



FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STUDIES
Te Kura Mahinga Tangata

SOSC 415

Contemporary Issues in the Sociology of Morality & Ethics

30 POINTS

TRIMESTER 1 + 2 2015

Important dates

Trimester dates: 2 March to 15 November 2015

Teaching dates: 2 March to 16 October 2015

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

Mid-year break: 2–12 July 2015

Mid-trimester break 2/3: 24 August to 6 September 2015

Last Assessment Item due: 16 October 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

Lecture: Monday 12.00 pm – 1.50 pm Murphy MY531

Names and contact details

COURSE COORDINATOR

Dr Rhonda Shaw
Room: Level 10, Murphy building, MY1007
Telephone: (04) 463 6134
Email: rhonda.shaw@vuw.ac.nz

OFFICE HOURS

Office Hours: by arrangement

Communication of additional information

Notices relating to Sociology students are posted on the Sociology notice boards, Levels 9 and 10, Murphy building.

The School's website is at: www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs.

Prescription

This course will explore the kinds of contributions sociologists can make to debates about ethics. It will cover theoretical approaches that place the question of ethics and moral life on the sociological agenda, including debates about research ethics in the social sciences. The second part of the course will cover recent discussions in the social sciences and bioethics about giving and exchanging bodily fluids, tissues, and organs.

Course content

2 March	Introduction to course
9 March	Research ethics and social science
16 March	Ethics in qualitative research
23 March	Defining ethics and morality
30 March	Morality and ethics in sociology
20 April	Bioethics and moral philosophy
27 April	No lecture – Anzac Day
4 May	Social science and the gift
11 May	Continental philosophy and the gift
18 May	Women and ethics
25 May	Debates about end-of-life care
1 June	No lecture – Queen's Birthday
13 July	Breast milk exchange
20 July	Organ donation and transplantation
27 July	Assisted human reproduction
3 August	Body modification and enhancement
10 August	Blood donation
17 August	Seminar
7 September	Seminar
14 September	Seminar
21 September	Seminar
28 September	Seminar
5 October	Seminar
12 October	Essay writing seminar

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. demonstrate close reading and summarising arguments
2. relate to everyday life and theory
3. understanding key terms and ideas and expressing them clearly (in short comments, essays and in seminar presentations)
4. develop and clarify research problems and proposals
5. present, communicate and discuss ideas with others.

Teaching format

One two-hour seminar per week will offer students a broad, general introduction to each topic area. The seminars will involve an introduction to the general topic area under discussion, and a participatory discussion involving close readings and analysis of weekly articles or essays. The weekly seminar class is designed to encourage students to critically reflect on issues in light of their own experiences and reflection, and in relation to the literature.

Students should note that the course is divided into two parts. In the first part of the course we will look at social theory that examines the relation between sociology, morality and ethics. A key objective in this part of the course is to address the place of ethics in sociology and related disciplines, and to discuss the significance of social science and ethnographic research in the field of bioethics. In conjunction with this material we will look at debates around the gift relation. During Trimester 1 students will write a short précis of course readings each week. Part II of the course begins during Trimester 1. Part II will deal with substantive issues in and around the nature of contemporary gifts and gift-gifting, and the exchange of bodily fluids, tissues, and organs. By the Mid-year break, students will have started their Research Essay assignment. The course coordinator will be available for consultation at this time. Please note that lecturer office hours can be negotiated for SOSC 415 students.

Mandatory course requirements

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

- submit 8 weekly précis assignments of the assigned readings
- submit the research essay
- complete the seminar presentation.

Workload

The expectations are that students will work 10 hours per point, therefore a 30-point course equates to 300 hours over trimester 1 + 2 including scheduled contact time of 2 hours per week.

In addition to attending the seminars (60 hours for the year) students can expect to spend around 40 hours collecting data for seminar work, 60 hours reading preparation for seminars, 60 hours preparing assignment one and 80 hours preparing assignment 2.

Assessment

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	PRECIS 8 x 500 words	40%	1,3,5	Weeks 3 to 12
2	Research Essay 5000 - 6000 words	40%	1,2,3,4	16 October

3	Seminar presentation (20 - 50 minutes)	20%	2,3,4,5	Tri 2
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PRECIS-

Weighting 40%

Quantity and Length: 8 x 500 words:

Due date: Weeks 3 to 12, Trimester 1

On the Friday before each Monday seminar, you are required to submit a 500 word précis of the assigned readings for the upcoming week. Your précis should briefly account for two or three of the most compelling ideas in the text(s). It should not take the form of a book review, nor must it account for each and every idea raised by the assigned text(s). Rather, your précis should reflect your sense of what is most important in the text(s), and what you would most like to discuss in class. At the end of each précis, please suggest one or two critical or interpretive questions for further discussion. These questions may pertain to your reading of the text itself, but they may also suggest connections between texts and/or reflections on the themes discussed. More information about this aspect of the coursework will be made available at the beginning of the course, in the first lecture.

These short assignments may be handed in at any time up to the Friday of each week. The final précis is due on Friday 5 June 2015. Extensions will only be given for illness (with a medical certificate) or bereavement.

RESEARCH ESSAY

Weighting: 40%

Length: 5000 - 6000 words

Due date: 16 October

This assignment is a substantive research essay designed to put the theories in Part I of the course to the empirical test. Students will choose topics in consultation with the lecturer. It is recommended that students consult Chapters 6 & 7 of Emerson, L. (2005) *Writing Guidelines for Social Science Students* (Second edition), Thomson/Dunmore Press: Victoria, Australia. More information about this assignment will be made available to students in Trimester 2.

SEMINAR PRESENTATION

Weighting: 20%

Duration: 20 to 50 minutes

Due date: during Trimester 2 in-class, date to be arranged with course coordinator

The seminar presentations will commence in the second trimester. Dates for seminar presentations will be arranged at the beginning of the course. Students will also be required to select one topic from the second part of the course for discussion in a seminar presentation. Ideally, the seminar presentation will form the basis of your substantive essay. The aim of the exercise is to see how well you can explain, clarify, or resolve issues using theories you have been learning about in lectures and from your reading.

Marking Criteria

The marking criteria can be found on blackboard.

Seminar Presentation

Due: In class time (Trimester 2, date to be advised)

Students will be expected to provide a seminar presentation (approx. 20 to 50 minutes) in the second trimester that will facilitate discussion on a topic of their choice relating to the overall format of the course.

Submission and return of work

Assignments must be placed in the assignment box on level 9, Murphy Building, to the side of the lifts. The Assignment Box is cleared at 4pm on the due date, all work is date-stamped, its receipt recorded, and then handed on to the appropriate markers. Marked assignments 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 supervisor *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 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.

Practicum/placement/field trip/internship arrangements

There are no other arrangements for this course.

Set texts

There is no set text or book of student notes for this course. Details on readings will be provided on Blackboard.

Recommended reading

Depending on demand, supplementary readings may be placed on two-hour loan in the library. The following journals will provide you with material that is relevant to many of the issues covered in this course. Please note that this list is not exhaustive. Students are also able to request journal articles through inter-loan if an item is not available in the Victoria Library. A small charge for each article will be applied. Books can be inter-loaned free of charge.

Journals

American Sociological Review

Australian Feminist Studies

Body & Society

Bioethics

Current Anthropology

Current Sociology

Economy & Society

Feminism and Psychology

Feminist Review

Feminist Theory

Health Care for Women International

Health Sociology Review

Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal for the Social Study of Health, Illness & Medicine

Hypatia
Journal of Bioethical Inquiry
Journal of Medical Ethics
Philosophy & Public Affairs
Signs: Journal of Women in Culture & Society
Sociology
Sociology of Health & Illness
Social Science and Medicine
The Sociological Quarterly
The Sociological Review
Theory, Culture & Society
Women's Studies International Forum

The required readings make up the content of the course reading pack. The readings have been organised by lecture/topic sequence and will be made available in advance of the lectures/seminars.

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, MY 1013 Phone: 463 5676, Email: allison.kirkman@vuw.ac.nz
International Student Liaison:	Dr Hal Levine, MY1023 Phone: 463 6132, Email: hal.levine@vuw.ac.nz
Māori and Pacific Student Liaison:	Dr Trevor Bradley, MY1101 Phone: 463 5432, Email: trevor.bradley@vuw.ac.nz
Students with Disabilities Liaison:	Dr Russil Durrant, MY1120 Phone: 463 9980, Email: russil.durrant@vuw.ac.nz
School Manager:	La'Chelle Pretorius, MY918 Phone: 463 6546, Email: lachelle.pretorius@vuw.ac.nz
School Administrators:	Suzanne Weaver, Heather Day, Alison Melling, MY921, Phone: 463 5317; 463 5677; 463 5258, Email: sacs@vuw.ac.nz School of Social and Cultural Studies: www.victoria.ac.nz/sacs