



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES

Sociology and Social Policy

SOSC 319

**Knowledge, Power and
Understanding**

20 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 2015

Important dates

Trimester dates: 2 March to 1 July 2015

Teaching dates: 2 March to 5 June 2015

Easter/Mid-trimester break: 3–19 April 2015

Last Assessment Item due: 5 June 2015

Withdrawal dates: Refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds. If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test or examination, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats.

Class times and locations

Lectures: Monday 10.00 am – 11.50 am in Alan MacDiarmid Building 106
Friday 11:00 am – 11:50 am in Alan MacDiarmid Building 106

Names and contact details

Course Coordinator and Lecturer: Dr Bronwyn Polaschek
Murphy Building, MY1018
Tel: 463 6130
Email bronwyn.polaschek@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: By appointment.

Course Coordinator and Lecturer: Dr Carol Harrington
Murphy Building, MY1022
Tel: 4637451
Email: carol.harrington@vuw.ac.nz
Office hours: By appointment

Communication of additional information

Any additional course information will be posted on Blackboard. You will automatically receive all Blackboard announcements as an email sent to your @myvuw.ac.nz email address. If you are not going to use this Victoria email address set up for you, we strongly encourage you to forward messages received from the Victoria email system to the email address you do use.

Prescription

The course will equip students to debate the reliability of knowledge gained about the social world, to assess social scientific knowledge and to consider its effects on politics and social policy. This course prepares students for honours and students will be required to formally present material to the class.

Course content

2 March: Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge; Paradigms in the Sociology of Knowledge (Bronwyn Polaschek)

9 March: Philosophy of Social Science: Researching the Social (Kevin Dew)

13 March: [Tutorial] Overview of Key Concepts

16 March: Sociology and Methodologies; Ethnography and Interviews (Bronwyn Polaschek)

20 March: [Tutorial] Discussion and Planning of Assessments One, Two and Three: Planning and Conducting Interview Research

23 March: Critical Discourse Analysis (Josh Barton); Actor Network Theory (Morgan Hamill)

27 March: [Tutorial] Methodologies and Research

30 March: Classification and Nationalism (Alexander Maxwell); National Movements and National Identities (David Pearson)

20 April, 24 April [Tutorial], 1 May [Tutorial]: Student PowerPoint Presentations: Compulsory Attendance

4 May: Bureaucracy and Knowledge (Carol Harrington)

8 May: [Tutorial] Student PowerPoint Presentations: Compulsory Attendance

11 May: Subjectivity and Power in the Construction of Knowledge (Carol Harrington)

15 May: [Tutorial] Peer Review Exercise: Compulsory Attendance

18 May: Efficiency, Control and Coercion (Professor Kevin Dew); The Researcher and Reflexivity (Bronwyn Polaschek)

22 May: [Tutorial] Objectivity, Subjectivity and Reflexivity in Research

25 May: Problems of Validity (Carol Harrington)

29 May: [Tutorial] Discussion and Revision for Assessment Five (In-class Test)

5 June: In-class Test: Compulsory Attendance

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. understand and be able to discuss basic concepts from the sociology of knowledge (assessed through Assessments, One, Two, Three, Four and Five)
2. demonstrate an introductory knowledge of the history of the social sciences and statistics (assessed through Assessments Four and Five)
3. demonstrate their recognition of the assumptions behind different styles of research design (assessed through Assessments One, Two, Three, Four and Five)
4. identify, analyse and evaluate the different political debates around the appropriate production of social scientific knowledge (assessed through Assessments One, Four and Five).

Teaching format

Lectures and tutorials.

While attendance at lectures is not compulsory, students are expected to regularly attend the lectures and a minimum of 6 tutorials.

Mandatory course requirements

In addition to achieving an overall pass mark of 50%, students must:

- submit both essays (Assessments One and Four);
- present during and attend the student PowerPoint presentations (Assessment Two) and a minimum of 6 tutorials including the peer review exercise (Assessment Three);
- sit the final in-class test (Assessment Five).

Workload

The design of the course is based upon the expectation that students will work 10 hours per point, therefore a 20-point course equates to 200 hours over the trimester. This includes scheduled contact time of lectures and tutorials, individual or group study, and work on assessment tasks.

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item	%	CLO(s)	Due date
1 Assessment One: Short Essay (1,000-1,200 words)	20%	1, 2, 3, 4	Friday, 27 March
2 Assessment Two: PowerPoint Class Presentation 2-3 PowerPoint slides (5 minute presentation, plus time for questions and answers)	10%	1, 3	Monday, 20 April, Friday 24 April, Friday 1 May, Friday 8 May in lecture and tutorial time

3	Assessment Three: Peer Review Exercise	10%	1, 3	Friday, 15 May during tutorial time
4	Assessment Four: Research Essay (2,500-3,000 words)	40%	1, 3, 4	Friday, 29 May
5	Assessment Five: Final In-class Test (50 mins)	20%	1, 2, 3, 4	5 June

In this course assessments one, two, three and four are related. Each of the first three assessments contributes towards Assessment Four: Research Essay. Through these assessments you will be choosing a research topic, writing a literature review, presenting a research plan, interviewing two of your classmates, friends and/or family, and producing a final research essay. Please read all of the assignments below before beginning Assessment One.

Additional material and marking criteria for each assessment will be available on Blackboard in the 'Course Content' folder.

Assessment One: Short Essay (Literature Review)

Weighting 20 %

1,000 – 1,200 words

Due Date: Friday, 27 March

The purpose of this assignment is to write a literature review from a list of selected topics in light of course themes and in preparation for completing interviews about your chosen topic.

You will write a literature review on the social construction of a topic chosen from the list below:

- ❖ National identity in Aotearoa New Zealand
- ❖ Online identity
- ❖ Gender and/or sexuality
- ❖ Romantic love
- ❖ Class and/or capitalism
- ❖ Everyday life
- ❖ Climate change and/or the environment
- ❖ A topic of your choice (in consultation with the course coordinator)

Your literature review should include a range of sources about your chosen topic. You should discuss the main definitions/debates/questions surrounding your topic.

For example, if you were discussing national identity in Aotearoa New Zealand you might outline how national identity has been defined by several scholars in the field of sociology, what debates/questions arise about how national identity is constructed, and/or what research has been conducted into people's attitudes about national identity.

Assessment Two: PowerPoint Class Presentation

Weighting 10 %

Monday 20 April, Friday 24 April, Friday 1 May, and Friday 8 May in lecture and tutorial time.

The purpose of this assignment is to investigate the feasibility of your research question and interview plan on your chosen topic in light of course themes.

You are required to produce and present a PowerPoint presentation of 2-3 slides in which you:

- identify your general area of research;
- pose a clear and specific research question that you intend to address in your research;
- outline who you plan to interview and your rationale for doing so;
- outline your interview template;

- identify any potential pitfalls you might encounter in undertaking your research.

You are being assessed on the clarity and quality of your research planning. The point of the exercise is to collaborate with the course coordinator and your classmates in developing your thinking and planning about your research topic. Student feedback in previous years suggests that this exercise is generally both helpful and enjoyable.

Names will be drawn randomly, and made available during tutorial and on Blackboard on 20 March.

Do not begin interviewing your participants until you have completed this assessment.

Assessment Three: Peer Review Exercise

Weighting 10%

Date: Friday, 15 May (during tutorial)

This exercise will be undertaken during tutorial on Friday, 15 May

Draft essays to be submitted to Bronwyn Polaschek on Monday, 11 May during the lecture. If you do not submit a draft essay, you will not be able to complete the peer review exercise.

The purpose of this assignment is to develop your critical thinking and research skills through providing feedback on a piece of draft social science research produced by a peer.

For this assessment, you will be required to submit a well-developed draft of your research essay ahead of time. Ideally you will be paired with a student who has a similar research topic and/or interview method. During the tutorial time, you will be required to read the essay of your peer student, and give written feedback on their research topic, interview method and particularly their analysis of the data they have collected.

You will be marked on the quality of the feedback you provide. Marking criteria will be available on Blackboard

Assessment Four: Research Essay

Weighting 40 %

2,500-3,000 words

Due: Friday, 29 May

The purpose of this assignment is to undertake and complete your own piece of social science research using interviews on a topic of your choice in light of course themes.

You will research a particular topic or issue in light of what you have learned about the social construction of knowledge, and the methodologies/methods involved in undertaking social science research.

You will choose from one of the topics listed under Assessment One (The social construction of national identity in Aotearoa New Zealand, online identity, gender and/or sexuality, romantic love, class and/or capitalism, everyday life, climate change and/or the environment, or a topic of your choice in consultation with the course coordinator).

You will design a research question, write an interview plan, and then undertake research on up to **two** of your classmates, friends and/or families.

For example, if you were researching national identity in Aotearoa New Zealand you might follow these steps:

1. Design a research question such as, to what extent does the national flag relate to New Zealanders' sense of national identity?
2. Design an interview template.
3. Interview up to **two*** classmates, friends and/or family (*Please see the course coordinator if you want to interview more than two people).

4. Write your research essay, outlining the process you followed, and analysing the results of your data. Your aim is to make some conclusions about your research question. For example, 'Based on my results, the national flag has little bearing on New Zealanders' sense of national identity. For my respondents, national identity was related more closely to cultural values such as egalitarianism'.

We will discuss this assignment more in class. Tutorial 2 (Friday, 20 March) will be dedicated to assessment discussion and planning. If you are unsure of what to do after attending Tutorial 2, please send an e-mail and/or arrange a meeting with Bronwyn Polaschek for clarification.

Your final essay must be handed in to the assignment box on level 9 of the Murphy building along with your peer review comments including the reviewer's name (Assessment Two), and a brief report on how you incorporated your peer reviewer's comments into the final research essay (or why you did not).

Assessment Five: Final In-class Test
Duration: 50 mins
Date: Friday, 5 June

Weighting 20 %

The purpose of this assignment is to demonstrate your knowledge about the course themes.

You will write three short essay answers on topics covering the content of the course. You will choose ONE question from Section A, and TWO questions from Section B. The material for the test will be covered during lectures/tutorials and in weekly readings. It will be reviewed on Friday, 29 May (the tutorial before the test).

Turnitin

Assessments One and Four must be submitted to Turnitin as well as in hard copy. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted essays to material available on the web and to previously submitted essays. To use it, go to www.turnitin.com, click on 'create a user profile' in the upper right corner. After creating an account, you can log in with your ID and password as with an email account. Use the class ID and enrolment password to enrol in "Course ID"

Class ID: 8070796

Enrolment password: sociology

When uploading submissions, be sure to click the final 'submit' button. If you have taken all the steps you will receive a notification/receipt.

Marking Criteria

Marking criteria will be available before assignments are due on Blackboard in the 'Course Content' folder.

Submission and return of work

Submit a paper copy to the Assignment Box at the SACS Administration Office, Level 9, Murphy Building (to the side of the lifts), by 4pm on the due date. Your essay **MUST NOT** be placed in individual staff pigeonholes, or under staff office doors, or handed to lecturers or tutors. The Assignment Box is cleared at 4pm every day. All work is date-stamped, recorded and then handed to the appropriate markers.

Marked assignments not collected in lectures or tutorials can be collected at the Murphy 9th floor reception desk, between **2.00 and 4.00 pm only from Monday to Friday**.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions

Assignments are due on the dates stated. If for some serious reason you don't think you can get an essay in on time, see your course coordinator **prior** to the due date and discuss the problem. Extensions of time are not permitted except for illness, or bereavements.

Penalties

Late submissions for student assignments in all Sociology and Social Policy undergraduate courses 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.

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. Work must still, however, be submitted to meet the mandatory course requirements.

Set texts

Each student should buy the prepared book of Student Notes from VicBooks, since ready access to and familiarity with its contents will be required throughout the course. Available from [vicbooks](#), ground floor Easterfield Building, Kelburn Parade.

Recommended reading

Please see Blackboard for a list of recommended reading.

Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. A class representative will be selected at the first lecture of the course. Students may like to write the Class Rep's name and details in this box:

Class Rep name and contact details:

Student feedback

Enhancements made to this course, based on the feedback of previous students, will be covered during the course.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php.

Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism
- Aegrotats: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates

- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades
- Resolving academic issues: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Special passes: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter
- Student Contract: www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz

School Contact Information

Head of School:	Dr Allison Kirkman, MY1013 Phone: 463 5676, Email: allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz
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School of Social and Cultural Studies:	www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs