



**Centre for the Study of Law and Governance
Jawaharlal Nehru University
New Delhi-110067**

Outline of Compulsory Course

LG 601 Research Methods

The Research Methodology Course has been designed with the following objectives in view: first, the students need to be introduced to basic debates about the nature of the social sciences, the character of explanation, and so forth. Second, it is proposed to introduce the students to a variety of research methods, both qualitative and quantitative. Not all students would be using all of these methodologies in their research. But we do hope to train students to be better readers of the social science that is routinely produced these days. For instance, in an intellectual climate where the use of data sets has become very common in social science, it is important to give the students some minimal skills to decipher a graph or an elementary correlation. We feel that students acquainted with a wide range of methodologies will be better equipped to read and critically apprehend work produced in the social sciences. It is with this understanding that the course has been designed with twin objectives of introducing students to issues in the philosophy of social sciences and to contemporary research techniques – both qualitative and quantitative.

The course is divided in three parts:

Part I: Conceptual Issues in Social Sciences

Part II: Qualitative Methods (Ethnographic Methods, Historical Research and PRA Methods)

Part III: Quantitative Methods

The details of some of the topics that will be pursued under each part are as follows:

Part I: Conceptual Issues in Social Sciences

- The Science/ Social Science Contrast
- Causation
- Interpretation and Meaning
- Objectivity in Social Science
- Methodological Individualism

Part II: Qualitative Methods

- Ethnographic Methods

This section is designed to introduce students to ethnographic research methods. They will be taught concepts like participant observation, emic and etic perspectives, informants, cultural patterning.

1. History, theory and ethics of anthropological fieldwork
2. Research methods: framing a research question, site selection, language learning, identifying informants, interviews (open ended, structured), questionnaires, surveys, participant observation, writing field notes.
3. Personal accounts of fieldwork, with a special focus on gender.

4. Writing ethnographies
 5. Visual anthropology (the use of photography and film in anthropology)
- Historical Research
 1. What is an archive and how to use it (including diaries, personal papers, letters, newspapers)
 2. Oral History
 - PRA methods
 1. Mapping, transects, focus groups, wealth ranking, preference ranking, season and historical diagramming (time lines, day in the life of.. etc.)
 2. Critiques of PRA

Part III: Quantitative Methods

The broad aim of the quantitative section of the course is to:

- a. To build familiarity with ideas and concepts of empirical investigation and modelling.
- b. To develop technical skills for describing, analyzing, and presenting quantitative data.
- c. To appreciate the role of judgement in drawing inferences from data and analysis.

The course will attempt to cover the following heads:

- Overview, Understanding Data, Measurement
- Basic Probability, Probability Distributions, Statistical Inference and Hypothesis Testing
- Sampling Strategies including Survey Design
- Controlling for "Other" Variables