School of Humanities Creative Industries SocialSci

SCHS4090: Societies, Cultures and Human Services Honours I

Callaghan
Semester 1 - 2024

The School of Humanities, Creative Industries and Social Sciences 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	This course introduces students to key debates and perspectives on theory and methods in the social sciences, more specifically sociology and anthropology, human services and criminology. Through interdisciplinary enquiry, the students will explore the questions of 'what is knowledge?' and 'how do we know what we know?'. The core concept of the course is 'epistemology' and a central learning objective is for the students to gain insight into how epistemology features in their own research. Through this course, students will gain an understanding of how research problems are conceived and acted upon in the disciplines of anthropology and sociology, human services and criminology. They will explore the philosophical underpinnings of social research, as well as ethical and political components of research.
Academic Progress Requirements Requisites	Nil Students must be active in the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) [40209] or the Bachelor of Social Science (Honours) [10726] program to enrol in this course. Students who have successfully completed SOCA4090 or SPSW4010 cannot enrol in this course.
Assumed Knowledge	A major in sociology and anthropology, human services, linguistics or criminology with a minimum credit grade average.
Contact Hours	**Callaghan** **Self-Directed Learning** Self-Directed 18 hour(s) per week(s) for 13 week(s) starting Week 1 **Seminar** Face to Face On Campus 2 hour(s) per week(s) for 13 week(s) starting Week 1
Unit Weighting	20
Workload	Students are required to spend on average 120-140 hours of effort (contact and non-contact) including assessments per 10 unit course.

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator   **Callaghan**
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Consultation: by email appointment.

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SYLLABUS

Course Content   SCHS4090 centres on the question: 'what is knowledge'. In this course, students will be introduced to philosophical and historical discussions related to the question of knowledge and how we know what we know. Topics that will be covered may include:
- epistemology: the theory of knowledge
- what is truth?
- epistemological positions: positivism; phenomenology; hermeneutics; social constructivism; interpretivism; empiricism
- from philosophy to practice
- research as action
- reflexivity
- positionality, subjectivity and bias

Course Learning Outcomes   **On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**
1. Explain how historical and emerging knowledge infrastructures influence the philosophy and practices of scholarship in the Social Sciences.

2. Select and synthesise key intellectual issues and debates in the Social Sciences to justify the focus and boundaries of a research study.

3. Apply critical reflective practices when engaging in complex multi-disciplinary Social Science contexts.

4. Identify the criteria used to evaluate the quality of research conducted in the Social Sciences.

Course Materials   All weekly readings are provided electronically on Canvas; there is no Textbook.

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Seminar topic	Assessment due
1	26 Feb	Introduction to Honours	
2	4 Mar	What is research I? The theory of research: epistemology	
3	11 Mar	What is research II? The practice of research: methodology	Literature database test 10%
4	18 Mar	Project design: Literature review and literature management	
5	25 Mar	Research Ethics I	**Research blog 20%**
6	1 Apr	Research Ethics II – Starting your application	
7	8 Apr	Criteria for quality	**Reflexive journal - formative feedback**
		Semester recess	
		Semester recess	
8	29 Apr	Oral presentations. Proposal writing roundtable and individual consultations	
9	6 May	Oral presentations. Proposal writing roundtable and individual consultations	**Literature review 50%**
10	13 May	Oral presentations. Proposal writing roundtable and individual consultations	
11	20 May	Basic and applied research	**Epistemology essay 50%**
12	27 May	Report writing, dissemination and thesis writing	
13	3 Jun	No class	**Reflexive journal 30%** Research proposal 40%
		Examination Period	
		Examination Period	

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 3 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Research blog	Thursday 28th March 11:59 pm	Individual	20%	2, 3, 4
2	Epistemology essay	Monday 20th May 11:59 pm	Individual	50%	1, 2, 3, 4
3	Reflexive journal	Monday 3rd June 11:59 pm	Individual	30%	3, 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 - Research blog

Assessment Type	Written Assignment
Description	A research blog that sets up the background for your Honours Project and your motivations for undertaking your project or topic of study.
Weighting	20%
Length	800-1000 words
Due Date	Thursday 28th March 11:59 pm
Submission Method	Canvas
Assessment Criteria	Provided on Canvas
Return Method	Canvas
Feedback Provided	Canvas

Assessment 2 – Epistemology Essay

Assessment Type	Essay
Description	Write an essay describing the epistemology of your research question and justifying your methodological approach. If your topic is purely theoretical, justify your interpretive approach
Weighting	50%
Length	2500-3000 words
Due Date	Monday 20th May 11:59 pm
Submission Method	Canvas
Assessment Criteria	Provided on Canvas
Return Method	Canvas
Feedback Provided	Canvas

Assessment 3 - Reflexive journal

Assessment Type	Journal
Description	Weekly reflections on research progress in the style of research diary. It must be a digital research diary. Each week will contain no more than 250 words.
Weighting	30%
Length	2500-3000 words
Due Date	Monday 3rd June 11:59 pm
Submission Method	Canvas
Assessment Criteria	Provided on Canvas
Return Method	Canvas
Feedback Provided	Canvas

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:
Canvas; email; face to face.

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.

Oral Interviews (Vivas)

As part of the evaluation process of any assessment item in this course an oral examination (viva) may be conducted. The purpose of the oral examination is to verify the authorship of the material submitted in response to the assessment task. The oral examination will be conducted in accordance with the principles set out in the Oral Examination (viva) Procedure. In cases where the oral examination reveals the assessment item may not be the student's own work the case will be dealt with under the Student Conduct Rule.

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

The University acknowledges the right of students to seek consideration for the impact of allowable adverse circumstances that may affect their performance in assessment item(s). Applications for special consideration due to adverse circumstances will be made using the online Adverse Circumstances system where:
1.   the assessment item is a major assessment item; or
2.   the assessment item is a minor assessment item and the Course Co-ordinator has specified in the Course Outline that students may apply the online Adverse Circumstances system;
3.   you are requesting a change of placement; or
4.   the course has a compulsory attendance requirement.
Before applying you must refer to the Adverse Circumstance Affecting Assessment Items Procedure available at:
https://policies.newcastle.edu.au/document/view-current.php?id=236

Important Policy Information

The Help button in the Canvas Navigation menu contains helpful information for using the Learning Management System. Students should familiarise themselves with the policies and procedures at https://www.newcastle.edu.au/current-students/respect-at-uni/policies-and-procedures that support a safe and respectful environment at the University.