

COURSE TITLE	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
COURSE CODE	POL 500
TIME	Wednesday, 2.30pm – 5.30pm
CREDIT	3
SEMESTER	I - Academic Session 2026/2027

SYNOPSIS

This course aims to develop students' research and analytical skills. In enhancing students' paradigms of research methodology in the social sciences, this course deepens the understanding of research strategies and philosophies as well as the underlying debates. Students will also be equipped with the logic of inquiry as well as the ethics to guide their research process. Emphasis will also be given to the knowledge related to research design, data collection, foundational data analysis, and report writing. While deliberating on the quantitative and qualitative methods, the course includes overview of specific methodological approaches. It also gives special attention to practical knowledge of the research process and in preparing students to conduct their own basic research projects. Students will leave the course with a better understanding of the ways to conduct their own research in various fields. This is a foundational course that will prepare students for advanced research courses in their chosen fields.

LEARNING OUTCOMES Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to demonstrate the following knowledge and skills:

1. Ability to develop a suitable research problem accompanied with a set of research questions based on relevant and key literature review.
2. Ability to present their research proposal at the foundational postgraduate level.
3. Ability to propose a viable design to begin their planned post-graduate research while upholding professional research ethics.
4. Ability to comprehend the importance of synthesising research findings and relating them to the relevant theories and works *vis-à-vis* the research objectives and sustainability issues.

LEARNING UNITS**LIST OF LECTURERS - CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH (CPR)**

1. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Azeem Fazwan Ahmad Farouk (azeemf@usm.my)
2. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Reevany Bustami (reevany@usm.my)
3. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Goh Soo Khoo (skgoh@usm.my)
4. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tang Chor Foon (tcfoon@usm.my)
5. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sazlina Salleh (sazlina@usm.my)
6. Dr. Dayang Haszelinna Abang Ali (dyghaszelinna@usm.my)
7. Dr. Illisriyani Ismail (illisriyani@usm.my)
8. Dr. Dina Miza Suhaimi (dinamiza@usm.my)

WEEK	TOPIC
1 30.09.2026	Introduction to POL500 Course - Objectives - Workload & the significance of this course Lecturer: Dr. Dina Miza Suhaimi Introduction to Research, Research Philosophies & Strategies - Understanding the philosophies and strategies of research: Inductive, Deductive, Retroductive and Abductive Research Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohammad Reevany Bustami
2 7.10.2026	Introduction to POL500 Course - Objectives - Workload & the significance of this course Research Problem - Logical - Reasonable research problem - Using AI for brainstorming and refining the problem - Identifying and developing resolvable problems Lecturer: Dr. Illisriyani Ismail
3 14.10.2026	Plagiarism, Ethics and Decolonizing Social Research & Research Ethics - Research ethics - Plagiarism - Paraphrasing - The difference between reference and plagiarizing - The importance of decolonizing knowledge and indigenous knowledge Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Azeem Fazwan Ahmad Farouk
4 21.10.2026	Literature Review - Past review & recent review - Gaps in literature - Essences of literature review Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Goh Soo Khoon
5 28.10.2026	References & Citation Library Session + Mendeley Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Goh Soo Khoon
6 4.11.2026	Research Framework Theoretical / conceptual framework Lecturer: Dr. Dina Miza Suhaimi
7 11.11.2026	Part 1: Quantitative Research Design - Descriptive - Correlational - Causal-comparative/ quasi-experimental - Experimental research - Software skills - SPSS - Sampling methods - Design of questionnaire Lecturer: Dr. Dayang Haszelinna Abang Ali

WEEK	TOPIC
8	MID-TERM BREAK (16.11.2026 - 22.11.2026)
9 25.11.2026	Part 2: Quantitative Research Design and Quantitative Data Analysis • Descriptive • Correlational • Causal-comparative/ quasi-experimental • Experimental research • Software skills • Characteristics of data • Modelling • Regression Analysis Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Tang Chor Foon
10 2.12.2026	Qualitative Research Design • Understanding resigin-design • Selected qualitative methods, e.g. <i>ethnography, phenomenology, grounded theory, and case study</i> Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Mohammad Reevany Bustami
11 9.12.2026	Sustainability & Futures Episteme and Multidisciplinary Research • SDGs and sustainability-related research Lecturer: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Sazlina Md Salleh
12 16.12.2026	Findings Writing, Overall Report Writing • Findings, comparison with prior studies • Limitations of your work, the difference between findings and conclusions, major / key findings, conclusion and implications
13 23.12.2026	Issues and Realities in Research • Problems with implementation in the field • Access to data & emerging issues
14 30.12.2026	Writing Citation, Academic publication • APA, MLA/ Turabian, Chicago - book, journal, indexed, ISI, SCOPUS, ESCI, peer review, predatory journal, mass media, popular writings, referencing style, Citation Databases, Impact Factors, and H-Index
15 6.1.2027	Presentation to respective supervisors / schools

LIST OF RESPECTIVE SCHOOLS / CENTRES

1. **Centre for Policy Research**
[Dr. Illisriyani Ismail; Email: illisriyani@usm.my and
[Dr. Dina Miza Suhaimi; Email: dinamiza@usm.my]
2. **Centre for Global Archaeological Research**
[Dr. Suresh Narayanan; Email: sureshnarayanan@usm.my]
3. **Center for Islamic Development Management Studies (ISDEV)**
[Profesor Madya Dr. Mohd Syakir Bin Mohd Rosdi; Email: mohdsyakir@usm.my]
4. **Centre for Instructional Technology & Multimedia**
[Ts. Dr. Mageswaran Sanmugam; Email: mageswaran@usm.my]
5. **National Higher Education Research Institute**
[Dr. Devisakti Annamali; Email: devisakti@usm.my]
6. **School of Distance Education**
[Dr. Siti Soraya Lin Abdullah Kamal; Email: omar.smadi@usm.my]
7. **School of Languages, Literacies & Translation**
[Assoc. Prof. Dr. Malini Ng Ganapathy; Email: sorayalin@usm.my]
8. **School of Humanities**
[Assoc. Prof. Dr. Asyirah Abdul Rahim; Email: asyirah@usm.my]
9. **School of Management**
[Dr. Nurhafiza Abdul Kader Malim; Email: fizanur@usm.my]
10. **School of Social Sciences**
[Pro. Madya Dr. Paramjit Singh Jamir Singh; Email: paramjit@usm.my]
11. **School of Communication**
[Dr. Kamaruzzaman Bin Abdul Manan; Email: kamaruzzaman@usm.my]
12. **School of Arts**
[Dr. Siti Rohaya binti Yahaya; Email: ysrohaya@usm.my]
13. **School of Educational Studies**
[Prof. Dr. Mageswary Karpudewan; Email: kmageswary@usm.my]
14. **Centre for Research on Women and Gender (KANITA)**
[Prof. Dato Dr. Noraida Endut; Email: idaman@usm.my]

POL500 ASSESSMENT

The assessments for this course are as follows:

No	Coursework	Assessment	Percentage (%)
1	Assignment (in group)	By CPR (To be submitted to CPR)	40
2	Research Proposal	By Respective Schools/ Centres (To be submitted to the student's respective schools or centres)	40
3	Research Proposal Presentation		20
Total			100

******Note: All evaluative components for this course **are compulsory**, and **MUST be completed** in order to pass the course.

IMPORTANT DATES:

No.	Activity / Requirement	Date / Period	Details
1	Course Introduction, Workload & Assignment Briefing	Weeks 1 – 2 30 Sept & 7 Oct 2026	Introduction to the course, course workload and its significance, including briefing on the group assignment to be submitted to CPR.
2	Group Assignment Period	Weeks 1 – 11 30 Sept – 9 Dec 2026	Students work on the group assignment throughout the specified period.
3	Group Assignment (40%) Submission	Week 11 9 Dec 2026	Submission of the completed group assignment to CPR. Students are required to submit the following via the designated link: • Presentation slides in PDF format • Pre-recorded video presentation in MP4 format, with a maximum duration of 8 minutes

IMPORTANT REMINDERS:

1. Please log in to the **USM eLearn in every class to record your attendance**. You are expected to stay until the end of the class.
2. You are also encouraged to log in early.
3. You are to meet up with your research presentation group once the assignment instruction is handed to you.
4. Your assignment should be submitted / uploaded by the 12th Week Friday 17:00 (5:00pm). CPR will provide the link latest by 4th Week, Friday 5pm. You are encouraged to submit your video presentation earlier.
5. For **research proposal** and **research proposal presentation**, please contact your **supervisor** on the 1st Week.
6. For queries on administrative matters, please contact the Institute of Postgraduate Studies (IPS) (shafiqahsuhaila@usm.my / admission_ips@usm.my).
7. For queries on specific academic matters/ specific fields, please contact your respective supervisor and school representatives/deputy deans.
8. Please check the USM eLearn portal and CPR website (cpr.usm.my) weekly for updates.

REFERENCES

1. Acharyya, R., & Bhattacharya, N. (2019). *Research Methodology for Social Sciences*. Routledge.
2. Blaikie, N. W. H. (1993). *Approaches to Social Enquiry*. Polity Press.
3. Blaikie, N. W. H. (2009). *Designing Social Research: The Logic of Anticipation* (2nd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
4. Bustami, R., Nasruddin, E., & Blaikie, N. (2004). *Lima Falsafah Penyelidikan Paradigma dan Strategi Penyelidikan untuk Sains Sosial dan Pengurusan*. Knowledge Craftsmen.
5. Hart, C. (2018). *Doing a Literature Review: Releasing the Research Imagination* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publication.
6. Leedy, P. D., & Ormrod, J. E. (2019). *Practical Research: Planning and Design* (12th ed.). Pearson.
7. Mills, G. E., & Gay, L. R. (2018). *Educational Research: Competencies for Analysis and Applications* (12th ed.). Pearson.
8. Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2010). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. John Wiley & Sons.
9. Sherman, R. R., & Webb, R. B. (1988). *Qualitative Research in Education: Focus and Methods*. Psychology Press.
10. Studenmund, A. H. (2017). *Using Econometrics: A Practical Guide* (7th ed.). Pearson.
11. United Nations (n.d.) Do you know all 17 SDGs? Retrieved September 28, 2022, from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>
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