

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*

**M. A. (APPLIED)  
SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

**SSRE 511: Processes and Organisation of Research**

**SSRE 521: Strategies and Techniques of Research**

# Course Outline

**CRN 3118/3119 : 30 POINTS EACH : TRIM 1+2,2009**

**(2 March – 15 November)**

**COURSE COORDINATOR: DR ANNETTE BEASLEY**

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**LECTURES: ALTERNATE FRI 9-12NOON AND 1-4PM, KIRK 204**

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<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE NO</b>
Contact Details .....	2
Course Readings.....	2
Course Aims and Learning Objectives.....	3
Class Delivery .....	3
Assessment.....	4
Mandatory Course Requirements.....	6
Course Timetable 2008.....	7
Reading Seminar Timetable.....	10
Assignments.....	12
Criteria for Assessing a Research Project or Thesis .....	22
Guidelines for Evaluating Empirical/Experimental Studies.....	23
General University Policies and Statutes.....	24
Other Contact Information .....	25
Assignment Cover Sheet .....	26

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**OFFICE HOURS:** By arrangement

**LECTURES:** Most alternate Fridays 9am – 12 noon  
and 1 - 4pm throughout the academic  
year in KK 204

## **COURSE DETAILS**

These two core papers of the MA (Applied) in Social Science Research, SSRE 511 - Processes and Organisation of Research and SSRE 521 - Strategies and Techniques of Research are taught concurrently. A variety of quantitative and qualitative social science research methods and techniques are examined within the context of relevant theoretical perspectives.

## **COURSE READINGS**

There is a set text and a book of student notes assigned to this course.

### **Set Text**

Crotty, Michael, 1998: *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney

The text can be purchased from the Victoria University Book Centre in the Student Union Building at a cost of approx. \$58.

### **Student Notes**

The reading notes can be purchased from the Student Notes Centre in the Student Union Building at a cost of approx. \$25.

## **COURSE AIMS**

- To examine quantitative and qualitative social science research methods and techniques
- To critically explore key social science theoretical perspectives and their relationship to research methodologies

## **LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

This course is designed to develop skills to:

- critically evaluate the assumptions informing the selection of a research framework
- understand the rationale behind the employment of a particular research method
- use a variety of techniques to collect information appropriate to a selected methodology
- understand the process of data analysis using a variety of methods
- understand the relationship between theory and methodology
- identify and critically evaluate the assumptions underpinning dominant social science theoretical perspectives
- present research data and results in a clear, logical and concise manner
- design a research project and write a research proposal

## **CLASS DELIVERY**

These two papers are taught concurrently in block mode. The sessions will involve a mix of lectures, seminar discussions and practical exercises as detailed in the timetable. Students are encouraged to actively participate in each session and will be assigned responsibility for leading the reading seminars.

## ASSESSMENT

### Reading seminars

The reading seminars are central to the course programme, and are designed to complement the lecture material and to foster critical thinking abilities. All required readings can be found in either the set text or the course book of readings. *All students are expected to have read the material **prior** to the class and to actively participate in discussion.*

*Reading seminar preparation accounts for 5% of the total grade for each paper.*

A timetable assigning each student joint responsibility (class numbers permitting) for a seminar presentation of a total of **four** reading discussions will be draw up during the first class meeting.

*Please note that once the timetable has been drawn up it is the student's responsibility to negotiate with other students any required change to the scheduled presentation. Failure to fulfil this course requirement will results in loss of marks except in the case of illness or extreme emergency.*

Students assigned a particular reading are required to work together to prepare the seminar which must include the following:

- a joint *PowerPoint* presentation of the key aspects of the set reading - **not to exceed 15 minutes**  
**and either**
- a *minimum of four* questions/points raised in the reading to stimulate a class discussion  
**or**
- a class exercise/demonstration which illustrates/explains/develops/clarifies the content of the set reading (45 minute time allocation)\
- a glossary of any definitions/specialised terms (preferably in your own words) to circulate among the class
- an electronic copy of the *PowerPoint* slides to be circulated to the class and lecturer as part of the course assessment **prior to** the specified class.

### *PowerPoint guidelines*

- Don't over overload/over-animate the slides - less is more!
- Rule of thumb – maximum of 5 lines per slide, maximum of one line per point
- Focus – use key words, phrases - avoid PowerPoint karaoke ie verbatim reading of the text
- Limit data slides to no more than 8 for a 15 minute presentation
- Include a summary slide of key words, concepts or points/findings etc
- Number and title slides
- Minimum font size 28 pt – larger for titles
- Avoid using the mouse as a pointer

## Written assessment

These two papers are internally assessed through a total of six assignments. In addition to the seminar preparation, three pieces of work are required for each paper if a pass is to be obtained.

In recognition of the diverse backgrounds of the students who enrol for this course and the fact that some are returning to study after a prolonged absence, students have the opportunity to resubmit *one* failed assignment from either assignment *1b Research Perspectives* or assignment *2b Exploring a Research Topic* for remarking on a pass/fail, no comments basis.

- |           |   |   |                       |
|-----------|---|---|-----------------------|
| <b>1b</b> | <b><i>Research perspectives (SSRE521)</i></b>             | <i>Due: 4pm, Monday 6 April</i>                               | <i>Weighting: 20%</i> |
| <b>1a</b> | <b><i>Excel exercise (SSRE 511)</i></b>                   | <i>Due: 4pm, Tuesday 2 June</i>                               | <i>Weighting: 15%</i> |
| <b>2a</b> | <b><i>Questionnaire design and critique (SSRE511)</i></b> | <i>Due: in class, Friday 1 May and<br/>4pm, Monday 11 May</i> | <i>Weighting: 30%</i> |
| <b>2b</b> | <b><i>Exploring a research topic (SSRE521)</i></b>        | <i>Due: 4pm, Monday 3 August</i>                              | <i>Weighting: 30%</i> |
| <b>3b</b> | <b><i>Annotated bibliography (SSRE521)</i></b>            | <i>Due: 4pm, Monday 7 September</i>                           | <i>Weighting: 45%</i> |
| <b>3a</b> | <b><i>Research proposal (SSRE 511)</i></b>                | <i>Due: 4pm, Monday 5 October</i>                             | <i>Weighting: 50%</i> |

## EXTENSIONS AND LATENESS

Because this is a professional course, an important aspect of the learning process is an ability to manage workloads so that deadlines can be met. This means that ***no extensions will be granted*** unless illness or another extreme emergency prevents you from submitting an assignment. *Any extension must be arranged before the due date and extension will not be extended beyond the period of certified illness or emergency.*

*Note that assessment work will not be accepted for marking more than 7 days after the due date or 7 days after an approved extension date. However, work must still be submitted to meet the mandatory course requirements.*

## LATE PENALTIES

Late submissions for student assignments are subject to a penalty. The exact deduction will be calculated on the basis of one half mark per day late for each 10 marks, i.e. 1 mark will be deducted each day for an assignment worth 20% of the total course mark.

## EXPECTED WORKLOADS

Students should expect to set aside 18 hours per week, including class contact hours, for this course as per the faculty recommendations for a 500 level course. Please note that these times can however increase or decrease at different stages throughout the course.

## MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- Attendance at scheduled lectures unless previously arranged.
- Completion of all assignments including satisfactory reading seminar preparation and participation, and the end of course class presentation.

## GRADES

The Social Science Research Programme 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.

<b>Pass</b>	A+	85% or over	Evidence of familiarity with relevant reading, sound understanding of relevant theoretical/methodological issues, plus individual interpretation and insights of a higher order. An A grade will not be achieved without such insight. Work well presented with logical structure that includes an introduction and a conclusion in addition to clarity of expression.
	A	80%-84%	
	A-	75%-79%	
	B+	70-74%	As above, but less individual insight and preparation. High level of understanding exhibited. Assignment well presented.
	B	65%-69%	
	B-	60%-64%	
	C+	55%-59%	Work lacks originality, individual insights and not strong on understanding. However, material used is relevant and presentation is satisfactory.
	C	50%-54%	
<b>Fail</b>	D	40%-49%	Little evidence of reading or comprehension. No insight. Poor presentation.
	E	Below 40%	A clear failure to reach an adequate standard on the criteria set out.

## COURSE TIMETABLE 2008

Wk	Date	Time	Topic	Lecturer	Reading
<b>APPROACHES TO SOCIAL RESEARCH</b>					
<b>1</b>	6 Mar	9-10am	Course Intro <b>T1 Philosophical assumptions</b>	Annette Beasley	
		10-12noon	Discussion		Sacks (1995)
		1-2.30pm	<b>T2 The research process</b> Lecture/discussion	AB	Crotty (1998) Chpt 1
		2.30-4pm	<b>T3 Ethics</b> Film and discussion		Kirkman (2001)
<b>2</b>	20 Mar	9-10am	<b>T4 Maori research</b> Reading seminar	AB	Ball (2005)
		10-12noon	Guest lecture	Laurie Porima	Smith (2005)
		1-2 pm	<b>T5 Pacific perspectives</b> Reading seminar		Sanga (2004) Fonua (2004)
		2-3.30pm	Guest lecturer	Prof. Fairbairn-Dunlop	
		3.30-4pm	<i>Assignment 1b, Research perspectives, guidelines</i>		
<b>QUANTATIVE RESEARCH TECHNIQUES</b>					
<b>3</b>	3 Apr	9-10am	<b>T6 Positivism</b> Reading seminar	AB	Crotty (1998) Chpt 2
		10.00-12noon	<b>T7 Surveys</b> Lecture	Jenny Neale	
		1-2.30pm	<b>T8 Coding and presentation of quantitative data</b> Reading seminar	AB	Feilding (1993) Desrosières (2001)
		2.30-4pm	Coding exercise		
	<b>6 April Due 4pm</b>	<b>Assignment 1b</b>	<b>Research perspectives</b>		
<b>4</b>	1 May	9-12noon	<b>T9 Excel workshop</b> MY221	Edwin Hermann	
		1.00-1.30pm	<i>Assignment 1a, Excel Exercise guidelines</i>	AB	
		1.30-4pm	<b>T10 Experimental design</b> Lecture/exercise		



Wk	Date	Time	Topic	Lecturer	Reading
	<b>1 May</b> <b>Due class time</b>	<b>Assignment 2a Part A</b>	<b>Questionnaire design</b>		
<b>5</b>	8 May	9-12noon 1-4pm	<b>T11 Basic Statistics A</b>	Richard Arnold	
	<b>11 May</b> <b>Due 4pm</b>	<b>Assignment 2a Part B</b>	<b>Questionnaire design and critique</b>		
<b>6</b>	15 May	9-12noon 1-4pm	<b>T11 Basic Statistics B</b>	R. A	
<b>7</b>	22 May	9-12noon 1-4pm	<b>T11 Basic Statistics – Excel workshop MY221 Basic Statistics</b>	R.A	
<b>THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES</b>					
<b>8</b>	5 June	9-10am  10-12noon	<b>T12 Constructionism</b> Reading seminar  <b>T13 Interpretivism</b> Reading seminar	AB	Crotty (1998) Chpt 3  Crotty (1998) Chpts 4 & 5
		1-3.30pm 3.30-4pm	Interpretivist workshop Assignment 2b, <i>Exploring a research topic, guidelines</i>	AB	
	<b>2 Jun</b> <b>4pm</b>	<b>Assignment 1a due</b>	<b>Excel exercise</b>		
<b>9</b>	17 Jul	9-11am 11-12noon	<b>T14 Critical Inquiry</b> Reading seminar <b>T15 Feminism</b> Reading seminar	AB	Crotty (1998) Chpt 6 & 7 Crotty (1998) Chpt 8
		1-2pm 2-2.30pm 2.30-4pm	<b>T16 Post Modernism</b> Reading seminar  <i>Assignment 2b Exploring a Research Topic, guidelines</i> Class forum	AB	Crotty (1998) Chpt 9
<b>QUALITATIVE RESEARCH TECHNIQUES</b>					
<b>10</b>	31 July	9-10.00am 10.00-11-12noon	<b>T17 Interviewing Techniques</b> Reading seminar <b>T18 Focus Groups</b> Reading seminar	AB	Kvale (1996)  Waldegrave (1999)
		1-1.30pm 1.00-4pm	<b>T19 Unobtrusive data collection</b> Reading seminar and exercise	AB	  Kellehear (1993)

Wk	Date	Time	Topic	Lecturer	Reading
	<b>3 Aug</b> <b>Due 4pm</b>	<b>Assignment</b> <b>2b due</b>	<b>Exploring a Research</b> <b>Topic</b>		
		1-1.30pm  1.30-2pm 2.30-4pm	<i>Assignment 3b,</i> <i>Annotated</i> <i>bibliography</i> <i>guidelines</i> Reading seminar <b>T21 Processing</b> <b>qualitative data,</b> Reading seminar and exercise	AB	Patton (2002)
	<b>7 Sept</b> <b>4pm</b>	<b>Assignment</b> <b>3b due</b>	<b>Annotated</b> <b>Bibliography</b>		
<b>12</b>	11 Sept	9-12noon	<i>Assignment 3a,</i> <i>Research Proposal</i> <i>Workshop</i>	AB	
<b>THE POLITICS OF RESEARCH</b>					
		1-4pm	<b>T22 Mixed Methods</b> Reading seminar and workshop	AB	Greene & Caracelli (2002)
<b>13</b>	25 Sept	9.00-11am  11.00-12noon	<b>T23 Politics, Power</b> <b>and Social Research</b> Reading seminar  <b>T24 Evidence-based</b> <b>Policy Research</b> Reading seminar	AB	Solvey (1998) Duke (2002)  Laforest and Orsini (2005) (handout)
		1-4pm	<b>T25 Action Research</b> Reading seminar and workshop	AB	Wadsworth (1998) Foote et al (2002)
	<b>5 Oct 3pm</b>	<b>Assignment</b> <b>3a due</b>	<b>Research Proposal</b>		
<b>14</b>	9 Oct	9-12noon  12noon	Research Proposal presentations Class lunch		

## READING SEMINAR TIMETABLE

Date	Reading	Name	Name	
6 Mar	Sacks (1995)	Class		
	Kirkman (2001)	Class		
	Crotty (1998) Chpt 1	Class		
20 Mar	Ball (2005)			
	Smith (2005)			
	Sanga (2004)			
	Fonua (2004)			
3 Apr	Crotty (1998) Chpt 2			
	Fielding (1993)			
	Desrosières (2001)			
5 June	Crotty (1998) Chpt 3			
	Crotty (1998) Chpt 4			
	Crotty (1998) Chpt 5			
17 Jul	Crotty (1998) Chpt 6			
	Crotty (1998) Chpt 7			
	Crotty (1998) Chpt 8			
	Crotty (1998) Chpt 9			

<b>Date</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Name</b>
31 July	Kvale (1996)			
	Waldegrave (1999)			
	Kellehear (1993)			
	Patton (2002)			
14 Aug	Thomson (1999)			
	Oral History Assn. Guidelines	Class		
	Beasley (2006)			
	Patton (2002)			
11 Sept	Greene & Caracelli (2002)			
26 Sept	Solvey (1998)			
	Duke (2002)			
	LaForest and Orsini (2005)			
	Wadsworth (1998)			
	Foote et al. (2002)			

## **ASSIGNMENT 1a**

***Excel Exercise***

***Word count: 2000 max***

***Due: 4pm, Tuesday 2 June***

***Weighting: 15%***

The purpose of the assignment is to learn and practice Microsoft Excel skills. The skills learnt will enhance your ability to provide a piece of work of ‘publishable’ quality.

Prime Minister Helen Clark ratified the Kyoto Protocol on 10 December 2002. With the ratification New Zealand is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) to 1990 levels over a several year period. Carbon dioxide is the most important of the GHG’s. Data of New Zealand carbon dioxide emissions from 1878 to 2000 are found at <http://cdiac.esd.ornl.gov/ftp/trends/emissions/nze.dat> website. Note that total emissions have been aggregated from several categories.

Your role is that of a policy analyst. You are to write a report to your policy manager. The report is your ‘professional’ opinion on whether New Zealand will be able to comply with the reduction in carbon dioxide emissions. You are to present the data in the report in table form as well as in a number of various graphical forms. The report is to include a simple analysis of emissions over time and an analysis of the proportion split of the categories in 1980 which is then to be contrasted with the proportion split in 2000. The report is to also include a comparison of emissions from gas fuels and liquid fuels over the past five years. If warranted the report may provide recommendations to your manager (if this is the case then be lateral in your thinking).

For this assignment, the emphasis is on your ability to interpret the raw data and present it graphic forms. The data referred to in your discussion should be presented in the form of tables and graphs, which in turn, should support your writing.

**In addition to the general grading criteria presented on page 7, to obtain a high grade in assignment 1a, it must feature the following:**

- presentation of data in the form of a range of graphs and tables, including graphic representation of comparative data, using Excel
- clearly readable, titled, labelled and well-set out tables and graphs
- graphs and tables support/illustrate points made in the discussion. The discussion demonstrates an ability to identify and understand the implications of the historical trends of carbon emissions in terms of New Zealand's commitment to the Kyoto Protocol
- the discussion offers policy recommendations in response to the implementation and impact of the reduced GHG targets set by the Kyoto Protocol.
- the report is:
  - clearly set-out
  - well argued and logically structured
  - demonstrates originality and/or innovation in its approach to the topic draws on additional literature sources to support argument/conclusions
- the report contains:
  - a title page which includes details of who the report is being prepared for and by whom
  - table of contents
  - Executive Summary - a concise overview of the contents of the report, key findings and policy recommendations.
  - Introduction, discussion and conclusion which includes policy recommendations
  - full reference list
  - spelling check

## **ASSIGNMENT 1b**

### ***Research Perspectives***

***Word count: 2500 max***

***Due: 4pm, Monday 6 April***

***Weighting: 20%***

Crotty (1998:7) points out that we bring a number of assumptions to our chosen methodology and that we need to state as best as we can what these assumptions are. Referring to Crotty (1998:4-5) Figure 1 and Table 1 identify the key assumptions an objectivist epistemology employing a positivist theoretical approach brings to research. Discuss the strengths and limitations, including ethical considerations, of this research perspective when conducting research among a selected minority or ethnic group.

**In addition to the general grading criteria presented on page 7, to obtain a high grade in assignment 1b it must feature the following:**

- a clear introduction which states the focus and aim of your essay and identifies how you intend to explore the assignment question
- identification of the assumptions of the approach, justification of choice
- critical reflection on the particular strengths and limitations of your approach when conducting research with your selected group of people, including ethical considerations. *Note:* Critical reflection considers power relationships in the context of social interactions and seeks to identify how these relationships may contribute to and/or alleviate conflict, oppression and bring about social change

## ASSIGNMENT 2a

### *Questionnaire Design and Critique*

*Weighting: 30%*

***Due: In class, Friday 1 May and 4pm, Monday 11 May***

This assignment is due in two parts. On 1 May students will bring to class a questionnaire they have developed - maximum 20 items that looks at 'use of public spaces'. Each student will take home another student's questionnaire. A critique on this questionnaire is due in on 11 May.

Each part of the assignment is worth 15%

Hint: In formulating the questionnaire, you will need to provide an explanation about the context in which it is being administered so that there is a basis from which to judge its appropriateness and whether or not it meets its objectives.

For both the formulating of the questionnaire and the critique you will need to take into consideration the following:

**In addition to the general grading criteria presented on page 7, to obtain a high grade in assignment 2a it must feature the following:**

- Does the questionnaire cover the relevant information?
- Are the questions worded appropriately?
- Is the order of the questions appropriate?
- Were the respondents capable of providing the information asked of them?
- What features relate to its mode of delivery? (a telephone interview, self-administered questionnaire, face-to-face interview)

If for any reason you are unable to be present at class on 1 May your questionnaire **MUST** be left with Jenny Neale beforehand and you will need to arrange to pick up your copy of another questionnaire to critique.



## ASSIGNMENT 2b

### *Exploring a Research Topic*

**Word Count: 3000 max**

**Due: 4pm, Monday 3 August**

**Weighting: 30%**

Formulate a research question applicable to you and your interests. Drawing on Crotty (1998:4-7), explain how you intend to research the topic. Your discussion should identify and justify your intended epistemological and theoretical orientation and their links with your choice of research methodology. Discuss briefly other possible methodologies and why you have not chosen to use them.

The aim of this assignment is to demonstrate that you have an understanding of:

- ❖ the link between epistemology, theoretical perspective, methodology and methods
- ❖ a range of research methodologies/methods
- ❖ the rationale behind the choice of a methodology
- ❖ methodological strengths and limitations

**In addition to the general grading criteria presented on page 7, to obtain a high grade in assignment 2b it must address the following:**

➤ **Formulating the research question**

Identify the research question which must be clear, concise and researchable explain:

- where did the idea come from?
- why is the topic of interest to you?
- what is the relevance of the topic for you, others, society, etc?

➤ **Research methods**

- identify your chosen methodology
- justify your choice of methodology
- identify/justify the methods that will be employed

➤ **Other ways it could be done**

- identify alternative research framework(s) that could have been employed
- justify your rejection of these framework(s) by describing the difficulties involved, eg time/funding, ethical, will work better etc

➤ **Conclusion**

Should include the following:

- reiterates focus of essay, what the essay set out to do
- restates the proposed research question
- briefly describes proposed research design (including methods)
- Reflects on the effectiveness of the proposed research design and reaches a conclusion on the nature, feasibility and contribution etc., of the research question and how you approach the research. You may conclude at this point that researching the topic as discussed will not work and it's back to the drawing board!

## ASSIGNMENT 3B

### *Annotated Bibliography*

***Due: 4pm, Monday 7 September***

***Weighting: 45%***

Create an annotated bibliography and resource list for your thesis topic and/or the research methodology you intend to use. The bibliography must contain a minimum of 15 items and an explanation of the context within which you are choosing the items.

The aim of this assignment is to show that you can select and précis the main points from literature relevant to your thesis and/or the methodology you intend to use. An annotated bibliography will give you a good start for the literature review for your proposal and subsequently the thesis itself.

Your bibliography should begin with a general introduction followed by the annotations.

**In addition to the general grading criteria presented on page 13, to obtain a high grade in assignment 3b it must feature the following:**

➤ **Introduction**

Includes: a general background to contextualise the topic; the focus and structure of the bibliography; and criteria for selection of the items included in the bibliography

➤ **Annotations**

Each annotation should be presented on a new page, fully referenced at the top of the page and a maximum of two pages

**a. Summary**

Each annotation must include a summary of the item's key points (these can be bulleted, and the page number noted in the margin).

Key points to be noted:

- ✿ the item's focus and/or aims and objectives
- ✿ the author's theoretical orientation/argument (if applicable)
- ✿ key areas/issues explored and any findings
- ✿ conclusions and/or recommendations reached

**b. Context**

Each annotation must identify how the item falls within the overall context of your research topic. Setting an item in the context of thesis topic addresses how it fits within/contributes to your understanding of the overall scope/focus of your subject. You must identify what emphasis/perspective the item brings to the subject and how it contributes to your understanding of the subject. What issues does the item raise and how do these fit within the framework of the subject eg gender, socio-economic, ethnicity, methodological etc. *Note:* the context provides a much broader emphasis than relevance as it provides a much larger picture of the topic as a whole.

*c. Relevance*

Each annotation must identify and justify the relevance of each item for your topic, ie how/why the item is useful and in what way. Alternatively why the item proves to be of little relevance or use.

## ASSIGNMENT 3A

### *Research Proposal*

***Due: 4pm, Monday 5 October***

***Weighting: 50%***

Prepare a full research proposal (including an appended Victoria University Ethics Committee application for ethics approval) for your thesis topic using the following template.

**In addition to the general grading criteria presented on page 13, to obtain a high grade in assignment 3a it must feature the following:**

➤ **Title**

This should be short and describe what your research is about.

➤ **Abstract**

Write a 200-250 word summary of the proposed research including the following: a brief description of the aim and objectives of the study; the research population or subject matter; proposed methodology; and the time-frame. Indicate why this research is needed and its uses.

➤ **Background**

This section provides the context for your research. The two key aspects to be discussed concern how the project came about and its relationship to other research in the field through consideration of the following:

- who is undertaking the research and for whom (where applicable)
- why choose this topic
- a brief review of relevant literature, key findings, conclusions and/or recommendations
- who might benefit from this research

➤ **Research Question, Aims and Objectives**

Drawing on the background section, narrow your focus to the aspect of the topic you intend to research.

- Identify your research question and how it came about, drawing on factors such as: personal experience, information gained from others with experience/expertise in the area, media reports, policy documents, previous studies etc.
- Identify and the aims and objectives of the research. Justify these and explain why/how they are appropriate.
- Define any specialised terms.

➤ **Research Design**

The focus of this section is on the broader framework of your research design and the how the various steps and stages integrate. Drawing on Crotty (1998:4-5) and

any other relevant literature, describe your epistemological, theoretical and methodological approach to the research and the relationship between the design components. Justify your design in terms of the aims and objectives of your research question. Outline any of the design's limitations and discuss the implications. You may also wish to indicate your rationale for rejecting an alternative research design.

➤ **Methods**

This section details the methods and techniques to be used through consideration of the following:

- How will the study be done?
- What are your sources of data?
- What data will be collected?
- How will it be collected ie methods, procedures and instruments to be used? Strengths/limitations of the methods.
- Who will be included/excluded from your research population or sample and why?
- How will you approach the issues of reliability and validity?
- What methods of data analysis or synthesis will be used?
- In what contexts will your results be interpreted and understood?

➤ **Significance**

In this section the anticipated outcomes of the project are described in relation to theory, practice, social policy and personal learning ie, what contribution will the research make to knowledge on the subject. Note: the significance of the research should not be confused with who will benefit from the research, detailed in the background section.

➤ **Time-line**

Prepare a brief break-down of how long the study is expected to take and its various stages. Items that may need to be considered include:

- Any further planning and approvals
- Ethical approval
- Literature search and review
- Pre-tests or pilots
- Collection of data
- Analysis/synthesis of data
- Writing-up - including drafts and time for incorporating
- Comments/changes suggested

You may also wish to indicate further stages such as dissemination of information, participation in policy formation etc.

➤ **Costing**

This is an estimate of the actual costs to you for doing the research. You will need to consider such things as:

- Photocopying
- Library searches and overseas material
- Stationery and postage
- Tapes, batteries, transcribing
- Transport
- Refreshments, petrol vouchers etc for participants
- Reproduction and binding of your thesis

➤ **References**

A list, formatted according to a standard bibliographic system, of all books, journal articles, reports, Acts, memos and submissions referred to in the proposal.

➤ **Ethical statement and VUW Humans Ethics Application**

Students undertaking any form of postgraduate research are required to submit a proposal to the university ethics committee for ethical approval before the data collection is begun. They need to ensure that their project's focus and methodology conform to the ethical code of their discipline and is not likely to bring the student, the School or the University in to disrepute.

After consideration of the ethical considerations the student will either be asked to make modifications or approval will be granted without the need for any amendments. Once approval has been given the student will be given a copy of their ethics form signed by the convenor (or another member of the ethics committee). The School Ethics Committee retains a copy for their files and a further copy is kept by the Human Ethics Committee.

NB. If subsequent modifications are made to your research design and these have ethical implications, a new ethical statement must be submitted to the departmental ethics committee.

➤ **Ethics Application**

The VUW Human Ethics Policy (includes templates for Information Sheets and Consent Forms) can be downloaded from:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/postgradlife/downloads/hecpolicy.pdf](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/postgradlife/downloads/hecpolicy.pdf)

An HEC ethics application form can be downloaded from:

[www.vuw.ac.nz/postgradlife/pages/pages\\_current\\_pg/ethics.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/postgradlife/pages/pages_current_pg/ethics.html)

➤ **Ethical statement**

Your ethical statement should briefly identify any ethical issues identified in your VUW HEC application and the strategies that will be employed to minimise the potential for harm. If your research methodology does not require ethical approval, your statement should explain why the research is exempt.

➤ **Class presentation**

The final part of preparing your research proposal is a class presentation. The time allowed for each presentation will be advised once class numbers are finalised.

## **CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING A RESEARCH PROJECT OR THESIS**

Is the research topic, question or intention clear?

What is the extent of the researcher's statement about their involvement in the project?

What is the scope of the literature review?

How is the literature review related to the:

- a) research topic?
- b) research methods?
- c) research data?
- d) research outcome/recommendations/conclusion?

What research methods are used?

What different research methods are used?

How are the research methods handled?

How appropriate are the research methods to the research topic?

How does the researcher demonstrate an awareness of the limitations of the research methods?

What is the relationship between the research methods used and the format of the report?

How is the information gathered, organised in the report?

What is the relationship between presenting the raw data, unedited texts, the people's voices and the researcher's interpretations?

What are the main themes addressed in the report?

What basis is used for any interpretations?

- a) what is the relationship between the philosophical/theoretical basis and the interpretations?
- b) how do the interpretations clarify the data?

What new information or new ways of looking at the topic does the researcher present?

For which audience is this report written?

What implications/recommendations/conclusions are drawn from the research?

What are the practical and policy implications described?

How consistent are the implications with the:

- a) research question?
- b) philosophy underpinning the research?
- c) methods to collect data?

How does the researcher demonstrate an awareness of the political implications and power relationships surrounding the project?

How does the project read/present?

- a) how are the contents, references, tables, diagrams presented?
- b) what is contained in the appendices and the bibliography?

What is the overall impression of the research report?

Does the researcher identify related areas which are not included in the research report?

What are the reasons given for not including those areas?

What has the researcher learnt from being involved in this research process?

## **GUIDELINES FOR EVALUATING EMPIRICAL/EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES**

### **Problem**

Is the problem clearly stated?

Is the problem significant - will the results contribute to the solution of some practical or theoretical problem?

Is the relationship to previous research made clear?

### **Design**

Are the assumptions of the study clearly stated?

Are the limitations of the study stated?

Are important terms in the study defined?

Is the research design fully described?

Is the research design appropriate?

Are the population and sample described?

Is the method of sampling appropriate?

### **Procedure**

Are the data-gathering methods described?



Are the data-gathering methods appropriate?  
Are the validity and reliability of the evidence established?

### **Analysis**

Are the analysis methods appropriate and are they properly applied?  
Are the results of the analysis clearly presented?

### **Conclusions**

Are the conclusions clearly stated?  
Are the conclusions substantiated by the evidence presented?  
Are the generalisations confined to the population from which the sample was drawn?  
Is the report logically organised and clearly written?

## **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**

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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>
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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>

## **ASSIGNMENT COVER SHEETS**

All written work submitted for assessment in Sociology and Social Policy papers must have a School Assignment Cover sheet. A sample is to be found at the back of this Course Outline. Further copies can be located on the reception counter at the Administration Office, and on the Assignment Box, on level 9 of Murphy building. You may wish to have a front sheet of your own, but a School Cover sheet must be used. This is critical for accurate identification and recording of your work.

**Office use only**

Date Received:

(Date Stamp)

# School of Social and Cultural Studies

*Te Kura Mahinga Tangata*

**CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**CRIMINOLOGY**

**SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL POLICY**

**SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

## Assignment Cover Sheet

(please write legibly)

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Course (eg ANTH 101): \_\_\_\_\_

Tutorial Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Tutorial Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor's Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CERTIFICATION OF AUTHENTICITY**

*I certify that this paper submitted for assessment is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_