



**Online Academic Summer School 2020**  
SOAS University of London

**Understanding Research Methods**  
Course Handbook

**Mode of Attendance:** Full-time, Online

**Duration:** 2 weeks

**SOAS Accredited:** This course is worth 15 UK credits

**Programme Description**

The Understanding Research Methods Summer School course will be a unique offering to the summer school environment in London. The course is designed for a wide-ranging number of participants whether preparing an undergraduate or Master's dissertation, or a Phd, or a professional task. It will outline the fundamentals of doing research for students from across the world. Students will collectively develop their understanding of research methods, confidence in designing a research project and executing appropriate methodologies and assessing their intellectual rigour. No prior knowledge or experience in research methods is required to take this course: the course will be particularly relevant for those who have to conduct research as part of their higher education studies but do not perhaps have access to a dedicated research methods courses, or for those who would like additional support for self-improvement.

Furthermore

- An optional pathway for SOAS PhD students, who for whatever reason (such as medical circumstances) may need to undertake a dedicated research methods training course in a focused timeframe
- The early summer scheduling of the course means those who need it can use the course as a remedial intervention to assist in their upgrade process

**Programme Schedule and Topics:**

- The course is designed to provide a blended pedagogic experience to students. In other words, learning will go beyond face to face class time and involve use of online learning materials
- Through a series of focused and dedicated learning exercises students will engage with a range of salient topics in Understanding Research Methods
- Each topic will be supported by tailored learning materials which will include a range of textual, documentary, audio and visual as appropriate. Readings have been chosen and packaged to have a guiding question, pop quiz questions, and an overall summary, as well as being divided into Essential and Desirable reading.

**Learning Outcomes**

On successful completion of the module, students should be able to:

- Their understanding that different methods and approaches to research reflect a range of intellectual traditions and societal interests
- The ability to assess which methods are suitable for their research enquiries
- The ability to design a framework for a research project
- The ability to critically engage with discussions surrounding the quality and integrity of research
- Their readiness to tackle further, advanced, consideration of approaches to research.

### **Assessment**

Each course is assessed by two online assessments ('e-tivities'\*) comprising of 30%, the remaining 70% is formed of a 2,500 word essay. The e-tivities provide formative and summative feedback to students as a means of monitoring their progress and encouraging areas in which they can improve. On successful completion of the assessments, students will receive a transcript confirming the credit awarded. Students that do not require credit are strongly encouraged to take part in the e-tivities, but are not required to complete the assessments.

\* An 'e-tivity' is a framework for online, active and interactive learning following a format that states clearly to the students its 'Purpose'; the 'Task' at hand; the contribution or 'Response' type; and the 'Outcome' (Salmon, G. (2002) *E-tivities: The Key to Active Online Learning*, New York and London: Routledge Falmer.)

### **Course Convenors**

Dr J Simon Rofe, Dr Ashley Cox

### **Introductory Readings and Sources**

- Braybrooke, David "Philosophy of Social Science". Prentice Hall. 1986
- Cartwright N and Montuschi E (eds), "Philosophy of Social Science: A New Introduction", OUP New York 2005
- Churchill, H and Sanders T, "Getting Your PhD: A Practical insider's Guide" Sage:London 2007
- Hollis, Martin "The Philosophy of Social Science: An Introduction." Cambridge. 1991
- Little, Daniel Varieties of Social Explanation: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Social Science. Westview Press 1991
- Patton M. "Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods". Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE 2002
- Swales J. & Feak C. "English in Today's Research World". Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press. 2000
- Swales J. & Feak C. "Academic Writing for Graduate Students: Essential Tasks and Skills. 3rd edition". University of Michigan Press. 2012,

