

SOCA6310: Key Issues in Institutional Equity and Inclusive Practice

Callaghan

Semester 1 - 2024



THE UNIVERSITY OF
NEWCASTLE
AUSTRALIA

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

Equity, diversity and inclusion have become central priorities across institutional and professional spaces. This requires specialised expertise and knowledge to ensure these priorities are addressed in the context of the complexities they present. In both public and private sectors there is a need to continue to develop a workforce that reflects a philosophy of social justice, which underpins commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion and awareness of the need for change to meet the challenge of these commitments. Because of this, terms like equity, inclusion, belonging and diversity have become watch words. But these watch words lack a clear intent and may be taken at face value. They are ambiguous and are often understood in numerous different ways. This leads to divergent, even incoherent, goals, rationales, intentions and strategies within and across institutions and organisations.

This course provides an overview of the key concepts, debates and strategies for equity, diversity and inclusion across institutional and professional spaces, as they relate to themes such as gender, race, Indigeneity, disability and more. It brings in examples of international and domestic best-practice, and introduces the students to case studies from industry. At the end of this course, students will be able to critically assess the impact of social and institutional inequalities for communities and individual lives, and to produce effective strategies for different professional and institutional contexts.

Academic Progress Requirements

Undergraduate degree majoring in Social Science or related discipline, or recognised prior learning or experience from relevant fields of practice.

Assumed Knowledge

Undergraduate degree majoring in Social Science or related discipline, or recognised prior learning or experience from relevant fields of practice.

Contact Hours

Callaghan Seminar

Face to Face On Campus
2 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s)

Unit Weighting

10

COURSE OUTLINE

www.newcastle.edu.au

CRICOS Provider 00109J

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

Course Coordinator	Callaghan Dr Matthew Bunn Matthew.Bunn@newcastle.edu.au Consultation: by appointment
Teaching Staff	Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.
School Office	School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences Social Sciences Building Callaghan HCISS@newcastle.edu.au +61 4985 4500

SYLLABUS

Course Content	Topics that will be drawn from include: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. A history of equity and discourse: introduction to equity; intersectionality and diversity; social justice philosophies, inclusion, exclusion and marginalisation.2. Broader social inequalities: power and hegemony; neoliberalism; inequality beyond the moment.3. Organisational (in)equity: educational (in)equity; workplace and employment (in)equity; precarity; temporal inequality; economies of insecurity; relational poverty.4. Governmentality and audit culture: individual change versus system change; logic and ideology; measuring success.
Course Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this course, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Construct the foundation for an equity initiative within an institution or organisation.2. Investigate issues that impact upon professional and institutional equity, diversity and inclusion strategies and initiatives.3. Evaluate EDI issues and design strategies and recommendations for institutional equity practices.4. Apply diverse conceptual lenses and analytical skills to deepen understandings of EDI case studies.5. Critique cross-societal equity problems in professional contexts.
Course Materials	Course materials will be provided on the course Canvas site.

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Assessment Due
1	26 Feb	<p>What is equity?</p> <p>In this week, we begin by exploring what makes 'equity' and its many related ideas – fairness, equal opportunity, diversity, social justice, inclusion – so difficult to define. We will explore how the vagueness of their definitions create the conditions for a struggle over their meaning and subsequently different ways to relate to the design of initiatives, policy and strategy, what gets measured and what success looks like.</p>	
2	4 Mar	<p>Social movements and the shaping of equity and social justice agendas</p> <p>Social movements have had a crucial role in influencing positive change within institutions and organisations. They have helped to challenge racism, sexism, ableism and other forms of social injustice. Through social struggle and activism from outside and inside of organisations using different resources and mediums, social movements have produced sustained pressure to transform unjust practices. In this week, we look at key examples of how social movements historically and currently have continued to pressure and influence institutions and organisations to make change.</p>	
3	11 Mar	<p>The power to set the agenda: making equity problems</p> <p>In this week, we consider how equity agendas are established. Who determines what the problem is? We consider how power is exerted within policy, strategy and document construction. Rather than seeing equity agendas as responding to a pre-existing problem, we will examine the idea that 'problems' are constructed through particular social forces. This is not to say that there are not genuine experiences of deprivation and suffering, but that the way that a 'problem' is framed allows for certain aspects to be highlighted, certain explanations championed, certain approaches endorsed and certain things blamed. We will look at 'equity' then, as something that has been created as a problem that can be explained and resolved through recourse to a narrow group of sanctioned ideas and approaches.</p>	<p>Case study pitch</p> <p>Due date: Friday March 15th</p>
4	18 Mar	<p>Aspiration, capital and inclusion</p> <p>In this week, we begin thinking about how equity is created as a problem in workplaces and institutions. What attributes do people who are 'included' have? Is it their aptitude, competence or intelligence that makes them perfect for the job or for an area of study? Is it the power of their aspiration and motivation? Is it to do with their social and cultural capital? Are there general attributes that can be assigned to successful people?</p> <p>In this week we focus on some of the common concepts and explanations both of how people are included, and what leads to</p>	

		others being excluded. We take up ideas of deficit, aspiration, and forms of capital and consider why they have become dominant explanations, what the criticisms are, and what alternative concepts could be considered.	
5	25 Mar	<p>Intersectionality and diversity</p> <p>In this week we continue our discussion of the power to set the equity agenda by exploring how language, policy and law creates categories that restrict access to more robust or holistic accounts of human experience, notably in the areas of discrimination and inequality. While we are always constrained by the need to create 'epistemic subjects' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992) – a static account of particular dimensions of a person while leaving out others as a way of creating knowledge – we must also examine the ways that categories create social realities and force people to think of themselves in particular ways, and navigate systems according to the categories that they fit in. Further, categories have been constructed by scholars, activists and communities to bring attention to the structural forces of oppression (such as gender, class and race) that produce and reproduce deep-seated social inequalities. The concept of intersectionality emerged from concerns to bring to light the intersecting inequalities that operate at the social level to impact lives at the personal level of lived experiences. In this session we will consider intersectional theory, its scholarly and political roots, and the ways that it might be taking on a new life in contemporary equity policy discourses.</p>	<p>In class and video presentations Due date: Weeks 5-7</p>
6	1 Apr – No class	<p>Education and inequality</p> <p>In this week we consider some of the key challenges presented by educational inequality. We look at the idea that schools and universities often reproduce social inequalities through notions such as talent, aptitude and merit and intelligence. We consider how equity in these spaces is often seen in juxtaposition to excellence and quality, and how this shapes the positioning of equity, diversity and inclusion inside of educational institutions.</p>	<p>Peer evaluations Due date: Weeks 6-8</p>
7	8 Apr	<p>Employment</p> <p>In HE equity work a great deal of emphasis is placed on making people 'employable'. Yet this idea masks the substantial power employers wield in determining who they want for their organisation. In this week, we delve into some of the issues surrounding EDI as it pertains to workforce recruitment. Thus, similar to our previous week in educational inequality, notions like aptitude, ability and quality can be hard to identify definitively. It is at this point where outward signs – dress, accent, personality etc. become incorporated into how a person's ability is often judged. Equity drives in workplaces thus have the challenge of identifying the quality of an applicant in the context of a series of judgments that may not have any association with actual work ability or quality.</p> <p>We also examine the economic or efficiency imperative for diversity: that diversity creates a greater body of experiences to draw from. This is often seen as providing a powerful workforce tool through the ability to come up with lateral and creative solutions. Moreover, many companies now perceive equity, diversity and inclusion as important to their 'brand', and hence implement equity strategies more focused on image than substance. We consider the</p>	

		challenges and opportunities of these approaches and what they mean for the field of equity.	
Mid Semester break April 15-26			
8	29 Apr	<p>Social mobility, affect, emotion and embodiment</p> <p>Equity work is premised on the idea that social mobility is good. People who start in modest conditions or worse can ascend the social ladder and take on roles that expand on their abilities. These stories are largely painted as happy, fulfilling and desirable. People make more money and have better chances to live meaningful lives, along with having access to what is often perceived as higher quality tastes, people and culture. The challenge, however, is that this impression hides many of the difficulties and ‘hidden injuries’ that are experienced along the way. These include struggles to fit in and with being rejected from class, familial or ethnic origins. Indeed, social mobility can be experienced as satisfying in some ways while being painful in others. In this week, we will explore how people embody their social position, and the need to take this seriously in the design of equity initiatives.</p> <p>We will also consider notions of affect and emotion. We consider the conditions for comfort, ease and a sense of place or alternatively, experiences of alienation, shame and feeling ‘out of place’. We consider how affect can also shape conformity and obedience: expectations of gratitude, fulfilment and happiness can also create difficulties for people to voice concerns, challenges or criticism.</p>	Essay Due date: Friday May 3 rd
9	6 May	<p>Time, Precarity and Insecurity</p> <p>Time is usually seen as being a primordial element of human life. We are all seen to have the same amount of time. There are 24 hours in the day, and 7 days in the week, for everybody. Yet one of the difficulties with this idea is that it masks the extraordinary differences in the way that time is experienced, how time is used and how long things take. In this week, we explore the impact that time has on people’s daily lives and how it pertains to equity. Though equity and diversity may provide opportunities for marginalised groups to enter previously restricted spaces, there are still substantial problems in the types of contracts, casualisation and insecurity that are experienced. Notably, these often revolve around how time is structured and allocated within different contexts.</p>	
10	13 May	<p>A multidimensional framework</p> <p>Much of equity, diversity and inclusion policy discourse overlooks the complex nature of multidimensional inequalities and power relations that deeply affect people and communities experiencing social marginalisation, exclusion and oppression. In this week, we consider the potential of multidimensional perspectives for providing more nuanced analyses of the complex dynamics and relations that (re)produce inequalities. In particular, we engage with Nancy Fraser’s social justice framework, which draws together the imperatives of redistribution (economic injustice), recognition (cultural injustice) and representation (political injustice). We consider Fraser’s framework in light of her focus on parity of participation, the idea that all participants should be equal peers in any given context. The session will examine how maldistribution,</p>	

		misrecognition and misrepresentation severely undermine efforts to build equity and how Fraser's framework might contribute to new approaches across different contexts, including the ways we think about parity of participation.	
11	20 May	<p>What works? Investigating evaluation</p> <p>This week of the course will support students into an exploration of how conventional evaluation practices can tend towards reproduction of an inequitable status quo. The history of much contemporary evaluation of policies and programs is linked to social science contexts guided by a particular belief that progress would be achieved through experimental research relying heavily on testing and measuring. Despite substantial ongoing debates regarding whether the evidence these processes produce could be considered timely, cost-effective, rigorous and credible, much program design and evaluation still adhere to the tenets of an 'experimenting society'.</p>	
12	27 May	<p>The importance of equity work now and in the future</p> <p>In this final week, we look toward celebrating the achievements of people working to produce EDI. We consider the significance of this work and the importance of applying the insights outlined in this course to enhance the and further meaningful EDI work. We then move to considering the frontier of equity work, practice and research and conclude by considering what the future of equity work might look like.</p>	
13	3 June	No class	<p>Strategy report Due date: Friday June 7th</p>
Semester 1 ends June 7th			

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	Case Study Pitch	Friday March 15 11:59pm	Individual	10%	1
2	Presentation	Weeks 5-7 Tuesdays 4-6pm	Individual	20%	1, 2
3	Peer Evaluation	Weeks 6-8 Tuesdays 4-6pm	Individual	10%	3, 4
4	Essay	Friday May 3 11:59pm	Individual	30%	2, 4, 5
5	Strategy Development Report	Friday June 7 11:59pm	Individual	30%	1, 2, 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 - Case Study Pitch

Assessment Type	Case Study / Problem Based Learning
Description	A case study pitch will outline an equity issue for development throughout the course. It will establish the rationale, significance, history and problems central to the equity issue.
Weighting	10%
Length	500 words
Due Date	Friday March 15 11:59pm
Submission Method	Online via Turnitin in Canvas
Assessment Criteria	See details online in Canvas
Return Method	Online via Turnitin in Canvas
Feedback Provided	Online - feedback through Turnitin, summative mark on Canvas

Assessment 2 - Presentation

Assessment Type	Presentation
Description	This presentation will be used to build out the background and context of case studies and sharing work with other students. Your presentation should be 10 minutes long and accompanied by powerpoint slides that includes a slide with the references you have used.
Weighting	20%
Length	10 minutes
Due Date	Weeks 5-7 in class Tuesdays 4-6pm
Submission Method	In class and online with power-point slides submitted on Canvas on day of presentation
Assessment Criteria	See details online in Canvas
Return Method	Not returned
Feedback Provided	In class and online - feedback provided in class, summative mark on Canvas

Assessment 3 - Peer Evaluation

Assessment Type	Written Assignment
Description	The peer evaluation is aimed at providing students with the opportunity to learn from each other's case studies, and to provide students the opportunity to have new ideas promoted for their own case study development.
Weighting	10%
Length	500 words
Due Date	Weeks 6-8 Tuesdays 4-6pm
Submission Method	Online
Assessment Criteria	See details online in Canvas
Return Method	Online in Canvas
Feedback Provided	Online - feedback and summative mark provided on Canvas

Assessment 4 - Essay

Assessment Type	Essay
Description	The essay will be a critical analysis of an equity, diversity and inclusion problem using a conceptual or theoretical framework or problematic from the course.
Weighting	30%
Length	2500 words
Due Date	Friday May 3 11:59pm
Submission Method	Online via Turnitin in Canvas
Assessment Criteria	See details online in Canvas
Return Method	Online via Turnitin in Canvas
Feedback Provided	Online - feedback through Turnitin, summative mark on Canvas

Assessment 5 - Strategy Development Report

Assessment Type	Written Assignment
Description	The strategy development report is designed to give students the opportunity to apply what they have learnt throughout the course to a real-world problem. The report will provide an a detailed strategy and justification for the implementation of an equity initiative connected to your case study.
Weighting	30%
Length	2000 words
Due Date	Friday June 7 11:59pm
Submission Method	Online via Turnitin in Canvas
Assessment Criteria	See details online in Canvas
Return Method	Online via Turnitin in Canvas
Feedback Provided	Online - feedback through Turnitin, summative mark on 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 Course Site: Students will receive communications via the posting of content or announcements on the Canvas course site.
- Email: Students will receive communications via their student email account.

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.

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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