ARTS4268

Methodologies in the Social Sciences: Questions and Quandaries

Term 1, 2023

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
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School Contact Information

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Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW Arts, Design and Architecture Kensington and Paddington campuses are built on Aboriginal Lands. We pay our respects to the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples who are the Custodians of these lands. We acknowledge the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.

Image courtesy of the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous UNSW's Indigenous strategy

Course Details

Units of Credit 6

Summary of the Course

Note: This is a 12 UOC course. You will enrol in 6 UOC in each of two successive terms with a result reported by a single grade at the end of the second 6 UOC course.

This is a core course for Honours candidates in the School of Social Sciences and the main focus will be the question of methodology. Each seminar will look at different approaches to research across the sub-disciplines and will explore what we might call the 'so what' of a particular methodology's analytical leverage. Why do the Social Sciences break into myriad, competing methodologies? Can we describe our methodologies as scientific, and if not, then how do we best secure a notion of accuracy and usefulness? How does our understanding of evidence actually change our research methods as well as the outcomes and conclusions that we might reach?

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Apply critical thinking and analytic skills
2. Effectively deploy a particular theory or methodological approach
3. Design and sustain an argument, or point of view
4. Identify and apply the ethical requirements and responsibilities of researchers
5. Develop and demonstrate effective oral presentation skills

Teaching Strategies

Seminars will be conducted by the coordinator with input from other specialist teaching staff to guide students through the process of conducting research at honours level, working with a supervisor and planning and executing an independent research project.

Library resources for honours students will be explained by the outreach librarian to assist students with researching their thesis topic.

Strategies for choosing a research topic and narrowing down the scope to a manageable project will be workshopped with the assistance of supervisors in the School and recent honours graduates.

Assessment

Details of assessment tasks

All assessments should be:

- Include your student number but not your name;
- presented in at least 11pt font;
- 1.5-spaced with minimum 2 cm margins at left and right; and
- presented with consecutively numbered pages at the bottom left.
- appropriately referenced in accordance with the *School of Social Sciences Referencing Guide*, with a reference list presented at the end of the paper.
- The word limit is exclusive of the bibliography but inclusive of everything else.

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Course Learning Outcomes Assessed
1. Symposium Presentation	10%	Not Applicable	1, 2, 3, 5
2. Discussion Paper	25%	Not Applicable	1, 3, 4
3. Discussion Paper	25%	Not Applicable	1, 3, 4
4. Research Paper	40%	Not Applicable	1, 2, 3, 4

Assessment 1: Symposium Presentation

Students develop and deliver an oral presentation related to their research paper topic.

Students will receive written feedback, a marked rubric, and a numerical grade within ten working days of submission. The rubric will be available at the start of term to allow students to work towards clearly defined standards.

Assessment 2: Discussion Paper

Students submit one 2000 word individual discussion paper on a single specified course theme for assessment. Students receive written feedback and a numerical grade within two weeks of submission.

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Additional details

The first assignment for this course is the **discussion paper**. This is a 2000 word response to the question, '*What's scientific about research in the Social Sciences?*'. The paper should develop, through critical engagement with a range of scholarly sources, an argument in relation to the question.

The question is inviting you to reflect on what is considered valid knowledge/s in your field/disciplines, and to present arguments for the robustness and validity of these knowledge/s. You may like to think about how you would defend the way that knowledge is produced in your discipline to a group of biophysical scientists or other social scientists who have a different epistemological approach.

You should conduct independent research to support your argument and the paper must be appropriately referenced in accordance with the School of Social Sciences Referencing Guide linked below, with a reference list presented at the end of the paper. The word limit is exclusive of the bibliography but inclusive of everything else. You will lose 5% per 100 words over the 1000 word limit. The standards against which this assessment will be evaluated are in the rubric, available on Moodle.

You must submit your discussion paper to TurnItIn in Moodle by the due date and time in T1 (which will be advised in the course material). I will not accept submissions by email.

The Faculty late penalty is 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part day that the work is late. Lateness includes weekends and public holidays.

The discussion paper will be marked /100 and will constitute 25% of your grade for this course.

Assessment 3: Discussion Paper

Assessment length: 1000 words

Students submit one 2000 word individual discussion paper on a single specified course theme for assessment. Students receive written feedback and a numerical grade within two weeks of submission.

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Additional details

The second discussion paper is a 2000 word essay on a concept relevant to your thesis. You will develop an argument in relation to why the term can be considered a concept, explore the contested nature of that concept, and explain its productiveness in your area of study.

You should conduct independent research to support your rejoinder and the paper must be appropriately referenced in accordance with the *School of Social Sciences Referencing Guide* linked below, with a reference list presented at the end of the paper. The word limit is exclusive of the bibliography but inclusive of everything else. You will lose 5% per 100 words over the 2000 word limit. The standards against which this assessment will be evaluated are in the rubric, available on Moodle.

You must submit your discussion paper 2 to TurnItIn in Moodle by the due due date and time in T1 (which will be advised in the course material). I will not accept submissions by email.

Assessment 4: Research Paper

4000 word individual research paper. Students receive written feedback and a numerical grade within two weeks of submission. This is the final assessment for this course.

This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Additional details

The third and final assessment task for this course is the **research paper**. In this paper, you must address the following three questions:

1. What disciplinary and scholarly traditions and perspectives do you bring to the research that you will do this year?
2. How do these disciplinary and scholarly traditions and perspectives affect the research that you are doing?
3. How do these lead to particular ways of understanding and researching the social world? What are the strengths and limitations of your disciplinary / scholarly perspective?

You should explore these questions and reflect upon them before writing up a thoughtful and personal yet scholarly paper. Each section should develop an argument or set of arguments and the paper as a whole should be both coherent and cohesive. We will spend time in class discussing how to approach this assessment, and further resources are available on Moodle.

You should conduct independent research to support the arguments you develop in your research paper and the paper must be appropriately referenced in accordance with the *School of Social Sciences Referencing Guide* linked below, with a reference list presented at the end of the paper. The word limit is exclusive of the bibliography but inclusive of everything else. You will lose 5% per 100 words over the 4000 word limit. The standards against which this assessment will be evaluated are in the rubric, available on Moodle.

Attendance Requirements

Please note that lecture recordings are not available for this course. Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and contact the Course Authority to make alternative arrangements for classes missed.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 13 February - 17 February	Seminar	Becoming a Researcher in the School of Social Sciences
Week 2: 20 February - 24 February	Seminar	The Purpose and Power of - and in - Social Scientific Research
	Homework	Engaging Your Supervisor session (to be conducted during your individually scheduled, one-on-one meeting with your supervisor).
Week 3: 27 February - 3 March	Seminar	Skins vs Sweaters: Ontologies, Epistemologies and Methodologies
Week 4: 6 March - 10 March	Seminar	Working with Theories and Concepts (1)
	Homework	Engaging Your Supervisor session (to be conducted during your individually scheduled, one-on-one meeting with your supervisor).
Week 5: 13 March - 17 March	Seminar	Working with Theories and Concepts (2)
Week 6: 20 March - 24 March	Reading	There are no classes this week. Time should be spent reading and preparing for your discussion paper.
Week 7: 27 March - 31 March	Seminar	Structure and Agency
	Homework	Engaging Your Supervisor session (to be conducted during your individually scheduled, one-on-one meeting with your supervisor).
Week 8: 3 April - 7 April	Seminar	Working with the Self - Positionality
Week 9: 10 April - 14 April	Seminar	Studying Foreign Domains and International Society
	Homework	Engaging Your Supervisor session (to be conducted during your individually scheduled, one-on-one meeting with your supervisor).

Week 10: 17 April - 21 April	Seminar	Studying Texts

Resources

Prescribed Resources

Weekly instructions and resources will be available on Moodle.

Students are strongly encouraged to consult the following text, which will be relied upon heavily during the first few weeks of the course:

Grix, J. (2018). *The Foundations of Research*. London and New York, Bloomsbury Publishing. (3rd edition).

Course Evaluation and Development

As an Honours seminar that can only sample some of the issues involved in conducting research, this course and its development will benefit from your constructive feedback. Student evaluative feedback is gathered periodically using, among other means, UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement process. Informal feedback and class-generated feedback are also important. Student feedback is taken seriously, and improvements will be made to the course based in part on such feedback. Significant changes to the course will be communicated to subsequent cohorts of students taking the course.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au

Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin, you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support, you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone, you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, alternative submission details will be stated on your course's Moodle site. For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle:
https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle

Late Submission Penalty

UNSW has a standard late submission penalty of:

- 5% per calendar day,
- for all assessments where a penalty applies,
- capped at five calendar days (120 hours) from the assessment deadline, after which a student cannot submit an assessment, and
- no permitted variation.

Students are expected to manage their time to meet deadlines and to request Special Consideration as early as possible before the deadline. Support with Time Management is available here.

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

- Copying: Using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.
- Collusion: Working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student for the purpose of them plagiarising, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.
- Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.
- Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): Submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

The UNSW Academic Skills support offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. One of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items. UNSW Library has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW, but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time
- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Academic Information

Due to evolving advice by NSW Health, students must check for updated information regarding online learning for all Arts, Design and Architecture courses this term (via Moodle or course information provided).

Please see: https://www.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/student-life/resources-support/protocols-guidelines for essential student information relating to:

- UNSW and Faculty policies and procedures;
- Student Support Services;
- Dean's List;
- review of results;
- credit transfer;
- cross-institutional study and exchange;
- examination information;
- enrolment information;
- Special Consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;

And other essential academic information.

This course outline sets out the description of classes at the date the Course Outline is published. The nature of classes may change during the Term after the Course Outline is published. Moodle should be consulted for the up to date class descriptions. If there is any inconsistency in the description of activities between the University timetable and the Course Outline (as updated in Moodle), the description in the Course Outline/Moodle applies.

Image Credit

Photo by Marvin Meyer on Unsplash

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