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SRAP5106

Academic Writing in the Social Sciences

Term One // 2020

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Alba Boer Cueva	a.boercueva@unsw.edu.au	Wednesday 16:45 - 17:45	Morven Brown Building, Rooms 165-168	N/A

School Contact Information

School of Social Sciences

Room 159

Morven Brown C20

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

In this course, you will be taught the academic skills you need to succeed at the masters level. This course will be particularly useful for students who have not studied at an Australian university or who are returning to university after a period in the work force. You will learn the key stages in the research and writing process, how to construct compelling paragraphs, including introductions and conclusions, how to engage convincingly with others' work, how to read and write critically, and how to make effective use of theory. To give you an opportunity to practice these skills, your assessments will enable you to apply these skills in a range of formats, focusing on particular themes that are addressed by international policy frameworks.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Identify and apply effective research strategies.
2. Engage appropriately with others' work, including using an academic referencing system.
3. Identify and evaluate a range of international policy frameworks which relate to the course theme.
4. Recognise and evaluate conflicting perspectives in academic research and international policy documents related to the course theme.
5. Propose a policy solution in response to an identified international problem within the course theme.

Teaching Strategies

This course uses a seminar format because this is best suited to the interactive nature of the course. While some information will be provided in lecture format, the course will involve considerable class participation both in the form of class discussions and group activities. As the course is predominantly an academic skills course, many in-class activities will be run so that students can practice the skills taught and receive immediate feedback.

The assessments have been designed to help students develop and consolidate the research, writing and speaking skills they will need when completing one of the three masters programs of which the course is a part. Specifically, the presentation gives students an opportunity to practice their speaking skills. The critical review introduces students to the important skills of locating sources and comparing and evaluating differing perspectives. The policy brief is directly relevant to the students who will need to produce similar assignments in other courses. It also introduces students to the important skill of making recommendations about how to address existing problems. The essay provides the opportunity to undertake considerable research on a topic. Together the assessments are designed to encourage students to address attempts to solve existing social, political and policy problems from multiple perspectives.

Assessment

Referencing:

The referencing system for this course is SoSS in-text referencing. This is a modified version of Harvard referencing. Please, follow the SoSS guide available on Moodle.

All assessments must follow this format:

- Size 12 font
- Times New Roman or Helvetica
- 2 line spacing
- Page numbers at the bottom right of each page
- Name and student number
- Title (cover page optional)
- Normal 2.54 margins
- Justified paragraphs
- Reference list on a separate page

Deductions applied to assignments:

- **3% deduction for every 100 words (or part thereof) over or under the word limit.** There is an allowance of + or – 10% for all assessments. For example, if your essay is 2750 words in length, it will not be penalised. If it is 2800 words, you will lose 3%. As you have already received a 10% allowance on the word count, **even 1 word over will attract a 3% penalty.** Using the essay again as an example, if your essay is 2751 words, you will receive a 3% penalty. If it is 2851 words, you will receive a 6% penalty, and so on for every 100 words or part thereof that your assignment is over the word limit. **The word count includes all text in the main body of the assignment. In-text references are included.** Only the title page, your student details and the reference list or bibliography is excluded.
- Please be aware that the Faculty and School policies on late submission is that a penalty of 5% applies for every day that an assignment is overdue. If needed you can apply for an extension here: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>
- You stand to lose between 5 and 20 marks for poor referencing and attribution of sources. There is a lot of assistance available to help you learn about referencing, attribution and avoiding plagiarism. If you are not sure just ask! See here for more information: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/referencing>

If you submit work for this course that you have already submitted for assessment in another course at this University or any other institution, in whole or in part, or if you copy material from another source and do not attribute that material to its original author, your work will be referred to the School Student Ethics Officer for an investigation into a possible charge of academic misconduct. See: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism>.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Student Learning Outcomes Assessed
Critical Review	15%	08/03/2020 11:59 PM	1,2,5
Policy Brief	35%	29/03/2020 11:59 PM	1,2,5
Essay	50%	26/04/2020 11:59 PM	1,2,3,4

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Critical Review

Start date: Not Applicable

Length: 700

Details: 700 words. Students will critically review two contrasting articles on the course theme. Students will receive written feedback and a numerical grade within ten working days of submission. The feedback sheet/rubric will be available to students at the start of the course so that they can work towards specified standards.

Additional details:

Critical Review

700 words, +/- 10%.

A major aspect of producing successful academic work is understanding that subjects are not merely defined by the knowledge within them, but by the debates they contain. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage this understanding. This will allow you to develop vital critical skills that will prepare you well for the policy brief and the essay. The critical review examines your ability to write fluently and coherently with close reference to two sources (drawing on other sources as needed) and to engage critically with the assumptions and arguments put forward in the articles.

For this assignment you need to choose **two academic, scholarly articles** that discuss an aspect of gender in an international context (the international aspect can be slight). The articles cannot be from the reading material provided in this course and should offer differing positions. You will want to include the following:

- complete and accurate references to the articles and references to other texts whenever appropriate;
- well-developed and sophisticated coverage of key issues and themes without being overly descriptive. This means that you shouldn't just repeat what the authors say, but rather explain how and why you think it strengthens or weakens her/his overall argument as well;
- critical engagement with the strengths and weaknesses of the article including your own informed argument – based on relevant literature – about the validity of the article's conclusions or insights;
- a reference list listing the sources you have referenced, including the articles themselves. The articles under review must be referenced normally and you must include references to sources other than the article under review.

Note: Remember that the purpose of a critical review is to review texts rather than explore a topic, as you would do when writing an essay. Do not get caught up in detailed summaries. It is the contrasting and evaluating that lead to the highest marks. You are also expected to read widely and **draw on a range of additional sources in order to support, justify and substantiate your analysis of the selected articles**. Conducting a critical review does not mean that additional sources (other than the selected articles) should not be cited. That is, if you only reference the articles under review, you are unlikely to attain a high grade.

Your critical review must be properly referenced and include a bibliography. All referencing must follow the SoSS Referencing Guide available on Moodle.

The critical review will be graded out of 100 and will constitute 15% of your final grade for this course. The review will be graded using a rubric showing the assessment criteria. The rubric is available on Moodle.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 2: Policy Brief

Start date:

Length: 1300

Details: 1300 words. Students must identify an international problem related to the course theme and develop one or more policy solutions. Students will receive written feedback and a numerical grade within ten working days of submission. The feedback sheet/rubric will be available to students at the start of the course so that they can work towards specified standards.

Additional details:

Policy Brief

1300 words, +/- 10%.

We study International Relations, Development Studies or Public Policy and Governance not simply to understand the world, but to change it. One of the mechanisms we use to modify the world is legislation, and a key precursor to any legislation is policy. This assignment encourages you to think about legislation and policy by creating a 'policy brief'. A policy brief identifies and explores an important problem and makes recommendations for how it should be addressed, typically through government legislation and action.

For this assignment you need to identify an international problem that is related to gender (the international aspect can be slight). You will want to include the following:

- an in-depth explanation of the problem. This means going beyond a description of the problem and **giving an explanation of the nature of the problem and why it is significant**. This means looking at the processes, structures, assumptions, etcetera underpinning the problem;
- a detailed assessment of the current steps taken – if any – to solve the problem. That is, analyse the extent to which these steps taken are effective in solving the problem;
- a set of policy recommendations. You need to analyse the options and any compromises they

will entail, present predictable outcomes and assess the feasibility of each. Your recommendations need to be supported with relevant data and sources;

- provide a summary of your recommendations at the end. This is separate to your detailed discussion of the recommendations and can be in dot-point form.

Note: Remember that the purpose of a policy brief is to provide an authoritative perspective on a problem and to develop policy (not just review it). The credibility of the brief relies on your ability to not only present and solve the problem but to effectively handle any counterarguments or conflicting views. Ultimately you need to answer the “Who cares?” or “So what?” questions that your audience might have. That is, why does this problem matter, and what is the value of this research and your recommendations?

You need to give the brief a title and use headings for the various sections. You need to refer to **at least five academic sources**. ‘Grey literature’, that is, sources that are not peer-reviewed are not counted towards the five.

Your policy brief must be properly referenced and include a bibliography. All referencing must follow the SoSS Referencing Guide available on Moodle.

The policy brief will be graded out of 100 and will constitute 35% of your final grade for this course. The review will be graded using a rubric showing the assessment criteria. The rubric is available on Moodle.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Assessment 3: Essay

Start date:

Length: 2500

Details: 2500 words. This will be the final assessment for the course. Drawing on theory related to the course theme, students should critique an international policy framework, commitment or resolution produced by an international body. Students will receive written feedback and a numerical grade within ten working days of submission. The feedback sheet/rubric will be available to students at the start of the course so that they can work towards specified standards.

Additional details:

Essay

2500 words, +/- 10%.

Essays continue to exist because the form is well suited to exploring the complexities of a subject. For this assignment you will be assessed on your ability to demonstrate your research skills (the ability to provide accurate and detailed information about your chosen area of study), on synthesis and persuasive argument (in bringing together ideas and data from several sources), on quality of presentation (including accurate referencing) and on the clarity of your writing.

Draw on theory – that is, develop a theoretical framework based on International Relations, Development Studies or Policy and Governance theory, **and gender-research to critique an**

international policy framework, commitment resolution, set of recommendations, etcetera, produced by an international body such as the UN, IMF, World Bank, or by an NGO, among many others. You can also critique a national policy that has international ramifications.

You can focus on a policy or document(s) concerned with, for example, promoting gender equality, empowering women, or that addresses male-specific problems, or indeed one that in some way neglects or does not adequately deal with gender. Remember that a critique can be both positive and negative. You may critique the text itself or look more broadly at implementation (or both). You will also want to do the following:

- In your introduction, establish a clear context for your inquiry, your basic argument and how the paper will proceed step by step (the structure).
- Signpost the structure throughout the essay, indicating the logical progression from paragraph to paragraph and section to section (linking sentences at the end of paragraphs and sections are important).
- Provide persuasive analysis of evidence in support of your argument.
- Ground your argument in the theoretical and conceptual debates of the discipline.

Note: Include **at least eight academic sources**. This means you will have to make reference to further reading. References to the core texts of this course alone will not be enough to pass this assessment. Grey literature will not count towards the minimum eight sources.

Your essay must be properly referenced and include a bibliography. All referencing must follow the SoSS Referencing Guide available on Moodle.

It is a good idea to plan and draft your research paper well in advance. You are welcome to see me during consultation hours to discuss your ideas, plan and draft. I will not, however, respond to requests for research assistance, i.e. 'I want to use 'X' as a case study, what should I read?' I also will not read or provide feedback on drafts of essays.

The essay will be graded out of 100 and will constitute 50% of your final grade for this course. The review will be graded using a rubric showing the assessment criteria. The rubric is available on Moodle.

Turnitin setting: This assignment is submitted through Turnitin and students can see Turnitin similarity reports.

Attendance Requirements

Please note that lecture recordings are not available for this course. Students are strongly encouraged to attend all classes and contact the Course Authority to make alternative arrangements for classes missed.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 17 February - 21 February	Seminar	Gender & IR - Overview of the field
	Seminar	Skills - Overview of the course
Week 2: 24 February - 28 February	Seminar	Gender & IR - Concepts
	Seminar	Skills - Process of research
Week 3: 2 March - 6 March	Seminar	Gender & IR - No component for this week
	Seminar	Skills - Introductions and body paragraphs; analysing critical reviews
	Assessment	Critical review, due 8th March, 11:59pm
Week 4: 9 March - 13 March	Seminar	Gender & IR - Intersectionality
	Seminar	Skills - Critical thinking
Week 5: 16 March - 20 March	Seminar	Gender & IR - The nation
	Seminar	Skills - Marking a sample policy brief
Week 6: 23 March - 27 March	Seminar	Gender & IR - War and masculinity
	Seminar	Skills - Critical review feedback
	Assessment	Policy brief, due 29th March, 11:59pm
Week 7: 30 March - 3 April	Seminar	Gender & IR - No component for this week
	Seminar	Skills - Integrating research
Week 8: 6 April - 10 April	Seminar	Gender & IR - Economics
	Seminar	Skills - Theory
Week 9: 13 April - 17 April	Seminar	Gender & IR - Analysing policy documents
	Seminar	Skills - Policy brief feedback
Week 10: 20 April - 24 April	Seminar	Gender & IR - No component this week
	Seminar	Skills - Grammar and expression; essays
	Assessment	Essay, due 26th April, 11:59pm

Resources

Prescribed Resources

The textbook for the academic skills component of the course is *Essentials of Essay Writing: What Markers Look For*, by Jamie Q Roberts (2017). It is available in the bookshop.

Resources for the Gender and IR component of the course are available on Moodle.

Please note that the texts in this course provide the springboard into the discussions we'll have each week, so they have to be well prepared as opposed to 'done'. They are also the foundation we will use in order to learn the academic skills necessary for Masters students like yourselves. The resources for each week are as follows.

Recommended Resources

See Moodle for additional resources, such as weekly readings and links to international organisations, UN policy frameworks and so on.

Course Evaluation and Development

Feedback is gathered in three ways:

1. Students can complete the online 'My Experience' survey.
2. Students can discuss the course with the convenor, either in person or via email.
3. The course convenor notes how successful individual classes were.

All of these mechanisms have led to the course being modified. The following changes have been made:

- there is now a greater focus on academic skills than the gender and IR material;
- the less interesting gender and IR topics have been discarded;
- considerable course time is dedicated to analysing successful assessments before the respective assessments are due;
- considerable course time is dedicated to providing feedback on assessments once they are marked; and,
- the gender and IR seminars include more group activities to facilitate discussions.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

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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