

MHST 513

RESEARCH METHODS

COURSE OUTLINE



Museum & Heritage Studies programme

**School of Art History, Classics & Religious Studies
Victoria University of Wellington**

2009

the best possible available stock of generalisations about social life ... will be based on a good deal of research, but their inductively-founded character will appear in their failure to approach law-likeness. No matter how well-framed they are the best of them may have to co-exist with counter-examples, since the constant creation of counter-examples is a feature of human life. And we shall never be able to say of the best of them precisely what their scope is. It follows of course that they will not entail well-defined sets of counterfactual conditionals. They will be prefaced not by universal quantifiers but by some such phrase as 'Characteristically and for the most part ...'

A MacIntyre (1981) After Virtue

there are no causes to be grasped with certainty where the act of creating meaning is concerned, only acts, expressions, and contexts to be interpreted. ... These contexts are always *contexts of practice*: it is always necessary to ask what people are *doing* or *trying* to do in what context.

J Bruner (1990) Acts of Meaning

COURSE ORGANISATION

- Course Coordinator:** Lee Davidson
OK 304
Office hours: Monday 3-4pm
Phone 463 5929
Email: lee.davidson@vuw.ac.nz
- Administrator:** Karen Johnson
Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday 9am-1pm
OK 306
Phone 463 5928
- Class Times:** Wednesday 10-12
Full year course trimester 1 & 2
Mar 2 – Nov 1, 2009
- Venue:** OK 301

Course notices will be put on the notice board in OK302. Please check the notice board regularly for University notices and other useful information.

Blackboard

The Blackboard system will be in use for this course. Check it for notices, as well as for material relating to lectures and assignments etc.

AIMS, OBJECTIVES AND CONTENT

Aims

To provide an introduction to social research methodology, including qualitative and quantitative research methods, historical studies, and cultural studies, looking at their application in a variety of contexts related to museums, culture and heritage.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course students should be able to:

- understand the rationale behind the use of qualitative and quantitative research methods;
- choose appropriate methods for particular research settings; and
- understand the principles and practicalities of research management from a variety of perspectives.

By the end of the course each student will have completed a proposal for their dissertation research.

Course delivery

The course is delivered through 23 two-hour discussion based seminars.

513 OUTLINE OF COURSE CONTENT

- March 4 Introduction to research methods
- March 11 Ethics and perspectives I
- March 18 Ethics and perspectives II
- March 25 Research questions and methodologies
- April 1 Introduction to research in museums
- April 8 Visitor research at Te Papa and briefing on Research Project for second
(10am-1pm) assignment. This class will be held at Te Papa and include lunch.

MID SEMESTER BREAK

Apr 29 – Jun 3 Research methods in the museum/heritage setting

This module involves an introduction to various research methods, including surveys, observation, interviews and focus groups, and their application in the museum/heritage setting. The module includes helping to develop, conduct and analyse a small practical research project in a museum, and forms the basis of the second assignment. As part of the assessment students will give a presentation on their research results to the class and other interested parties on June 3.

- July 15 Historical methods
- July 22 Visit to Archives New Zealand (tbc)
- July 29 Visit to Alexander Turnbull Library (tbc)
- August 5 The dissertation – intro and discussion with 2nd year students
- August 12 Library seminar
- August 19 The Proposal (part I)

MID SEMESTER BREAK

- Sept 9 The Proposal (part II)
- Sept 16 Student presentation and discussion of draft proposals
- Sept 23 Dissertation proposal – the finishing touches
- Sept 30 Proposal due - no class
- Oct 7 Dissertation writing
- Oct 14 Supervision issues, ethics, where next?

READING

Readings will be handed out in class one week prior to the relevant seminar. Further appropriate readings will be advised where necessary.

Some basic background reading includes:

- Alasuutari, P., Bickman L. & Brannen J. (Eds) (2008) *SAGE Handbook of Social Research Methods*.
- Beach, D. (1996) *The Responsible Conduct of Research*.
- Booth, W.C., Colomb, G. G. & Williams, J. M. (2008) *Craft of Research*. 3rd ed.
- Creswell, J.W. (2009) *Research Design: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*.
- Cryer, P. (2006) *The Research Student's Guide to Success*.
- Israel, M. & Hay, I. (2006) *Research Ethics for Social Scientists: Between Ethical Conduct and Regulatory Compliance*.
- Rountree, K. & Laing, T. (1996) *Writing By Degrees: A Practical Guide to Writing Theses and Research Papers*.
- Thody, A. (2006) *Writing and Presenting Research*.
- Tolich, M. (Ed) (2001) *Research Ethics in Aotearoa New Zealand: Concepts, Practice, Critique*.
- Staines, G. M., Johnson, K. & Bonacci, M. (2008) *Social Sciences Research: Research, Writing, and Presentation Strategies for Students*. 2nd ed.

ASSESSMENT

This course is internally assessed on the basis of three written assignments and a presentation. The word lengths, due dates and percentage of the final mark for each are as follows:

Assign. 1: Ethics & Perspectives	(2000 words)	9 April	20%
Assign. 2: Research Project	Presentation	3 June	10%
	Assignment (3000 words)	15 July	30%
Assign. 3: Dissertation Proposal	(4000 words)	30 Sept	40%

Method of Assessment

Assessment will be criterion referenced. An assessment schedule will be prepared for each assignment and distributed to students indicating the criteria against which the assignment will be assessed and the marks which will be awarded for each element of the work.

All written assignments may be handed in for comment as initial drafts and resubmitted *one further time only* for final grading by **1 November** at the latest. Assignments not received by the initial due date will not be eligible for resubmission. The only exception will be on medical grounds (including a medical certificate) or in other exceptional circumstances.

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities in examinations and other assessment procedures.

Relationship between assessment and course objectives

The assignments are structured to ensure that by the end of the course the student has completed a research proposal with a well developed research design, including ethical considerations and a sound methodological approach.

A note on referencing styles

Strict adherence to a particular style is a very important part of academic writing that students are expected to master during the course of the year. It is expected that writing will be presented in Times New Roman font sized at 12 pt one and spaced at one a half. Text should be justified left and ragged on the right margin. Block quotes of more than 3 lines should be offset and single space. All essays should correspond to the Chicago style. If you prefer to use footnotes, use Chicago A. If you prefer in-text references, use Chicago B.

Please consult the online examples for references in footnotes, citations and bibliography under reference guides/online reference collection on the library website: <http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/home.html>

For all other queries, consult the style guide in the reference section of the central library: *The Chicago Manual of Style*. 15th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003.

Sample references:

Book

Chicago A

Footnote:

Wendy Doniger, *Splitting the Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 65.

Subsequent footnotes:

Doniger, 1999, 76.

NB Ibid may be used only if the citation is exactly the same in every respect.

Bibliography:

Doniger, Wendy. *Splitting the Difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

Chicago B

In text reference:

(Doniger 1999, 65)

References:

Doniger, Wendy. 1999. *Splitting the difference*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Journal article:

Chicago A

Footnote:

John Maynard Smith, "The Origin of Altruism," *Nature* 393 (1998): 639.

Bibliography:

Smith, John Maynard. "The Origin of Altruism." *Nature* 393 (1998): 639–40.

Chicago B

In text reference:

(Smith 1998, 639)

References:

Smith, John Maynard. 1998. The origin of altruism. *Nature* 393: 639–40.

For help with writing

Please attend the very useful workshops run by the library, PGSA and Student Learning Support on aspects of research skills and writing. Do not hesitate to consult one of the advisors at SLS about your essays:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/slss/index.aspx

Consult the study hub for resources and tips:

http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/slss/studyhub.aspx

WORKLOAD AND MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Workload Guidelines

The workload expectations for this course are 10 hours per week (inclusive of seminar time) during teaching weeks, plus 60 hours in total during non-teaching periods.

Mandatory course requirements

The minimum course requirements which must be satisfied in order for students to be eligible for a grade are:

- completion of all three assignments;
- attendance at 90% of seminars.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY STATUTES AND POLICIES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the *Victoria University Calendar* or go to the Academic Policy and Student Policy sections on:

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy>

This website also provides information for students in a number of areas including Academic Grievances, Student and Staff conduct, Meeting the needs of students with impairments, and student support/VUWSA student advocates.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source
- The work of other students or staff
- Information from the internet
- Software programs and other electronic material
- Designs and ideas
- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>