Research Methodology (Spring 2016)
Sookmyung Women’s University
Graduate School of TESOL

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Course Overview

This course takes students through the process of conducting and writing up a research project in the field of applied linguistics. It introduces students to essential concepts and processes in research methodology such as sampling, validity and reliability, quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. The course is conducted in a seminar style, and students ought to come to class prepared to discuss the various topics that will be covered in each lesson as to how they relate to their own research areas. Depending on students’ preferences, they can either choose to get hands-on experience conducting a mini-research project which could serve as a pilot study for their future thesis, or write up detailed introduction, literature review and methodology sections for their thesis proper. Thus, students who wish to take this course should have an idea of what they would like to research on for their thesis when beginning this course.

There is no prescribed winter reading book for this course, but students intending to take this course should spend some time in the winter break to come up with an idea for their research and start reading more about it, such that they already have a plan in mind when they start the course.

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to conduct and write up MA-level research projects, specifically how to search and critique the research literature, choose an appropriate research topic and theoretical framework, and formulate appropriate research questions. They will also be able to apply and design an appropriate methodology for data collection and analyze the data in order to be able to answer their proposed research questions. Finally, students will learn and practice research report writing, specifically according to the format of an MA thesis.

Texts and Materials


Evaluation

Class Participation 30%
Assignments 25%
Mid-term Project 15%
Final Project 30%

Weekly Plan

Week 1

- Introduction to the course

In this first lesson, apart from an introduction to the course, materials and assignments, we will be exploring our own ideas and perspectives on research, comparing them with what’s out there, and discussing research interests that students have. Based on these, the course syllabus may be adjusted slightly to address students’ needs.

Homework: Read Creswell, Chapter 1 and Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 1. Come to class with a well-written statement of the research design you intend to use for your research project.

Week 2

- Nunan & Bailey Chapter, 1: Introducing Classroom Research
- Creswell, Chapter 1: The Selection of a Research Design

This week, we will deal with introductory concepts about classroom research get familiarized with different kinds of research designs and the respective philosophical principles they are based on.

Homework: Read Creswell, Chapter 2 and Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 2. Review and refine your research plan based on feedback and new information gained through reading the textbooks and other sources related to your research topic.

Week 3

- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 2: Getting Started on Classroom Research
- Creswell, Chapter 2: Review of the Literature

This week, we will learn about how write a literature review and the concepts and skills associated with it, such as searching the literature and organizing the information found. We will also look at how research questions are formulated based on the different research traditions.

Homework: Read Creswell (2013) Chapter 3 and 4. Come to class with a minimum of 5 studies that are directly related to the study you want to develop, explaining why and how they are related to your study.
Week 4

- Creswell, Chapter 3: The Use of Theory
- Creswell, Chapter 4: Writing Strategies and Ethical Considerations

This week, we will deal more with writing a literature review. This time, we will look at the incorporation of theory into the literature review and design of the research, some writing strategies as well as some ethical considerations in writing and doing research.

Homework: Read Nunan & Bailey, Chapters 3 and 4. Come to class with a statement expressing the underlying theories that you are going to make use of in your research project.

Week 5

- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 3: Key Concepts in Planning Classroom Research
- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 4: The Experimental Method

This week’s focus is on quantitative research designs and issues of reliability and validity in quantitative research.

Homework: Read Nunan & Bailey, Chapters 5 and 6. Come to class with a draft plan of your research design.

Week 6

- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 5: Surveys
- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 6: Case Study Research

This week, we will be looking at survey research and how to design good surveys. This concludes our series of quantitative research designs, and we will begin looking at qualitative research designs, starting with case study research.

Homework: Read Nunan & Bailey, Chapters 7 and 8. Design a survey to elicit some aspect of information related to the area of research you are exploring.

Week 7

- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 7: Ethnography
- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 8: Action Research

This week, we conclude our series of qualitative research designs with ethnography. We will also cover issues of trustworthiness in qualitative research (comparable to reliability and validity in quantitative). In addition, we will learn about Action Research and distinguish it from empirical research.
*Note: Depending on students’ research interests, we will also cover other quantitative and/or qualitative designs during Weeks 5 to 7.

Homework: Refine your research report (including an introduction, research questions and draft of a literature review and methodology section) based on feedback and information gained from your ongoing literature search and from having learnt more about the particular methodological approach related to your study.

**Week 8**

- Creswell, Chapter 5: The Introduction
- Creswell, Chapter 6: The Purpose Statement
- Creswell, Chapter 7: Research Questions and Hypotheses

Now that students have had an exposure to the various research designs and have had some basic instruction on how to write a literature review, we will address various aspects of the literature review in greater depth. Students need to bring their drafts and peer-review other students’ drafts, given the greater insights they would have gained from the course so far. It is essential that students prepare well for this, as the outcome of this process would inform students’ writing of their mid-term assignment, due on Week 10.

Homework: Work on your mid-term paper and read Nunan and Bailey, Chapters 9 and 12.

**Week 9**

Study week (no class)

**Week 10**

- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 9: Classroom Observation
- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 12: Analyzing Classroom Interaction

We begin the second ‘half’ of this course, where we will cover data collection and analysis for both qualitative and quantitative research designs. In today’s class, we will focus on data collection and analysis of classroom-based research.

Homework: Read Nunan and Bailey, Chapters 10 and 11. Come to class with a revised and improved version of your data collection procedures.
Week 11

- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 10: Introspective Methods of Data Collection
- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 11: Elicitation Procedures

Today, we will deal with the introspective and elicitation methods of data collection, as well as any other methods of data collections related to students’ interests.

Homework: Read Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 13 and Creswell, Chapter 8. Come to class with a data set that can be manipulated quantitatively.

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Week 12

- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 13: Quantitative Data Analysis
- Creswell, Chapter 8: Quantitative Methods

This week, we go deeper into quantitative research methods and explore various types of quantitative analyses.

Homework: Read Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 14 and Creswell, Chapter 9. Bring to class a set of data that can be evaluated using qualitative methods.

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Week 13

- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 14: Qualitative Data Analysis
- Creswell, Chapter 9: Qualitative Methods

This week’s lesson is all about qualitative methods and qualitative data analysis techniques.

Homework: Read Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 15 and Creswell, Chapter 10. Bring to class a set of data that can be used to demonstrate a mixed methods inquiry.

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Week 14

- Creswell, Chapter 10: Mixed Methods Procedures
- Nunan & Bailey, Chapter 15: Putting It All Together

This week’s lesson will be all about mixed methods procedures and combining different kinds of research together.

Homework: Prepare for research presentations based on your final term paper.
Week 15

- Research presentations

The course concludes with students presenting their research studies to each other.