

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI



**VICTORIA**  
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

*Te Kura Mahinga Tangata*

Sociology and Social Policy

**SOSC / SPOL 489**

*Research Paper*

# Course Outline

CRN 1674 /4639: 30 POINTS : TRIM 1+2, 2009

(2 March – 15 November)

**COURSE COORDINATOR: DR CHAMSY EL-OJEILI**

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# **SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY**

## **SOSC / SPOL 489 - RESEARCH PAPER 2009**

### **COURSE COORDINATOR**

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### **COURSE AIMS**

The aim of the course is to provide students with an extended period of research experience on a topic of interest chosen after consultation with the co-ordinator and other staff in the Programme. The topic might well be one which comes within the general area of another Honours paper, though the Research Report for SOSC/SPOL 489 should be envisaged as a separate exercise and cannot be submitted as a project for another Honours course. For some students the course can be envisaged as a pilot project for an MA

At the start of the course there will be informal sessions discussing ongoing projects and sharing research experiences. Several meetings will be held in the first trimester to develop the research proposal and design; and to discuss problems and strategies arising from the experience of field research. But at an early stage students will begin to analyse and write up the data working with their supervisor.

### **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

The course should not be viewed as an attempt to complete a major and polished research project producing original findings. It should be seen as a pilot project or case study in sociological/social policy research. In particular, the course is directed at developing the research potential and competence of students in these disciplines. Research competence in sociology/social policy may be demonstrated in the following areas:

1. **conceptual ability** - conceptualising the project and relating it to the existing body of knowledge and research on the subject chosen.
2. **methodological competence** - developing an appropriate research design and strategy for the project. This includes justifying your sample selection.

3. **field experience** - dealing with the practical problems of data collection and accessibility.
4. **analytical skills** - the ability to integrate the data collected and conceptual/theoretical issues raised in the final report.
5. **resource utilization** - participation in research seminars. This includes the ability to develop interest and provide feedback on your colleagues' research projects; consultation with the supervisor, co-ordinator and other interested researchers or organisations at each stage of the research process.
6. **management of research** - developing your personal schedule on conducting and completing the research within the constraints of time and resources. While no formal evaluation is made in these areas, research students should set these as their personal goals.

## **SUPERVISION**

Supervisors will be allocated, as far as possible, on the basis of the theoretical and methodological interests of students. Subject to enrolment numbers, no staff member shall supervise more than two students.

## **ASSESSMENT**

The course co-ordinator will monitor progress with supervisors and students. Three reports are required and will be assessed by the supervisors. The format of these reports are:

### **1. *Research Proposal and Design Report - 15%***

Provide an outline of your research problem, specifying questions you are interested in investigating. Indicate conceptual/theoretical interests and issues. Set out briefly the research design you propose to use.

**Due date:** 4pm, Friday 27 April 2009

### **2. *Literature and Methodology Report - 15%***

This will summarise the state of knowledge about your topic, stating its relevance to your present research. The report will also include a discussion of the research strategy you are going to adopt and the methodological problems anticipated arising from the first report.

**Due date:** 4pm, Friday 5 June 2009

### **3. Final Research Report - 70%**

The maximum word limit is normally 10,000 words (excluding bibliography and appendices) but this will depend on the nature of the research. The final report should be typewritten. It will incorporate the preceding reports though not necessarily in the same form as originally presented. As this piece of work will also be read by the external examiner it should be complete and not assume the reader has knowledge of the earlier progress reports. **Three copies** of this report will be required. The Programme reserves the right to retain one copy.

Only a letter grade will be given to students for reports 1 and 2. In recognition of the fact that varying rates of progress are demonstrated by each individual student at a different stage in the research process, the assessment procedure has been made flexible. If the final report turns out to be better than the marks for the first two reports, the latter will be ignored.

You are expected to discuss a draft outline of the final report with your supervisor before proceeding to the writing up of the final version. Supervisors will be happy to comment on a first draft if this is handed in by the end of September at the latest.

**Due date:** The **final date** on which research reports may be accepted is 4pm, Monday 26 October 2009

**Note:** All grades given for in-term work are provisional. Final grades are determined, in conjunction with the external-examiner, at the examiners' meeting in November.

### **HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS**

Two copies of each of the Research Proposal and the Literature Review should be handed in - one to the student's supervisor and one to the course coordinator, Dr Chamsy el-Ojeili.

***STUDENTS MUST KEEP A COPY OF EVERY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT.***

The Department will accept no responsibility for pieces of work claimed to have been handed in.

### **MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

Mandatory course requirements are the completion and submission by due date of the Proposal, Literature Review, and Final Report.

## WORKLOAD

The workload should average 10 hours a week throughout the course. The actual workload will vary at various stages of the research process - sometimes it is likely to be more than 10 hours, at others less.

## GRADES FOR SOCIOLOGY ASSIGNMENTS

The Department of Sociology and Social Policy follows university policy in giving letter grades for all internally assessed work instead of giving numerical marks. The following table sets out the range of marks within which each letter grade is assigned. Your final grade and marks for the course will be an aggregate of the grades you achieve during the course.

PASS	A+	85% or over	FAILURE:	D	40%-49%
	A	80% - 84%		E	Below 40%
	A-	75% - 79%			
	B+	70% - 74%			
	B	65% - 69%			
	B-	60% - 64%			
	C+	55% - 59%			
	C	50% - 54%			

## GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

## ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

## OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

Head of School:	Assoc. Professor Jenny Neale, MY1013 Tel: 463 5827 E-m: <a href="mailto:Jenny.Neale@vuw.ac.nz">Jenny.Neale@vuw.ac.nz</a>
International Student Liaison:	Dr Hal Levine MY1023 Tel: 463 6132 E-m: <a href="mailto:Hal.Levine@vuw.ac.nz">Hal.Levine@vuw.ac.nz</a>
Maori and Pacific Student Liaison:	Jan - June: Dr David Pearson, MY1020 Tel: 463 6131 E-m: <a href="mailto:Deavid/Pearson@vuw.ac.nz">Deavid/Pearson@vuw.ac.nz</a> Jul - Dec: Dr Trevor Bradley, MY1101 Tel: 463 5432 E-m: <a href="mailto:Trevor.Bradley@vuw.ac.nz">Trevor.Bradley@vuw.ac.nz</a>
Students with Disabilities Liaison:	Dr Russil Durrant, MY1120 Tel: 463 9980 E-m: <a href="mailto:Russil.Durrant@vuw.ac.nz">Russil.Durrant@vuw.ac.nz</a>
School Manager:	Carol Hogan, MY918 Tel: 463 6546 E-m: <a href="mailto:Carol.Hogan@vuw.ac.nz">Carol.Hogan@vuw.ac.nz</a>
School Administrators:	Monica Lichti, Alison Melling MY921, Tel: 463 5317, 463 5258 E-m: <a href="mailto:sacs@vuw.ac.nz">sacs@vuw.ac.nz</a>

## USEFUL READING

Supervisors will assist with advice on reading specific to your project but the you might find some useful tips and ideas in the following:

An extremely useful 'how to do research' book is:

Wadsworth, Y. (1990) *Do it Yourself Social Research* Allen and Unwin.

A splendid text on the writing process is:

Becker H.S (1986) *Writing for Social Scientists* University of Chicago Press

And still worthy of your attention is:

Mills, C. Wright (1959) *The Sociological Imagination* Oxford U.P. (see Appendix on 'Intellectual Craftsmanship')

Other useful texts, and these are just a selection, so browse further, are:

Howard K and J.A Sharp (1983) *The Management of a Student Research Project* Aldershot: Gower

Laing P (1992) *Supervising the Qualitative Research of Graduate Students* Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the New Zealand Association of Social Anthropologists, November

Locke L.F et al (1987) *Proposals That Work: A Guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals* Beverly Hills: Sage

Madsen D (1983) *Successful Dissertations and Theses* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Moses I (1984) *Supervision of Higher Degree Students - Problem Areas and Possible Solutions*, Higher Education Research and Development 3(2): 153-165

Sandelowski M, David D.H and B.G Harris (1989) *Artful Design: Writing the Proposal for Research in the Naturalist Paradigm* Research in Nursing and Health 12: 77-84

Tornquist E.M and S.G Funk (1990) *How to Write a Research Grant Proposal*, IMAGE: Journal of Nursing Scholarship 22(1): 44-51

An excellent general text on research methods is:

May, Tim (1997) *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process* (2nd ed) Buckingham: Open University Press.

A New Zealand text on qualitative sociological research is:

Tolich, Martin and Carl Davidson (1998) *Starting Fieldwork: An Introduction to Qualitative Research in New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Other recent texts include:

Bell, J (1993) *Doing your research project : a guide for first-time researchers in education and social science*, Buckingham: Open University Press

Gilbert, N(ed) (1993) *Researching Social Life*, London: Sage

Hobbs, D and T May (eds) (1993) *Interpreting the field : accounts of ethnography*, Oxford : Clarendon Press ; New York : Oxford University Press,

Morse, Janice M (ed) (1994) *Critical issues in qualitative research methods*, Thousand Oaks : Sage

Prus, R C (1996) *Symbolic interaction and ethnographic research: intersubjectivity and the study of human lived experience*, Albany : State University of New York Press

Reinharz, S (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, New York: Oxford University Press