

SOCS3200: Qualitative Social Inquiry: Applied Research Project

Callaghan and Ourimbah
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	This course provides grounding in advanced social research methods. In this course you will practise your qualitative research skills. You will identify, workshop and apply social science research skills by developing a research proposal, writing a literature review, collecting and analysing data, and producing a research report based on the data collected. Your small research project will be conducted under a Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) approved topic area.
Academic Progress Requirements	Nil
Assumed Knowledge	SOCS2400 Applied Social Research and SOCS2300 Ethical Debates in Social Sciences.
Contact Hours	Callaghan Lectorial Face to Face On Campus 2 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1 As this course involves participation in an ethics approved research project, there is a minimum of 60%; attendance required. Ourimbah Lectorial Face to Face On Campus 2 hour(s) per week(s) for 12 week(s) starting Week 1 As this course involves participation in an ethics approved research project, there is a minimum of 60%; attendance required.
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

www.newcastle.edu.au

CRICOS Provider 00109J

CONTACTS

Course Coordinator	Callaghan and Ourimbah Dr Mitchell Taylor mitchell.taylor@newcastle.edu.au Consultation: email for an appointment (in person or online via Zoom)
Teaching Staff	Other teaching staff will be advised on the course Canvas site.
School Office	School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences (Callaghan) Social Sciences Building Callaghan HCISS@newcastle.edu.au +61 4985 4500 School of Humanities Creative Industries and Social Sciences (Ourimbah) HO1.43 Humanities Building Ourimbah HCISS@newcastle.edu.au +61 4985 4500

SYLLABUS

Course Content	In this course you will undertake a range of exercises to develop your qualitative research skills. Topics and activities may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Writing research proposals• Qualitative research methods• Ethical research practices• Qualitative data collection• Conducting research interviews• Conducting focus groups• Qualitative data analysis• Research report writing
Course Learning Outcomes	On successful completion of this course, students will be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Develop a research question appropriate for a small qualitative research project.2. Justify the validity of a qualitative research method in addressing the selected question.3. Assess the ethical issues involved in the project and identify appropriate ethical research decisions.4. Plan, collect and critically analyse qualitative research data.5. Communicate research results in written and oral forms, at a capstone level.
Course Materials	<p><u>This text is compulsory</u> and there will be required reading from it for most of the Semester. You will need to reference it for your final report.</p> <p>Waller, Vivienne, Farquharson, Karen and Dempsey, Deborah (2016) <i>Qualitative Social Research: Contemporary Methods for the Digital Age</i>. London: Sage.</p> <p>Additional Recommended Texts:</p> <p>Bryman, Alan (2009) <i>Social Research Methods</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press (any edition of this text is suitable).</p> <p>O'Leary, Zina (2014) <i>The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project</i>, 2nd ed. London: Sage</p>

SCHEDULE

Week	Week Begins	Topic	Learning Activity	Assessment Due
1	26 Feb	Foundations of qualitative research and becoming a researcher: introduction to the course	Introductions, discussion of umbrella projects, brief introduction to interviewing.	
2	4 Mar	Developing your research question, carrying out ethical research and credibility in qualitative research	Discussion of research ethics and application to your topic; research question development; draft timelines/Gantt charts.	
3	11 Mar	Sampling and conducting interviews	Interview practice; project development in umbrella groups.	
4	18 Mar	Conducting focus groups	Focus group practice; project development. Research question should be finalized this week.	
5	25 Mar	Qualitative data analysis	Qualitative data coding and analysis; safety briefing; piloting your interview/focus group questions.	Research Proposal , due Friday 29 th March, 11:59pm.
6	1 Apr	<i>No classes this week</i>	No classes will run this week due to Easter holiday days.	
7	8 Apr	Indirect data collection: observation and document analysis	Observation exercise; project development in umbrella groups	
Mid-Semester Recess				
Mid-Semester Recess				
8	29 Apr	Writing up qualitative research	Self-assessment of class participation; project discussions in umbrella groups.	
9	6 May	Project presentations	Student presentations; project discussions in umbrella groups - monitoring progress.	In Class Presentations
10	13 May	Project presentations	Student presentations; project discussions in umbrella groups - monitoring progress.	
11	20 May	Project presentations	Student presentations; project discussions in umbrella groups - monitoring progress.	
12	27 May	Project presentations	Student presentations; project discussions in umbrella groups - monitoring progress.	
13	3 Jun	<i>No classes this week</i>		
Examination Period				Research Report , due Fri 14/6, 11:59pm. Transcripts and consent forms must be submitted before this date.

ASSESSMENTS

This course has 4 assessments. Each assessment is described in more detail in the sections below.

	Assessment Name	Due Date	Involvement	Weighting	Learning Outcomes
1	Research Proposal (30%)	Friday, 29 th March, 11:59pm.	Individual	30%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2	Participation in Tutorial Exercises (10%)	In class participation will be assessed from weeks 1-8.	Individual	10%	2, 3, 4
3	Research Report and Submission of Transcripts (50%)	Friday 14 th June, 11:59pm.	Individual	50%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4	In Class Presentation (10%)	Presentations will be scheduled in weeks 9-12	Individual	10%	2, 3, 4, 5

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 Proposal

Assessment Type	Proposal / Plan
Description	Develop a research proposal for a small project under ethically approved umbrella topics.
Weighting	30%
Due Date	Friday, 29 th March, 11:59pm.
Length	1500 words (+/- 10%)
Submission Method	Online. The assignment will go through Turnitin.
Assessment Criteria	Rubric will be available on Canvas.
Return Method	Online
Feedback Provided	Online – please allow up to two weeks for marking.

Assessment 2 – Participation in Tutorial Exercises

Assessment Type	Tutorial / Laboratory Exercises
Description	The first 8 lectorials will contain a range of informal activities designed to help you build the skills you need to carry out your project. The activities will cover project design, interviewing techniques, observation skills, and data analysis. Your participation and engagement in these activities is assessed.
Weighting	10%
Due Date	The activities run in-class from week 1-8. Students will submit a self-assessment rubric in week 8, and marks will be allocated in week 9
Length	The activities will take approximately 30-45 minutes of lectorial time during weeks 1-8.
Submission Method	The lectorial leader will make note of students' involvement in-class activities. Students will fill out and submit their self-assessment rubric in class in week 8.
Assessment Criteria	Rubric will be available on Canvas
Return Method	Not returned.
Feedback Provided	Students will only receive a mark for this task. If any student wishes to discuss barriers to their participation, to gauge their progress, or to receive more feedback about their in-class performance, they should speak to their lectorial leader.

Assessment 3 - Research Report

Assessment Type	Report
Description	A formal report of your research project and analysis of your data.
Weighting	50%
Due Date	Friday 14 th June, 11:59pm.
Length	3000 words (+/- 10%)
Submission Method	Online. The assignment will go through Turnitin. Transcripts and consent forms should be emailed directly to the course co-ordinator before the due date of the report.
Assessment Criteria	Rubric will be available on Canvas

Return Method	Online.
Feedback Provided	Online – please allow up to three weeks for marking.

Assessment 4 - In Class Presentation

Assessment Type	Presentation
Description	A report to the class on your research proposal and/or progress and preliminary findings
Weighting	10%
Due Date	Presentations will be scheduled in weeks 9-12
Length	The presentation should last approximately 10 minutes with an additional 5 minutes for questions
Submission Method	In Class. Please email a copy of your presentation slides (if used) to your lectorial leader on the morning of your presentation
Assessment Criteria	Rubric will be available on Canvas
Return Method	Not returned.
Feedback Provided	By email within 1 week of the presentation data.

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.

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	<p>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:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. the assessment item is a major assessment item; or2. 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; or4. the course has a compulsory attendance requirement. <p>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</p>
Important Policy Information	<p>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.</p>

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.

© 2024 The University of Newcastle, Australia