



<b>Course Code &amp; Title</b>	<b>LISS362 Introduction to Systematic Reviews</b>				
<b>Convenor(s)</b>	Farida Soliman				
<b>Institution</b>	QMUL	<b>Department</b>		LISS DTP	
<b>Academic Year</b>	2021-22	<b>Term</b>		Summer	
<b>Number of sessions</b>	7	<b>Research Platform</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social Theory &amp; Epistemology (STE)</li><li>• Qualitative Research (QuL)</li><li>• Quantitative Research (QuT)</li></ul>	<b>Length of Session(s)</b>	2 hrs
<b>Day, Date</b>		<b>Start : End</b>		<b>Room Location</b>	
Tuesdays starting 02/05/2022 (Except the week of 05/06/2022)		13:00 : 15:00		Via Zoom	
<b>Enrolment Links:</b>	<a href="#">Click here</a> to register on Skillsforge. You may be prompted to log in.				

#### Course Description:

The overall aim of this course is to provide students with a holistic overview of systematic reviews as well as equip them with the necessary practical skills to conduct their own systematic reviews. The course combines both theoretically and practically driven sessions to ensure students are able to apply the methods learned in the theory sessions. There are 5 main themes for this course; firstly, a theoretical understanding of the research methodology as a whole. Secondly, the course shifts its focus to designing and planning a review (including all the pre-review steps needed to ensure the review is conducted smoothly). Thirdly, we go through the steps required to conduct a systematic review after the planning stage. Having covered the practical elements of conducting a systematic review, the course explores the different ways in which data can be synthesised and, finally, disseminated.

After completing the course, students should feel confident planning a systematic review and going through its different phases. Students will also have gained a brief overview of different synthesis methods and ways in which they can communicate their findings.

The learning outcomes are described below based on the 5 main themes discussed above.



### **Theory**

- Understand what a systematic review is and why it is useful.
  - o Different types of reviews (rapid reviews, evidence and gap maps, meta-review) and why one might apply these methods.
- Understand the difference between the systematic review element and the synthesis.
- Understand the similarities and differences between qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods systematic reviews (within this also develop a basic understanding of the different approaches to systematic review synthesis).
- Explore the differences between additive/aggregative and interpretive/configurative methods of systematic reviews and syntheses.

### **Designing & planning a systematic review**

- Learning to define your research question and selecting your methodology.
- Identifying and reaching out to relevant stakeholders during the design stage of the review.
- Understanding the importance of setting up and defining your conceptual framework during the planning phase of the review.
- Defining your inclusion and exclusion criteria based on your framework.
  - o Understanding the implications behind the criteria outlined above and some of the practical choices you might be forced to make regarding feasibility of completing a review.
  - o Setting parameters regarding dates, types of studies to be included, choice of database, and being able to weigh up costs/benefits.
- How to write and register a systematic review protocol.

### **Conducting a systematic review**

- Evaluating pros/cons of different systematic review software or reference management programs (EPPI, Zotero, Endnote, or manually on Excel).
- Identifying studies for the systematic review with database searching, using grey literature, backwards and forwards citation tracking, and other sources.
  - o Learn how to develop and pilot a search strategy.
  - o Understand the differences and benefits of exhaustive, narrow, iterative searches.
  - o Organise references and records throughout the search and the review – “basic housekeeping” and transparency/replicability.
  - o Evaluate the efficacy of a search and mitigating different biases.
- Screening the identified studies and determining study eligibility
  - o Students will learn how to
    - Develop screening tools.
    - Pilot screening tools and reconcile differences.
    - Reduce human error and ensure consistency amongst the review team.
    - Ensure transparency throughout the screening processes.
- Data extraction and quality assessment
  - o What tools are available for use
    - How do these vary based on the type of review and type of included studies (more qualitative or quantitative).
  - o How to capture the data you need
    - Piloting your tools and ensuring consistency amongst coders.



- Open vs closed coding.
- Quality appraisal and its impact on the validity of the systematic review
  - Different dimensions of quality assessment (for the included studies and the systematic review as a whole).
  - Justifying ecological validity of your review and results.
  - Assessing the methodological standards of the included studies.
  - How to integrate quality assessment in the review.

***Approaches to systematic review synthesis***

- Overview of different approaches to synthesis.

***Presenting your findings***

- Communicating the systematic review findings to academic and non-academic audiences.
- How to transparently report your findings and ensure the review adheres to best practice.

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Theory (first hour)</b>	<b>Practice (second hour)</b>
1	03/05	Understanding what systematic reviews are	NA
		Defining research question and identifying the problem (who needs the review, what is it for etc)	
2	10/05	Identifying studies relevant to your review How to develop a search strategy Defining PICOS and conceptual framework	Piloting and conducting the search
3	17/05	Study eligibility Implications Different ways to code studies Best practice in screening	Developing your screening tool and coding your studies
4	24/05	NA	Data extraction & Quality Assessment (quantitative reviews)
			Data extraction and quality assessment (qualitative review)
5	31/05	Quality assurance throughout the review	Protocol writing workshop
6	14/06	Different ways to synthesise data	NA
		Communicating your findings and using the review	
7	21/06	10-15 min bookable sessions to go over students' specific projects and provide tailored feedback.	

**Reading List:**

*Main Textbook to be used:*

Gough, D., In Oliver, S., & In Thomas, J. (2012). *An introduction to systematic reviews*. London: Sage.

*Other Resources:*

- Cochrane Library



## London Interdisciplinary Social Science Doctoral Training Partnership

### Advanced Research Methods in Social Sciences

- PRISMA Guidelines
- EPPI Centre

#### **Eligibility:**

Systematic reviewing as a methodology is a useful tool for all social sciences, but specifically researchers focused on policy and practice, health/mental health, and childhood development.

#### **Pre-course preparation:**

- Students already aiming to complete or start a systematic review should send in a brief description of their research questions, planned methods (if any), and research interests.
- Students should familiarise themselves with databases relevant to their field of interest.

#### **Number of students:**

*Minimum number required to run: 5*

*Maximum number of places available: 20*