Course Manual
Joint Master’s Programme in
International Humanitarian Action

APPLIED RESEARCH
DESIGN

University College Dublin
Academic Year: 2016-2017, Semester 2
1. Module Overview & Learning Outcomes

The purpose of this module is to equip students with the competences (knowledge and skills) to carry out rigorous research. Global humanitarian action has evolved over the last generation from the random charitable giving to populations affected by disasters to an enterprise with a recognisable global humanitarian system that commands an ever increasing budget and employs a growing number of humanitarian professionals. This shift requires ever increasing demands on this system to be accountable for its actions to both the givers and the receivers of humanitarian aid. Over this generation the call for actions to be based on ‘evidence’ has steadily increased. Humanitarian professionals working at all levels, in the field, in headquarters and in policy, are now required to have varying levels of research competences. These competences may include not only the ability to conduct research projects but may also extends to the capacity to critique methodology and the making of claims on the basis of research projects.

The NOHA programme in particular is designed to produce humanitarian professionals that have the competences to contribute to improvements in the delivery of humanitarian action. We also want to provide the competences to enable this new generation of professional to document their experiences so that they can contribute to knowledge. To this end, this module addresses both academic research (to prepare students for their thesis and further) and applied research (to encourage students to apply systematic research to humanitarian action praxis).

Learning Outcomes

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

- Independently develop a research proposal for a research project;
- Understand what is required in a literature review and to establish a study framework;
- Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of commonly used research methods within the humanitarian sector;
- Apply methods adopting quantitative and qualitative methodologies as used within the humanitarian sector;
- Analyse and present quantitative and qualitative data;
- Apply best practice in programme/ project monitoring and evaluation.

The module has three distinct but inter-related components:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week beginning 6/2/2017</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Method of Delivery</th>
<th>Assessment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning Research</td>
<td>lectures; group work on 4/5 research areas narrowing to individual research proposal on a researchable aspect of</td>
<td>Individual written research proposal (1,500 words)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- structure of a research proposal;</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- background and rationale;</td>
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</table>
2. Timetable

Week 1: Planning Research

1. Topic: Research Proposal Writing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7th February 2017</td>
<td>Room 1.01, Agriculture and Food Science Building</td>
<td>10.00 - 13.00</td>
<td>Prof. Jim Phelan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Expected learning outcome:
At the end of this seminar students should be able:
- To produce a research proposal for a research project

Readings:
- Advance Reading:
- Additional Reading:
# Week 2: Research Methods

## 2. Topic: Research Proposal Workshop

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8th February</td>
<td>1.01AG</td>
<td>11.00 - 13.00</td>
<td>Dr Ronan McDermott; Desire Mpanje</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## 3. Topic: Literature Review

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th February</td>
<td>1.16AG</td>
<td>11.00 - 13.00</td>
<td>Prof Jim Phelan (TBC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Expected learning outcome:**

At the end of this seminar students should be able:

- To produce a literature review for a research project;
- To create a related conceptual and analytical framework for a research project

**Readings:**

- **Advance Reading:**
- **Additional Reading:**

## 4. Topic: Research Proposal Workshop (cont.)

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<th>Time</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10th February</td>
<td>1.16AG</td>
<td>14.00 - 16.00</td>
<td>Dr Ronan McDermott; Desire Mpanje</td>
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## 5. Topic: Quantitative Research Methods I

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Lecturer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13th February</td>
<td>1.18 AG A109 ART</td>
<td>11.00 - 13.00 14.00 - 16.00</td>
<td>Dr Ronan McDermott</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Expected learning outcome:**

At the end of this seminar students should be able:

- To identify the relative merits and demerits of quantitative and qualitative social research methods;
- To understand the advantages and disadvantages of survey research;
- To construct questionnaires using established computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) tools in the humanitarian sector

**Readings:**

- **Advance Reading:**
- **Optional Reading:**
(Chapters 2 & 11)

- Audio-visual material:
  - Open Data Kit (ODK)/Kobo Collect tutorial: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fTNrHV9Geqs&t=2131s

**Please note:** In advance of the class please create an account with KoBo Toolbox: http://www.kobotoolbox.org/
Please also bring a laptop with an internet connection to class. Android users: please download KoBoCollect app from the Play Store (unfortunately KoBoCollect is only available on Android)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6. Topic: <strong>Quantitative Research Methods II</strong></th>
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<tbody>
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<td><strong>Date:</strong> 14th February 2017</td>
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**Expected learning outcomes:**
At the end of this seminar students should be able:
- To conduct structured interviews using established computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI) tools in the humanitarian sector;
- To apply appropriate sampling strategies for the use of quantitative methods in humanitarian settings

**Readings:**
- Advance Reading:
- Optional Reading:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7. Topic: <strong>Qualitative Research Methods I</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date:</strong> 16th February 2017</td>
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**Expected learning outcomes:**
At the end of this seminar students should be able:
- To formulate a qualitative research question;
- To design a qualitative study;
- To generate relevant qualitative data;
- To observe appropriate ethical guidelines

**Readings:**
- Advance Reading:
### 8. Topic: Qualitative Research Methods II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Lecturer:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17th February 2017</td>
<td>1.16 AG</td>
<td>11.00 - 13.00</td>
<td>Desire Mpanje</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Expected learning outcomes:**
At the end of this seminar students should be able:
- To use the relevant methodological literature; critically appraise fieldwork.
- To design and carry out qualitative evaluations of humanitarian action
- To design and carry out participatory monitoring and evaluation of humanitarian action

**Readings:**
- **Advance Reading:**
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation_id=annotation_554130&feature=iv&src_vid=FGH2tYuXf0s&v=9t-hYjAKww](https://www.youtube.com/watch?annotation_id=annotation_554130&feature=iv&src_vid=FGH2tYuXf0s&v=9t-hYjAKww)
  - [https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/teaching-resources/interview](https://www.ukdataservice.ac.uk/teaching-resources/interview)
- **Optional Reading:**
  - Kvale, S., and Brinkmann, S. (2009) *Interviews: Learning the craft of qualitative research interviewing*. Sage, Chapter 9 Interview Quality

### 9. Topic: Research Ethics

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<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<th>Lecturer:</th>
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<tr>
<td>17th February 2017</td>
<td>1.16 AG</td>
<td>14.00 - 16.00</td>
<td>Maciej Szydlowski</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Expected learning outcome:**
At the end of this seminar students should be able:
- To understand the ethical principles pertaining to research projects involving vulnerable participants.

**Readings:**
- **Advance Reading:**
- **Optional Reading:**

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**Week 3: Data Analysis and Presentation**

10. Topic: Quantitative Data Analysis and Presentation I
### Expected learning outcome:

At the end of this and the following seminar students should be able to:

- understand observations and variables in research data;
- know the attributes of variables that determine how data may be summarised and analysed;
- know how to create a simple database in SPSS, and how to enter, edit and save data;
- know how to manipulate data and create new variables using procedures available in SPSS;
- know how to present descriptive statistics on all variable types;
- know how to represent research data graphically using SPSS;
- know how to use selected statistical procedures in SPSS;
- be able to present selected data in report form.

### Readings:

- **Advance Reading:**
- **Optional Reading:**

### 11. Topic: Quantitative Data Analysis and Presentation II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
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<td></td>
<td>G-30PCLab</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>11.00 - 13.00</td>
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<td>14.00 - 16.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturer:</td>
<td>Dr Ronan McDermott</td>
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</table>

**Expected learning outcomes and readings:** see [Quantitative Data Analysis and Presentation I](#)

### 12. Topic: Qualitative Data Analysis and Presentation I

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Venue</td>
<td>LG-20 AG</td>
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<td></td>
<td>G-07 AG</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time:</td>
<td>11.00 - 13.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>14.00 - 17.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturer:</td>
<td>Desire Mpanje</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Expected learning outcome:**

At the end of this seminar students should be able to:

- analyse qualitative data (interview transcripts, focus group material, and other texts)

**Readings:**

- **Advance Reading:**
  - [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRL4PF2u9XA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DRL4PF2u9XA)
- **Optional Reading:**
13. Topic: Qualitative Data Analysis and Presentation II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: 24th February 2017</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Time:</th>
<th>Lecturer: Desire Mpanje</th>
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<td>D114 HEA G5 DAE</td>
<td>11.00 - 13.00 14.00 - 17.00</td>
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Expected learning outcome:
At the end of this seminar students will be able to:
- set up, identify codes and themes, and to analyse and write up a qualitative research project using a software programme for qualitative data analysis

Readings:
- **Advance Reading:**
  - NVivo Toolkit available on the NOHA Blackboard
- **Optional Reading:**

Recommended textbooks:

3. Module Delivery
The module will employ a combination of lectures and problem-based learning to achieve the learning outcomes outlined. Students are expected to attend each lecture/seminar having read the advance reading assigned. This will enable students to work collaboratively to address the questions posed by case studies provided in class. Students are expected to subsequently present their findings to further in-class discussion.

4. Assessment
The module will be assessed by assignment and written exam:
- **Assignment 1 – Research Proposal – 33%**
  - Assignment will be distributed during research proposal workshop in Week 1
  - Submission via Blackboard
  - Deadline: 11am, Monday 20th February 2017
- **Assignment 2 – Research Methods Development – 33%**
  - Assignment will be distributed in Week 3
  - Submission via Blackboard
  - Deadline: 5pm, Friday 3rd March 2017
- **Examination – 34%**
  - 2-hour exam
  - 10th March, 2-4pm