The University of Newcastle
Faculty of Education and Arts
School of Humanities and Social Science
http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/

Student Focus are located at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Callaghan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 3, Shortland Union, Callaghan</td>
<td>Office hours: 9am – 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Room: MC127 McMullin Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2, Student Services Centre, Callaghan</td>
<td>Phone: +61 2 4921 5175 or 5172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor, University House, City</td>
<td>Fax: +61 2 4921 6933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor, Administration Building, Ourimbah</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Humanities-SocialScience@newcastle.edu.au">Humanities-SocialScience@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Web: <a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/">www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Course Co-ordinator: Terry Leahy
Room: W342
Ph: 49 216106
Fax: 49 216933
Email: Terry.Leahy@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: Tuesday 11 - 12; Wednesday 11 - 12; Thursday 3 - 4

Student Focus are located at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Ourimbah</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Level 3, Shortland Union, Callaghan</td>
<td>Office hours: 9am – 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Academic Support Unit, Room: HO1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level 2, Student Services Centre, Callaghan</td>
<td>Phone: +61 2 4348 4323 or 4349 4934</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor, University House, City</td>
<td>Fax: +61 2 4348 4075</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground Floor, Administration Building, Ourimbah</td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:Humanities-SocialScience@newcastle.edu.au">Humanities-SocialScience@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Web: <a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/">www.newcastle.edu.au/school/hss/</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Central Coast Coordinator: Sharon Walsh
Room: H01.66
Ph: 43484240
Email: Sharon.Walsh@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation hours: Mon 10 - 12
SOCS1100 - Professional Practice and Key Debates in the Social Sciences
Course Outline

Callaghan Course Coordinator: Terry Leahy
Central Coast Coordinator: Sharon Walsh
Semester: Semester 2 - 2006
Unit Weighting: 10
Teaching Methods
Lecture
Seminar
Computer Lab

Brief Course Description
This course is a prescribed course for students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Science and is only available to students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Science program.

This course comprises two streams. The first stream introduces students to the utility of the Social Sciences in terms of the nature of work and range of careers available, with a focus on key social issues and debates in social policy, program management and social research. The second stream consists of a series of practical seminars that provide students with a foundation of professional skills, including: computer literacy, effective use of the internet, and competency with word processing, spreadsheets, databases and presentation software as they apply in the Social Sciences. Other aspects of professional practice such as written, oral and interpersonal communication skills, and working in groups are also covered.

Contact Hours
Computer Lab for 2 Hours per Week for 5 Weeks
Lecture for 1 Hour per Week for the Full Term
Seminar for 2 Hours per Week for 9 Weeks

Learning Materials/Texts

Book of Readings: It is essential that you purchase the book of readings for this course. You will need to bring it to every seminar and computer lab. It will form the basis for discussion in seminars and we will be working through it to learn computer skills in the computer labs. For Callaghan campus students, it will be available from the NUSA printery next to the Bar on the Hill by week one. On the Central Coast this text will be available from the Coop bookshop.

Highly recommended:

This is a very useful book for most aspects of this course connected with research – for example on focus groups, ethics and values in the social sciences.

Cassette recorder: In order to complete the assessment tasks for this course you will need to purchase a simple audio-cassette recorder. A good one costs about $120. You need to be able to switch off "voice activated recording" for interviews - because you will need all the pauses in conversation left in. Another useful feature is a control which allows you to slow the tape down so you can catch difficult phrases. It is necessary to have a tape counter because you can summarize the contents of a tape, indexing topics with the tape counter as
you take notes and return to particular sections to replay them using a tape counter. Electronic shops have these recorders – they are quite easy to get hold of. You will find this an essential item for any kind of social science career.

Another option is a digital audio recorder. I think these have various problems – they are more expensive and they do not allow you to slow down the recording when you are playing it back. However, computer storage of interviews as audio files is easy with a digital recorder.

If students want to pool resources and buy one cassette recorder for their group of 6 students (as arranged in week one) this is OK.

Course Objectives
On successful completion of this course students will be able to:
1. Demonstrate an understanding of foundational social science knowledge and debates in the areas of program management, policy analysis and social research.
2. Critically appraise and discuss the relevant literature.
3. Demonstrate competency in the use of a range of information and communication technologies.
4. Demonstrate competency in written, oral, group work and interpersonal communication skills.

Course Content
This course introduces students to the foundational skills and knowledge required for professional practice in a range of Social Science related careers, with a focus on social research, social policy and program management. Seminars will provide foundational knowledge of social research methods, including epistemological debates and links between social theory and various methods; an understanding of the key aspects of the social policy-making process, and an introduction to the nature of program development and management. Tutorial Seminars will cover: foundational computer skills (word processing, spreadsheets and critical use of the internet), effective library research (including use of electronic databases), time management, research report and essay writing, presentation skills and use of MS PowerPoint, referencing and plagiarism, managing group work, and interpersonal communication skills.

Assessment Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>Essay (2,000 words); 40%; due week 12 5 pm Friday Nov 3rd</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group/tutorial participation and contribution</td>
<td>Participation 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>Career Portfolio and plan (1000 words); 10%; due week 14, 5pm Friday Nov 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>Research Report (2,000 words); 40%; due week 7 5 pm Fri Sep 1st</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assumed Knowledge
SOCA1010 Society and Culture: A Sociological Introduction.
## Callaghan Campus Timetable

**SOCS1100**  
**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE & KEY DEBATES IN SOCIAL SCIE**  
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science  
Semester 2 - 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computer Lab</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>11:00 - 13:00</th>
<th>[CT314]</th>
<th>Wks 2, 4, 6, 9, 11.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
<td>[CT311]</td>
<td>Wks 2, 4, 6, 9, 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
<td>[CT304]</td>
<td>Wks 2, 4, 6, 9, 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
<td>[CT314]</td>
<td>Wks 2, 4, 6, 9, 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>12:00 - 14:00</td>
<td>[CT109]</td>
<td>Wks 2, 4, 6, 9, 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Lecture</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>13:00 - 15:00</td>
<td>[SRLT1]</td>
<td>Wks 1,3,5,7,8,10,12 - 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Seminar</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>11:00 - 13:00</td>
<td>[W238]</td>
<td>Wks 1,3,5,7,8,10,12 - 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
<td>[W243]</td>
<td>Wks 1,3,5,7,8,10,12 - 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
<td>[W238]</td>
<td>Wks 1,3,5,7,8,10,12 - 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>15:00 - 17:00</td>
<td>[MCG28C]</td>
<td>Wks 1,3,5,7,8,10,12 - 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>12:00 - 14:00</td>
<td>[W202]</td>
<td>Wks 1,3,5,7,8,10,12 - 14.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Ourimbah Timetable

**SOCS1100**  
**PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE & KEY DEBATES IN SOCIAL SCIE**  
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science  
Semester 2 - 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Computer Lab</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>16:00 - 18:00</th>
<th>[O_IT06]</th>
<th>Wks 2, 4, 6, 9, 11.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>14:00 - 16:00</td>
<td>[O_FA-Sem]</td>
<td>Wks 2, 4, 6, 9, 11.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Lecture</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>14:00 - 16:00</td>
<td>[O_CS2.04]</td>
<td>Wks 1,3,5,7,8,10,12 - 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and Seminar</td>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>16:00 - 18:00</td>
<td>[O_CS2.04]</td>
<td>Wks 1,3,5,7,8,10,12 - 14.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or</td>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>14:00 - 16:00</td>
<td>[O_CN1:1.05]</td>
<td>Wks 1,3,5,7,8,10,12 - 14.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Plagiarism

University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if he or she presents the thoughts or works of another as one’s own. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:
· copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;
· using another’s ideas without due acknowledgment;
· working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it was completed independently.

Plagiarism is not only related to written works, but also to material such as data, images, music, formulae, websites and computer programs.

Aiding another student to plagiarise is also a violation of the Plagiarism Policy and may invoke a penalty.

For further information on the University policy on plagiarism, please refer to the Policy on Student Academic Integrity at the following link -


The University has established a software plagiarism detection system called Turnitin. When you submit assessment items please be aware that for the purpose of assessing any assessment item the University may -

· Reproduce this assessment item and provide a copy to another member of the University; and/or
· Communicate a copy of this assessment item to a plagiarism checking service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future plagiarism checking).
· Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking.

Written Assessment Items

Students may be required to provide written assessment items in electronic form as well as hard copy.

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations

Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date, as advised in the Course Outline, unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension of time for submission of the item. University policy is that an assessment item submitted after the due date, without an approved extension, will be penalised.

Any student:

1. who is applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment: or
2. whose attendance at or performance in an assessment item or formal written examination has been or will be affected by medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment;

must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, to the appropriate officer on the prescribed form.

Please go to the Policy and the on-line form for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you, at:

Changing your Enrolment
The last dates to withdraw without financial or academic penalty (called the HECS Census Dates) are:

- For semester 1 courses: 31 March 2006
- For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2006
- For Trimester 1 courses: 17 February 2006
- For Trimester 2 courses: 9 June 2006

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester and prior to the commencement of the formal exam period. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of semester will result in a fail grade.

Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of semester/trimester, except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of semester/trimester must be on the appropriate form, and should be discussed with the School Office.

To change your enrolment online, please refer to [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/changingenrolment.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/changingenrolment.html)

Contact Details
Faculty Student Service Offices

The Faculty of Education and Arts
Room: GP1-22 (General Purpose Building)
Phone: 0249 215 314

The Dean of Students
Dr Jennifer Archer
Phone: 492 15806
Fax: 492 17151
resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Various services are offered by the University Student Support Unit:

Alteration of this Course Outline
No change to this course outline will be permitted after the end of the second week of the term except in exceptional circumstances and with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of any approved changes to this outline.

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards

Web Address for Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS
The University is committed to providing a range of support services for students with a disability or chronic illness.

If you have a disability or chronic illness which you feel may impact on your studies, please feel free to discuss your support needs with your lecturer or course coordinator. Disability Support may also be provided by the Student Support Service (Disability). Students must be registered to receive this type of support. To register please contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 49 21 5766, or via email at: student-disability@newcastle.edu.au

As some forms of support can take a few weeks to implement it is extremely important that you discuss your needs with your lecturer, course coordinator or Student Support Service staff at the beginning of each semester.

For more information related to confidentiality and documentation please visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website at:
Online Tutorial Registration:
Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system:
β  http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm
Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/
This course uses Blackboard and studentmail to contact students, so you are advised to keep your email accounts within the quota to ensure you receive essential messages. To receive an expedited response to queries, post questions on the Blackboard discussion forum if there is one, or if emailing staff directly use the course code in the subject line of your email. Students are advised to check their studentmail and the course Blackboard site on a weekly basis.

Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date. Late assignments will be subject to the penalties described below.

Hard copy submission:
β  **Type your assignments**: All work must be typewritten in 11 or 12 point black font. Leave a wide margin for marker’s comments, use 1.5 or double spacing, and include page numbers.
β  **Word length**: Assignments that fall short of the word length will be required to be resubmitted. Longer assignments will not be penalized but lecturers cannot be expected to read all of a longer document in deciding on the result.
β  **Proof read your work** because spelling, grammatical and referencing mistakes will be penalised.
β  **Staple the pages** of your assignment together (do not use pins or paper clips).
β  **University coversheet**: All assignments must be submitted with the University coversheet:

β  **Assignments are to be deposited at any Student Focus. Focus are located at:**
   o Level 3, Shortland Union, Callaghan
   o Level 2, Student Services Centre, Callaghan
   o Ground Floor, University House, City
   o Ground Floor, Administration Building, Ourimbah
   Any changes to this procedure will be announced during the semester.
β  **Do not fax or email assignments**: Only hard copies of assignments will be considered for assessment. Inability to physically submit a hard copy of an assignment by the deadline due to other commitments or distance from campus is an unacceptable excuse. Assignments mailed to Schools are accepted from the date posted.

β  **Keep a copy of all assignments**: All assignments are date-stamped upon receipt. However, it is the student’s responsibility to produce a copy of their work if the assignment goes astray after submission. Students are advised to keep updated back-ups in hard copy and on disk.
Online copy submission to Turnitin
In addition to hard copy submission, students are required to submit an electronic version of the following assignments to Turnitin via the course Blackboard website:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essay (2,000 words)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Week 12, 5 pm Friday Nov 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Report (2,000 words)</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>Week 7, 5 pm Fri Sep 1st</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prior to final submission, all students have the opportunity to submit one draft of their assignment to Turnitin to self-check their referencing.

Assignments will not be marked until both hard copy and online versions have been submitted. Marks may be deducted for late submission of either version.

Penalties for Late Assignments
Students are required to submit assessment items by the due date. Assignments submitted after the due date might not be included for assessment. No penalty will apply if the student has submitted an Application for an Extension of Time by the due date and the application is approved by the Course Coordinator.

Special Consideration/Extension of Time Applications
Students wishing to apply for Special Consideration or Extension of Time should obtain the appropriate form from the Student HUBS.

No Assignment Re-submission
Students who have failed an assignment are not permitted to revise and resubmit it in this course. However, students are always welcome to contact their Tutor, Lecturer or Course Coordinator to make a consultation time to receive individual feedback on their assignments.

Re-marks
Students can request to have their work re-marked by the Course Coordinator or Discipline Convenor (or their delegate); three outcomes are possible: the same grade, a lower grade, or a higher grade being awarded. Students may also appeal against their final result for a course. Please consult the University policy at:


Return of Assignments
Where possible, assignments will be marked within 3 weeks and returned to students in class. At the end of semester, students can collect assignments from the Student HUBS during office hours.

Preferred Referencing Style
In this course, it is recommended that you use the Harvard in-text referencing system (similar to the APA system) for referencing sources of information used in assignments. Inadequate or incorrect reference to the work of others may be viewed as plagiarism and result in reduced marks or failure.

An in-text citation names the author of the source, gives the date of publication, and for a direct quote includes a page number, in parentheses. At the end of the paper, a list of references provides publication information about the source; the list is alphabetised by authors’ last names (or by titles for works without authors). Further information on referencing and general study skills can be obtained from:
Infoskills:  

See also:


Student Representatives  
We are very interested in your feedback and suggestions for improvement. Student Representatives are the channel of communication between students and the School Board. Contact details of Student Representatives can be found on the School website.

Student Communication  
Students should discuss any course related matters with their Tutor, Lecturer, or Course Coordinator in the first instance and then the relevant Discipline or Program Convenor. If this proves unsatisfactory, they should then contact the Head of School if required. Contact details can be found on the School website.

**Essential Online Information for Students**

Information on Class and Exam Timetables, Tutorial Online Registration, Learning Support, Campus Maps, Careers information, Counselling, the Health Service and a range of free Student Support Services can be found at:


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading guide</th>
<th>Fail (FF)</th>
<th>Pass (P)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>An unacceptable effort, including non-completion. The student has not understood the basic principles of the subject matter and/or has been unable to express their understanding in a comprehensible way. Deficient in terms of answering the question, research, referencing and correct presentation (spelling, grammar etc.). May include extensive plagiarism.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>The work demonstrates a reasonable attempt to answer the question, shows some grasp of the basic principles of the subject matter and a basic knowledge of the required readings, is comprehensible, accurate and adequately referenced.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit (C) The work demonstrates a clear understanding of the question, a capacity to integrate research into the discussion, and a critical appreciation of a range of different theoretical perspectives. A deficiency in any of the above may be compensated by evidence of independent thought. The work is coherent and accurate.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction (D) Evidence of substantial additional reading and/or research, and evidence of the ability to generalise from the theoretical content to develop an argument in an informed and original manner. The work is well organised, clearly expressed and shows a capacity for critical analysis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction (HD) All of the above, plus a thorough understanding of the subject matter based on substantial additional reading and/or research. The work shows a high level of independent thought, presents informed and insightful discussion of the topic, particularly the theoretical issues involved, and demonstrates a well-developed capacity for critical analysis.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecture Topics</td>
<td>Seminar and Computer Lab Topics and Tasks</td>
<td>Tasks Due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus groups and interviews in the social sciences – qualitative research</td>
<td>Introducing ourselves</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Explaining the course guide</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Setting up the focus groups</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing focus group topics</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Arranging cassette recorders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluating evidence. Plagiarism.</td>
<td>Finding info on the net</td>
<td>Conduct the focus group interview and tape it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Searching library databases</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bias and values in the social sciences</td>
<td>Bias and values in the social sciences</td>
<td>Find info on your topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tables and descriptive statistics in the social sciences</td>
<td>Tables in Excel Spreadsheets: Part One</td>
<td>Divide up transcription task in your group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to do interviews and focus groups</td>
<td>How to write up your focus group tapes</td>
<td>Transcribe the taped interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to code and analyze interview data</td>
<td>Tables in Excel Spreadsheets: Part Two</td>
<td>Prepare a table</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Welfare State and Economic Rationalism</td>
<td>The Welfare State and Economic Rationalism</td>
<td>Due Date - Friday Sep 1st Research Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School of Humanities and Social Science
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Welfare and Governmentality</th>
<th>Social Welfare and Governmentality</th>
<th>Begin your key debates essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How to discuss a topic in an essay format</td>
<td>PowerPoint Presentations: Part One</td>
<td>Start your career portfolio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mapping Social Inequality and Cultural Diversity with Survey Data</td>
<td>Mapping Social Inequality and Cultural Diversity with Survey Data</td>
<td>Prepare your PowerPoint for key debates essay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career choice and careers in social science</td>
<td>PowerPoint Presentations: Part Two</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Semester Recess: Monday 2 October – Friday 13 October</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Concept of Social Capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Middle Class – Neo Marxist Approaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Review and Party</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due date - Friday Nov 3rd
Career portfolio
Essay - Key Debates
Assessment Item 1: Research Report
Controversial topic
Weighting: 40%  Due Date: Week 7 - Friday Sep 1
Length: 2,000 words.

Explanation and timing of the task:

A research report consists of two key sections. The first is a literature review of existing research on a topic. The second is the report and analysis of your own original data.

For this research report the data will be a taped focus group interview with a number of students from your seminar and computer lab group. The topic will be attitudes to a controversial social issue. Your group will be asked to devise a topic of the kind that may be the subject of investigation in the social sciences. You can imagine that a research company is asking you to investigate the topic – “What do young people think about … ?”.

In week one your group will work out a topic which is likely to engender debate and discussion in your group, making it suitable as a focus group topic. For example “Drugs in Sport”; “Divorce and Single Fathers” and so on. Preferably, choose a topic that you do not all agree about.

In the second week your group will meet to conduct the focus group.

In weeks five and six you will be instructed in methods to write up and analyze interview data. It would make sense for your group to meet in week four and divide up the task of transcription so you all transcribe a part of the tape and join the transcription together for analysis by each student for their own report. By week six it would be sensible to write up your analysis of the transcript for your research report, finalizing the report by the end of week seven.

In the second week you will also be instructed on methods for searching databases so that you can review existing research on a topic. The research report tasks requires you to conduct a search of databases and find between three and five articles from academic journals which you will summarize and discuss for the review of existing research on your group’s topic. Also prepare a reference list for the articles you use. It would make sense to begin this task in the third week. In addition to the material presented in the book of readings the library tutorials on the web called “infoskills” have some excellent instruction on this topic.

In weeks four and six, you will be instructed on how to prepare a table in an Excel spreadsheet. During the course of your database search on your focus group topic you will have come across a number of tables or numerical data of some kind. For your research report you will be expected to prepare this data as at least two tables in Excel spreadsheets. Please enter the data yourself and prepare your own tables – do not cut and paste from the net or other source. Under each table explain in your own words the meaning of the table as data relevant to your topic. You will need to cite the source for the information in the table. These tables will be included as part of your review of existing research on the topic. It would be sensible to complete this part of the task in week six.

See the week by week summary of the course for reminders on the timing of this task.

The assessment task:

Prepare a research report on a controversial social issue and people’s attitudes to that issue - as revealed in a focus group interview. The report must include a discussion of existing research on the issue; as well as at least two tables of data prepared in Excel spreadsheets by you - and derived from your database search. It must also include a report of the focus group discussion with your own analysis of examples of interview transcript. The conclusion should discuss the relationship between your own findings and the existing research.
Example and format for a research report:

The following resources will be placed in short loans to give students an idea of what a research report in the social sciences looks like - and to set out the format for a research report:


Examples and discussion of how to transcribe and analyze interview data

The following resources will be placed in short loans to help students to get a deeper understanding of different ways to approach interview data.


**Assessment Item 2: Career Portfolio**

**Weighting:** 10%  **Due Date:** Week 14 – Friday, Nov 3  
**Length:** 1,000 words

**Instructions:** In week 11, the lecture will be concerned with career development in the social sciences. What work is available in the social sciences? From this broad arena of employment what particular kinds of work is the student interested in pursuing? What does the student find engaging about this field? What kinds of skills and training are necessary to be employable in that field? What sort of information and documentation will be required at an interview? For this assignment students will collect these materials together – job advertisements in the field the student wishes to enter, a resume of work experience, a curriculum vitae of academic achievements relevant to a career in the social sciences, a plan of what the student intends to do in coming years to ensure employability in their chosen field, a discussion of the students ambitions and interests in terms of social science careers.

**Careers service**


You can also register your email with Careers & Employment to receive advanced notification of part-time job vacancies, program related job opportunities (including traineeships and vacation work), and graduate opportunities.

Careers & Employment run a number of career related activities throughout the year, including the annual Careers Expo, seminars and professional development programs, job application checking service, interview practice and careers counselling sessions.
Assessment Item 3: Essay  
Key Debates in the Social Sciences  
Weighting: 20%  Due Date:  Week 14 – Friday, Nov 4  
Length: 2,000 words

Instructions: The essay topics are intended to cover the key debates handled in the lecture series. Students will be expected to make use of at least 5 academic references for their essay topic for the essay they choose. It is expected that students will begin with the references listed below for their essay topics - before searching for further material. The references listed here will be available in short loans. Essays should be written in academic genre with a proper referencing and reference list. For most essays, the following textbook is an excellent introduction to the issues.


In weeks 9 and 11 the Computer Lab instruction will be on how to prepare presentations in PowerPoint. For this assessment item, students will summarise their essay in PowerPoint format, presenting this on a floppy disk with their printed essay.

Essay Topics and Readings: Choose ONE of the following.

**Essay Topic One:** How has what has been called neo-liberalism or economic rationalism affected the welfare state in Australia and other wealthy nations? Overall, has there been a drop in standards of living and security resulting from these changes.


**Essay Topic Two:** How have Foucault’s ideas about power, knowledge, the disciplinary society and governmentality been applied to understand institutions such as the courts, schools and community services?


Smart, Barry 1985, Michel Foucault, Routledge, London, pp. 71 – 144..


**Essay Topic Three:** Is it realistic to expect that social science can ever be free of values, objective or unbiased? What are some alternative goals for social science research?


Silverman, David 1995, Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction, SAGE, London,


**Essay Topic Four:** What is Putnam’s concept of social capital and how has it led to an emphasis on building social capital as an approach to social improvement? What are some critiques of the concept of social capital?


**Essay Topic Five:** The role of the middle class professional is to discipline, control and guide the working class - to the ultimate benefit of the ruling capitalist class. It is this fact which leads to working class resistance. Examine this approach in the context of professional work in education, the human services or other social science careers.


Pont, Jennifer 1997, Heart Health Promotion in a Respectable Community: An Inside View of the Culture of the Coalfields of Northern New South Wales, PhD, University of Newcastle, pp. 121 – 144.


**Assessment Item 4: Participation**

**Weighting:** 10%

Students are required to attend seminars and computer labs. If you are unable to attend for more than two weeks, arrangements must be made with the lecturer.

Students are required to undertake the weekly reading and participate in discussion organised around that. The participation mark will be an overall grade, taking into account participation in all seminars and computer labs.