SWRK3005 - Social Work Research
Course Outline

Semester 2 - 2008

Course Coordinator: Debbie Plath
Room: W228 – Behavioural Sciences Building
Phone: 4921 5765
Email: Debbie.Plath@newcastle.edu.au
Consultation Times: Thursdays 11.00 – 1.00

Unit Weighting: 10 units
Teaching Methods: Experience Based Learning Workshops
Self Directed Learning
Student Projects
Case Studies

Brief Course Description
Students will develop an understanding of the role that research plays in social work practice and competence in planning a practice-based research study that would inform social work intervention. Students will attain knowledge and skills in qualitative and quantitative methods that may be used in practice-based social research. Ethical issues and critical debates in social work research will also be examined.

Contact Hours
Workshop for 3 Hours per Week for the full semester.

Learning Materials/Texts
The recommended text for the course is:


In addition, a range of literature has been placed on short loan at Auchmuty library. Most items are accessible electronically on the following link:
http://library.newcastle.edu.au/search/?searchtype=r&searcharg=SWRK3005

Some essential readings will also be photocopied and distributed in class.

Course Outline Issued and Correct as at: Week 1, Semester 2 - 2008

CTS Download Date: 14 July, 2008
Course Objectives
The purpose of this course is to equip social work students with the skills and knowledge required to conduct practice-based research in the social work context.
It is expected that students will:
1. Understand how social workers make use of research to inform practice
2. Develop knowledge in quantitative and qualitative research methods and an understanding of when particular methods are most appropriate to answer different types of research questions encountered in social work practice.
3. Gain practical skills in gathering and analysing research data.
4. Develop competence in identifying and appropriately responding to ethical issues encountered in social work research.
5. Be able to critically review the benefits and shortfalls of published research.
6. Engaged in informed debate on social, political, ethical, technical and practical issues surrounding social work research.
7. Students undertaking the honours stream of the degree will use the learning and tasks in this course as the basis for the individual research thesis completed in the final year of the degree.

Course Content
* The role of research in social work practice.
* Designing a research project.
* Gathering quantitative and qualitative data.
* Analysing quantitative and qualitative data.
* Ethical and political issues in social work
* Critical appraisal of published research.
* Writing a research proposal and an ethics application.

Assessment Items
| Essays / Written Assignments | Written assignment 2000 words, 50% |
| Research report Due: 13th October |
| Essays / Written Assignments | Written assignment 3000 words, 50% |
| Research proposal Due: 5th November |
| Other: | Individual and group tasks (graded satisfactory or unsatisfactory). These must be completed to a satisfactory standard in order to pass the course |

Assumed Knowledge
Completion of all 2nd year and semester 1 3rd year SWRK courses in the Bachelor of Social Work program.

Newcastle City Precinct Timetable
SWRK3005
SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH
Enquiries: School of Humanities and Social Science
Semester 2 – 2008
Workshop Friday 9:00 - 12:00 UNH4-19 Wks 1-3 & 6-14 only
and Workshop Friday 9:00 - 12:00 UNHTH Wks 4-5 only

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
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.

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 2008

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 website

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.

Web Address for Rules Governing Undergraduate 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 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
Mandatory Program Component

This course is a mandatory program component. Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000647.html (section 2).

Essential Criteria in Assessment

This course contains compulsory components or assessment items that must be satisfactorily completed in order for a student to receive a pass mark or better for the course. These essential elements are described in the CTS. Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000648.html

Students must satisfactorily complete all group tasks in order to pass the course.

Group Work, Peer and/or Self-Assessment

The assessment in this course involves group work/peer and/or self-assessment. Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000650.html

All group assessment tasks in this course are graded as satisfactory or unsatisfactory. Groups that do not obtain a satisfactory result will be required to submit additional work as directed by the course coordinator. Individuals who do not satisfactorily participate in group tasks may be required to submit an alternative task.

The ability to work effectively in small groups and teams is an important aspect of professional social work practice. Small group assessment tasks are thus a fundamental component of your learning throughout the Bachelor of Social Work program.

Some class time is set aside for small groups to work on the allocated group tasks. Groups may, however, need to organise additional group meeting times outside of class times. A group discussion board will also be established for each small group on the online Blackboard site.

Groups are expected to work cooperatively in deciding how to approach each task and how work will be distributed and managed between group members. In the first group meeting time should be spent discussing group expectations and negotiating an agreement on how the group can work effectively together. Group members are to take responsibility for developing strategies for managing group processes and addressing any conflict that may arise in the group. The course coordinator (Debbie Plath) will be available as a resource to groups during the group meetings scheduled in class times and is also available during consultation times (as listed above) to discuss any concerns in relation to the content or processes entailed in the group task.

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.
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:

- **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.
- **Word length**: The word limit of all assessment items should be strictly followed – 10% above or below is acceptable, otherwise penalties may apply.
- **Proof read your work** because spelling, grammatical and referencing mistakes will be penalised.
- **Staple the pages** of your assignment together (do not use pins or paper clips).
- **University Assessment Item Coversheet**: All assignments must be submitted with the University coversheet available at: [http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/)
- **By arrangement with the relevant lecturer, assignments may be submitted at any Student Hub located at**:
  - Level 3, Shortland Union, Callaghan
  - Level 2, Student Services Centre, Callaghan
  - Ground Floor, University House, City
  - Opposite Café Central, Ourimbah
- **Date-stamping assignments**: All students must date-stamp their own assignments using the machine provided at each Student Hub. If mailing an assignment, this should be address to the relevant School. Mailed assignments are accepted from the date posted, confirmed by a Post Office date-stamp; they are also date-stamped upon receipt by Schools.
- **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.
- **Keep a copy of all assignments**: 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 electronic and hard copy formats.

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 available @ [www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/](http://www.blackboard.newcastle.edu.au/)

1. Research report
2. Research proposal

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.

**Academic Integrity**

Integrity, honesty, and a respect for knowledge and truth are the bases of all academic endeavours in teaching, learning and research. To preserve the quality of learning, both for the individual and for others enrolled, the University imposes severe sanctions on activities that undermine academic integrity.

There are two major categories of academic dishonesty:

(a) **Academic Fraud**, in which a false representation is made to gain an unjust advantage by, for example,

- the falsification of data
• reusing one’s own work that has been submitted previously and counted towards another course (without permission)

• misconduct in Examinations

(b) Plagiarism, which is the presentation of the thoughts or works of another as one’s own. Plagiarism includes

• copying, paraphrasing, or using someone else’s ideas without appropriate acknowledgement

• failure to identify direct quotation through the use of quotation marks

• working with others without permission and presenting the resulting work as though it were completed independently.

Please note that aiding another student to plagiarise (e.g. by lending assignments to other students) 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 - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000608.html

Penalties for Late Assignments
Assignments submitted after the due date, without an approved extension of time will be penalised by the reduction of 5% of the possible maximum mark for the assessment item for each day or part day that the item is late. Weekends count as one day in determining the penalty. Assessment items submitted more than ten days after the due date will be awarded zero marks.


Refer - ‘Rules Governing the Administration of Assessment Items - Rule 000113’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000113.html (section 18)

Special Circumstances
Students wishing to apply for Special Circumstances or Extension of Time should apply online. Refer - ‘Special Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items - Procedure 000641’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html

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 & Moderations
A student may only request a re-mark of an assessment item before the final result - in the course to which the assessment item contributes - has been posted. If a final result in the course has been posted, the student must apply under ‘Procedures for Appeal Against a Final Result’ (Refer - http://www.newcastle.edu.au/study/forms/).

Students concerned at the mark given for an assessment item should first discuss the matter with the Course Coordinator. If subsequently requesting a re-mark, students should be aware that as a result of a re-mark the original mark may be increased or reduced. The case for a re-mark should be outlined in writing and submitted to the Course Coordinator, who determines whether a re-mark should be granted, taking into consideration all of the following:

1. whether the student had discussed the matter with the Course Coordinator
2. the case put forward by the student for a re-mark
3. the weighting of the assessment item and its potential impact on the student’s final mark or grade
4. the time required to undertake the re-mark
5. the number of original markers, that is,
   a) whether there was a single marker, or
   b) if there was more than one marker whether there was agreement or disagreement on the marks awarded.

A re-mark may also be initiated at the request of the Course Coordinator, the Head of School, the School Assessment Committee, the Faculty Progress and Appeals Committee or the Pro Vice-Chancellor. Re-marks may be undertaken by:

1. the original marker; or
2. an alternate internal marker; or
3. an alternate external marker (usually as a consequence of a grievance procedure).

Moderation may be applied when there is a major discrepancy (or perceived discrepancy) between:

1. the content of the course as against the content or nature of the assessment item(s)
2. the content or nature of the assessment item(s) as against those set out in the Course Outline
3. the marks given by a particular examiner and those given by another in the same course
4. the results in a particular course and the results in other courses undertaken by the same students.

For further detail on this University policy refer - ‘Re-marks and Moderations - Procedure 000769’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000769.html

Return of Assignments
Students can collect assignments from a nominated Student Hub during office hours. Students will be informed during class which Hub to go to and the earliest date that assignments will be available for collection. Students must present their student identification card to collect their assignment.


Preferred Referencing Style
In this course, it is recommended that you use the 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). For further information on referencing and general study skills refer - ‘Infoskills’ available @ www.newcastle.edu.au/services/library/tutorials/infoskills/index.html

Student Representatives
Student Representatives are a major channel of communication between students and the School. Contact details of Student Representatives can be found on School websites.

Refer - ‘Information for Student Representatives on Committees’ available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/service/committees/student_reps/index.html

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 is available @ http://www.newcastle.edu.au/currentstudents/index.html
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grading guide</th>
<th>Grade (Code)</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail (FF)</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>
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<tr>
<td>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass (P)</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>
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<tr>
<td>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit (C)</td>
<td>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>
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<tr>
<td>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction (D)</td>
<td>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>
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<tr>
<td>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction (HD)</td>
<td>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>
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SECTION B: COURSE DETAIL

In this course, students will gain an understanding of the role that research plays in social work practice, attain knowledge and skills in qualitative and quantitative methods, examine ethical issues and critical debates in social work research, and develop competence in reporting on a research study and in writing a research proposal.

Social work graduates require a thorough understanding of research in order to critically appraise research that informs practice interventions and to conduct practice based research (particularly evaluation research and needs assessments). This is a requirement for program accreditation with the Australian Association of Social Workers.

Research is a core component for all Bachelor of Social Work students. For students within the honours stream in the Bachelor of Social Work program the successful completion of this course will equip them with the knowledge and skills required to conduct an individual piece of research at fourth year level. A mock research project will be conducted as a class activity. A research report and research proposal will be completed by all students as the assessment tasks in the course. For honours students, the research proposal will be the basis for their individual research project supervised in the 4th year of the program.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>25/07/2008</td>
<td>The role of research in social work</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>01/08/2008</td>
<td>Cross-cultural social work practice: Identifying issues for research</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>08/08/2008</td>
<td>Developing a research topic / question</td>
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<td>Conducting a literature review</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Designing the research</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>15/08/2008</td>
<td>Choosing research participants (sampling)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Developing a survey and planning a focus group – small group work</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>22/08/2008</td>
<td>Developing a survey and planning a focus group – small groupwork</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ethical issues in research</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>29/08/2008</td>
<td>Conducting a survey – gathering quantitative data</td>
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<td><strong>Individual ungraded task due – Literature review postings on Blackboard</strong></td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>05/09/2008</td>
<td>Conducting focus groups – gathering qualitative data</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>12/09/2008</td>
<td><strong>Group task – to be emailed by Thursday 11th Sept for use in class on Friday</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Analysing quantitative and qualitative data</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>19/09/2008</td>
<td>Presenting research findings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing a research report</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>26/09/2008</td>
<td>Using research to inform social work practice</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Types of social work research</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Semester Recess: Monday 29 September to Friday 10 October 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>17/10/2008</td>
<td><strong>Written task 1: Research Report, Due: Monday 13th October</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social work research case studies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Writing a research proposal</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>24/10/2008</td>
<td>Social work research case studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>31/10/2008</td>
<td>Critical issues and debates in social work research</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>No class</td>
<td><strong>Written task 2: Research Proposal, Due: Wednesday 5th November</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Ungraded Assessment Tasks
A satisfactory standard is required in these tasks in order to pass the course

A class activity over several sessions entails students designing and conducting a mock research project. The topic of the research relates to cross-cultural social work practice, but the specifics of the research will be negotiated as a group. This is a class activity and the findings will be presented in assignments but these are not intended as publishable research findings. The following ungraded assessment tasks relate to this class activity.

1. Individual task – critical review of literature
Each student is required to participate in the literature review component of this research project by locating and reviewing two items of literature that offer some background information on the topic of the research project.

Reviews are to be posted on the appropriate discussion board on the course Blackboard site. Each review should cover the following:
- Main arguments or findings
- Strengths and limitations
- Relevance to the class research project

An electronic version of the item should be attached to the posting OR a hard copy provided to course coordinator for access by other students.

As duplication of items reviewed by other students is not allowed, it is suggested that you locate and review several items.

Assessment criteria:
- Ability to synthesise information succinctly
- Clarity of expression
- Demonstrated critical appraisal skills
- Provision of full reference details

Due: Friday 29th August
Length: Each review is to be approximately 250 words.

2. Group task – collect and analyse data
Small groups will be formed to design and conduct either a survey or a focus group as part of the class data gathering activity. Groups will also be required to record and present the data gathered from the exercise.

Groups will be required to submit:
- The survey form or focus group interview questions
- Report on frequencies (survey) or a transcript of session (focus group)

Due: Thursday 11th September
Email to Debbie.Plath@newcastle.edu.au as the data will be used in class on 12th September
This information will also be provided to all students through the blackboard site.

Groups will also be responsible for planning and conducting a survey or focus group with students and/or social workers in weeks 6 and 7.

Some class times will be set aside to work on this task.

Assessment criteria:
- Informed and thoughtful planning of data collection instrument
- Planned and skilled administration of data collection instrument
- Accurate presentation of the data gathered
Graded Individual Assessment Tasks

1. Research Report
   Length:  2000 words
   Weighting:  50%
   Due:   13th October

   This task is a report on the mock research project conducted in class. You are expected to draw on the literature reviews conducted by fellow students and the data gathered by all the groups as well as your own reading, reflection and data analysis in writing the research report. The report should cover the following:
   • Background and significance of the research, with reference to relevant literature
   • Research question and aims
   • Research methods chosen and the rationale for these, with reference to literature on research methods
   • Description of sampling and data collection techniques (survey and focus group questions may be attached in appendix)
   • Strengths and limitations of the research methodology
   • Ethical issues and how adequately these were addressed
   • Description of data analysis process
   • Summary and interpretation of findings
   • Implications for practice and/or future research

   Assessment criteria
   1. Demonstrated understanding of the components and purpose of a research report.
   2. Well focused, relevant and accurately referenced background literature.
   3. Clear, succinct and accurate description of research methods.
   4. Ability to appraise the strengths and limitations of research methods.
   5. Provision of a rationale for the choice of methodology that is informed by relevant research literature.
   6. A realistic presentation of findings in the context of research aims methods and background literature.
   7. Discussion of the research within the wider context of ethics and practice implications.

2. Research Proposal
   Length:  3000 words
   Weighting:  50%
   Due:   5th November

   Students are to write a research proposal on a topic of your choice, addressing the following guidelines (based on Alston & Bowles 2003: 306-312):
   • Project title
   • Background (incorporating literature review)
   • Aims and significance of the proposed study
   • Expected outcomes / implications for social work practice
   • Research plan: Methodology
     Sampling
     Data collection techniques
     Data analysis
     Rationale for choice of method
     Limitations
     Timetable
   • Ethical considerations
   • Administration of the research, resource requirements and budget

   Assessment Criteria
   1. Well structured, fluently written, conceptually clear, with accurate referencing.
   2. Literature review is well researched, synthesised and appropriately integrated into the research proposal.
   3. Methodology is appropriate to the research aims and demonstrates an understanding of all relevant aspects including sampling, data collection and data analysis methods.
   4. Ethical issues are clearly identified as well as ways in which ethical concerns will be addressed.
   5. Research process is realistically considered within organisational and social context.
   6. Connections are made between research and social work practice.