



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES  
Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

## Sociology and Social Policy

# SOSC/SPOL 319

## Knowledge, Power and Understanding

20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 2 2014

### Important dates

**Trimester dates:** 14 July to 16 November 2014

**Teaching dates:** 14 July to 17 October 2014

**Mid-trimester break:** 25 August to 7 September 2014

**Last assessment item due:** 17 October 2014

**Withdrawal dates:** Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds). If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats).

## Class times and locations

Lectures:

- Wednesday 11:00 - 11:50 Murphy MY632
- Friday 12:00 – 12.50 New Kirk KK202

Tutorials:

- Friday 13:00 - 13:50 New Kirk KK202 beginning 25 July (week two)

## Names and contact details

Lecturer: Dr Bronwyn Polaschek  
Murphy Building, MY1018  
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Lecturer: Dr Carol Harrington  
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Office hours: By appointment.

## Communication of additional information

Any additional course information will be posted on Blackboard. You will automatically receive all Blackboard announcements as an email sent to your @myvuw.ac.nz email address. If you are not going to use this Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to forward messages received from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

## Prescription

The course will equip students to debate the reliability of knowledge gained about the social world, to assess social scientific knowledge and to consider its effects on politics and social policy. This course prepares students for honours and students will be required to formally present material to the class.

## Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Understand and be able to discuss basic concepts from the sociology of knowledge. (Assessed through the short essay assignment, the Powerpoint presentation of a self-chosen research essay topic, a peer-review of a fellow student's draft research essay, the research essay assignment, and the final in-class test).
2. Demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the history of the social sciences and statistics. (Assessed through the research essay assignment and the final in-class test).
3. Be able to demonstrate their recognition of the assumptions behind different styles of research design. (Assessed through the short essay assignment, the peer-review, the research essay assignment and the final in-class test).

- Be able to identify, analyse and evaluate the different political debates around the appropriate production of social scientific knowledge. (Assessed through the short essay, the research essay and the final in-class test).

## Teaching format

Lectures and tutorials.

While attendance at lectures is not compulsory, students are expected to regularly attend the lectures and a minimum of 6 tutorials.

## Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- Submit all essays
- Attend the student Powerpoint presentations and a minimum of 6 tutorials including the peer review exercise;
- Sit the final in-class test.

## Workload

The design of the course is based upon the expectation that students will work 10 hours per point, therefore a 20-point course equates to 200 hours over the trimester. This includes scheduled contact time of lectures and tutorials, individual or group study, and work on assessment tasks.

## Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Assessment One: Short Essay (1,000-1,200 words)	20%	1, 2, 3, 4	8 Aug
2	Powerpoint Class Presentation 2-3 Powerpoint slides (5 minutes presentation, 5 minutes questions and answers)	10%	1	Between 13 Aug and 22 Aug (during lecture/tutorial times)
3	Assessment Three: Peer Review Exercise	10%	1, 3	19 Sept (during tutorial)  <i>Draft essays to be submitted 17 Sept</i>
4	Assessment Four: Research Essay (2,500-3,000 words)	40%	1, 3, 4	3 Oct
5	Assessment Five: Final In-class Test (50 mins)	20%	1, 2, 3, 4	17 Oct

**Assessment One: Short Essay**  
**1,000 – 1,200 words**  
**Due Date: 8 August**

**Weighting 20%**

*The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to think critically about the production of knowledge within the context of carrying out social science research.*

Drawing on the chapter in Student Notes entitled 'Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research' by Guba and Lincoln (week one), identify and critically assess the ontological and epistemological

position taken by Dan Woodman in the research article listed below. (A link to the article can be found on Blackboard, under Assignments or it can be accessed through the library database.)

Woodman, D (2012) 'Life out of synch: How new patterns of further education and the rise of precarious employment are reshaping young people's relationships' *Sociology*, 46 (6) 1074-1090.

**Assessment Two: Powerpoint Class Presentation**

**Weighting 10%**

**Due: 13-22 August**

**(Names will be drawn during the first tutorial for order of presentation and posted on Blackboard)**

*The purpose of this assignment is to encourage you to commit yourself to a topic for your Research Essay and to allow you to investigate the feasibility of your research question/project in light of course themes.*

You are required to produce and present a Powerpoint presentation of 2-3 slides in which you:

- identify the general area of research your essay/question contributes to
- pose a clear and specific research question that you intend to address in the essay
- name 2-3 theorists/books/research articles you will be drawing upon
- attempt a preliminary thesis statement (based on what you *expect* to find or argue) and
- identify some secondary questions and any potential pitfalls you might encounter in undertaking the research essay – you do not have to have all of the answers at this stage!

A suggested format for the presentation will be found on Blackboard.

You are being assessed on the clarity and quality of the research question and your identification of the connections your chosen topic has to course themes. The point of the exercise is to collaborate with your classmates in developing your thinking about the topic and your question. Student feedback in previous years suggests that this exercise is generally both helpful and enjoyable.

**Assessment Three: Peer Review Exercise**

**Weighting 10%**

***Draft essays to be submitted to me 17 September (at the lecture). If you do not submit a draft essay, you will not be able to complete the peer review exercise.***

**Date: 19 September (during tutorial)**

**This exercise will be undertaken during tutorial on 19 September hence attendance at this tutorial is compulsory.**

*The purpose of this assignment is to develop your critical thinking skills through providing feedback on a piece of draft social science research produced by a peer.*

For this assessment, you are required to provide a peer with a well-developed draft of your research essay and a constructive review of their essay. Your essay must be submitted to me at the lecture prior, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of September. I will pair students/essays and you will be required to give your peer both written and verbal feedback on their draft during tutorial on the 19<sup>th</sup> of September. Further detail on what is expected and the criteria for assessment of this task will be available on Blackboard under Assignments.

**Assessment Four: Research Essay**

**Weighting 40%**

**2,500-3,000 words**

**Due: 3 October**

*The purpose of this assignment is to undertake and complete your own piece of social science research in light of the course themes.*

You will research a particular topic or issue in light of what you have learned about the social construction of knowledge. I would encourage you to think of your own topic and to make it

something that is of personal interest to you. It might be an issue recently or currently being debated in parliament or the media. Some general topic areas to get you started thinking include:

- ❖ The Internet; Social Networks; Electronic surveillance, Teenage drinking; Legal highs; Romantic love; Youth unemployment; Attitudes towards climate change; National identity; Death and funeral practices; Motherhood and breastfeeding; Asperger's Syndrome; Depression; Health and illness; Definitions of gender and sexuality; Everyday life.

Once you decide on your general area of interest, think about the theory/concepts/methodology you want to use, and then create your specific question. It is important to narrow your interests to a question that can realistically be answered within the limitations of time and word length ascribed by the course. If you were interested in romantic love, for instance, you could create a question such as: In what ways does the hegemonic discourse around romantic love disguise relationships of power in contemporary New Zealand? Or: In what ways is the hegemonic discourse around romantic love in contemporary Western cultures ethnocentric/ heterocentric?

***We will discuss this more in class. If you are unsure of what to do please send an e-mail and/or arrange a meeting for clarification with me. It is important that you give careful consideration to how you frame your question.***

Your final essay must be handed in to the assignment box on level 9 of the Murphy building along with the first draft, peer review comments, including reviewer's name, and a report of how you incorporated these comments into the final version (or why you didn't).

### **Assessment Five: Final In-class Test**

**Weighting 20%**

**Duration: 50 mins**

**Date: 17 October**

*The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate your knowledge about the course themes.*

You will write three short essay answers on topics covering the content of the course. You will choose ONE question from Section A, and TWO questions from Section B. The material for the test will be covered during lectures/tutorials and in weekly readings. It will be reviewed on Wednesday, 15 October (the lecture before the test).

### **Turnitin**

Assessment One and Four must be submitted to Turnitin as well as in hard copy. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted essays to material available on the web and to previously submitted essays. To use it, go to [www.turnitin.com](http://www.turnitin.com), click on 'create a user profile' in the upper right corner. After creating an account, you can log in with your ID and password as with an email account. Use the class ID and enrolment password to enrol in "Course ID"

Class ID: 8070796

Enrolment password: sociology

When uploading submissions, be sure to click the final 'submit' button. If you have taken all the steps you will receive a notification/receipt.

### **Marking Criteria**

Marking criteria will be distributed before assignments are due during lectures and on Blackboard.

### **Submission and return of work**

Submit a paper copy to the Assignment Box at the SACS Administration Office, Level 9, Murphy Building (to the side of the lifts), by 4pm on the due date. Your essay MUST NOT be placed in individual staff pigeonholes, or under staff office doors, or handed to lecturers or tutors. The

Assignment Box is cleared at 4pm every day. All work is date-stamped, recorded and then handed to the appropriate markers.

Marked assignments not collected in lectures or tutorials can be collected at the Murphy 9th floor reception desk, between **2.00 and 4.00 pm only from Monday to Friday**.

## Extensions and penalties

### Extensions

Assignments are due on the dates stated. If for some serious reason you don't think you can get an essay in on time, see your course co-ordinator **prior** to the due date and discuss the problem. Extensions of time are not permitted except for illness, or bereavements.

### Penalties

Late submissions for student assignments in all Sociology and Social Policy undergraduate courses 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.

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

### Set texts

There are no set texts. All readings for lectures/tutorials will be available via Blackboard.

### Recommended reading

Please see Blackboard for a list of recommended reading.

### Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:
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### Student feedback

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be covered during the course.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

### Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Aegrotats: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)

- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Resolving academic issues: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Special passes: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Student Contract: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)

### School Contact Information

Head of School:	Dr Allison Kirkman, MY1013 Phone: 463 5676, Email: <a href="mailto:allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz">allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz</a>
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School of Social and Cultural Studies:	<a href="http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs">www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs</a>