

SOCA6640: Social Science Research Methods

Callaghan and Online
Semester 2 - 2023



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Science

The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Science is committed to providing an inclusive environment in which all cultures are accorded respect and all students and staff are expected to act with honesty, fairness, trustworthiness and accountability in dealings with others.

The School recognises and respects the unique histories and cultures of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, their unbroken relationship with the lands and the waters of Australia over millennia, and the validity of Aboriginal ways of knowing. We are dedicated to reconciliation and to offering opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to access and succeed in higher education.

OVERVIEW

Course Description

Provides students with a sound grounding in the range of research methods relevant to the wider teaching program in Social Change and Development. It also provides an awareness of some of the relevant debates in the area of methodology. This course places a strong emphasis on qualitative research methods, although an overview of quantitative methods, survey design and mixed methods will be included. The course will be student-centred, problem-oriented and delivered in a multimedia format.

Assumed Knowledge

Undergraduate degree with major in social science or related area

Contact Hours

**Callaghan
Teaching
intensive**

2 full days (12 hours) Week 3 (5th and 6th August)
Room: W308

Note: this is a Saturday & Sunday
On-line: 1 hour per week for 12 weeks

Online

1 hour(s) per Week for 12 Weeks

Self-Directed

1 hour(s) per Week for 12 Weeks

Unit Weighting Workload

10

Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

COURSE OUTLINE

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator **Callaghan and Online**
Professor Kate Senior
Kate.senior@newcastle.edu.au
(02) 49217078 or 0412 913227
Consultation: By email/phone for appointment
Please note: There are 4 non-compulsory Zoom meetings throughout semester. Both face to face and on-line students may use these sessions to ask questions about course content and assessment.

Teaching Staff Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.

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SYLLABUS

Course Content Content includes:

1. examination of the range of research methods relevant to the wider teaching program in Social Change and Development;
2. exposure to some of the relevant debates in the area of methodology;
3. An exploration of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, as well as mixed methods approaches.

Course Learning Outcomes **On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**

1. Analyse linkages between (a) theories of social change and development and (b) Social research practice and methodology.
2. Demonstrate a critical understanding of the range of research techniques employed by social researchers, both qualitative and quantitative.
3. Design research frameworks appropriate to the research tasks arising from other parts of the course.
4. Discuss the ethical implications of research practices and the external environment within which social research is conducted.

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	17/7/23	Introduction to Social Research	Introductions, previous experience, expectations and particular research interests.	Assessment 1: tutorial/on line discussions/contributions throughout semester. Ongoing. 15%
2	24/7/23	Introduction to qualitative research	Exploring guidelines for ethical research. Thinking about community needs and expectations of research and researchers and ethics in everyday research practice.	
3	31/7/23	The craft of the interview	Practice interviews Transcribe your interviews to be ready for analysis.	Intensive-5-6 August (face to face students) Assessment 5 face to face students: Oral presentation- photo voice) during teaching intensive for face to face students. 15% Due: during teaching intensive On line students: Assessment 5: Presentation-photo voice. 15% Part A: Upload two photographs and provide a written commentary on them. Due 6th August 11:59 pm Part B: Comment on at least 2 other people's photographs. Due 13 August 11:59 pm
4	7/8/23	Focus groups	When would you use a focus group? What are the key considerations in the construction of focus groups?	

5	14/8/23	Just hanging around? Ethnography and observation	Observation exercise & writing detailed field notes.	Assessment 2: Exploring and analysing interview data (10%) Due Sunday 20th August, 11.59 pm
6	21/8/23	Innovations in qualitative research: arts-based methods	Discussion about the application of these methods. Think of a research project where these methods may provide more detailed information than traditional methods.	
7	28/8/23	Participatory action research	How do you involve the community in all stages of the research process? What are the challenges?	
8	4/9/23	Decolonising methodologies	How do ideas from week 8 challenge your understanding of research?	
9	11/9/23	Introduction to quantitative research	How do we establish a sample in both quantitative and qualitative research?	Assessment 3: project Applying qualitative research methods with specific population groups (30%) Due Sunday 17th September 11: 59 pm
10	18/9/23	Survey design	Explore some 'off the shelf surveys' to explore issues of reliability, validity and cross cultural application	
Mid semester recess 25/9/23-6/10/23				
11	9/10/23	Bringing it all together: mixed methods	Applying your knowledge in the real world – what are the challenges?	
12	16/10/23	Writing it up: presenting social research	Explore some mixed methods reports. In what other ways might we present research?	Assessment 4: Proposal plan: Designing a mixed methods project as a research team (30%) (face to face students) or as an individual (on- line students) Due : Sunday 29th October 11:59 pm

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 5 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Weekly contributions to, and participation in, Online forum; and teaching intensive (face to face students) (15%)	Ongoing	Individual	15%	1, 2, 3, 4
2	Tutorial Laboratory exercise: Exploring interview data: ethics analysis and feedback (10%)	Assessment 2, Sunday, 20 th August 11.59pm	Individual	10%	1,2, 3,4
3	Project: Applying qualitative research methods with specific population groups	Assessment 3: Sunday, 17 th September 11.59 pm	Individual	30%	1,2, 3,4
4	Proposal/Plan: designing a mixed methods project as a research team	Assessment 4: Sunday 29 th October 11.59 pm	Group (face to face) Individual (on-line)	30%	1,2 ,3 ,4
5	Presentation- photo voice (15%)	Assessment 5: During teaching intensive (week 3 5 th & 6 th August) Face to face students On-line students : Part A: 6/8/23 Part B: 13/8/23	Individual	15%	1,2, 4

Late Submissions The mark for an assessment item submitted after the designated time on the due date, without an approved extension of time, will be reduced by 10% of the possible maximum mark for that assessment item for each day or part day that the assessment item is late. Note: this applies equally to week and weekend days.

Assessment 1 - Weekly contributions to, and participation in, online forum; and Teaching intensive (15%)

Assessment Type	Online Learning Activity/ teaching intensive
Purpose	To provide students the opportunity to discuss details of topics/concepts addressed in class; to provide students opportunities to practice 'authentic' tasks related to content which has been dealt with in class
Description	In-class/online learning activities related to the particular topics/concepts being addressed in weekly lectures and the readings that are provided. Please engage with the questions on the Discussion Board on Canvas and comment on the responses provided by your peers.
Weighting	15%
Due Date	Ongoing
Submission Method	in Class Online
Assessment Criteria	
Return Method	Ongoing Assessment
Feedback Provided	In Class.

Weighting	10%
Length	Two photographs and brief explanation (c 500 words)
Due Date	Assessment 2,
Submission Method	Face to face students: in class, during week 3
Assessment Criteria	Online students: On-line Part A: 6th August, Part B: 13th August
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online

Assessment 2 – Exploring interview data: ethics, analysis and feedback (10%)

Assessment Type	Tutorial/laboratory exercise
Purpose	To provide students with the opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of qualitative methodology, with a particular emphasis on interviews. This task will also explore ethical considerations in research and how to provide feedback to research participants.
Description	You will be provided with a transcript from an extended interview with a group of young people in the Northern Territory of Australia about their relationships and sexual health. Sexually transmitted disease and teenage pregnancy are important issues in the NT (and of course in many other parts of the world) and this research was conducted to explore the background to these issues and to make recommendations to Government policy and health education.

Read through the interview provided and complete the following tasks:

1. Conduct a thematic analysis, using the blank column to identify and name key themes that emerge
2. Write a summary of the key themes that emerge from your analysis of this interview

- data
3. What are the key ethical considerations underpinning this research project?
 4. What recommendations could you make to the health department with the aim of improving young people's sexual health?

Weighting	10%
Length	c. 1000 words, excluding bibliography/references
Due Date	Sunday 20th August 11:59pm
Submission Method	Online
Assessment Criteria	
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online

Assessment 3- Report: Applying qualitative methods with specific population groups (30%)

Assessment Type Project

Purpose

To provide students with the opportunity to explore the application of different types of qualitative methodologies and their suitability for particular population groups

Description

You have project to explore perceptions of the impact of climate change with young people (you may specify the country and the region). The young people you are working with have limited literacy and the communities that you are working with have had some very poor previous experience of researchers 'coming in and taking information from us and never coming back again'. Your aim is to try to explore the issue of climate change in detail, including young people's current understanding and their thoughts about how climate change may affect their futures. You also want to re-engage the wider community about a discussion of these issues and establish a framework for effective communication about your results.

Pick two qualitative research methods that we have explored in class to explore perceptions of climate change with young people and undertake the following tasks:

1. Provide a brief context for your study, the region, the population and the circumstances affecting the population. 5%
2. Provide a framework of the questions that are going to underpin your enquiry 5%
3. Provide a description of the methods you have chosen 5%
4. Explain why this combination of methods is the best/most effective way to engage the population 5%
5. Describe how you are going to recruit young people to your study and your sample size. 5%
6. Explain how you will use the results from these methods to engage the wider population in a discussion about climate change 5%

Weighting	30%
Length	c, 1500 words, excluding bibliography/references
Due Date	Sunday 17th September 11:59pm

Submission Method	Online
Assessment Criteria	
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online

Assessment 4: Funding application: Mixed Methods (30%)

Assessment Type	Proposal/plan
Purpose	To provide students with the opportunity to develop project description for a project of their own choosing using an authentic project description template similar to those used by many funding agencies. Students will demonstrate their understanding of mixed methods approaches. They will justify the importance of the issue they have selected and the innovation of their approach. They will demonstrate their knowledge of the ethical principles underpinning their approach, strategies to effectively involve the community and effective dissemination strategies. Face to face students will work as a team. On line students will work individually, although the option to form teams can be negotiated.
Description	Think of a development issue that you think is particularly important and which you would like to explore in depth. Design a three year, mixed methods research project to explore this issue. Write a description for your project using the attached template. You are free to imagine this project as one that is undertaken by an individual or a team (some creative writing may be essential here). Make sure you undertake a literature review to provide a strong rationale for both the project and the methods that you have selected.
Weighting	30%
Length	c. 2500 words, excluding bibliography/references
Due Date	Sunday 29th October, 11:59pm
Submission Method	Online
Assessment Criteria	
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online

Assessment 5 – Exploring and using visual methods-photovoice (15%)

Assessment Type	Oral presentation (face to face students) power-point presentation (online students)
Purpose	To explore the use and value of visual methods in development contexts and provide experience of delivering a presentation to the class and commenting on each other's work.
Description	<p>Please take two photographs which explore a development issue that is important to you and provide an explanation of why you took these photographs and the stories that they tell. Please comment on why this visual method is useful and/or powerful. Please do not photograph people in a way that individuals are recognisable. Please also use this opportunity to briefly introduce yourself and your interests.</p> <p>Face to face students will present these as an oral presentation in class.</p> <p>Online students will upload their presentation as a Power point presentation. They will submit their assessment in two parts:</p> <p>Part A: Power point presentation with two photographs. Part B: Comment on at least two other student's work.</p>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Grading Scheme

This course is graded as follows:

Range of Marks	Grade	Description
85-100	High Distinction (HD)	Outstanding standard indicating comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an outstanding level of academic achievement; mastery of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
75-84	Distinction (D)	Excellent standard indicating a very high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a very high level of academic ability; sound development of skills*; and achievement of all assessment objectives.
65-74	Credit (C)	Good standard indicating a high level of knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of a high level of academic achievement; reasonable development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
50-64	Pass (P)	Satisfactory standard indicating an adequate knowledge and understanding of the relevant materials; demonstration of an adequate level of academic achievement; satisfactory development of skills*; and achievement of all learning outcomes.
0-49	Fail (FF)	Failure to satisfactorily achieve learning outcomes. If all compulsory course components are not completed the mark will be zero. A fail grade may also be awarded following disciplinary action.

*Skills are those identified for the purposes of assessment task(s).

Communication Methods

Communication methods used in this course include:

Course Evaluation

Each year feedback is sought from students and other stakeholders about the courses offered in the University for the purposes of identifying areas of excellence and potential improvement.

Academic Misconduct All students are required to meet the academic integrity standards of the University. These standards reinforce the importance of integrity and honesty in an academic environment. Academic Integrity policies apply to all students of the University in all modes of study and in all locations. For the Student Academic Integrity Policy, refer to <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=35>.

Adverse Circumstances You are entitled to apply for special consideration because adverse circumstances have had an impact on your performance in an assessment item. This includes applying for an extension of time to complete an assessment item. Prior to applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstances Affecting Assessment Items Procedure, available at <https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236>. All applications for Adverse Circumstances must be lodged via the online Adverse Circumstances system, along with supporting documentation.

Important Policy Information The 'HELP for Students' tab in UoNline contains important information that all students should be familiar with, including various systems, policies and procedures.

This course outline was approved by the Head of School. No alteration of this course outline is permitted without Head of School approval. If a change is approved, students will be notified and an amended course outline will be provided in the same manner as the original.

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