Course Coordinator: Dr Debbie Plath  
Room: W228  
Ph: 49215765  
Email: Debbie.Plath@newcastle.edu.au  
Consultation hours: Thursdays 11.00 – 1.00pm  
Unit Weighting: 10 Units for each course (SWRK4006 / SWRK4007)  
Teaching Methods: Individual Supervision, Self Directed Learning & Student Projects

Brief Description of Courses  
Students will complete an honours research project under the supervision of an academic staff member who is the student's honours research supervisor. The course involves the direct application of research knowledge and skills developed in the previous 3 years of the social work program, specifically SWRK 3005. Building on SWRK 3005 students will refine a research question and methodology, complete a literature review, implement appropriate data collection and analysis and commence a research thesis in SWRK4006. The research thesis will be completed in SWRK4007.

Contact Hours  
Individual Supervision for 1 Hour per week for the two semesters  
The supervisor will be responsible for arranging regular consultations with the student, the frequency of which will be agreed upon early in the student's candidature.

Course Objectives  
The purpose of this course is to equip social work students with the skills and knowledge required to undertake practice-based research in the social work context. Students will:

- Carry out independent research in the context of social work practice
- Select and administer quantitative and/or qualitative research methods most appropriate to answer a specific research question in social work practice.
- Gain practical skills in gathering and analysing research data.
- Further develop competence in identifying and appropriately responding to ethical issues encountered in social work research.
- Be able to critically review the benefits and shortfalls of published research and complete a literature review for the purpose of a new research project.
- Develop research application, project management and time management skills.
- Develop writing, editing and drafting skills for the purpose of producing a research thesis.
- Engaged in informed debate on social, political, ethical, technical and practical issues surrounding social work research.
Course Content

- The role of research in social work practice.
- Refining and conducting a research project.
- Gathering quantitative and/or qualitative data.
- Analysing quantitative and/or qualitative data.
- Ethical and political issues in social work
- Critical appraisal of published research.
- Writing a literature review
- Writing a research thesis

Assessment Items SWRK4006

| Essays / Written Assignments | Conduct of a research project, under the supervision of a nominated supervisor. The research will result in a full thesis dissertation pertinent to the field of social work practice to be presented at the end of semester 2. In this course in semester 1 students will receive graded formal feedback from their supervisor on achievement in the following tasks:
| Submission 1: Research Proposal 2,500 words | 40% |
| Due: Monday 20th April |
| Submission 2: Annotated Bibliography 2,500 words | 40% |
| Due: Friday 5th June |

Other:

- Seminar Presentation: 15 minute discussion of topic
  - 20%
  - Presentation to academic staff in School of Humanities & Social Sciences
  - 15 minute presentation followed by 15 minutes feedback & discussion.
  - Wednesday 29th April, 1.00pm

SWRK4006 Assignment Submission 1:

The research proposal should contain the following:

- Research topic or research question
- Background to topic and explanation of significance to social work
- Research aims
- Methodological approach to the examination of the research topic / question
- Rationale for choice of methodology
- Social, political, ethical and practical issues surrounding the examination of the research topic / question.

NOTE: By negotiation with course coordinator, the research proposal may take the form of an application for ethics approval.

Criteria for assessment of task 1:

- Ability to conceptualise and plan a research project
- Articulates a process of informed decision making in design of methodology
- Effective use of social research literature in design of research
- Demonstrates initiative, creativity and independent thinking
- Critical analysis of context and process of the research
- Understanding of the relationship of research to social work practice
- Clear, coherent and well organised written communication skills
- Accurate referencing.

SWRK4006 Assignment Submission 2:

The annotated bibliography should contain a well considered choice of items of literature that are pertinent to the chosen research topic (at least 20 items). For each item, the following should be addressed:

- Main focus and arguments / findings in the literature
- Explanation of how this relates to the chosen research topic (how will it be used in your thesis?)
- Strengths and limitations of the literature
- Any social, political, ethical or practical issues presented by the literature
Criteria for assessment of task 2:
- Ability to analyse and critically appraise research literature
- Focused and selective approach to the analysis of literature of relevance to research topic
- Demonstrated command of literature in chosen field
- Critical analysis of context and process of the research
- Clear, coherent and well organised written communication skills
- Accurate referencing.

SWRK4006 Seminar Presentation:
The 15 minute presentation to staff should cover the following:
- Brief overview of the research proposal
- Main findings from review of literature
- Anticipated outcomes of the research and how these will be of use to social work
- Challenges in conducting the research.

Criteria for assessment of seminar presentation:
- Clear, coherent oral communication and engagement of audience
- Ability to conceptualise and articulate a research plan
- Articulates a process of informed decision making in design of methodology
- Critical analysis of context and process of the research
- Understanding of the relationship of research to social work practice
- Critical appraisal of the strengths and limitations of research
- Critical reflection on own research work

Assessment Items SWRK4007

| Essays / Written Assignments | Continuation of a research project, under the supervision of a nominated supervisor, which will take the form of a thesis dissertation pertinent to the field of social work practice. Students will receive a graded pass on the completed research thesis:  
**Research Thesis**: 8,000 – 10,000 words 75%  
Due: Monday 2nd November |
| Presentations - Individual | **Research Presentation**: (15 minutes) Verbal presentation of the thesis conference style (at 4th year social work conference) 25%  
Date to be advised |

Examining the Research Thesis
- There will be a minimum of 2 examiners;
- At least one of the two examiners to be external to the School unless an external moderator is appointed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor to monitor the quality levels of theses/projects in the discipline;
- Supervisor not to be an examiner. The supervisor shall provide a report to the program convenor when the thesis/dissertation is being submitted;
- The final mark shall be an average of the two marks given by the examiners;
- If there is a difference of ten percentage points or more in the assessment between the two examiners, a third examiner is to be used (not the supervisor);
- In all cases where three examiners are used, the final mark shall be an average of the two closest marks except where there is disparity between the written report of the examiners and the mark awarded.

Criteria for assessment of thesis:
- Ability to conceptualise, conduct and report on a scholarly research project
- Well considered design of research methodology, informed by social research literature
- Demonstrates initiative, creativity and independent thinking
- Presents an argued position that is informed by literature, data, research, theory and other relevant evidence
Critical and theoretical analysis of the topic area
Argues for the significance of the research to social work practice
Demonstrates a command of literature and research in the research topic area
Critical analysis of the strengths and limitations of research
Contributes new insights for social work in the chosen research area
Clear, coherent and well organised written communication skills
Accurate referencing.

Criteria for assessment of presentation on thesis:
- Ability to conceptualise, conduct and report on a scholarly research project
- Well considered design of research methodology, informed by social research literature
- Demonstrates initiative, creativity and independent thinking
- Presents an argued position that is informed by literature, data, research, theory and other relevant evidence
- Critical and theoretical analysis of the topic area
- Argues for the significance of the research to social work practice
- Contributes new insights for social work in the chosen research area
- Clear, coherent and engaging presentation style

Grading of the Honours Award:
- Class I: both a GPA of 6.0 or more in the 3000/4000 level courses undertaken and an average mark of 85 or over for the Research Component (SWRK3005, SWRK4006 & SWRK4007);

If a student fails to satisfy the criteria for Class I honours, they may be offered:
- Class II Division 1 provided they have either:
  a. both a GPA of 6.0 or more in the 3000/4000 level courses undertaken and an average mark of 75 or over for the Research Component (SWRK3005, SWRK4006 & SWRK4007);
  b. both a GPA of 5.5 or more in the 3000/4000 level courses undertaken and an average mark of 85 or over for the Research Component (SWRK3005, SWRK4006 & SWRK4007);

If a student fails to satisfy the criteria for Class II Division 1 honours, they may be offered:
- Class II Division 2: provided they have both a GPA of 5.5 or more in the 3000/4000 level courses undertaken and an average mark of 65 or more for the Research Component (SWRK3005, SWRK4006 & SWRK4007).

Assumed Knowledge
Completion of all 2nd year and 3rd year SWRK courses in the Bachelor of Social Work program at a high level of proficiency. Eligible students will have:
- achieved a GPA of 5.5 or more over the program to the point where the Research Component is integrated; and
- have either been invited by or have had a written application approved by the Pro Vice-Chancellor responsible for the program.

Completion of SWRK4006 is assumed knowledge for SWRK4007.

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 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 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: http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000641.html

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.

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](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000648.html)

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](http://www.newcastle.edu.au/services/disability).

CHANGING YOUR ENROLMENT

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

For Semester 1 courses: 31 March 2009
For Semester 2 courses: 31 August 2009

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](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:

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<tr>
<th>Callaghan Campus</th>
<th>Port Macquarie students</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shortland Hub: Level 3, Shortland Building</td>
<td>contact your program officer or</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hunter Hub: Level 2, Student Services Centre</td>
<td><a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Precinct</td>
<td>Phone 4921 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>City Hub &amp; Information Common, University</td>
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<tr>
<td>House</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Coast Campus (Ourimbah)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Hub: Opposite the Main Cafeteria</td>
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OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

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<tr>
<th>Faculty Websites</th>
<th>The Dean of Students Resolution Precinct</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Education &amp; Arts:</td>
<td>Phone: 02 4921 5806;</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/">www.newcastle.edu.au/faculty/education-arts/</a></td>
<td>Fax: 02 4921 7151</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au">resolutionprecinct@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rules Governing Undergraduate Academic Awards</td>
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<tr>
<td><a href="http://www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000311.html">www.newcastle.edu.au/policylibrary/000311.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>General enquiries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Callaghan, City and Port Macquarie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 02 4921 5000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
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<td>Ourimbah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phone: 02 4348 4030</td>
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<tr>
<td>Email: <a href="mailto:EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au">EnquiryCentre@newcastle.edu.au</a></td>
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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.
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 directly to the lecturer or 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/)

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.

For 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](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.


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

Assignment Re-submission

As this is a 1000 level course a student who fails the first assessment item will be allowed to correct errors and re-submit the assignment for a capped mark of 50% of the available marks for the assessment item.

Assignments that have passed may not be resubmitted. Students are, however, always welcome to contact their Lecturer or Course Coordinator to make a consultation time to receive individual feedback on their assignments.

Re-marks & Moderations

A student may request a re-mark of an assessment item before the final result have been posted in the course to which the assessment item contributes. 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 the lecturer or 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 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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<tr>
<th>Grading guide</th>
<th>Percentage Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>49% or less</td>
<td>Fail (FF)</td>
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<tr>
<td></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>50% to 64%</td>
<td>Pass (P)</td>
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<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>65% to 74%</td>
<td>Credit (C)</td>
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<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>75% to 84%</td>
<td>Distinction (D)</td>
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<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>85% upwards</td>
<td>High Distinction (HD)</td>
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<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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