TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES
Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

Sociology and Social Policy

SOSC/SPOL 489

Research Project

30 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 + 2 2014

Important dates

Trimester dates: 3 March to 16 November 2014
Teaching dates: 3 March to 17 October 2014
Easter/Mid-trimester break: 18 April to 4 May 2014
Mid-year break: 3–13 July 2014
Mid-trimester break 2/3: 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. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

Guided reading groups (led by staff) and peer tutorials: Monday 1.00 – 2.50 pm KK104

Names and contact details

The staff member with overall responsibility for this course is Dr Sandra Grey, who is available to discuss any student queries about the course and assessment.

Course Coordinator: Dr Sandra Grey
Murphy Building, MY 1004
Tel: 04 463 5371
E-mail:Sandra.Grey@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: 9am Tuesday; 1pm Wednesday

If Sandra is not available and you have an urgent problem then leave a message with the School Administration on 463 5317.

Communication of additional information

The School's website is at: www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs. On the same page you will find *Sociolog*, www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs/research/sociolog a chronicle of reflections written by Sociology, Social Policy, Social Science Research staff and postgraduate students.

Prescription

In this course students will choose and conduct an independent research project and write an extended essay. They will receive individual supervision from a staff member, and also work as a group learning foundational research skills, such as formulating a research question, writing a literature review and developing an argument.

Course content

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 course, 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. 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.

Guided reading and peer sessions schedule

Date	Topic	Staff member	Readings
3-Mar-14	Welcome	Students will be advised of which staff conducting the tutorials at the start of the course.	A reading list will be provided at the start of the course.
10-Mar-14	Methodological positions in sociology and social policy		
17-Mar-14	What is a research proposal?		

24-Mar-14	*Peer review research proposals*		
31-Mar-14	*Peer review research proposals*		
7-Apr-14	Methods of research and writing up a methods section		
14-Apr-14	Ethics		
5-May	*Peer review ethics proposals*		
12-May-14	What is a literature review		
19-May-14	*Peer review of literature review*		
26-May-14	*Peer review of literature review*		
2-Jun-14	Lunch for end to Trimester 1		
Mid-year break			
The room has been booked for peer sessions each week for 2014 and there are two taught classes in the second trimester			
11-Aug-14	Structural editing session		
15-Sep-14	Copy-editing and referencing session		

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to show research competence in sociology/social policy in the following ways:

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.

Teaching format

There will be guided reading sessions lead by staff during the first half of 2014, and peer-conducted tutorials to discuss on-going projects and sharing research experiences throughout the year.

One-on-one supervision meetings will be held throughout the year.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must: complete and submit their *Proposal, Literature Review*, and *Final Report* by the due dates.

Workload

The workload should be at least 10 hours per week throughout the course (at least 300 hours across 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. It is likely students will spend at least 60 hours preparing their research proposal, 60 hours on their literature review, and 180 hours on the final research report. The remaining time will be spent in the guided reading and peer tutorial sessions, and in supervision.

Assessment

	Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Research Proposal and Design Report	15%	1, 2	4pm 16 April
2	Literature and Methodology Report	15%	2, 3	4pm 4 June
3	Final Research Report (10,000 words)	70%	1-5	4pm 17 October

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:

Research Proposal and Design Report   **Weighting: 15%**
Due date: 4pm, Wednesday 16 April, 2014
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.

Literature and Methodology Report   **Weighting 15%**
Due date: 4pm, Wednesday 4 June, 2014
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.

Final Research Report -   **Weighting 70%**
Final date: 4pm, Friday 17 October 2014
Word limit: 10,000 words
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.

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.

Submission and return of work

Assignments must be placed in the assignment box on level 9, Murphy Building, to the side of the lifts. The Assignment Box is cleared at 4pm on the due date, all work is date-stamped, its receipt recorded, and then handed on to the appropriate markers. Marked assignments 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

Students must speak to their supervisor if seeking an extension.

Penalties

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

Recommended reading

A reading list will be provided during the first sessions of the course.

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:

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.

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
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats

- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progess (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library/resources/subjectcontacts.html
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz

School Contact Information

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