SOCS3200 - Applied Social Research Project

Course Co-ordinator: Callaghan
Debbi Long
Debbi.Long@newcastle.edu.au

Course Co-ordinator: Ourimbah
Dr Melanie Boursnell
Melanie.Boursnell@newcastle.edu.au

Consultation hours will be posted on Blackboard or e-mail for an appointment.

Brief Course Description
This course is a prescribed course for students enrolled in the Bachelor of Social Science and is also available to other students as an elective. This course provides grounding in advanced social research methods and is a logical progression from SOCS2400 Applied Social Research, which students are strongly recommended to have completed as preparation for SOCS3200.

In this course students undertake a social science research project related to career interests combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, including a literature review, research proposal, data collection, and report writing.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 2 - 2009

CTS Download Date: 7th July 2009
Contact Hours
There is a seminar for three hours per week for the full term – this incorporates workshop time.

Learning Materials/Texts
Course Text: -

Martin Brett Davies. 2007.

Copies have been ordered for the Coop Bookshop at Ourimbah.
This is an essential text which will be used every week. Please ensure you purchase a copy in week 1. If you are unable to, you must consult the copy in the Library - short loans to prepare for class.

Course Objectives
On successful completion of this course students will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of a range of social research methods, related ethical issues, and the relationship between research and social theory.
2. Critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of various social research methods and select appropriate methods to answer research questions.
3. Conduct the planning, collection and analysis of data as part of a small research project.
4. Effectively communicate research results in written and oral form.

Course Content
This course provides grounding in advanced social research methods and is a logical progression from SOCS2400 Applied Social Research, which students are highly recommended to have completed as preparation for SOCS3200.

In this course students undertake a social science research project related to career interests combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, including a research proposal, literature review, data collection, and report writing.

Assessment Items

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Essays / Written Assignments</th>
<th>Research proposal 1500 words, 20% due week 5 (24th August 2009)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group/tutorial participation and contribution</td>
<td>Attendance and participation 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participation is assessed on students’ demonstrated evidence of class preparation each week. This includes having studied the prescribed readings and other allocated tasks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projects</td>
<td>Presentation of research project, 500 words, 20%, due between weeks 8 and 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>Major research report; 3000 words; 50%; due end of semester.</td>
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Assumed Knowledge
SOCS2400 Applied Social Research
Callaghan Campus Timetable
SOCS3200
APPLIED SOCIAL RESEARCH PROJECT
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 - 2008
Seminar Tuesday 9:00 - 11:00 [HA110]
or Monday 9:00 - 11:00 [GP2-18]
and Workshop Tuesday 12:00 - 13:00 [W238]
or Monday 11:00 - 12:00 [GP2-18]

Ourimbah Timetable
SOCS3200
APPLIED SOCIAL RESEARCH PROJECT
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 - 2008
Seminar Monday 14:00 - 16:00 [O_CS2.07]
and Workshop Monday 16:00 - 17:00 [O_CN2 1:11]

Plagiarism

University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. A student plagiarises if they present 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. Furthermore, 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.

Marks and Grades Released During Term

All marks and grades released during the term, are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School on the recommendation of the School Assessment body.

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 following the instructions provided in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Procedure - Policy 000641.

Note: different procedures apply for minor and major assessment tasks.

Please go to the Policy at http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html for further information, particularly for information on the options available to you.

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:

- Requests for Special Consideration must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.

- Requests for Extensions of Time on Assessment Items must be lodged no later than the due date of the item.

- Requests for Rescheduling Exams must be received no later than ten working days prior the first date of the examination period

Your application may not be accepted if it is received after the deadline. In the first instance, students who are unable to meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

Changing your Enrolment

The census dates below are the last dates to withdraw without academic penalty. For onshore students, withdrawal on or before the census date means no financial penalty.

For semester 2 courses: 31 August 2009

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of semester. 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 staff in the Student Hubs or with your Program Executive at PSB if you are a Singapore student.

To check or change your enrolment online, please refer to myHub - Self Service for Students

https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au
Faculty Information

The Student Hubs are a one-stop shop for the delivery of student related services and are the first point of contact for students studying in Australia.

The four Student Hubs are located at:

Callaghan campus

• Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Union Building
• Hunter Hub: Student Services Centre, Hunter side of campus

City Precinct

• City Hub & Information Common: University House, ground floor in combination with an Information Common for the City Precinct

Ourimbah campus

• Ourimbah Hub: Administration Building

Faculty websites

Faculty of Education and Arts

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/

Contact details

Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie

Phone: 02 4921 5000

Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

Ourimbah

Phone: 02 4348 4030

Email: EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au

The Dean of Students
Resolution Precinct
Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au

Deputy Dean of Students (Ourimbah)
Phone: 02 4348 4123
Fax: 02 4348 4145
Email: 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.
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 02 4921 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: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability

Online Tutorial Registration:

Students are required to enrol in the Lecture and a specific Tutorial time for this course via the Online Registration system. Refer - http://studinfo1.newcastle.edu.au/rego/stud_choose_login.cfm

NB: Registrations close at the end of week 2 of semester.

Studentmail and Blackboard: Refer - 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.

Important Additional Information

Details about the following topics are available on your course Blackboard site (where relevant). Refer - www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/

- Written Assignment Presentation and Submission Details
- Online copy submission to Turnitin
- Penalties for Late Assignments
- Special Circumstances
- No Assignment Re-submission
- Re-marks & Moderations
- Return of Assignments
- Preferred Referencing Style
- Student Representatives
- Student Communication
- Essential Online Information for Students
**SOCS3200 - Applied Social Science Research Project**


This is an essential text which will be used every week. You should purchase a copy in Week 1. If you are really unable to, you must consult the copy in Short Loans to prepare for Class.

This course requires you to devise, carry out and write up a small research project. This year you will be able to choose between devising your own project and taking part in a scheme for SOCS students to do evaluation projects for different parts of the University – a work related research project (WRRP).

A decision to put in an expression of interest for WRRP has to be made in Week 1 – information is at the back of this course guide and on the Blackboard site.

**WEEK 1. - EVERYONE - Buy copy of text**

During Class, be prepared to:
- Introduce yourself, the major that you are studying, and a topic you are interested in researching.

Class Discussion:
- Discussion on available research methods
- Start thinking about Personal Project Road Map (p49, course text)

OR Prepare Expression of Interest for WRRP if you want – due Friday at 9am.

**READING FOR NEXT WEEK**

Davies: Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (course text)


**FURTHER READING (OPTIONAL)**

Introducing qualitative research : a student's guide to the craft of doing qualitative research / Rosaline S. Barbour (2008) – CHAPTER 1

Handbook of qualitative research / Norman K. Denzin, Yvonna S. Lincoln (2000) – CHAPTER 1

**WEEK2 - Must have read Davies Chapters 1, 2 and 3**

In Class Discussion of chapters 1, 2 and 3

**BRING TO CLASS**

- A 50 word description of your proposed topic. Introduce your chosen topic to the class. As a class, we will discuss available and appropriate methods, and refine your research question.
- A draft of your Personal Project Road Map (template on p49 of course text)
- WRRP projects will be allocated.

**READINGS IN PREPARATION FOR TUTORIAL 3**

Davies – Chapter 9

School of Humanities and Social Science
Silverman, D (2005) Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook, CHAPTER 8 ‘Choosing a Methodology’

FURTHER READING

Davies Chapter 11

Social research methods: an Australian perspective / edited by Maggie Walter: Chapter 2

**WEEK 3 - BRING TO CLASS 2 academic references on your chosen topic.**

- Be prepared to talk for 2 minutes about the content/methods of these references

IN CLASS

- Formulation of Project Proposal (Ethical considerations, Methods, Literature review; Appendix – Interview schedule/questions etc, Personal Project Road Map)
- Discussion of Chapter 9, relating to your chosen topic.

READINGS IN PREPARATION FOR TUTORIAL 4

Read Davies Chapters 10 and 11

Silverman, D (2005) Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook CHAPTER 10. Writing a research proposal

FURTHER READING

Morgan, DL (1996) Focus Groups

**WEEK 4
BRING TO CLASS
Interview questions, participants observation ideas, focus group topics for discussion etc**

IN CLASS

- Discussion of Chapters 10 and 11, relating to your chosen topic.
- Carry out pilot study (interview one of your classmates, or discuss ideas with another classmate. Give feedback to each other, and report back to whole class)
- Discussion on data collection – tips
- Continue to formulate Project Proposals

READINGS IN PREPARATION FOR WEEK 5

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PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE
**WEEK 5**

**BRING TO CLASS**
1 reference on your chosen methods (for example - interviewing young people, semi-structured interviews etc) to discuss in class

**IN CLASS:**
- Discussion on the “how to’s” of data collection
- Discuss recording equipment

**WEEK 6 - Organization and updates**

**IN CLASS**
- Assign dates for Presentations
- Organise data collection
- Carry out data collection (interviews with class mates if needed etc)
- Each student to talk for 5 minutes: update the class on your progress so far, and any problems or obstacles you have encountered.
- Reflect on literature collected so far (how useful/relevant is it to your ongoing project?)

**LOOK AHEAD**
- Start thinking about preparing for your presentation (PowerPoint etc)
- READ Davies Chapter 13: Writing a Report

**READINGS IN PREPARATION FOR WEEK 7**

Davies: Chapter 12

**WEEK 7**

**BRING TO CLASS**
ALL evidence of data collected so far (tapes/audio/transcripts/notes. Partial transcript for the class to analyse

**NOTE:** PLEASE BRING ELECTRONIC COPY (on disk/flash drive etc) OF PARTIAL TRANSCRIPTS.

**IN CLASS**
- Data collection cont…
- Discussion of Chapter 12
- Discussion of data analysis
- As a class, analyse excerpts of partial transcripts
- Tutor will give feedback on Project Proposals, and answer any question about proposals.

**READING IN PREPARATION FOR WEEK 8**

Davies Chapter 14: p231 onwards: ‘10 Golden Rules’
Silverman, D (2005) Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook CHAPTER 11 Beginning data analysis

FURTHER READING

Social research methods: an Australian perspective / edited by Maggie Walter: Chapter 5 ‘Content Analysis’

**WEEK 8 Presentation and updates**

**IN CLASS**

- Presentations
- Updates on progress: be prepared to talk for 2 minutes on your progress. In particular reflect on how your original research question has developed/changed, and how you are using the ‘10 Golden Rules’

**READING IN PREPARATION FOR WEEK 9**

- Read: Davies Chapter 13: Writing your report

**WEEK 9**

**IN CLASS**

- Presentations cont…
- Updates on progress cont…
- Question and Answer session
- Begin to formulate Report

**READING IN PREPARATION FOR WEEK 10**

Davies: Concise Glossary: p233

Silverman, D (2005) Doing qualitative research: a practical handbook CHAPTER 14 Quality in qualitative research

**WEEK 10**

**IN CLASS**

- Presentations cont…
- Question and Answer session
- Discussion on how to construct and formulate findings/results from data
- Talk for 2 minutes on terms in the ‘Concise Glossary’ you find relevant to your project

**FURTHER READING**

Social research methods: an Australian perspective / edited by Maggie Walter: Chapter 13 ‘Writing Up research’
WEEK 11
BRING TO CLASS
Material you have continued to gather for your literature review

IN CLASS
- Remainder of Presentations
- Question and Answer session
- Updates on progress
- Update on Literature review progress: talk for 2 minutes on the development of your literature review since your Proposal submission

WEEK 12 AND WEEK 13

IN CLASS
- Question and Answer session
- Advice and reflections on the research process
Guidelines for your research project: Ethics and feasibility

You will need to complete 3-5 individual interviews or one focus group – you need to ensure that you will produce enough data for this project.

1. Who to interview for your Qualitative research project.

You can choose people in your social networks – who work with you or whom you know socially, or through a leisure pursuit, who might do you a favour. Remember, you are asking them to help you with a student project, so that you can learn interviewing or focus group skills, this is a practice exercise.

Interviewing training manuals are like written instructions on how to drive a car – they do not make much sense until you try: this is your opportunity to have practical experience of putting the written recommendations into practice.

Remember that the point of the research exercise is to practice the skills – not to produce publishable data.

The subject of the research is important though – it is a waste of time to research trivial issues, so although you cannot develop a full-scale triangulated proposal at this stage, your research question should be based on the literature and applicable to the group to which you have access.

It is important that the people you ask do not feel obliged to agree if they do not want to participate. See the section on ethics below.

Don’t interview your partner or best friend – you share so much knowledge of each other that you will find it hard to achieve any distance, and the interview will not produce such rich data.

Remember also that subjects for qualitative research are not usually randomly sampled – look up purposive or theoretical sampling. Try to devise a project which relates meaningfully to the lives of people you already know.

2. Is it Feasible – can you complete the project in the time available?

Most things take longer than you expect.

Recruitment – it often takes longer than you think to get people to agree and arrange an interview.

Interviewing/focus groups – practical difficulties, missed appointments, illness, can slow up this part of the research process.

Transcribing – It is generally acknowledged that a 1 hour interview takes 3 hours to transcribe – and it may take another 3 hours to complete the analysis.

You can save time by listening to the tapes and only transcribing the most relevant and interesting material, but if you choose to do this, you should review the tapes several times; things may become relevant later which did not appear at first.

3. Is your project Ethical for research with human subjects?

You do not have to apply for ethics clearance for your research – this course has been approved by an ethics committee as long as students follow the recommendations. For your information though, in case you go on to do a longer project and to make you aware of the issues which ethics committees address – here is a list of the issues which need to be addressed.

Privacy and coercion

You have the obligation to make sure that your subjects do not feel coerced – (in your project, the fact that they know you may make this more likely, not less).

If you are unsure, give them a written letter and ask them to call you later, or go through a third party.
You should not use anyone whose contact details you do not already have – looking up strangers in a telephone book or collecting numbers from work - any calling without the other person’s prior permission - is an invasion of privacy in violation of NSW privacy law. For instance, you should not access a data base of addresses for a club or association even if you are a member of it – only contact people you already know.

If there are friends of friends who might participate, get the friend to contact them first and ask them to contact you.

* Justification for research – this means that you have related your topic to the literature and can argue that it is necessary and important.

* Risk of harm – awareness of what you might discover – with interviewing, this is mostly the risk of upsetting someone by making them recall distressing events, or offending them. With people you know, you might bear in mind that you will want a continuing relationship with them – will any of your questions put this at risk?

* Crimes Act – if someone told you about illegal activities (with names and dates) or child abuse you would be obliged to report it.

* Referral to caring and support agencies – if you discovered that one of your interviewees was ill or depressed or suicidal, who would you refer them to?

* Subjects have the right to withdraw at any time without penalty

* They can withdraw any comment they wish up to the point when the report is written.

* Separate consent to be tape-recorded – they have the right to review and erase tape.

* Data storage, security, length of time to be kept – for full projects, tapes and transcripts should be in locked cupboards, only seen by student and supervisor, kept for five years.

  * Anonymity or confidentiality – pseudonyms, code names, should be used when writing up and identifying information (such as job description, participation in very memorable incidents) should be left out. It is generally considered good practice to de-identify your transcripts as soon as possible and only work with the de-identified material.

**Qualitative research journals.**

It is good practice to keep a journal/log of your reading, thinking and analysis whilst doing qualitative research.
Students who are selected to take part in Work Related Research Projects (WRRPs) will participate fully in SOCS3200 seminars and workshops. They will also fulfil all requirements for assessment as follows:

O-Week Descriptions of the WRRPs will be posted on the Black Board site and students invited to apply.

Week 1 The Course coordinator will explain the WRRP pilot and invite students to an information session outside class time.
  - Students who are interested in applying will fill out an expression of interest guided by a pro-forma and nominate their preferred projects in order.

Weeks 2 – 4 Students will attend class as usual and work through course materials.
  - Students will be matched to available projects and put in touch with a contact person in the work location.
  - They will also meet with their contact person and familiarise themselves with the requirements of their WRRP.
  - Instead of developing an individual project they will research the background and methodologies related to their WRRP and commence working on the project.

Week 5 Students will hand in a 1500 word ‘proposal’ for assessment.
  - This can be based on the material developed by others for the WRRP but must include the student’s own critical analysis of the literature and methodology.
  - They may wish to also submit this document to their WRRP contact person.

Weeks 5-11 Students will attend class and report on the progress of their WRRP and the experience of doing workplace research (with due regard for confidentiality).
  - They will work on the WRRP outside class time, just as other students are working on individual projects.
  - All students will be assigned a presentation date. On their assigned week, they will explain their project, methodology and preliminary findings to the class.
  - Representatives of the WRRP may be invited to hear the presentation.

Weeks 12 to 13 Students will continue with WRRP but also attend class to resolve issues with their reports.

Week 14. Students will submit their individual final reports for assessment in accordance with the course requirements. They will also agree on a reporting format with their WRRP contact person.
  - The two reports will be similar in content but may differ in format.
  - The report for assessment may contain additional academic references and a reflection on the research process which may not be appropriate for the workplace report.
  - The workplace report will be prepared in cooperation with the course coordinator and other students who have worked on the project.
  - The projects will be presented to the workplace team.
SOCS3200 Work Related Research Project

2009 Call for Expressions of Interest

The major assessable task for this course will involve the design, implementation and presentation of a report on an applied social research project. A small number Work Related Research Projects (WRRP) have been submitted by work groups or services within the University that are currently seeking information related to quality assurance, needs assessment or planning strategies in relation to service provision. Students have an option to apply to work on one of these projects to complete the requirements of the SOCS3200 assessment task.

While these projects are not placements, they will give students the opportunity to work directly with practitioners. A summary of the projects are listed below.

Undertaking a WRRP will involve direct experience in:

- Gaining an understanding of the workplace rationale for the development of the project
- Developing or critiquing research methods used for the project
- Responding to ethical and resource issues related to the project
- Communicating research findings in a work setting

Specifically, you will be involved in the organisation, implementation, data collection, data analysis and reporting for the research project. This will be done under the guidance of SOCS3200 course coordinator and tutors and the workplace representatives.

To apply for this opportunity you will need to:

1. Have successfully completed SOCS2400 or equivalent course.
2. Hold a good overall grade point average for your studies to date
3. Be prepared to commit 6 hours a week, outside lecture and tutorial times, to the project over a 10 week period
4. Submit an expression of interest which includes:
   a. A list of the projects listed in preference order
   b. A 500 word statement outlining
      i. your interest in the project/s
      ii. your level of commitment in time to devote to the project – including weekly attendance of lecture and tutorials for SOCS3200
      iii. why you should be chosen for the project – the skills and abilities you would bring to the project

Important Information:

- The report you will produce for your WRRP will be presented and submitted as your assessment for SOCS3200. Other students will be working on independent research projects which will take equivalent time.
- You will be expected to complete a workplace log instead of a research journal.

Expression of Interest Due Date – received by e-mail by Dr Melanie Boursnell by 9am Friday July 25th 2009:
This is an absolute deadline.
Projects will be assigned during that day.
Offers will be e-mailed and Acceptance is required before class in Week 2.
APPLICATION 2009

SOCS3200 Work Related Research Project

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Student Number: ______________________________________________________

Program: _____________________________________________________________

Stage/Level of Study: __________________________________________________

SOCS2400 Completion Mark: ____________________________________________

Project Preferences: ____________________________________________________

Place a number in each of the boxes, starting with 1 for your first preference.

☐ Project No 1 University Library

☐ Project No 2 Student Services

Please attach your 500 word statement of interest and availability.