Course Co-ordinator: Dr Ann Taylor  
Room: W353  
Ph: 49216834  
Email: Ann.Taylor@newcastle.edu.au

Consultation hours: Drop in on Thursday from 2-4pm. Email for a consultation at other times.

Lecturer at Callaghan – Ms. Debbi Long. Debbi.Long@newcastle.edu.au

Lecturer at Ourimbah Dr. Melanie Boursnell. Melanie.Boursnell@newcastle.edu.au

See staff section of Blackboard for other contact details.

SOCS3200 - Applied Social Research Project
Course Outline

Semester: Semester 2 - 2010  
Unit Weighting: 10  
Teaching Methods: Seminar

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 2 - 2010

CTS Download Date: 7th June 2010
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.

Contact Hours
Seminar for 3 Hours per Week for the Full Term

This is available in United Campus Bookshops at Callaghan and Cooperative Bookshop at Ourimbah. We will be using it every week

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</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Group/tutorial participation and contribution</td>
<td>Attendance and participation 10%, 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 10 to 13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reports</td>
<td>Major research report; 3000 words; 50%; due end of semester.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Assumed Knowledge
SOCS2400 Applied Social Research
Callaghan Campus Timetable
SOCS3200
Applied Social Research Project
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 - 2010
Seminar Friday 9:00 - 12:00 [RW223]
or Monday 9:00 - 12:00 [RW223]
or Monday 13:00 - 16:00 [RW223]

Ourimbah Timetable
SOCS3200
Applied Social Research Project
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 - 2010
Seminar Monday 13:00 - 16:00 [O_CS207]

IMPORTANT UNIVERSITY INFORMATION

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge, truth and ethical practices are fundamental to the business of the University. These principles are at the core of all academic endeavour in teaching, learning and research. Dishonest practices contravene academic values, compromise the integrity of research and devalue the quality of learning. To preserve the quality of learning for the individual and others, the University may impose severe sanctions on activities that undermine academic integrity. There are two major categories of academic dishonesty:

Academic fraud is a form of academic dishonesty that involves making a false representation to gain an unjust advantage. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it can include:

a) falsification of data;

b) using a substitute person to undertake, in full or part, an examination or other assessment item;

c) reusing one’s own work, or part thereof, that has been submitted previously and counted towards another course (without permission);

d) making contact or colluding with another person, contrary to instructions, during an examination or other assessment item;

e) bringing material or device(s) into an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item; and

f) making use of computer software or other material and device(s) during an examination or other assessment item other than such as may be specified for that assessment item.

g) contract cheating or having another writer compete for tender to produce an essay or assignment and then submitting the work as one's own.

Plagiarism is the presentation of the thoughts or works of another as one’s own. University policy prohibits students plagiarising any material under any circumstances. Without limiting the generality of this definition, it may include:

a) copying or paraphrasing material from any source without due acknowledgment;

b) using another person's ideas without due acknowledgment;

c) collusion or working with others without permission, and presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently.

Turnitin is an electronic text matching system. During 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 text matching service (which may then retain a copy of the item on its database for the purpose of future checking).
· Submit the assessment item to other forms of plagiarism checking

RE-MARKS AND MODERATIONS
Students can access the University's policy at: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html

MARKS AND GRADES RELEASED DURING TERM
All marks and grades released during term are indicative only until formally approved by the Head of School.

SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES AFFECTING ASSESSMENT ITEMS

Extension of Time for Assessment Items, Deferred Assessment and Special Consideration for Assessment Items or Formal Written Examinations items must be submitted by the due date in the Course Outline unless the Course Coordinator approves an extension. Unapproved late submissions will be penalised in line with the University policy specified in Late Penalty (under student) at the link above.

Requests for Extensions of Time must be lodged no later than the due date of the item. This applies to students:
· applying for an extension of time for submission of an assessment item on the basis of medical, compassionate, hardship/trauma or unavoidable commitment; or
· 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.

Students must report the circumstances, with supporting documentation, as outlined in the Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure at:

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

Students should be aware of the following important deadlines:
· Special Consideration Requests must be lodged no later than 3 working days after the due date of submission or examination.
· Rescheduling Exam requests must be received no later than 10 working days prior the first date of the examination period.

Late applications may not be accepted. Students who cannot meet the above deadlines due to extenuating circumstances should speak firstly to their Program Officer or their Program Executive if studying in Singapore.

STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR CHRONIC ILLNESS

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 contact the Disability Liaison Officer on 02 4921 5766, 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 on confidentiality and documentation visit the Student Support Service (Disability) website: www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability.

CHANGING YOUR ENROLMENT
Students enrolled after the census dates listed in the link below are liable for the full cost of their student contribution or fees for that term.

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/fees/censusdates.html

Students may withdraw from a course without academic penalty on or before the last day of term. Any withdrawal from a course after the last day of term will result in a fail grade.

**Students cannot enrol in a new course after the second week of term,** except under exceptional circumstances. Any application to add a course after the second week of term 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 go to myHub: https://myhub.newcastle.edu.au

**STUDENT INFORMATION & CONTACTS**

Various services are offered by the Student Support Unit:
www.newcastle.edu.au/service/studentsupport/

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. Student Hubs are located at:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Callaghan Campus</th>
<th>Port Macquarie Student Hub</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building</td>
<td>The University of Newcastle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre</td>
<td>A Block, Administration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>City Precinct</strong></td>
<td>Widderson Road</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Hub &amp; Information Common, University House</td>
<td>Port Macquarie NSW 2444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)</strong></td>
<td>Phone: 49215000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria</td>
<td>Singapore students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contact your PSB Program Executive</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Websites</th>
<th>Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/</a></td>
<td>Rules Governing Postgraduate Academic Awards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/health/</a></td>
<td>Rules Governing Professional Doctorate Awards</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Dean of Students Office**
The Dean of Students and Deputy Dean of Students work to ensure that all students receive fair and equitable treatment at the University. In doing this they provide information and advice and help students resolve problems of an academic nature.

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/dean-of-students/
Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151
Email: Dean-Of-Students@newcastle.edu.au

**University Complaints Managers Office**
The University is committed to maintaining and enhancing fair, equitable and safe work practices and promoting positive relationships with its staff and students. There is a single system to deal with all types of complaints, ranging from minor administrative matters to more serious deeply held grievances concerning unfair, unjust or unreasonable behaviour.

http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/complaints/
Phone: 02 4921 5806
Fax: 02 4921 7151

**General enquiries**
Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie
Phone: 02 4921 5000
Email:
This course outline will not be altered after the second week of the term except under extenuating circumstances with Head of School approval. Students will be notified in advance of the change.

**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://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/regdates.html](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/enrolment/regdates.html)

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

**Studentmail and Blackboard:** Refer - [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://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/](http://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 Course Content

This course requires you to devise, carry out and write up a small 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.

Qualitative research journal – a blank notebook to keep your reflections and observations in.

It is good practice to keep a journal/log of your reading, thinking and analysis whilst doing qualitative research. Buy a cheap hardback notebook and start jotting down your thoughts while doing the project. These notes will be useful when you come to analyse your data and write up your project.

WEEK 1. – Introduction - EVERYONE - Buy copy of text

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

Class Discussion:
- Discussion on available research methods
- Discussion of Course related ethics approval requirements and forms.
- Start thinking about Personal Project Road Map (p49, course text)

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
WEEK 2 – Introducing your topic
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)

READINGS IN PREPARATION FOR TUTORIAL 3

Davies – Chapter 9

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 – Literature review and proposal writing
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, student ethics application, 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 – Piloting your questions

BRING TO CLASS

Interview questions, participant 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 – none this week.

PROJECT PROPOSALS DUE

WEEK 5 – Submit Project Proposal

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 – Thinking about Data Analysis

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 Presentations and updates 2.

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 Presentations and Findings

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 Advice and Reflections

IN CLASS
- Question and Answer session - Advice and reflections on the research process

Appendix : Guidelines for your research project: Ethics and feasibility

This course has a course related ethics approval. This means that you can do a small research project for practice as long as it falls within the course guidelines. Everyone will have to complete a student ethics application and have their proposal signed off by the course coordinator before starting any research. You will need to complete 3-5 individual interviews or one focus group 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.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Week Commencing</th>
<th>Seminar Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1    | 26<sup>th</sup> July | Introduction – buy a textbook.  
Thinking about research topics |
| 2    | 2<sup>nd</sup> August | Introduce proposed topics  
Must have read Davies Chapters 1, 2 and 3  
Project Roadmap and ethics process |
| 3    | 9<sup>th</sup> August | Literature review and proposal writing  
BRING TO CLASS 2 academic references  
on your chosen topic |
| 4    | 16<sup>th</sup> August | Piloting your questions  
BRING TO CLASS Interview questions,  
participant observation ideas,  
focus group topics for discussion |
| 5    | 23<sup>rd</sup> August | Proposal due this week.  
BRING TO CLASS  
1 reference on your chosen methods  
(for example – interviewing young people,  
semi-structured interviews etc) |
| 6    | 30<sup>th</sup> August | Organization and updates |
| 7    | 6<sup>th</sup> September | WEEK 7 – Thinking about Data Analysis  
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. |
| 8    | 13<sup>th</sup> September | Presentation and updates |
| 9    | 20<sup>th</sup> September | Presentation and updates |
| 10   | 11<sup>th</sup> October | Q and A on data analysis and findings |
| 11   | 18<sup>th</sup> October | Thinking about writing /Revisiting your literature review |
| 12   | 25<sup>th</sup> October | Advice and Reflection |
| 13   | 1<sup>st</sup> November | Submit Research Report. |

**Examination period: 8<sup>th</sup> November to 26<sup>th</sup> November**