



KAUTILYA SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

GITAM (Deemed to be University)

Rudraram, Patancheru Mandal

Hyderabad, Telangana 502329

Course Code: PPOL6131	Course Title: Navigating the Field: Research Ethics and Methods	
Trimester: 5	Course Type: General Core	Credits: 3
Home Program(s): MPP	Batch/Academic Year: 2023-2025	
Course Lead: Dr. Chandrasekhar Commuri, Dr. Vishnu S Pillai	Assigned Academic Associate:	

Course Description

Transformative evidence-based policy decisions depend on robust fieldwork. In this course, students will learn the basic fundamentals of crafting a research project and planning its execution towards successful completion. Based on the topic of their choice, determined in consultation with a faculty member, students will be guided to conduct literature reviews, identify policy problem(s), and explore appropriate theoretical and analytical frameworks to attend to their resolution. The course will adopt a deeply hands-on approach and will be treated as a precursor to students' capstone, which entails independent work. The course will enable students to become independent evidence-based policy researchers in pursuit of evolving as successful policy practitioners.

Learning Objectives

1. State the fundamental elements of and steps towards conducting a policy research project
2. Define researcher positionality and outline the different positions towards research subjects
3. Develop research projects taking into account standard ethical practices in particular reference to human subjects
4. Formulate a research proposal in an area of interest with feedback from faculty and peers
5. Conduct a pilot project to test the proposal and make necessary amends as required

Course Outcomes

On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. Understand the fundamental basis of research inquiry based on human subjects.
2. Recognize the importance of safeguarding subject confidentiality and privacy.
3. Learn how to build trust and deal with unanticipated challenges while conducting

human subject research.

4. Learn how to formulate a convincing and feasible research proposal.
5. Learn how to conduct a policy research inquiry, from gathering evidence to recommending policy solutions.

Course Schedule

Unit I	Sessions: 4	Basics of Policy Research
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inductive and deductive research approach (based on the logic of inquiry) ● Creating a good hypothesis ● Links between theory and research ● Purpose of research – exploration, description, explanation ● Qualitative and quantitative research methods (a division based on the type of data – a brief introduction) ● Primary data and secondary data (another division based on the type of data) ● Causality ● Units of analysis ● Type of research – the time dimensions ● Designing a research project ● Literature review 		
Unit II	Sessions: 3	Threats to Validity and Types of Research Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Threats to statistical conclusion validity ● Threats to internal validity ● Threats to construct validity ● Threats to external validity ● Experimental research design ● Quasi-experimental research design ● Non-experimental research design 		
Unit III	Sessions: 8	Research And Professional Ethics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identifying positionality and overcoming researcher bias ● Human Subjects and their Rights ● Procedure for Ensuring Research Integrity ● Professional Ethics and Limits to Human-focused Inquiry ● Common Mistakes and How to Avoid them 		
Unit IV	Sessions: 9	Approaches to Research Inquiry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Qualitative Paradigm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Interviewing o Focus group discussion/workshops o Observation o Analysing Qualitative Data <input type="checkbox"/> Quantitative Paradigm <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Sampling logic o Questionnaire Design o Different survey methods o Basics of Factor Analysis <input type="checkbox"/> Mixed-Methods Research - basics 		