



SCHOOL OF  
**MODERN LANGUAGES AND CULTURES**  
FACULTY OF ARTS, THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG

## Course Guide

# Research Skills for China Studies

SINO 2004

**Course convener:**

- Dr. Loretta Kim

**Contact details:**

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- Consultation hours: Tuesdays, 4:00 – 6:00pm (except 6 November 2018) or by appointment

**Time of the course:**

- Tuesdays, 1:30 – 3:20pm

**Venue:** CPD LG42

For course-related announcements, check your official HKU student email account and the course Moodle webpage regularly.

## **I. Introduction**

This course is intended to help China Studies majors and minors start their Capstone projects. Students will learn research skills that are generally applicable to all fields of China Studies and will also work with the course instructor individually on research methods that are specifically useful for their projects.

## **II. Format**

This course will meet nearly every week during the semester for the captioned 110-minute period. Students will be expected to conduct independent research throughout the semester in order to prepare for their presentations and final research proposals.

## **III. Attendance**

Attendance is mandatory except in the event of serious illness or other exceptional situations that are officially recognized grounds for excused absences. Students who do not attend a minimum of 80% of class meetings without approved exemptions will not be eligible for passing grades (D or above) in the course.

## **IV. General Learning Objectives and Outcomes**

The purpose of this course is to give students a solid grounding in independent research skills. It provides analytical tools for thinking more deeply about the way “China” can be explored through various topics. At the successful completion of this course, students will have developed a deeper understanding of pre-modern and modern China and will have sharpened their analytical abilities and acquired pertinent skills to interpret texts, images, concepts, and forms of human behavior.

## **V. Assessment**

Students will be assessed on the merit of their performance throughout the semester. The coursework grade will be based on students’ active and constructive participation in all class meetings, written assignments, individual presentations, and their final projects, which will be the research proposals for the Capstone project.

- **Active and Constructive Participation in Class (30%):** Attendance and active participation in class discussion *is mandatory* for all class and individual meetings. Be punctual and fully prepared on each class and individual meeting. For individual meetings, student should show satisfactory progress on his/her draft research proposal with written texts. Important note: Assessment is not based solely on the quantity of participation (i.e. how many times a student speaks during a discussion) but a combination and balance of quantity and quality (how thoughtful, relevant, and detailed the contributions are).
- **Written Assignment and Presentation (30%):**
  - Two short written assignments (10%). Each student will complete two short written assignments in the first month. Satisfactory work on these assignments

will help students prepare for their own projects.

- Topic Summary and Annotated Bibliography (10%). By the end of the second month, each student should complete a description of your chosen topic and a substantial bibliography of related sources.
- Proposal Presentation (10%). By the end of the third month, each student will be ready to present a first complete draft of his/her research proposal. Each student will give a 20-minute presentation introducing his or her research proposal to the class. After each presentation, all other students in the class will actively give comments and ask questions. Presenters will respond to such feedback and carry out dialogues with classmates. Each presentation will be evaluated based on how clearly the presenter explains his or her ideas, how persuasively s/he argues for the research's significance, and how open s/he is to communicating with other students (answering questions, providing clarification, etc.).
- **Final Project: Research Proposal (40%):** Each student will prepare a written proposal at the end of the semester. The proposal will consist of five mandatory parts: 1) Introduction of Research Question, 2) Related Research (Literature Review), 3) Research Methodology, 4) Hypothesis/Expected Outcomes, 5) Significance/Impact of Research. You may also include sections like Supporting Materials, Outline of the Project, and Bibliography or other features in their proposals. All students are highly encouraged to consult individually with the course instructor while designing their proposals.

## VI. Plagiarism Policy

As stated in the University of Hong Kong's *Full-Time Undergraduate Handbook for the 2017/2018 Session*,<sup>1</sup> plagiarism is defined in the University's Regulations Governing Conduct at Examinations as: **"...the unacknowledged use, as one's own, of work of another person, whether or not such work has been published."**

Plagiarism occurs when all forms of information taken from books, journals, databases, websites and other sources are not acknowledged to be someone else's information. When using information for your written work you need to state where it comes from. You need to acknowledge the sources of your information consistently and in a precise manner throughout your writing. Adequate referencing is also indispensable even when paraphrasing information from these sources. All material used for writing needs to be clearly identified as such the author or origin of

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<sup>1</sup> This information can be found in the University of Hong Kong's *Full-Time Undergraduate Handbook for the 2017/2018 Session* can be found at: <http://www.handbook.hku.hk/ug/full-time-2017-18/important-policies/copyright-and-plagiarism>. Further information can be found in the booklet entitled *"What is Plagiarism"* that is enclosed in the Student Registration Folder. Every student receives the Student Registration Folder upon admission into the University of Hong Kong.

the information must be acknowledged in order to prevent a misappropriation of intellectual property. In order to do so, referencing systems exist which serve as a framework for correctly citing information used for essays, reports, and other academic writing.

There are several referencing systems commonly used in the Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities, including APA, MLA, and Chicago styles. The main point to remember is to reference consistently throughout your written work, using one of the styles. Please do not switch between styles; choose one and stick to it.

## VII. Important Dates

- First day of class: **4 September 2018** (Tuesday)
- Assignment 1 due by: **18 September 2018** (Tuesday) **by 1:30pm through the Moodle Turnitin Portal** [and also bring a hard copy to class]
- Assignment 2 due by: **9 October 2018** (Tuesday) **by 1:30pm through the Moodle Turnitin Portal** [and also bring a hard copy to class]
- Topic Summary and Bibliography in one document due by: **13 November 2018** (Tuesday) **by 1:30pm through the Moodle Turnitin Portal** [and also bring a hard copy to class]
- Proposal Presentation on: **27 November 2018** (and if needed, **20 November 2018**)
- **Final Project (Research Proposal)** due by: **4 December 2018** (Tuesday) **by 3:00pm through the Moodle Turnitin Portal**

## VIII. Course Outline

- **Week 1 (4 September):** *Course Objectives, Evaluation, and Expectations*  
Focus: How do we identify areas of interest?

- **Week 2 (11 September):** *Research Topic and Research Question*  
Focus: What is a research question?

Assignment 1: Choose one of The HKU 3MT Competition videos of finalists and awardees (<http://www.ke.hku.hk/hku3mt/index.php/competition/2018/2018-videos-of-finalists-and-awardees>) in Arts, Social Sciences or Education. Study the presentation and submit a one-page, single-spaced PDF (no specific word limit, but an average length for the assignment will be 500-700 words) to analyze the presenters' research project **through the Moodle Portal ("Assignment 1")**. See the Assignment 1 Guidelines at the end of this course guide.

- **Week 3 (18 September): Literature Review**

Focus: Why do we compose literature reviews?

**Assignment 1 is due by 1:30pm (submit through Moodle).** In class sharing and discussion on Assignment 1.

**No class on 25 September due to the public holiday**

- **Week 4 (2 October): Library visit: Sources/Database Search**

Focus: How do we locate primary and secondary source materials?

**We will meet at the AV Viewing Room on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of the University Main Library. Please bring your own preferred digital devices (laptop, tablet, smartphone, etc.)**

Assignment 2: Choose one research article in your area of interest from a database (such as Find@HKUL, JSTOR, Project Muse or ProQuest) and analyze it according to the Assignment 2 Guidelines. If you do not know exactly how to find an appropriate article, please seek help from your instructor.

- **Week 5 (9 October): Model Research Article and Research Topic Sharing Day**

Focus: What does a good research article look like? Share the model research article and your preliminary research topics with classmates.

**Assignment 2 is due by 1:30pm (submit through Moodle).** In class sharing and discussion

**No class on 16 October for Reading Week**

- **Week 6 (23 October): Research Methods I**

Focus: How do you choose the appropriate methods of conducting research? We will do in-class exercises to practice four major research methods during two class meetings: 1. Textual/Historical analysis; 2. Image/Visual analysis; 3.

Quantitative/Data analysis; 4. Interview/Ethnography analysis and questionnaire design. **[Note: This week and Week 7 will be arranged based on the actual interests and needs of class members]**

- **Week 7 (30 October): Research Methods II**

Focus: How do you choose the appropriate methods of conducting research? We will continue our in-class exercise on research methods.

- **Week 8 (6 November): Independent work (Class time will be divided into individual appointments)**

- **Week 9 (13 November): Preliminary Research Design Sharing Day**

Focus: In-class sharing and discussion on your topic summary and bibliography.

Share about your research and identify common strengths and weaknesses.  
**Topic Summary and Annotated Bibliography is due in class.**

- **Week 10 (20 November): Optional Individual Consultations or Proposal Presentations**

- **Week 11 (27 November): Proposal Presentations**

#### **General Working Schedule**

First Month (September): Develop an area of interest

Second Month (October): Learn specific research skills

Third Month (November): Write the proposal

Final Stage (Early December): Revise and polish up the proposal

**Final Project (Research Proposal) due by: 4 December 2018 (Tuesday) by 3:00pm through the Moodle Turnitin Portal**

## Assignment 1 Guidelines

Step 1: Visit the website

[<http://www.ke.hku.hk/hku3mt/index.php/competition/2018/2018-videos-of-finalists-and-awardees>]

Step 2: View *at least* three (or up to all) presentations before choosing one to study

Step 3: See and hear your chosen presentation at least three times

Step 4: During either the second or third time, take notes about:

- What is the presenter's research topic?
- What methods are the presenter using to study this topic?
- What sources are the presenter using to study this topic?
- How does the presenter try to convince the audience that his or her topic is important and meaningful?
- How does the presenter try to convince the audience that his or her topic is original (unique)?

Step 5: After reflecting on the presentation, add to your notes:

- How do you feel about the presenter's topic after hearing the presentation?
- What is the most interesting thing about the presentation?
- What do you think the presenter did not explain adequately? What would you like to know more about (if anything)?

Step 6: Check your document for spelling/grammar, and proper formatting

Step 7: Convert to PDF

Step 8: Submit through Moodle (Week 2: "Assignment 1")

## Assignment 2 Guidelines

Your assignment should answer the following questions

- 1) Article Information (please cite all details including author, article title, journal name, volume/issue numbers, publication year, pages)
- 2) What is the research topic and what is/are the research question/s?
- 3) What is the argument/thesis?
- 4) What are the keywords of the study, as identified by the author and/or you?
- 5) What is the significance of this project?
- 6) What are the primary sources used in this article?
- 7) What are the secondary sources used in this article?
- 8) Please comment on the author's analysis. You may assess whether the sources/evidence/data support the argument, whether the analysis is logical and coherent, which part of the analysis impressed you most, what shortcomings of the research you identified, etcetera
- 9) Any Other Observations [optional]

There is no explicit word count range or limit for this assignment but do equally prioritize quantity and quality in crafting your responses. The best answers will be thorough but also succinct (to the point, no extra words for the sake of words).

Practice formatting your references to primary and secondary sources correctly and consistently.

Do be critical as well as complimentary about the research article you choose. You do not have to defer to the "wisdom" of the author if you disagree with any aspect of his or her work.