

## SOCS3200: Qualitative Social Inquiry: Applied Research Project

Online

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

<b>Course Description</b>	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.
<b>Academic Progress Requirements</b>	Nil
<b>Assumed Knowledge</b>	SOCS2400 Applied Social Research and SOCS2300 Ethical Debates in Social Sciences.
<b>Contact Hours</b>	<b>Online via Futurelearn</b> 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 level of participation required. Students must ensure they complete at least 60% of the weekly Futurelearn modules.
<b>Unit Weighting</b>	10
<b>Workload</b>	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](http://www.newcastle.edu.au)

CRICOS Provider 00109J

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# CONTACTS

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

# SYLLABUS

<b>Course Content</b>	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"><li>• Writing research proposals</li><li>• Qualitative research methods</li><li>• Ethical research practices</li><li>• Qualitative data collection</li><li>• Conducting research interviews</li><li>• Conducting focus groups</li><li>• Qualitative data analysis</li><li>• Research report writing</li></ul>
<b>Course Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>On successful completion of this course, students will be able to:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Develop a research question appropriate for a small qualitative research project.</li><li>2. Justify the validity of a qualitative research method in addressing the selected question.</li><li>3. Assess the ethical issues involved in the project and identify appropriate ethical research decisions.</li><li>4. Plan, collect and critically analyse qualitative research data.</li><li>5. Communicate research results in written and oral forms, at a capstone level.</li></ol>
<b>Course Materials</b>	<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><b>Additional Recommended Texts:</b></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	Qualitative vs. quantitative research	Introduction, discussion of umbrella projects, project planning	
2	4 Mar	Ethics in social research	Discussion of research ethics and application to your topic, research question development	
3	11 Mar	Research design and project management	Further developing research questions, planning project timeline	
4	18 Mar	Interviews	Developing interview questions, understanding how to conduct an interview  <b>Research question should be finalized this week</b>	
5	25 Mar	Focus groups	Understanding the purpose of focus groups, developing question guides, focus group skill development	<b>Research Proposal, due Friday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 11:59pm.</b>
6	1 Apr	Data analysis	Analysing qualitative data, coding, understanding computer assisted qualitative analysis	
7	8 Apr	Presentation techniques	Understanding the requirements for the presentation, comparing presentation styles, sharing tips and tricks for presenting	
<b>Mid-Semester Recess</b>				
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8	29 Apr	Writing up qualitative research	Discussion of qualitative report writing, analysing examples, presentations and project reporting	<b>Online presentations from this week on</b>
9	6 May	Observation and ethnography	Practising observation and ethnography, presentations and project reporting	
10	13 May	Indigenous research	Understanding Indigenous knowledge and methodology, presentations and project reporting	
11	20 May	Stories and texts	Discussion of narrative inquiry, visual methods, document analysis, presentations and project reporting	
12	27 May	Disseminating research	Understanding academic publishing, presentations and project reporting	
13	3 Jun	<i>No content this week</i>		
<b>Examination Period</b>				<b>Research Report, due Fri 14/6, 11:59pm. Transcripts and consent forms must be submitted before this date.</b>

# 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 <sup>th</sup> March, 11:59pm.	Individual	30%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
2	Participation in Online Exercises (10%)	Futurelearn participation will be assessed from weeks 1-7.	Individual	10%	2, 3, 4
3	Research Report and Submission of Transcripts (50%)	Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> June, 11:59pm.	Individual	50%	1, 2, 3, 4, 5
4	Online Presentation (10%)	Presentations will be scheduled in weeks 8-12.	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

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

## Assessment 2 – Participation in Online Exercises

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Tutorial / Laboratory Exercises
<b>Description</b>	The first 7 weeks of Futurelearn content 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 by the observation of the course coordinator and by a self-assessment exercise conducted in week 7
<b>Weighting</b>	10%
<b>Due Date</b>	The activities are part of the Futurelearn content in weeks 1-7. Students will submit a self-assessment rubric in week 7, and marks will be allocated in week 8.
<b>Length</b>	The activities will take you approximately 30-45 minutes during weeks 1-7. This time is included in the 2 hours allocated for the Futurelearn content each week.
<b>Submission Method</b>	The course coordinator will make note of students' involvement in the online activities. Students will email their self-assessment rubric to the course coordinator in week 7
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	Rubric will be available on Canvas
<b>Return Method</b>	Not returned.
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	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 performance, they should speak to the course coordinator

## Assessment 3 - Research Report

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

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<b>Return Method</b>	Online.
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	Online – please allow up to three weeks for marking.

## Assessment 4 - Online Presentation

<b>Assessment Type</b>	Presentation
<b>Description</b>	A report to the class on your research proposal and/or progress and preliminary findings
<b>Weighting</b>	10%
<b>Due Date</b>	Presentations will be scheduled in weeks 8-12
<b>Length</b>	The presentation should last approximately 10 minutes.
<b>Submission Method</b>	Online on Canvas and Futurelearn. The presentation will be pre-recorded and uploaded to both Canvas and the Futurelearn padlet.
<b>Assessment Criteria</b>	Rubric will be available on Canvas
<b>Return Method</b>	Not returned.
<b>Feedback Provided</b>	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

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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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