

## SWRK4009: Social Work Honours Project

Ourimbah and Newcastle City Precinct

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

Each student undertakes independent research into a specialised area of social work policy practice and develops a body of work that incorporates a social work theory, practice, ethics, research and policy analysis. Course content includes: 1. Historical, social, cultural and political influences on social policies, policy practice and social services, and contemporary policy initiatives. 2. Social policy development processes, including analysing and debating social policy. 3. Links between economics, law, politics and social policy. 4. Ways in which policy and services address equality, social justice and human rights, including activism. 5. How social work skills, practice, research and intervention methods are applied to policy practice. 6. How to present written, oral and multimedia information to a target audience (including government submission, video, conference abstract, conference presentation, conference paper).

### Academic Progress Requirements

This course is a compulsory program requirement and is monitored for academic progress purposes. The course must be completed to progress in the program or meet other program requirements.

Failure or withdrawal from this course will result in students being considered under the Student Academic Progress Procedure.

### Requisites

To enrol in this course students must be active in the Bachelor of Social Work (Honours) (12317), and have successfully completed SWRK3002 and SWRK4500.

### Assumed Knowledge

SWRK3300, SWRK3007, SWRK3002, SWRK3005

### Contact Hours

Newcastle and Ourimbah

#### Lecture

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

#### Workshop

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

# COURSE OUTLINE

[www.newcastle.edu.au](http://www.newcastle.edu.au)

CRICOS Provider 00109J

**Forum**

Face to Face On Campus  
2 days per week for 1 week(s) starting Week 14  
Social Work Conference held at NuSpace across 2 days in week 14

**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** **Ourimbah and Newcastle City Precinct**

Prof Margaret Alston  
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Consultation: Monday and Tuesdays

**Teaching Staff** A/Professor Penny Buykx

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## SYLLABUS

**Course Content**

Each student undertakes independent research into a specialised area of social work policy practice and develops a body of work that incorporates a social work theory, practice, ethics, research and policy analysis. Course content includes:

1. Historical, social, cultural and political influences on social policies, policy practice and social services, and contemporary policy initiatives.
2. Social policy development processes, including analysing and debating social policy.
3. Links between economics, law, politics and social policy.
4. Ways in which policy and services address equality, social justice and human rights, including activism
5. How social work skills, practice, research and intervention methods are applied to policy practice.
6. How to present written, oral and multi-media information to a target audience (including government submission, video, conference abstract, conference presentation, conference paper).

**Course Learning Outcomes**

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

1. Demonstrate understanding of the historical, social and political impacts on contemporary social policy, theories that inform policy practice, and the policy making process.
2. Critique the role of social workers in the policy process and social work skills related to policy practice.
3. Demonstrate an advanced and coherent theoretical and research knowledge of one issue or social problem pertinent to social work practice.
4. Demonstrate skills to prepare a body of work, including written and visual materials for commenting on, informing, and changing or promoting policy and or social change.

**Course Materials**

**Recommended Reading:**

Research for Social Workers, Alston and Bowles

Philip Mendes 2019. Empowerment and control in the Australian Welfare State: a Critical

Analysis of Australian Social Policy since 1972. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon.

Reference and reading examples (as a starting point for your research) - see Canvas site

# 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 | Government submission     | March 23 11.59pm                         | Individual  | 30%       | 1, 2, 3, 4        |
| 2 | Group project (formative) | June 11 and 12                           | Group       | Formative | 1, 4              |
| 3 | Research presentation     | April 5 Ourimbah; April 9 Newcastle City | Individual  | 10%       | 1, 2, 3           |
| 4 | Conference presentation   | June 11 and 12                           | Individual  | 20%       | 1, 2, 3, 4        |
| 5 | Journal article           | 1 June 11.59pm                           | Individual  | 40%       | 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 - Government submission

**Assessment Type**

Written Assignment

**Purpose**

Apply research and knowledge to a government policy or law related to your research topic.

**Description**

Prepare a submission to a mock government inquiry (Commonwealth or State) focused on your selected policy. Write the submission as an Australian social worker who is a member of both the Australian Association of Social Workers (AASW) and the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW).

**Weighting**

30%

**Length**

3500 words

**Due Date**

March 23 11.59pm

**Submission Method**

Online

**Assessment Criteria**

1. Critical analysis of social policy in a social justice framework that considers different stakeholders and the international context
2. A well-argued position for policy reform linked to critical and comparative analysis
3. Succinct and practical recommendations with clear implementation considerations
4. Use and appropriate referencing of relevant literature and other source material to support analysis, discussion and recommendations
5. Submission document that covers all terms of reference, is cohesive and informed, and has accurate spelling and grammar

**Return Method**

Online

**Feedback Provided**

Online - 3 weeks after submission. comments on Assignment

## Assessment 2 - Group project (formative)

**Assessment Type**

Project

**Purpose**

Project group participation

**Description**

This is non-graded and is really about ensuring that everyone participates in discussions in class about the conference and contributes to the conference. This year we are not loading students with significant tasks - but we will discuss how we expect you to participate in class

**Weighting**

Formative

**Length**

This is a formative assessment

**Due Date**

June 11 and 12

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|                            |          |
|----------------------------|----------|
| <b>Submission Method</b>   | In class |
| <b>Assessment Criteria</b> | In class |
| <b>Return Method</b>       | In class |
| <b>Feedback Provided</b>   | In class |

### Assessment 3 - Research presentation

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| <b>Assessment Type</b>     | Presentation   |
| <b>Purpose</b>             | Early status report on research project; develop skills in presenting information concisely; provide some practice and preparation for the conference in a peer environment  |
| <b>Description</b>         | Initial presentation on Honours Project topic and planned research. Please note: powerpoint slides for presentation to be emailed to tutor by 5 April prior to allocated presentation time to enable compilation of a slide deck |
| <b>Weighting</b>           | 10%  |
| <b>Length</b>              | 3 minute presentation  |
| <b>Due Date</b>            | April 5 Ourimbah; April 9 Newcastle City   |
| <b>Submission Method</b>   | In Class   |
| <b>Assessment Criteria</b> | 1. Covers all required presentation content 2. Well focused research question and searches 3. Present to an audience, including professional language, well-paced and engaging style, and succinct visual slide.                 |
| <b>Return Method</b>       | Online   |
| <b>Feedback Provided</b>   | Online   |

### Assessment 4 - Conference presentation

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Assessment Type</b>     | Presentation  |
| <b>Purpose</b>             | A culmination of research over the semester, presenting in a conference format to students peers and social workers from the field. This is a presentation of key findings from the literature review covered in the journal article.   |
| <b>Description</b>         | Provide an overview of your literature review, findings and ideas for social work   |
| <b>Weighting</b>           | 20%   |
| <b>Length</b>              | 20 minutes  |
| <b>Due Date</b>            | June 11 and 12  |
| <b>Submission Method</b>   | In Class  |
| <b>Assessment Criteria</b> | 1. Background & topic: Clear description of topic, rationale, research question and search methods<br>2. Knowledge: Overview of integrated knowledge of theories and research evidence relating to the topic<br>3. Context: Social work relevance, role, practice implications, and an idea for social work practice<br>4. Analysis: Demonstrated critical analysis of consistencies and contradictions across reviewed literature, research and other evidence<br>5. Argument & position: A well argued position on how the literature and evidence informs the research question and practice idea<br>6. Style & structure: Professional presentation appropriate to audience, purpose and context, including appropriate language, well-paced and engaging style, and visual material that is easy to read with accurate referencing, spelling and grammar |
| <b>Return Method</b>       | Online  |
| <b>Feedback Provided</b>   | Online  |

### Assessment 5 - Journal article

|                            |   |
|----------------------------|---|
| <b>Assessment Type</b>     | Written Assignment  |
| <b>Purpose</b>             | Demonstrate research skills and knowledge about your research topic.  |
| <b>Description</b>         | Prepare a journal article about your literature review for Australian Social Work. You should demonstrate knowledge of theoretical and research literature relevant to your topic               |
| <b>Weighting</b>           | 40%   |
| <b>Length</b>              | 5,500 words   |
| <b>Due Date</b>            | 3 June 11.59pm  |
| <b>Submission Method</b>   | Online  |
| <b>Assessment Criteria</b> | 1. Background & topic: Clear description of topic, rationale, research question and search methods<br>2. Knowledge: Overview of integrated knowledge of theories and research evidence relating |

to the topic

3. Context: Social work relevance, role, practice implications, and an idea for social work practice

4. Analysis: Demonstrated critical analysis of consistencies and contradictions across reviewed literature, research and other evidence

5. Argument & position: A well-argued position on how the literature and evidence informs the research question and practice idea

6. Style & structure: Structured according to journal requirements, professional writing and language appropriate to audience, purpose and context, including cohesive, well-structured style, connections between central ideas and themes, and accurate referencing, spelling and grammar

**Return Method**

Online

**Feedback Provided**

Online - 3 weeks after submission.

## 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).

### Attendance

Attendance/participation will be recorded in the following components:

- Lecture
- Workshop

### 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.
- Face to Face: Communication will be provided via face to face meetings or supervision.

### 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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