what degree the performing-arts are funded by state revenue in Britain. Secondly, you will examine debate on the issue, for example, considering questions such as would innovative art survive without state assistance, and, is it right for government to support the arts when that money could help people living in poverty? You should also look at the relevant policies of the Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat political parties. For a different perspective on these issues, you may like to examine "Project One", a component of Roosevelt's New Deal in 1930s America that promoted the arts, although with an agenda that advocated regionalism, socialist realism and proletarian interpretations.

As an outcome of your research, you will then devise a questionnaire, which will function as the case study of your paper. The questionnaire should ask Londoners a series of questions that examines levels of awareness and attitudes towards the state's funding of the arts.

TOPIC 2: In contemporary Britain, how do people discover and obtain music?

The rise of the Internet has changed the way people discover and obtain music. One can listen to radio stations all over the world, websites and blogs allow people to share information and opinion, and perhaps most significantly, music can be downloaded (both legally and illegally). The related rise of MP3 players such as the IPOD has also changed the way people listen and share music.

For this topic you should first research the London music industry to understand the network of relationships between the major radio stations, music stores, music press, promoters and venues. Secondly, you should examine the phenomena of trends, that is, how things become popular. This is relevant here in two ways: first, how new technologies such as the IPOD enter the mainstream (many new technologies do not), and, second, how musical acts develop an audience base. If you are unfamiliar with this sociological field, a good starting point is Malcolm Gladwell's book "The Tipping Point" (Little Brown and Company). It is very readable and as it has been hugely popular you will find much debate about it on the internet.

As an outcome of your research, you will then devise a questionnaire, which will function as the case study for your paper. The questionnaire should ask Londoners a series of questions concerning their habits in discovering, listening and obtaining music. You will ask a series of general questions to build up a broad picture. For instance, do people discover new music via friends, the radio, media reviews or the charts? Are people still purchasing recordings, or is using software to download or copy recordings from friends more common? Are people concerned about the legal and ethical issues of copying music? Do people usually confine themselves to one genre (e.g. rap, heavy-metal or jazz)? And, are people most commonly listening to music on mediums such as cds, the radio, an IPOD, or attending live acts? You may like to make a UK/USA comparative study by asking friends in the States to also do the questionnaire. Another possibility it to examine whether factors such as age, gender and ethnicity relevant in the questions.

Research Area: Media

The media are undergoing a period of considerable change in Britain. Much of this change is the result of the development of new technologies, especially the combination of Broadband and the Internet, which have seen recent rapid uptake in this country.

Television now offers a range of digital services and the Government has determined that there will only be digital television services after 2012, with the switch over process beginning in 2008. The BBC Charter is being renewed this year and the government is likely to define the role of BBC more closely and also to decide on the level of the licence fee, which may partly be used to cover the costs of digital switch over. The introduction of digital television channels has meant that the traditional pattern of television broadcasting in Britain is being transformed, with the major broadcasters, ITV, BBC and Channel 4 all losing share of audiences and, for the commercial broadcasters, consequent loss of advertising revenue.

Audience use of media has been changing, especially amongst younger adults, with much greater emphasis on use of the internet as against the more traditional media. This has consequences for the newspaper industry which is increasing its on-line presence but where the revenue possibilities of on-line operation as against traditional print are far from clear.

Regulation of media in Britain has traditionally been quite substantial and the relatively recent merger of regulatory bodies to produce OfCom has meant new policies for regulation, bringing together broadcasting and telecoms and covering issues such as cross-media ownership.

The government has in recent years systematised its support for the British film industry through setting up of the UK Film Council to advise on policy and to administer funding derived from the Lottery. The UK Film Council has not only been helping to fund production but is also intervening in film distribution and in training and education in film.

London is the centre for much of Britain's media activity, both in terms of production and administration. The BBC is mainly based in London, the main film distributors have offices here, UK Film Council and OfCom operate from London as do many film and television companies. London has the biggest concentration of art house cinemas in the country.

It may therefore be possible to establish research projects which involve different media policy areas where media professionals would be interviewed. However these are busy people and this approach would need advance planning to ensure that co-operation would be forthcoming. Survey research would be a more certain approach but the need would be for students to be able to tap into a relevant British population. It might be possible to set up links with some of the British university media courses around London to locate people willing to complete surveys.

Suggested possible areas for research projects:

Film Exhibition in London

This could involve gathering data on which types of films are being shown in which cinemas, identifying multiplexes as against art house cinemas, considering the

economics of each type of exhibition and the methods of marketing open to the different sectors.

It might be possible with the agreement of cinema managers to survey the audiences for different types of film to determine how they find out about films, what they look for in a film, how often they go to the cinema and other relevant data. UK Film Council have been offering support to distributors for some films in recent years so it would also be possible to investigate the effects of this policy.

Changes to Television

A possible project would be to investigate the changes to audiences that are being brought about by the increasing number of digital channels and how the main television broadcasters have responded to this both in terms of the programmes they offer and the setting up of new channels (e.g. BBC3, BBC4, ITV4, More 4). The project could investigate how the broadcasters are interpreting their Public Service role in this new situation. It might be possible to construct a survey on viewing, though this might work best if it can be small-scale and qualitative, which means that care would have to be taken over the type of sample to be looked for. Alternatively if it were possible to interview professionals from television it might be possible to obtain views on how policies on programming have changed or might change in future.

Research Sources

London has possibly the best film and media library in the world at the British Film Institute, which has a range of material from all sorts of sources such as specialist magazines and newspaper cuttings. It has complete back copies of trade publications such *Broadcast*, *Screen International* which can provide invaluable data. All the major institutions have extensive web-sites which contain policy documents, reports etc.