ARTS3875

Decolonising Research Methods

Term One // 2020

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Timothy Heffernan	t.heffernan@unsw.edu.au	Thursdays 9-10am or by appointment	TBA	TBA

School Contact Information

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

Subject Area: *Sociology and Anthropology*
This course can also be studied in the following specialisation: Australian Studies

In this course you will reflect on the practice of key social research methods for investigating culture and society. You will address the relationship between methods and methodology and recognise the importance of understanding the historical, theoretical and philosophical contexts from which particular research methods have emerged. Social researchers do not apply a set of neutral techniques to the issues they investigate, but rather research is part of a dynamic, engagement with social and cultural worlds with often deep connections to colonial thought and power. A heightened sense of the strategies used in researching culture and society enhances reflexivity among social researchers: that is, the capacity to reflect upon who we are, what we are doing; and the ethics of accountability. You will find that central to this course is the proposition that social research is a form of intervention in the social and cultural world, which may have major consequences on people's lives. So too you will develop an understanding of your 'subjective positioning' and will come to find ways to decolonise your practice both through methods and methodologies. To do this you will engage with a wide source of information and knowledge and address decolonising principles and praxis.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Appreciate cultural diversity and complexity
2. Analyse and manage the ethical dilemmas posed by a research task
3. Communicate creative thought and research
4. Identify the benefits of learning through sharing knowledge
5. Communicate effectively in written and/or oral modes
6. Appreciate the nexus between theory, method and methodology

Teaching Strategies

This course will be delivered in a 3 hour seminar format, which allows for engaging dialogue to develop between students and the lecturer. The seminar is designed to encourage students to reflect on their own positionality and any experiences they have had with social research, increasing their critical self-awareness and disciplinary awareness. Throughout the semester teaching strategies will include content delivery, free and open discussion, reflections on praxis and doing social research and problem based learning packages.

Assessment

Harvard referencing must be used for all written assignments. Please see this resource: https://student.unsw.edu.au/harvard-referencing

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Reflexive Essay	20%	23/03/2020 05:00 PM	1,2,6
Group Presentaton	20%	Weeks 4, 5, 6, 7 & 9	2,3,4,5
Final Essay	60%	01/05/2020 05:00 PM	1,3,5

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Reflexive Essay

Start date: Not Applicable

Details: Students are required to write a 1200 word reflexive essay which interacts with a key source on cross cultural encounters. They must reflexively engage with what this might mean for them as researchers. Written feedback will be provided in class.

Additional details:

Students are required to write a 1,200 word reflexive essay which interacts with TWO texts:

1. The short book *Whitefella Culture* (Hagan 1991)
2. The Introduction to Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies*

Students should read the texts and comment on what each text is about and their learning experience. For instance, in the body of your essay, you may wish to discuss several of the following points: What is the main argument? Who is the intended audience? What position does each author take? What insight do these texts offer? What did you learn? Did reading these texts change the way you think about cross-cultural engagements? How? Why? What might this mean for you as a researcher? etc).

Students should engage with each text through direct **quoting** or **paraphrasing** to illustrate their ideas. Students should frame their essay around **epistemology, ontology** and **axiology** (which we will cover in
class). Comments will be given on each student's essay and overall feedback will be provided in class.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Group Presentaton

Start date: Week Four

Length: 40 Minute Group Oral Presentation

Details: Students will participate in a group presentation in one week of classes. They will work collectively and receive a group mark for this task. Feedback is given verbally after the presentation and the mark for this assessment task is given in writing to the student at the end of the semester.

Additional details:

Groups will be organised in Week One. Students will be asked to facilitate a discussion on the week's readings, raise broader critical questions, and facilitate activities. Students will work collectively and receive a group mark. Verbal feedback will be given after the presentation and a grade will be given at the end of the term.

Turnitin setting: This is not a Turnitin assignment

Assessment 3: Final Essay

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 3,500

Details: Students are required to write a 3500 word length essay portfolio, and engage with the relevant set and wider course literature to produce an academic argument and reflection. 2,500-word essay based on seminar content, and maximum of 1,000-words creative methodology reflection.This is the final piece of assessment for the course.Written feedback is given to students two weeks after assessment is submitted.

Additional details:

Students are required to write a 3,500 word length essay portfolio, comprising of a 2,500 word essay AND a 1,000 word creative reflection.

Students should engage with the relevant set readings from the course and wider literature to produce an academic argument and reflection.

For the 2,500 word **essay**, you will choose a species of Indigenous Australian flora OR fauna and analyse how this species is understood from a Western knowledge/scientific perspective AND from an Indigenous knowledge/scientific perspective. How are these understandings different and/or similar? What does comparing these perspectives and findings reveal about ways of knowing? How does this fit within the course's wider theme of knowledge as power, as socially constructed, and as differently valued?

For the **creative methodology reflection** exercise, you are to engage with the longform short fiction 'Water', from Ellen van Neerven's *Heat and Light* (2014) (available via Moodle). Your 1,000 word analysis of this text is to reflect on how van Neerven's futuristic imagining sheds light on contemporary social realities, and offers insights to social research practice.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students do not see Turnitin similarity reports.

Attendance Requirements

Students must attend 8 out of all 10 scheduled classes unless they have the required documentation. This includes any fieldwork or homework activities that fall within the term. In some circumstances alternative arrangement may be made for individual students. Please contact the convenor to discuss.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 17 February - 21 February	Topic	**Setting the scene for decolonising research**
	Seminar	In this week's seminar we discuss the course objectives, modes of delivery, student expectations, and assessment tasks. We also establish what students already know about social research and introduce sociological and anthropological perspectives on research, providing a short historical reflection on the emergence of research methods and ethical principles.
	Reading	Connell, R. 2007, 'Empire and the creation of a social science' in *Southern theory: the dynamics of knowledge in social science*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, pp. 3-25. George, L. 2018, 'Stirring up silence: What does decolonising anthropology in Aotearoa New Zealand really mean?' *Commoning Ethnography*, vol. 1, no. 1, pp. 1-6.
	Homework	Please finalise your 'learning statement' and upload it to Moodle by 5pm, Sun 23 Feb.
Week 2: 24 February - 28 February	Topic	**Social Research as Intervention**
	Seminar	In this week's seminar we will explore the relationship between 'the social' and research. We will also question why the two are so intimately linked. Finally, students will be introduced to ethnography, the main "research method" used in anthropology and across some research in sociology.
	Reading	Hirschauer, S 2006, 'Putting things into words: ethnographic description and the silence of the social, *Human Studies,* vol. 29, no. 4, pp. 413-41. Rose, D 1992, *Dingo makes us human*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 1-41.

Week 3: 2 March - 6 March	Fieldwork	In lieu of class this week, students will undertake a short ethnographic exercise. Students are asked to: 1. Read the weekly reading 2. Sit and observe a social situation for 45 minutes. You are NOT to directly engage those within this scene in any type of interview or discussion about the exercise. This is an observation only exercise, and should not involve vulnerable populations. You should take notes during the observation or directly after you have left your chosen scene. 3. Spend 30 minutes reflecting on this experience and write about 200 words on what you saw, felt, thought and experienced. 4. Next, select and friend, family member or colleague and undertake a short conversation - roughly 15 minutes - about their membership in a local community (e.g. school, university, suburb, faith group, hobby, club, etc). 5. Transcribe the conversation before Week 4's seminar (more information will be provided in week 1). These activities should take between 3-6 hours - e.g. the time it would take to prepare for and attend a weekly seminar. We will draw on these activities extensively throughout the term!
	Reading	Geertz, C 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures*. Basic Books, New York, pp. 3-32.
Week 4: 9 March - 13 March	Topic	**Ways of knowing**
		In this week's seminar we will look at what have classically been termed 'scientific' and 'vernacular' ways on knowing. By examining these as classificatory modes we will look at notions of "innocent" and "oppressive" ways of producing knowledge and research materials. *Group One Presentation*
	Reading	Rose, DB 2005, 'An Indigenous philosophical ecology: situating the human,' TAJA, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 294-305. Trigger, D 2008, 'Indigeneity, ferality & what 'belongs' in the Australian bush,' JRAI, vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 628-46.

		Additonal text for those interested:
		Grosfoguel, R 2007. The epistemic decolonial turn, Cultural Studies, vol. 21, no. 2-3, pp. 211-23.
Week 5: 16 March - 20 March	Topic	**Ethics**
	Seminar	In this week's seminar we will consider the role of ethics in producing social research materials. *Group Two Presentation*
	Reading	Casteneda, Q 2006, Ethnography in the forest: an analysis of ethics in the morals of anthropology, *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 121-45. Scheper-Hughes, N 1995, The primacy of the ethical: propositions for a militant anthropology, *Current Anthropology,* vol. 36, no. 3, pp. 409-40.
Week 6: 23 March - 27 March	Topic	**Hidden dimensions: risk & silence**
	Seminar	In this week's seminar we will reflect on a complex dimension of social research, namely what happens when we identify or experience risk through the course of social research? *Group Three Presentation*
	Reading	Tourigny, S. 2004. 'Yo Bitch…' and other challenges: Bringing high risk ethnography into the discourse. In *Anthropologists in the Field: Cases in Participant Observation*, edited by Lynne Hume, Jane Mulcock, pp.111-26. Blackman, S. 2007. '"Hidden Ethnography": Crossing Emotional Borders in Qualitative Accounts of Young People's Lives,' *Sociology, vol* 41, no. 4, pp. 699-716. **Additional text for those interested:** Apoifis N, 2017, 'Fieldwork in a furnace: anarchists, anti-authoritarians and militant ethnography', *Qualitative Research*, vol. 17, pp. 3 - 19.
Week 7: 30 March - 3 April	Topic	**Reflexivity and critical self-awareness**
	Seminar	In this week's seminar we will focus on the question: how is the researcher located and positioned in research? To this end, we will consider 'reflexivity' as tool used to analyse personal, intersubjective and social processes that shape research projects. *Group Four Presentation*

	Reading	Jacobs-Huey, L. 2002. The natives are gazing and talking back: reviewing the problematics of positionality, voice and accountability among 'Native' anthropologists. *American Anthropologist,* vol. 104, no. 3, pp. 791-804.
Week 8: 6 April - 10 April	Seminar	Public Holiday. No Seminar
Week 9: 13 April - 17 April	Topic	**Creativity and creative methods**
		In this week's seminar we will discuss the role of creativity and creative methodologies in research. Discussion will focus on how creativity has the power to connect the seemingly unconnected, and how creative social research might call for a fundamental re-conceptualisation and transformation of contemporary research methods in social science. *Group Five Presentation*
	Reading	Hokari, M. 2011, *Gurinji Journey: A Japanese Historian in the Outback*. Extracted sections: pp.12-22; 30-63 and 243-264. Sydney: UNSW Press. Soyini Madison, D. 2005. 'It's time to write: Writing as performance'. In *Critical Ethnography: Methods, ethics and performance*. Pp.181-198. Sage Publications: California
Week 10: 20 April - 24 April	Topic	**Oral History and Testemony**
	Seminar	In this week's seminar we will work closely with oral history/testimony, sites of collective memory and shared meaning. This is an important part of social research. We will consider aspects of collective memory, remembrance, life stories, and oral histories in difficult situations of trauma and vulnerability. This will lead us to reflect on the oral histories of nations, individuals, and families across a range of cultural terrains.
	Reading	Goodall, H 1994, 'Colonialism and catastrophe: contested memories of nuclear testing and measles epidemic at Ernabella,' in K Darian-Smith & P Hamilton (eds) Memory and History in Twentieth Century Australia, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, pp. 55-76. Blee, K 1993, Evidence, empathy and ethics: lessons from the oral history of the Klan, *Journal of American History,* vol. 80, no. 2, ,pp.

		596-606
Week 11: 27 April - 28 April	Topic	**Content and Discourse Analysis**
		In this seminar we seeks answers to the question: Where do we get our ideas and what can we do with them? We'll focus on discourse analysis as a method for social research purposes and practically assess the ways in which language comes to betray certain social positions and dispositions, revealing, often, covert ideologies through normative ideals.
	Reading	Rosenberg, M 2011, Golden retrievers are white, pit bulls are black and chihuahuas are hispanic: representations of breeds of dogs and Issues of race in popular culture, in L Kalof & G Montgomery (eds), *Making animal meaning*, Michigan State University Press, East Lansing, MI, pp.113-26. Kearney, A 2012, Sexual gamesmanship, Indigeneity and the performance of corporeal masculinities, *Sport in Society, vol. 1*5, no. 7, pp. 936-51.

Resources

Prescribed Resources

Three additional texts are required to complete assessment one and three. Please find these texts located in the text list on Moodle.

Recommended Resources

Whilst the internet is not recommended as your first port of call for research, it can offer some valuable information regarding Anthropology and Sociology, ethics, codes of ethics, social research methods, advocacy and human rights.

Please see the recommended articles, chapters and books in the 'suggested' section of the Course Text List, which you may find to be useful when completing the assessments in this course.

Course Evaluation and Development

Information on course evaluation and development will be made available to students via Moodle towards the end of the term. For more information, see https://teaching.unsw.edu.au/myexperience

Acknowledgement

UNSW Australia's Kensington campus, on which the School of Social Sciences is housed, is built on the land of Indigenous Australians. We pay our respects to the Bedegal people of the Eora nation who are the Indigenous Owners of this land. We acknowledge all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, the First Australians, whose lands, winds and waters we all now share, and pay respect to their unique values, and their continuing and enduring cultures which deepen and enrich the life of our nation and communities.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

Turnitin Submission

If you encounter a problem when attempting to submit your assignment through Turnitin, please telephone External Support on 9385 3331 or email them on externalteltsupport@unsw.edu.au . Support hours are 8:00am – 10:00pm on weekdays and 9:00am – 5:00pm on weekends (365 days a year). If you are unable to submit your assignment due to a fault with Turnitin you may apply for an extension, but you must retain your ticket number from External Support (along with any other relevant documents) to include as evidence to support your extension application. If you email External Support you will automatically receive a ticket number, but if you telephone you will need to specifically ask for one. Turnitin also provides updates on their system status on Twitter.

Generally, assessment tasks must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle assignment. In instances where this is not possible, it will be stated on your course's Moodle site with alternative submission details.

For information on how to submit assignments online via Moodle: https://student.unsw.edu.au/how-submit-assignment-moodle

Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of others and presenting them as your own. It can take many forms, from deliberate cheating to accidentally copying from a source without acknowledgement.

UNSW groups plagiarism into the following categories:

Copying: using the same or very similar words to the original text or idea without acknowledging the source or using quotation marks. This also applies to images, art and design projects, as well as presentations where someone presents another's ideas or words without credit.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original structure and/or progression of ideas of the original, and information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit and to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without appropriate referencing.

Collusion: working with others but passing off the work as a person's individual work. Collusion also includes providing your work to another student before the due date, or for the purpose of them plagiarising at any time, paying another person to perform an academic task, stealing or acquiring another person's academic work and copying it, offering to complete another person's work or seeking payment for completing academic work.

Inappropriate citation: Citing sources which have not been read, without acknowledging the "secondary" source from which knowledge of them has been obtained.

Duplication ("self-plagiarism"): submitting your own work, in whole or in part, where it has previously been prepared or submitted for another assessment or course at UNSW or another university.

Correct referencing practices:

- Paraphrasing, summarising, essay writing and time management
- Appropriate use of and attribution for a range of materials including text, images, formulae and concepts.

Individual assistance is available on request from The Learning Centre (http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/). Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study and one of the identified causes of plagiarism is poor time management. Students should allow sufficient time for research, drafting and proper referencing of sources in preparing all assessment items.

UNSW Library also has the ELISE tool available to assist you with your study at UNSW. ELISE is designed to introduce new students to studying at UNSW but it can also be a great refresher during your study.

Completing the ELISE tutorial and quiz will enable you to:

- analyse topics, plan responses and organise research for academic writing and other assessment tasks
- effectively and efficiently find appropriate information sources and evaluate relevance to your needs
- use and manage information effectively to accomplish a specific purpose
- better manage your time

- understand your rights and responsibilities as a student at UNSW
- be aware of plagiarism, copyright, UNSW Student Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use of UNSW ICT Resources Policy
- be aware of the standards of behaviour expected of everyone in the UNSW community
- locate services and information about UNSW and UNSW Library

Some of these areas will be familiar to you, others will be new. Gaining a solid understanding of all the related aspects of ELISE will help you make the most of your studies at UNSW.
http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise/aboutelise

Academic Information

For essential student information relating to:

- requests for extension;
- late submissions guidelines;
- review of marks;
- UNSW Health and Safety policies;
- examination procedures;
- special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure;
- student equity and disability;
- and other essential academic information, see

https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/

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