



P_SS: Social Science for Postgraduate Study

Portfolio Part 2

'A piece of written work where the student discusses factors determining researcher's choice of methodology, making references to ontological and epistemological perspectives, methodological approaches and other relevant factors.'

For this part of the Portfolio, you need to demonstrate your understanding of relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodology in social science research.

Your discussion should include discussion of the following questions:

1. What implications do ontological and epistemological perspectives have for our understanding of the creation of knowledge in social research?
2. How does epistemology link to methodology?
 - a. How would a Positivist (objective) perspective influence a researcher's choice of methodological approach and research methods?
 - b. How would an Interpretivist (subjective) perspective influence a researcher's choice of methodological approach and research methods?
3. What other factors impact researcher's choice of methodology and methods?

Think about how you structure your writing. Having an analytical and comparative structure will make it easier to actually write and compare the approaches to research. You have 900 words for this Theme. Think about how many words you will allocate to each section, ensuring that each is covered in sufficient detail.

The piece of work must be written in continuous prose and an academic style. Do not use bullet points, tables, or your own personal abbreviations.

To get started, use the sources that you already have to help you with your understanding: reading assigned to you each week, studies that you have discussed in seminar and additional reading indicated in the 'further reading' folder.



However, you should write in your own words. There will be vocabulary and phrases that may be unavoidable, but do not copy whole sentences or paragraphs from the sources you use, unless you are quoting directly from a text. Remember that paraphrasing is an important skill to develop! We are not looking for perfect English, but your work should demonstrate your understanding of the ideas you are writing about.

There are unlikely to be sources that provide you with 'the answer'. Instead, you need to locate sources that provide relevant information and analysis, which you can use to help construct your essay. These include books available in the University libraries and academic articles which can be downloaded from StarPlus. There is also a recommended reading list. Where you have used information or ideas from a particular source, you must acknowledge this. You must do this by providing an in-text citation, and final reference list (bibliography). Please consult the APA referencing guide to learn how to format the references – you can find this guide on MOLE.