

MODULE CODE:	TRDL7087
TITLE:	Fieldwork Methods in the Study of Religion
DATED:	15/12/2011
LEVEL:	7
CREDITS:	20
JACS CODE:	V610

AIMS

- * To provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the nature of empirical research.
 - * To assess critically the methodologies and tools available to conduct qualitative (fieldwork-based) research in the field of Religious Studies.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of this module students should be able to:

- * present a comprehensive research proposal demonstrating systematic understanding of the theory of fieldwork-based research methods in the study of religion;
- * display critical awareness of the problems associated with the design of fieldwork-based research and use of methods;
- * offer an comprehensive understanding of the ethical implications of conducting a research project;
- * design a research project with the appropriate methods, depending on the topic, and demonstrate an awareness of responsibilities facing the researcher;
- * evaluate in-depth scholarship in the field of the chosen research topic as a preparation for the dissertation in part II of the MA programme.

INDICATIVE CONTENT

- * Introduction to module
- * Qualitative Methods: their use in the study of religion
- * Participant observation and interviews
- * Documents as sources of data
- * Interpreting visual images
- * Research ethics: ethical principles and responsibilities
- * Designing a fieldwork-based research project

LEARNING AND TEACHING STRATEGY

Moodle Units will introduce the students to the concepts, principles and practices of the topics studied for the module. Case studies may be used to provide examples and will be used to develop further understanding of what has been learned. Alongside written material, Units might also include podcasts or vidcasts, links to relevant websites and e-resources, scanned chapters from books and journals (in accordance with copyright law) as well as suggestions for further reading. Each Unit will contain clear instructions about the order in which students should consult the material as well as offering reasons for the inclusion of

each item of material. Unit information will be geared towards the student achieving the module learning outcomes.

Tutorials and webinars may be used in order to support discussion and critical evaluation of what has been learned as well as enabling students to pursue their own questions. Module information may be supported by student chatrooms and webinars to explore more fully the concepts, principles and practices of each topic, to explore aspects of the set reading for the Unit, or to enable clarification where confusion might have arisen. In addition, tutorial support is available through email, telephone or skype conference with module tutors and the programme director.

Guided independent study allows students to further their independent learning skills with appropriate support provided by the module tutor(s). Much of this is included in the material contained in each Unit, though further guidance is available from module tutors and programme directors through email, telephone and skype conference.

The allocation of teaching to deliver the module is:

Activity type	Hours	Percentage
Scheduled learning	20	10%
Independent learning	180	90%
Placement learning		
TOTAL	200	100%

ASSESSMENT

Assessment Component 1 – 100%

One essay of 5,000 words

Example assignment:

Prepare a 5,000-word research proposal on a topic of research of your choice which will:

- * clearly define the research aim/ question and the nature of the problem to be investigated
- * explain the research context, and clearly define the scope of the project
- * demonstrate basic familiarity with the relevant academic literature on the chosen subject area, and indicate the contribution the project will make to existing scholarship
- * identify the appropriate research method(s), explaining why these are best suited to this piece of research
- * explain the research strategy, overall process, and intended time-frame
- * show awareness of ethical issues relating to the research strategy and process

Assessment Summary

Activity type	Percentage
Written exam	

Coursework	100%
Practical	
TOTAL	100%

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT (ESD)

Does the module contribute to ESD?	Yes
If yes please provide brief details (no more than 100 words):	
The module contributes to the sustainability agenda in its broadest sense by encouraging students to think about the skills they require to solve their academic problems. These are transferrable skills and assist in nurturing critical and creative thinking. As such the module is focused on meeting the immediate needs of the students while also equipping them to think critically and solve problems in an unknown future.	

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Essential

Bryman, A. *Social Research Methods* (2nd ed.) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
 Bell, J. *Doing Your Research Project* (5th ed.) (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2010)

Recommended

Creswell, J.W. *Research design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed method approaches* (Thousand Oaks, London: Sage, 2003)
 Hart, C. *Doing a Literature Review* (London, Thousand Oaks: Sage, 2006 [1998])
 May, T. *Social research: issues, methods and process* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001)
 Sieber, J. *Planning ethically responsible research: a guide for students and internal review boards* (Newbury Park, Calif.: Sage, 1992)

Website

<http://www.kent.ac.uk/religionmethods/index.html>