

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ADVANCED STUDIES (NIAS)

PhD Research Methodology Course

February-April 2015

Course Objective

Designed as follow-up to the Foundations course, the Research Methodology course is the second mandatory course that all Ph.D. students at NIAS need to complete. However, there are important differences between the two courses. While the Foundations course sought to introduce you to the diverse fields of intellectual inquiry pursued by faculty members at NIAS and some of the basic tenets of interdisciplinary research, the Research Methodology course focuses on the central debates, practices and skills associated with doing research in different disciplines.

We will begin by discussing enterprise of research, history, and theory of methodology, academic writing practices and then move on to lectures that focus on specific methodological practices from the relevant disciplines to be taught collaboratively by the institute's faculty members. A more important goal of this course is to guide you towards preparing a rough draft of your Ph.D. thesis proposal. Therefore, during this course, you need to be working with your primary supervisor on various aspects of the thesis proposal. You may also consult with relevant scholars within the institute or outside of NIAS who could be your potential thesis committee members.

The following issues need to be considered by students:

The course is quite rigorous and will consume a lot of your time. Please be considered in a number of courses you want to take this semester. It is not advisable to take more than 2 courses (including the RM course) during this semester.

Please request and insist your thesis supervisor to offer a course focusing on literature and research methods relevant to your dissertation research. This will be helpful to do well on various aspects of your thesis proposal.

Attendance is mandatory for this course in addition to spending at least 10 hours per week of dedicated reading. Please email the instructor (rethinaraj72@gmail) with a copy to Ms. Sandhya if you are unable to attend a session. If your absent for more than two sections, 5% of the total grade will be deducted. All assignments should be sent to the course coordinator, everybody in the class, and copied to Ms. Sandhya as well.

In addition to the regular classes on Tuesdays, approximately five three-hour workshop sessions will be organised covering academic writing, research ethics, presentation skills, computational tools, and other relevant research skills. The schedule for these workshops will be decided within the first two weeks. There are two public holidays that fall on a Tuesday (17 February and 14 April), and make-up classes will be arranged to compensate for the lost days.

Course Title	Research Methodology
Course No	201
Credits	3
Time Period	February to April 2015
Course Coordinator	T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj
Faculty	NIAS Faculty
Evaluation	Assignments, Proposal Development and Presentations
Venue	Conference Hall 1

LECTURE DISCUSSIONS

SI No	Date	Time	Topic	Faculty
1	February 3	9.30-11.30	Introduction to the Course	T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj
2	February 10	10.30-12.30	Research Objective and Methods	T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj
3	February 19	10.30-12.30	Framing Research Questions	T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj
4	February 24	10.30-12.30	Research Ethics and Academic Integrity	Dilip Ahuja
5	March 3	10.30-12.30	Philosophy of Statistics and Statistical Methods	NarendarPani
6	March 10	10.30-12.30	Data Gathering and Survey Design	Hippu S K Nathan
7	March 17	10.30-12.30	Data Analysis and Interpretation	Chidambaram Iyer
8	March 24	10.30-12.30	Social Science Research Methods 1 (Qualitative and Case Studies)	Anita Kurup
9	March 31	10.30-12.30	Philosophical Research Methods	M G Narasimhan
10	April 7	10.30-12.30 14.00-17.00	Social Science Research Methods 2 (Ethnography and Qualitative)	Carol Upadhya (Two 3-hr sessions)
11	April 21	10.30-12.30	Life Sciences Research Methods	Sindhu Radhakrishna
12	April 28	10.30-12.30	Research Methods in Humanities	S. Settar
13	April 30	10.30-12.30	Research Methods in Physical Sciences	T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj
14	TBD	10.30-12.30	Student Final Presentation	T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj

ASSIGNMENTS

Please take the assignments seriously as they help you in gradually shaping the rough draft of the proposal.

- Assignment #1: Research Questions (~2 pages) [10%]
- Assignment#2: Literature Review (~4 pages) [10%]
- Assignment #3: Data, Methods, and Project Design (~6 pages) [15%]
- Assignment#4: Analysis and Significance of Project (~8 pages) [15%]
- Thesis Proposal Draft: ~20 pages [30%]

In all your writing assignments, follow appropriate guidelines for source citation, paraphrasing etc to avoid plagiarism charges. Plagiarism is the worst form of academic infraction which can result in personal embarrassment and serious penalties. In rare cases, they also warrant expulsion from the PhD programme.

WORKSHOPS

In addition to the regular lectures discussions, the course will have about 5 three-hour workshop sessions providing an orientation to research, writing, and presentation skills. Schedule for these workshops will be announced later.

SI No	Topic	Faculty
1	Writing Form and Style	T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj
2	Source Citations and Plagiarism	T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj
3	LaTeX and the Art of Typesetting	T.S. Gopi Rethinaraj
4	Open Source Tools in Research	ShoibalChakravarty
5	GIS in Research	M.B. Rajani

BASIS FOR GRADES

- Class Attendance: 10%
- Project Presentation: 10%
- Assignments: 50%
- Draft of Thesis Proposal: 30%

OFFICE HOURS

The course coordinator (Gopi) has no fixed office hours and is mostly around at the institute from 9.30 AM to 4.30 PM. Feel free to stop by his office anytime or catch up during the tea breaks and lunch time at the canteen.

REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED READINGS

Wayne Booth, Gregory Colomb, and Joseph Williams. *The Craft of Research*. Third Edition. University of Chicago Press. 2008 [PDF copy provided]

John W. Creswell. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. Second Edition. Sage Publications. 2003 [PDF copy provided]

Kate L. Turabian. *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations*. Eighth Edition. University of Chicago Press. 2013 [PDF copy of Sixth Edition provided, but instructor recommends all students to have a personal copy of the Eighth Edition. Amazon India delivers copy in less than a week.]