1. **Title of the module**

Critical Social Research: Truth, Ethics and Power SOCI838 (SO832)

1. **School or partner institution which will be responsible for management of the module**

School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research

1. **The level of the module (e.g. Level 4, Level 5, Level 6 or Level 7)**

Level 7

1. **The number of credits and the ECTS value which the module represents**

20 Credits (ECTS 10)

1. **Which term(s) the module is to be taught in (or other teaching pattern)**

Spring Term (term 2)

1. **Prerequisite and co-requisite modules**

None

1. **The programmes of study to which the module contributes**

MA in Methods of Social Research (MSR)

MA in International Social Policy

1. **The intended subject specific learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**
   1. Have a critical understanding of the political and policy contexts of social research, how they are related to power structures and how they influence social research as well as the reflexivity of social research;
   2. Have a comprehensive and in depth understanding of how to conduct and present research in ways that adds to knowledge as well as having has a wider ‘impact’. Impact is here discussed in the context of how the term is used within research in the UK, e.g. by funding bodies such as the ESRC, and elsewhere.;
   3. Have comprehensive and critical understanding the various theoretical and philosophical bases for social research, different epistemological models used in the social sciences and how they relate to and differ in terms of concepts such as the role of social research and understandings of truth, power and ethics;
   4. Embark on in depth and systematic criticisms of the methodological choices made in published research studies;
   5. Critically appraise at a level appropriate to postgraduates the epistemological limits of different research methodologies;
   6. Critically reflect on, evaluate and criticise the data analyses they encounter in the literature in their field;
2. **The intended generic learning outcomes.  
   On successfully completing the module students will be able to:**

9.1 Design and communicate a research question, design, results and implications to academic and general audiences in a systematic way informed by a deep reflection and understanding of the role and ways in one can approach social research;

* 1. Successfully manage their time, prioritise workloads and manage stress as well taking responsibility for their learning and professional development;
  2. Access and evaluate ICT and library based resources appropriate for postgraduate study; make critical judgments about their merits and use the available evidence to construct a developed argument to be presented orally or in writing;
  3. Solve problems that are common in social research in a systematic and comprehensive way.
  4. Plan for their future and understand career opportunities in a reflected way, informed by new knowledge of the ranges of approaches to social research covered in the module.

1. **A synopsis of the curriculum**

This course provides students with the understanding and skills necessary to use research, whether within a research career or outside of it. Building on other training in the details of specific methods, it focuses on two sets of broader questions. Firstly, it critically analysis central concepts such as truth, power, ethics and uncertainty in social research. When addressing these issues, the module engages with how they are dealt with and approached in qualitative and quantitative research. In the module students will engage actively with these issues and critically reflect upon their own views and how they apply them in their own research projects. We particularly discuss the difficulties of causal inference and generalisation, coming to conclusions from research reviews, and philosophical issues around ‘truth’ and values. Secondly, it looks at the link between research and action. In doing this, it goes from the very practical (how to ensure that your research is used by policymakers and/or practitioners, and to deal with the political pressures on researchers) to the conceptual (in what ways does evidence get used by wider society?) to the normative (should researchers be ‘critical’, and if so, what are their ethical obligations in doing this?).

1. **Reading List (Indicative list, current at time of publication. Reading lists will be published annually)**

Brady, Henry E., and David C. Collier, eds. 2010. *Rethinking social inquiry: Diverse tools, shared standards* [2nd edition]. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield.

Buroway, M (2004/2005), ‘For public sociology [2004 American Sociological Association Presidential Address]’. *British Journal of Sociology*, 56(2):259-294. DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-4446.2005.00059.x

Douglas, H (2009), *Science, Policy and the Value-free Ideal*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

King, Gary, Robert O. Keohane and Sidney Verba. 1994. *Designing Social Inquiry*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kuhn, T (1962/2012), *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Nutley, S; Walter, I and Davies, HTO (2007), *Using evidence: how research can inform public services*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Vayda, AP & Walters, BB (eds) (2011), *Causal Explanation for Social Scientists: A Reader*. Alatamira Press.

Weiss, Carol H (1979), *The Many Meanings of Research Utilization’* Public Administration Review, 39(5):426-43.

1. **Learning and Teaching methods**

Contact hours: 22

Private study hours: 178

Total hours: 200

1. **Assessment methods.**

13.1 Main assessment methods

Coursework - Reflection (2,500 words) - 50%

Coursework - essay (2,500 words) - 50%

13.2 Reassessment methods:

100% coursework

1. ***Map of Module Learning Outcomes (sections 8 & 9) to Learning and Teaching Methods (section12) and methods of Assessment (section 13)***

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Module learning outcome** | *8.1* | *8.2* | *8.3* | *8.4* | *8.5* | *8.6* |  | *9.1* | *9.2* | *9.3* | *9.4* | *9.5* |
| **Learning/ teaching method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Private Study | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |  | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |
| Lectures | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |  |  |  |  | **✓** | **✓** |
| Seminars | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |  | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |
| **Assessment method** |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Reflection (2500 words) | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |  |  |  |  | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |
| Essay (2500 words | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |  | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** | **✓** |  |

1. **Inclusive module design**

The School recognises and has embedded the expectations of current equality legislation, by ensuring that the module is as accessible as possible by design. Additional alternative arrangements for students with Inclusive Learning Plans (ILPs)/ declared disabilities will be made on an individual basis, in consultation with the relevant policies and support services.

The inclusive practices in the guidance (see Annex B Appendix A) have been considered in order to support all students in the following areas:

a) Accessible resources and curriculum

b) Learning, teaching and assessment methods

1. **Campus(es) or centre(s) where module will be delivered**

Canterbury

1. **Internationalisation**

The methods, models and theories reviewed have international relevance. The range of generic skills which will be developed are applicable to international contexts and the specific skills have potential international relevance

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**Revision record – all revisions must be recorded in the grid and full details of the change retained in the appropriate committee records.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date approved | Major/minor revision | Start date of the delivery of revised version | Section revised | Impacts PLOs( Q6&7 cover sheet) |
| 27/01/2019 | Major | January 2019 | 1, 2, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 17 | No |
|  |  |  |  |  |