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

Sociology and Social Policy

SOSC/SPOL 489
Research Paper

Course Outline

CRN 1674/4639: 30 POINTS: TRIM 1+2, 2011

Teaching dates: 28 February to 14 October 2011
Mid-trimester break Trimester One: 18 April to 1 May 2011
Mid-year break: 4 to 10 July 2011
Mid-trimester break Trimester Two: 22 August to 4 September 2011
Study/Examination Period: 17 October to 12 November 2011

COURSE COORDINATOR: DR CHAMSY EL-OJEILI

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SOCIOLOGY AND SOCIAL POLICY
SOSC/SPOL 489 - RESEARCH PAPER 2011

COURSE COORDINATOR

Dr Chamsy el-Ojeili, MY 1016

Phone: 463 6740

Email: chamsy.el-ojeili@vuw.ac.nz

Office hours: Thursday 2-4pm or by appointment

INFORMATION SESSIONS/MEETINGS

There will be a series of information sessions for SOSC/SPOL489 students on ethics, developing research proposals, literature reviews, etc., and periodic informal meetings as a group to discuss progress. Details of these sessions and meetings will be sent to students early in first trimester.

WEBSITE

The School's website is at: http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs. On the same page you will 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 AIMS

The aim of the course is to provide students with an extended period of research experience on a topic of interest chosen after consultation with the co-ordinator and other staff in the Programme. The topic might well be one which comes within the general area of another Honours paper, though the Research Report for SOSC/SPOL 489 should be envisaged as a separate exercise and cannot be submitted as a project for another Honours course. For some students the course can be envisaged as a pilot project for an MA.

At the start of the course there will be informal sessions discussing ongoing projects and sharing research experiences. Several meetings will be held in the first trimester to develop the research proposal and design; and to discuss problems and strategies arising from the experience of field research. But at an early stage students will begin to analyse and write up the data working with their supervisor.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

The course should not be viewed as an attempt to complete a major and polished research project producing original findings. It should be seen as a pilot project or case study in sociological/social policy research. In particular, the course is directed at developing the research potential and competence of students in these disciplines. Research competence in sociology/social policy may be demonstrated in the following areas:

1. **conceptual ability** - conceptualising the project and relating it to the existing body of knowledge and research on the subject chosen.

2. **methodological competence** - developing an appropriate research design and strategy for the project. This includes justifying your sample selection.

3. **field experience** - dealing with the practical problems of data collection and accessibility.

4. **analytical skills** - the ability to integrate the data collected and conceptual/theoretical issues raised in the final report.

5. **resource utilization** - participation in research seminars. This includes the ability to develop interest and provide feedback on your colleagues' research projects; consultation with the supervisor, co-ordinator and other interested researchers or organisations at each stage of the research process.

6. **management of research** - developing your personal schedule on conducting and completing the research within the constraints of time and resources. While no formal evaluation is made in these areas, research students should set these as their personal goals.

SUPERVISION

Supervisors will be allocated, as far as possible, on the basis of the theoretical and methodological interests of students. Subject to enrolment numbers, no staff member shall supervise more than two students.

COMMUNICATION OF ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Additional information will be emailed to students.

ASSESSMENT

The course co-ordinator will monitor progress with supervisors and students. Three reports are required and will be assessed by the supervisors. The format of these reports are:

1.   *Research Proposal and Design Report - 15% (word limit 1,500 words)*

Provide an outline of your research problem, specifying questions you are interested in investigating. Indicate conceptual/theoretical interests and issues. Set out briefly the research design you propose to use.

Due date: 4pm, Wednesday 27 April 2011

2.   *Literature and Methodology Report - 15% (word limit 2,000 words)*

This will summarise the state of knowledge about your topic, stating its relevance to your present research. The report will also include a discussion of the research strategy you are going to adopt and the methodological problems anticipated arising from the first report.

Due date: 4pm, Friday 3 June 2011

3.   *Final Research Report - 70%*

The maximum word limit is normally 10,000 words (excluding bibliography and appendices) but this will depend on the nature of the research. The final report should be typewritten. It will incorporate the preceding reports though not necessarily in the same form as originally presented. As this piece of work will also be read by the external examiner it should be complete and not assume the reader has knowledge of the earlier progress reports. **Three copies** of this report will be required. The Programme reserves the right to retain one copy.

Only a letter grade will be given to students for reports 1 and 2. In recognition of the fact that varying rates of progress are demonstrated by each individual student at a different stage in the research process, the assessment procedure has been made flexible. If the final report turns out to be better than the marks for the first two reports, the latter will be ignored.

You are expected to discuss a draft outline of the final report with your supervisor before proceeding to the writing up of the final version. Supervisors will be happy to comment on a first draft if this is handed in by the end of September at the latest.

Due date: The **final date** on which research reports may be accepted is 4pm, Tuesday 25 October 2011

Note: All grades given for in-term work are provisional. Final grades are determined, in conjunction with the external-examiner, at the examiners' meeting in November.

HANDING IN ASSIGNMENTS

Two copies of each of the Research Proposal and the Literature Review should be handed in - one to the student's supervisor and one to the course coordinator, Dr Chamsy el-Ojeili.

STUDENTS MUST KEEP A COPY OF EVERY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT.

The Department will accept no responsibility for pieces of work claimed to have been handed in.

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Mandatory course requirements are the completion and submission by due date of the *Proposal, Literature Review*, and *Final Report.*

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

The workload for this course averages 10 hours a week. The actual workload will vary at various stages of the research process - sometimes it is likely to be more than 10 hours, at others less.

GRADES FOR SOCIOLOGY ASSIGNMENTS

The Department of Sociology and Social Policy follows university policy in giving letter grades for all internally assessed work instead of giving numerical marks. 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.

PASS	A+	85% or over	FAILURE:	D	40%-49%
	A	80% - 84%		E	Below 40%
	A-	75% - 79%			
	B+	70% - 74%			
	B	65% - 69%			
	B-	60% - 64%			
	C+	55% - 59%			
	C	50% - 54%			

LATE PENALTIES

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.

COURSE WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURES

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at:
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawlsrefunds.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

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.
Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).
Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-

Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

OTHER CONTACT INFORMATION

Head of School:	Dr Allison Kirkman, MY1013
	Tel: 463 5676 E-m: Allison.Kirkman@vuw.ac.nz
International Student Liaison:	Dr Hal Levine MY1023
	Tel: 463 6132 E-m: Hal.Levine@vuw.ac.nz
Maori and Pacific Student Liaison:	Dr Trevor Bradley, MY1101
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Students with Disabilities Liaison:	Dr Russil Durrant, MY1120
	Tel: 463 9980 E-m: russil.durrant@vuw.ac.nz
School Manager:	Carol Hogan, MY918
	Tel: 463 6546 E-m: Carol.Hogan@vuw.ac.nz
School Administrators:	Monica Lichti, Alison Melling, Heather Day
	MY921, Tel: 463 5317; 463 5258; 463 5677
	E-m: sacs@vuw.ac.nz

USEFUL READING

There is no set text or book of student notes for this course.

Supervisors will assist with advice on reading specific to your project but you might find some useful tips and ideas in the following:

An extremely useful 'how to do research' book is:

Wadsworth, Y. (1990) *Do it Yourself Social Research,* Allen and Unwin.

A splendid text on the writing process is:

Becker H.S (1986) *Writing for Social Scientists* University of Chicago Press

And still worthy of your attention is:

Mills, C. Wright (1959) *The Sociological Imagination* Oxford U.P. (see Appendix on 'Intellectual Craftsmanship')

Other useful texts, and these are just a selection, so browse further, are:

Howard K and J.A Sharp (1983) *The Management of a Student Research Project* Aldershot: Gower

Laing P (1992) Supervising *the Qualitative Research of Graduate Students* Paper presented to the Annual Conference of the New Zealand Association of Social Anthropologists, November

Locke L.F et al (1987) *Proposals That Work: A Guide for planning dissertations and grant proposals* Beverly Hills: Sage

Madsen D (1983) Successful *Dissertations and Theses* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Moses I (1984) *Supervision of Higher Degree Students - Problem Areas and Possible Solutions*, Higher Education Research and Development 3(2): 153-165

Sandelowski M, David D.H and B.G Harris (l989) *Artful Design: Writing the Proposal for Research in the Naturalist Paradigm* Research in Nursing and Health 12: 77-84

Tornquist E.M and S.G Funk (1990) *How to Write a Research Grant Proposal*, IMAGE: Journal of Nursing Scholarship 22(1): 44-51

An excellent general text on research methods is:

May, Tim (1997) *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process* (2nd ed) Buckingham: Open University Press.

A New Zealand text on qualitative sociological research is:

Tolich, Martin and Carl Davidson (1998) *Starting Fieldwork: An Introduction to Qualitative Research in New Zealand*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

Other recent texts include:

Bell, J (1993*) Doing your research project : a guide for first-time researchers in education and social science*, Buckingham: Open University Press

Gilbert, N(ed) (1993) *Researching Social Life*, London: Sage

Hobbs, D and T May (eds) (1993) *Interpreting the field : accounts of ethnography*, Oxford: Clarendon Press ; New York : Oxford University Press,

Morse, Janice M (ed) (1994) *Critical issues in qualitative research methods*, Thousand Oaks: Sage

Prus, R C (1996) *Symbolic interaction and ethnographic research: intersubjectivity and the study of human lived experience*, Albany : State University of New York Press

Reinharz, S (1992) *Feminist Methods in Social Research*, New York: Oxford University Press