IP901-20 Creating Knowledge for Change: Foundations of Transdisciplinary Research

22/23

Department
Liberal Arts
Level
Taught Postgraduate Level
Module leader
Marta Guerriero
Credit value
20
Module duration
10 weeks
Assessment
100% coursework
Study location
University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

This module aims at interrogating the foundations, principles and practices of inter- and trans-disciplinary research, with a specific focus on mixed methods research for change-making. Through the use of case studies and real-world examples, students will explore and evaluate the scope, value and limitations of different and combined approaches for knowledge creation. They will gain an advanced understanding of the ontological and epistemological factors which underpin research, as well as a range of contextual, practical and theoretical challenges. They will also gain knowledge of how to design, develop and manage a research intervention that responds in nuanced, robust and imaginative ways to complex and systemic problems.

Module aims

This module aims to:

- Explore the foundations and principles of inter- and trans-disciplinary research, and demonstrate models for good research project design and management

- Develop students' critical understanding of the theoretical principles and academic debates underpinning the selection and use of different research methods to find, generate, evaluate and interpret data
- Demonstrate how mixed methods research can interrogate the intersection between lived experience, textual discourses, systems of signification and quantifiable actions
- Foster an advanced awareness of the ethical implications associated with different methodologies, and the importance of ethical considerations in research design
- Encourage students to draw on diverse perspectives and methodological lenses to create positive solutions and knowledge for change.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

The following topics will be covered during the module. Each topic will be approached through case-studies and real-world examples:

- Ontological and epistemological foundations of research
- Multi-, inter- and trans-disciplinary research methodologies and approaches
- Identifying research gaps and designing research questions
- Advanced research issues, including researcher's positionality, ethical challenges, operationalisation of questions and concepts, and research partnerships
- Foundations of project management (design, implementation, evaluation and impact)
- Understanding critical reflection as a research methodology.

Learning outcomes

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

- Demonstrate advanced understanding of the foundations of inter- and trans-disciplinary research, including the ontological and epistemological factors which underpin different research methodologies
- Assess the scope, value and limitations of inter- and trans-disciplinary research methods, based on a range of contextual, practical and theoretical factors
- Demonstrate an ability to effectively plan a research project, including designing a research question, constructively combining research methods, and acknowledging the practical challenges of undertaking a research project
- Critically evaluate advanced issues of research used to create knowledge for change, including researcher’s positionality, ethical challenges, operationalisation of questions and concepts, and research partnerships
- Demonstrate cognitive and meta-cognitive skills such as critical thinking and analysis, planning how to approach a learning task, and identifying appropriate strategies to solve a problem

Indicative reading list

- Becker, H. S. (1998). Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bickman, L. and Brannen, J., eds (2008) The Sage Handbook of Social Research Methods. London: Sage.
- Bryman, A. (2015) Social Research Methods. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buckingham, A. and Saunders, P. (2004) The Survey Methods Workbook. Cambridge: Polity.
- Creswell, J. W., & Clark, V. L. P. (2017). Designing and conducting mixed methods research. London: Sage.
- Creswell, J.W. and Creswell, J.D. (2018). Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. Fifth edition. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Dean, J. (2017). Doing Reflexivity: An Introduction, Bristol: Policy Press.
- Johnson, R. B., & Onwuegbuzie, A. J. (2004). Mixed methods research: A research paradigm whose time has come. Educational researcher, 33(7), 14-26.
- King, G., Keohane, R. and Verba, S. (1994) Designing Social Inquiry. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Morgan, D. (2014). Integrating Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: A Pragmatic Approach. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Robson, C. (2011) Real World Research: a resource for users of social research methods in applied settings. London: Wiley.
- Ruane, J.M. (2016). Introducing Social Research Methods: Essentials for Getting the Edge, John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.
- Scheyvens, R. (2014). Development Field Work: A Practical Guide, SAGE Publications.
- Teddlie, C., & Tashakkori, A. (2009). Foundations of mixed methods research: Integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in the social and behavioral sciences. London: Sage.

Research element

Healey & Jenkins (2009) propose that Research-led-teaching design should consider four discrete opportunities. This module has been designed to include the first three of these opportunities.

1. Research-led learning, where the module syllabus is developed from current research in relevant fields, being based on contemporary and seminal, peer reviewed and other high quality research literature.
   As such, all knowledge for student engagement will be consciously and specifically chosen for its merits in reference to broader academic understanding.

2. Research-tutored learning, where students engage actively in discussing high quality, contemporary and seminal research literature. In exploring this module's case studies, and critical discussion around methodology, students will engage with high quality contemporary and seminal academic literature.

3. Research-orientated learning, where students are actively taught methodological understanding and skills for the independent creation of new knowledge. This module expressly provides students with the practical and conceptual understanding required to carry out well-considered and robustly-designed independent research.

4. Research-based learning, where student use developing methodological skills to create

original knowledge of their own. Though students will not use the methodological skills acquired for the independent creation of knowledge in this particular module, successful completion of it will enable them to do so in other master's level modules.

Interdisciplinary

Positive global transformations are widely recognised to require transdisciplinary approaches. This module has been designed according to our signature problem-based, response-focused pedagogy, and as such will draw on transdisciplinary knowledge, pedagogy and methodologies in the design and delivery of learning opportunities.

This module is expressly designed to provide students with skills and understanding which can be applied flexibly to a range of disciplinary contexts, while authentic assessment methods will require students to demonstrate transdisciplinary aptitude in tasks which are reflective of the practical application and critical evaluation of research design and implementation. Transdisciplinary aptitude will be explicitly embedded in relevant marking rubrics, as adapted from the standard university scale and descriptors.

International

This is a module on the Master’s in Global Sustainable Development which offers transdisciplinary, global and culturally-specific perspectives, allowing students to achieve breadth and depth of knowledge.

Subject specific skills

As a transdisciplinary module, all skills associated with it are inherently transferable and are outlined below.

Transferable skills

Fundamental principles of quantitative research approaches (methodological, ontological, epistemological)

Fundamental principles of qualitative research approaches (methodological, ontological, epistemological)

Fundamental principles of mixed methods research approaches (methodological, ontological, epistemological)

Fundamental principles of research project design, management, and evaluation

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Study

Study time

Type	Required
Seminars	10 sessions of 2 hours (10%)
Other activity	5 hours (2%)
Private study	60 hours (30%)
Assessment	115 hours (58%)
Total	200 hours

Private study description

Approximately 6 hours per week private study including reading, preparing for practical exercises, preparing tasks set for weekly taught sessions.

Other activity description

Guest sessions.

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group A1

	Weighting	Study time
Reflective journal	40%	40 hours
Reflective and evaluative portfolio of short essays connecting theory, methodology and practice, linked to readings and tasks taking place throughout the term.		
Mixed methods research project plan including application for ethical approval	60%	75 hours
Applied assessment: research project design, including selection of different methodologies, ethical considerations, and demonstration of principles of good research design.		

Feedback on assessment

Written feedback will be provided for all assessments. Students will be given the opportunity for verbal feedback. Where possible, peer-feedback methods will be employed.

Availability

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of TGDA-L801 Postgraduate Taught Global Sustainable Development