Course title: Research methods and legal writing			
Course code: MPL 173	**No. of credits:** 3	**L-T-P:** 24-9-18	**Learning hours:** 51
Pre-requisite course code and title (if any): None			
Department: Centre for Post Graduate Legal Studies			
Course coordinator: Dr Kavita	**Course instructor:** Dr Kavita		
Contact details: kavita@terisas.ac.in			
Course type: Core	**Course offered in:** Semester 1		

Course description:

The course aims to build scientific perspective, attitude and skills for systematic enquiry by developing understanding of philosophical foundations of research, various elements of research design and methods and tools for data collection and analysis.

The course will enable comprehension of principles and elements of research methodology, to formulate research problem, objectives and questions. It will introduce students to various methods, tools and techniques related to social and legal research. The focus of the course would be designing studies for applied research. It will also guide them to deal with various ethical and methodological concerns in doing research. The course will also discuss the limitations, benefits, appropriateness, and challenges of using qualitative and quantitative techniques in applied research.

The course has a strong practical component. Field visit is an essential part, which will help students understand the real challenges of conducting social research.

Course objectives:

1. To provide an understanding of various perspectives, methods and tools in social and legal research.
2. To equip students with tools for data collection
3. To enable students to undertake independent legal research

Course contents

S.No.	Topic	L	T	P
1	**FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH** Understanding its epistemological roots and methodological Options Introduction to Different Perspectives and types of research Dealing with ethical concerns	4	0	0
2	**DESIGNING RESEARCH** Defining the Research Problem and Objectives Literature Review (both theoretical and empirical) and gap identification Developing Research Questions Hypothesis & Types of hypotheses Research Design and Sampling	6	2	2
3	**METHODS AND TOOLS** Ethnographic Approaches Fieldwork and Participant Observation Interview Focus Group Discussion Survey and Questionnaire Design Case Study Participatory Approaches	5	3	6
4	**Legal Methods** Qualitative Legal Research Case Study Method of Legal Research Comparative Legal Research Inter-disciplinary Legal Research Empirical and Quantitative Legal Research	5	0	6
5	**DATA ANALYSIS** Quantitative Data Analysis Qualitative Data Analysis	4	2	2

	• Making sense of multiple perspectives: Approaches and techniques for analysis of qualitative data • Data validation • Identifying needs and policy priorities Identifying limitations of research			
6	**Legal Writing** Elements of legal writing. Purpose of legal writing- research, chamber, courts etc. This covers a practical exercise in writing legal, resulting in writing a research note on a legal topic.	0	2	2
	Total	24	9	18

Evaluation criteria:

1. Research Problem, Objectives and Research Question (Practical): 20%
2. Survey Methods (Practical): 25%
3. Presentation: 25%
4. Major Test (end semester):30%

Learning outcomes:

On completion of this course, the students would:

1. Carry out independent research pertaining to any specific legal issue
2. Design a research, justifying use of various methods/tools to carry out the same
3. Collect, analyse and interpret both quantitative and qualitative data

Pedagogical approach

In order to support active learning, the lectures in this course are supplemented with a large number of tutorials and practical work. The emphasis of these tutorials and practical hours (field visits) is to encourage the active involvement of students in undertaking tasks that help them better understand concepts / methods / tools in social and legal research. Students practice and learn by doing. Interviewing, focus groups, participatory exercises and survey method are practiced, and evaluated, in the form of role play, in-class activities and group exercises.

Materials:

Suggested readings

Bryman, A.,(2008). Social research methods. 3rd edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Desai, V. and Potter, R. B. (eds) (2006). Doing Development Research. London: Sage.

May T. (1997). Social research: Issues, methods and process. Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Robson C. (1993). Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers.

Oxford: Blackwell.

Scheyvens R. and Storey, D. (eds.) (2003). Development fieldwork: A practical guide. London: Sage.

Shirley. White A.(1999). The Art of Facilitating Participation: Realising the Power of Grassroots Communication. New Delhi: Sage.

Freire, P. (2005). Pedagogy of the Oppressed. New York: Continuum.

Cane, P and Kritzer, H.(2010). The Oxford Handbook of Empirical Legal Research.
Oxford Handbooks

Verma, SK & Wani, Afzal V (eds) (2001). Legal Research and Methodology. New Delhi: Indian Law Institute.

Strunk, W. and White E.B. (2000). Elements of Style. 4th ed., New York: Longman.

Other Readings (for specific modules) :

Foundations of social research

Scheyvens R. and Storey, D., 2003, eds., Development fieldwork: A practical guide, London: Sage (chapters 8 and 9).

White, H., 2002, 'Combining quantitative and qualitative approaches in poverty analysis', World Development, 30(3): 511-522.

Participatory methods

Cooke, B. and Kothari, U., 2001, eds, Participation: The New Tyranny? London: Zed Books (chapters 1 and 9).

Mikkelsen, B., 2005, Methods for development work and research: A new guide for practitioners, 2nd edition, New Delhi and London: Sage (chapters 2 and 3)

Mosse, D., 1994, 'Authority, gender and knowledge: Theoretical reflections on the practice of participatory rural appraisal, Development and Change, 25(3): 497-526.

Ethnographic approaches

Hammersley, M., 1992, What's wrong with ethnography? London: Routledge.

Scheyvens R. and Storey, D., 2003, eds., Development fieldwork: A practical guide, London: Sage (chapter 4).

Thapar-Björkert, S. and Henry, M., 2004, 'Reassessing the research relationship: Location, position and power in fieldwork accounts', International Journal of Social Research Methodology 7(5): 363-381.

Survey methods

Czaja, R. and Blair, J., 2005, Designing surveys: A guide to decisions and procedures, 2nd edition, Thousand Oaks and London: Pine Forge.

Grosh, M. and Glewwe, P., 2000, eds., Designing household survey questionnaires for developing countries: Lessons from 15 years of the living standards measurement study. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.

Groves, R. M. et al, 2009, Survey methodology, 2nd edition, Hoboken: Wiley.

Analysing data

Coffey, A. and Atkinson, P., 1996, Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage (particularly chapters 1 and 2).

Robson C. , 1993, Real world research: A resource for social scientists and practitioner-researchers. Oxford: Blackwell (chapter on analysing qualitative data).

Silverman D. 2006, Interpreting qualitative data: Methods for analyzing talk, text and interaction, 3rd edition, London: Sage (sections in part two).
Additional information (if any):
Student responsibilities: Attendance: At-least 75% attendance will be necessary to be able to appear for the final exam.

Course reviewers:

Prof. Bindu Ronald, Professor, Symbiosis Law School, Pune
Dr. Anirban Mazumdar, Associate Professor, The West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences, Kolkata.