

TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI



**VICTORIA**  
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

**SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES**

*Te Kura Mahinga Tangata*

# **SACS 301**

*Methods in Social and Cultural Research*

## **Course Outline**

**CRN 13132: 20 Points : Trimester 1, 2010**

*Trimester dates: 1 March to 4 July 2010*

*Teaching dates: 1 March to 4 June 2010*

*Mid-trimester break: 5 April to 18 April 2010*

**COURSE COORDINATOR: Dr Allison Kirkman**

*Room 1013, Murphy Building*

*Tel: (04) 463 5676*

*Email: [Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:Allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz)*

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**CLASSES: TUESDAY 12-2PM, & THURSDAY, 12-1PM, HM LT 104**

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<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
Course Coordinator Details .....	1
Course Aims and Learning Objectives .....	2
Course Readings .....	2
Assessment Requirements .....	3
Mandatory Course Requirements .....	5
Workload and Extensions.....	5
Penalties for Late Submission/Grades .....	6
Course Timetable .....	7
General University Policies and Statutes .....	8
Assignment Cover Sheet .....	10

**Course Coordinator:** Dr Allison Kirkman  
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**Office Hours:** Tuesday 2-3pm

**Class Times and Locations:** Tuesday 12-2pm & Thursday 12-1pm,  
HM LT 104

### **Other Contact Information**

Head of School: Dr Allison Kirkman, MY1013  
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School Administrators: Monica Lichti, Alison Melling, Heather Day  
MY921, Tel: 463 5317; 463 5258; 463 5677  
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### **Communication of Additional Information**

The noticeboards for this course are located on level 9 and 10 of Murphy building. Additional course-related information will be placed on BlackBoard.

### **Website**

The School's website is at: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs>. On the same page you will also find *Sociolog*, <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs/about/sociolog.aspx>, a chronicle of reflections written by Sociology, Social Policy, Social Science Research staff and postgraduate students.

## Course Content and Aims

This course is a multi-disciplinary survey of key methodological approaches and techniques employed by Social Science researchers.

The aims of the course are:

- To introduce students to a range of key methodological approaches and techniques employed by social science researchers.
- To critically discuss the theoretical underpinnings of qualitative and quantitative approaches, ethics and the practice of social and cultural research.

## Learning Objectives

During this course students will develop an understanding of:

- the theoretical underpinnings of social research
- the relationship between research and theory
- a range of social research perspectives
- research ethics
- the principles of quantitative and qualitative research design
- a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods
- data analysis, interpretation and presentation.

## Course Readings

There is a set text (details below) and a book of student notes (retail price \$25.70) assigned to this course.

### Set Text

Davidson, C., and Tolich, M., (eds) 2003 *Social Science Research in New Zealand*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Pearson Education New Zealand Ltd., Auckland (retail price \$94.99).

For the first two weeks of trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two all undergraduate textbooks will be sold from vicbooks and student notes from the Student Notes Distribution Centre on the ground floor of the Student Union Building.

Students can order textbooks and student notes online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz) or can email an order or enquiry to [enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz](mailto:enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz). Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop. Students will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8am – 6pm, Monday – Friday during trimester (closing at 5pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

## Assessment Requirements

This course is internally assessed. There are three pieces of assessment:

- |                                      |                             |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. <i>Short Essay - 20%</i>          | <i>Due by 4pm, 23 March</i> |
| 2. <i>Exercise in analysis - 35%</i> | <i>Due by 4pm, 4 May</i>    |
| 3. <i>Analysis of data - 45%</i>     | <i>Due by 4pm, 1 June</i>   |

*Please note:* All assignments are due at 4pm on the day indicated. The assignment box is located next to the lifts on level 9 of the Murphy Building.

### 1. *Short Essay*

**Due: 4pm, Tuesday 23 March**

**Percentage of final grade: 20%**

**Word Count: 1500 words**

Submit a fully referenced short essay on one of the following titles:

1. Critically evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a positivist approach to researching socio-cultural issues.
2. What are the main principles of interpretivism?
3. What is kaupapa Māori research, and how might it be applied in your discipline area?
4. What are feminist methodologies, and what is their value to socio-cultural research?
5. Jupp (1996:145) argues that 'the aim of critical research and analysis is to confront prevailing knowledge – and the structures which underpin it – by providing an alternative reading and understanding of it'. Evaluate this statement with reference to research within your discipline.

## 2. *Exercise in Data Analysis*

**Diary Submission Due: 4pm, Tuesday 20 April**

**Analysis Submission Due: 4pm, Tuesday 18 May**

**Word limit for analysis section: maximum 2000 words**

**Percentage of final grade: 40%**

This exercise has two parts. The first part is completing a diary for two days (one during the week and one at the weekend). All the diaries will then be combined to make a data set and distributed to all class members. The submitted assignment will be an analysis of these diaries. Further information will be provided in class and on Blackboard.

## 3. *Critique of Research Papers*

**Due: 4pm, Tuesday 1 June**

**Percentage of final grade: 40%**

**Word length: maximum 2500 words**

### **Objective**

An important task for social researchers is the analysis of completed research papers and reports. This final assignment encourages you to apply what you have learnt to produce a critical review of two **contrasting** research studies. They can be in the same general topic area or cover two different topic areas.

Choose *TWO* articles from your course handbook – one each from the Quantitative and Qualitative Sections. Write an abstract and prepare an analysis of each paper following the guidelines below.

1. Write an **abstract** (150-200 words) for each of the chosen articles giving a brief description **in your own words**, of the issue addressed, research methods and key findings giving a brief account of the scope of the study, research methods and main findings.
2. Write a review of each paper covering the following aspects:
  - a) the aims of the research
  - b) the way in which the data was collected
  - c) why, or why not, the method chosen was appropriate
  - d) the way in which ethical issues were identified and dealt with (or not) and any areas of concern
  - e) the significance of the study and its place in the field more generally
  - f) overall presentation of the research results and evidence for the conclusions drawn.

3. Compare the data-gathering and analysis methods used for the two papers. Comment on their appropriateness to the research question(s) being examined?
4. From your reading of the two papers, discuss the key issues that would need to be considered if you were to research a similar area.

In marking this assignment, credit will be given where there is evidence of the application of principles learned during the course and from the book of readings.

## Mandatory Course Requirements

To meet mandatory course requirements students must:

- submit all three assessment items by the specified due dates and times.

Students are strongly urged to attend all the timetabled sessions as assignment work is closely related to the lecture content and required reading.

## Expected Workload

Students should expect to set aside 13 hours per week, including class contact hours, for this course as per the faculty recommendations for a 300-level, 20-point course.

## Assignment Cover Sheets

All written work submitted for assessment in the School of Social and Cultural Studies must have a School Assignment Cover sheet, see sample at the back of this Course Outline. Further copies can be located on the reception counter at the Administration Office, and on the Assignment Box, on level 9 of Murphy building. You may wish to have a front sheet of your own, but a School Cover sheet must be used. This is critical for accurate identification and recording of your work.

## Extensions/Late Submission

**No extensions will be granted** unless illness or another extreme emergency prevents you from submitting an assignment. *Any extension must be arranged with the course co-ordinator before the due date and any such extension will not be extended beyond the period of certified illness or emergency.*

*Note: Assessment work will not be accepted for marking more than 7 days after the due date or 7 days after an approved extension date if an extension has been granted. However, work must still be submitted to meet the mandatory course requirements.*

## Penalties for Late Submission

Late submissions for student assignments are subject to a penalty. The exact deduction will be calculated on the basis of one half-mark per day late for each 10 marks, i.e. 1 mark will be deducted each day for an assignment worth 20% of the total course mark.

## Grades

University policy is followed and letter grades are given for all internally assessed work. The following table sets out the range of marks within which each letter grade is assigned. Your final grade and marks for the course will be an aggregate of the grades you achieve during the course.

<b>Pass</b>	A+	85% or over	Evidence of familiarity with relevant reading, sound understanding of relevant theoretical/methodological issues, plus individual interpretation and insights of a higher order. An A grade will not be achieved without such insight. Work well presented with logical structure that includes an introduction and a conclusion in addition to clarity of expression.
	A	80%-84%	
	A-	75%-79%	
	B+	70-74%	As above, but less individual insight and preparation. High level of understanding exhibited. Assignment well presented.
	B	65%-69%	
	B-	60%-64%	
	C+	55%-59%	Work lacks originality, individual insights and not strong on understanding. However, material used is relevant and presentation is satisfactory.
	C	50%-54%	
<b>Fail</b>	D	40%-49%	Little evidence of reading or comprehension. No insight. Poor presentation.
	E	Below 40%	A clear failure to reach an adequate standard on the criteria set out.

## Course Withdrawal Procedures

If you decide for ANY reason at ANY stage to withdraw from SACS 301 (or any other course) please see the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences office on the 4<sup>th</sup> floor of the Murphy Building for an Add/Drop Course form. Failure to do so may have consequences for enrolment, student grants, allowances, loans, etc., i.e. you will get credited with a fail, not a withdrawal on your record if you do not act promptly.

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>



## Course Timetable 2010

Week	Date	Topic	Reading
1	02.03 04.03	<b>Introduction and discussion</b>	Davidson & Tolich (D&T) chaps 1&2 Campbell, R. (2002)
2	9.03 11.03	<b>Theory and research Critical research</b>	D&T Chapt 3 Walters, R. (2003)
3	16.03  18.03	<b>Minority Research perspectives</b>  <b>Maori Research Perspectives</b>	D&T Chapt 6, Stanley, L., & Wise, S. (1993) Beatson & Perry (2002)  D&T Chaps 4 &5
4	23.03 25.03	<b>Research Design</b> Developing Research Questions & Hypotheses	D&T Chapt 8 & 9 Bouma, G.D. (1996), de Vaus, D. (1995) D&T Chapt 25
5	30.03 01.04	<b>Data Collection &amp; Surveys</b> - Choice of methods for data collection and sampling	D&T Chapt 10, Appendix 1 &2 Fink, Arlene (2006)
<b>Mid-trimester Break: 05.04 – 18.04</b>			
6	20.04 22.04	<b>Data Collection &amp; Surveys</b> - Questionnaire design, Survey analysis	D&T Chaps 11, 13 & 26 Bryman, A. (2001) Gobo, G (2001)
7	27.04 29.04	<b>Interviews</b> - interviews & focus groups	D&T Chaps 17, 18, 22 Leibrich, J (1993)
8	04.05 06.05	Thematic, narrative and discourse analysis	D&T
9	11.05 13.05	<b>Fieldwork &amp; ethnography</b>	D&T Chapt 20 Geertz, C (1993)
10	18.05 20.05	<b>Ethics &amp; Research Workshop</b>	D&T Chapt 7 Wilkinson T (2001) Denzin N (1968) Wallis R (1977)
11	25.05 27.05	<b>Policy &amp; Research Evaluation</b>	Weiss et al (2008) D&T Chapt 16
12	01.06 03.06	<b>Writing reports Mixed Methods</b>	D&T Chapt 12 Neale(2004)

Allison Kirkman is the course coordinator, however a number of academic staff from the School of Social and Cultural Studies will contribute to the lecture programme. This information will be provided on BlackBoard.

## Class Representative

A class representative will be recruited in consultation with the class at the beginning of the course. The class representative's name and contact details will be available to the Victoria University of Wellington Students' Association (VUWSA), the course coordinator and the class (on BlackBoard). The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the course coordinator on behalf of students.

## General University Policies and Statutes

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>

The AVC(Academic) 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. This website can be accessed at:

[http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about\\_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx)

## 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>

**Office use only**

Date Received:

(Date Stamp)

# **School of Social and Cultural Studies**

Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

**CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY**

**CRIMINOLOGY**

**SOCIOLOGY & SOCIAL POLICY**

**SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH**

## **Assignment Cover Sheet**

*(please write legibly)*

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_ Course (eg SACS 301): \_\_\_\_\_

Tutorial Day: \_\_\_\_\_ Tutorial Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor's Name (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

Assignment No.: \_\_\_\_\_ Due Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **CERTIFICATION OF AUTHENTICITY**

*I certify that this paper submitted for assessment is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged.*

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_