

School of the Arts and Media



ARTS5100

RESEARCH METHODS AND THESIS WRITING

Session 1, 2018

UNSW Course Outline

Staff Contact Details

Position	Name	Email	Office
Course Convener	Dr Christopher Oakey	c.oakey@unsw.edu.au	TBA

Class

Times and Location

Tuesday, 9am – 11am, Robert Webster room 332

Tuesday, 12pm – 2pm, Robert Webster room 332

School of the Arts and Media Contact Information

Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building

Phone: 9385 4856

Email: sam@unsw.edu.au

Attendance Requirements

- A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a face-to-face (F2F) or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.
- A student who attends less than eighty per cent (80%) of the classes within a course may be refused final assessment and/or awarded a final grade of UF (Unsatisfactory Fail).
 - For a course with 12 tutorials or seminars and 12 lectures you can miss no more than 2 tutorials or seminars and 2 lectures.
 - For a course with 4 tutorials or seminars and 4 lectures you need to attend all components of the course. If you need to miss one of the components, please make an application using UNSW Special Consideration.
 - If your course has 12 seminars, you can miss no more than 2 seminars.
 - If your course has 12 lectures, 12 studios and 12 tutorials then you can miss no more than 2 classes for each of the component.
- A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.
- If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should lodge a special consideration application, the request should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.
- A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance. A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the

course's learning outcomes and/or volume of learning. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.

For more information about the SAM attendance protocols, see the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines>.

For information relating to Arts and Social Sciences protocols can be found here:

<https://www.arts.unsw.edu.au/current-students/academic-information/protocols-guidelines/> The UNSW Policy can be viewed here: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/attendance>

Essential Information

For essential student information relating to: attendance requirements; requests for extension; review of marks; occupational health and safety; examination procedures; special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure; student equity and disability; and other essential matters, see the SAM Policies and Guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

The University's expectations of students are set out in the Student Code of Conduct. In general terms, the overarching obligation of all students is to act in the best interests of the University community at all times. For specific guidelines and to understand which actions or behaviours constitute Academic Misconduct, Non-Academic Misconduct and Research Misconduct see the UNSW Student Conduct page (<https://student.unsw.edu.au/conduct>).

Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

As an Honours and Masters level course, Research Methods and Thesis Writing focuses on developing higher level research skills in order to help you work independently on demanding research tasks and to present your work formally. At the completion of this course you will be familiar with relevant research practices and will have produced a detailed research proposal and plan for your thesis or production.

Students are expected to:

- attend all seminars and workshops;
- come prepared each week (which sometimes means having completed tasks assigned during previous classes)
- contribute to group discussion and other forms of active participation;
- engage with the material presented in class;
- approach the research tasks and seminar discussions in a spirit of openness and intellectual generosity;
- prepare and complete all assessment tasks.

At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to

- work independently to develop a complex research project;
- analyse critically the structure, argumentation and quality of a thesis and/or practical project, and identify the methodological approaches employed;
- engage with peers' and colleagues' research critically and in the spirit of intellectual openness and generosity;
- present an outline of specific research questions developing out of their research, and identify research methods suitable for their project;
- develop a formal research proposal for their Honours thesis and/or project.

Teaching Strategies

The course will be taught through a two-hour seminar each week. Discipline-speakers may be invited to contribute in several of the weeks. Students will present one aspect of their own research (major Honours project) at a symposium at the end of semester.

My approach to teaching is informed by principles of interactivity, student agency, intellectual collectivism, and the sheer pleasure of scholarly knowledge and learning. The aim is to facilitate ways for students to access and foster a range of productive possibilities from the disciplinary bases of their study. The abilities obtained will be an ongoing resource in students' professional and personal lives, continuing beyond the immediate context of any one course or program.

Rationale for the inclusion of content and teaching approach

This course is based on the premise that Honours and Masters students require specific skills in order to conceive and carry out independent research, and to write a thesis that meets certain academic standards and protocols. My immediate aim is to equip students with those skills, to enhance students' ability to engage creatively with epistemological issues within their own disciplines, and to offer students the opportunity to learn from approaches taken up in disciplines other than their own. Any set readings will be distributed in class and digitally, via email.

Assessment

In order to pass this course, you must make a serious attempt at ALL assessment tasks. This is a SAM requirement.

Assessment task	Length	Weight	Due date
Thesis critique	1500 words	25%	Friday 30th March
Formal research proposal	3500 words	50%	Friday 27th April
Research presentation (AKA SAM Symposium)	5 – 10 minutes	25%	TBA (The symposium will take place during Exam Week)

Details:

1. Thesis critique:

Choose ONE recent (post–2008) article from a top-tier journal in your discipline.

Your task is to submit a critical evaluation of the article you have chosen. Your critique should consider the following:

- Topic – does the author justify their research topic and explain the relevance of the research project? Do they explain how the topic relates to broader issues and debates within their discipline?
- Literature review – does the author cover relevant debates in the field or discipline, and how sound is the critical evaluation of relevant literature? Does the author successfully locate their thesis topic and research question within ongoing debates in their field or discipline? What awareness of other relevant research is displayed? How wide is the range of literature covered in the review, and how accurate and relevant is the critique of this literature?
- Structure – does the article follow a logical structure? How does the structure relate to the research question and the analysis of relevant material? How well do the various sections relate to each other, and to the whole article? Is there an irrelevant section, or a section that is insufficiently developed?
- Argument – how original and valid is the central argument? What, in your estimation, does it contribute to the discipline? How effectively does the author articulate their contribution to the discipline? Are there any identifiable gaps or jumps in the argument?
- Quality of writing – is the writing clear and appropriate for its academic purpose? How skillfully does the author construct their argument? Does the writing display an engaging and original ‘voice’? Is there an identifiable narrative that runs through the thesis? Is the referencing proper and accurate? Does the thesis meet academic standards regarding appropriate acknowledgement of sources?

2. Research Proposal:

Your research proposal must cover the following (we will discuss the suggested lengths for each part during class):

- Tentative title: this should reflect the precise research question you intend to investigate or explore in your thesis.
- Rationale: what are you seeking to research, or what problems do you intend to address in your thesis? Why is the topic of interest to you, and why do you think this research is necessary? How does it relate to existing, on-going debates in your discipline/field?
 - *Creative Practice/Production students*: describe in detail the project you are going to undertake and how it relates to your research questions.
- Literature review: this will form the major part of the research proposal, and will establish both the broad academic context of your research topic and its academic rationale. It will provide a succinct and critical evaluation of relevant literature and its bearing on your topic, demonstrate your understanding of the area of your research topic, and locate gaps in the existing literature that justifies your topic.
- Methodology: what approach will you use to address your topic? If your research involves data, what methods will you use to collect and analyse that data? What conceptual, methodological or scholarly approach have you chosen to carry out your analysis or production?
- Tentative chapter outline: what are your chapter/section titles, and how do they relate to the topic and your research questions? Outline how they develop the argument of your thesis.
- Timeline: outline your timeline for conducting your research and writing and redrafting your chapters.
 - *Creative Practice/Production students*: provide details of your production timeline for the completion and exhibition of your Honours project, as well as the timeline for the writing and redrafting of your thesis. Please provide a list of technical requirements for your project and the resources you will need to show/perform the project.
- References: provide a list of references relevant to this assignment, and an indicative bibliography of other sources that you intend to use in your thesis.

3. Research Presentation:

Your research presentation will be 5 to 10 minutes in duration, and will provide a summary of your research proposal, covering the research topic and rationale, literature review, and methodology. It will be presented in the format of an academic conference paper, and members of the School and Faculty will be invited to watch.

The Symposium, of which your presentation will be a part, will take place over two days and your attendance on both days is mandatory: engaging with your colleagues work in this format is both a matter of collegiality and professionalism. The marking criteria for this assessment will be distributed in class.

All the assessments will be discussed in detail in class, where you will also be supplied with marking criteria and given time to ask questions. You will have the opportunity to present a short thesis critique

to your colleagues and there will be time for individual consultations regarding the Research Proposal. See course schedule (below) for details.

Submission of Assessment Tasks

- Students must put their names and student numbers on every page of their assignments.
- Students are expected to make a serious attempt at all assessable tasks in order to be able to pass the course.
- Generally, in SAM hard-copy submissions are not required. Assessments must be submitted electronically via either Turnitin or a Moodle Assignment. For courses where this is not possible, alternative submission details will be stated on your course's Moodle site.
- 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.

Late Assessment Penalties

- An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).
- The late penalty is the loss of 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late. Lateness will include weekends and public holidays. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.
- Work submitted between ten (10) and nineteen (19) working days after the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.
- Work submitted twenty (20) working days after the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course, a student will automatically fail the course.

Special Consideration Applications

You can apply for special consideration when illness or other circumstances interfere with your assessment performance. Sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond your control may:

- Prevent you from completing a course requirement,
- Keep you from attending an assessable activity,
- Stop you submitting assessable work for a course,
- Significantly affect your performance in assessable work, be it a formal end-of-semester

examination, a class test, a laboratory test, a seminar presentation or any other form of assessment.

Students may seek an extension of time to complete an assessed task by applying for special consideration. For further details in relation to Special Consideration including 'When to Apply', 'How to Apply' and 'Supporting Documentation', please refer to the Special Consideration website: <https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>.

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 information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student's own analysis to bring the material together.
- **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.

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.

For more detailed discussions of both plagiarism and correct practices see <https://student.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism>.

Students should complete the UNSW Library ELISE Tutorial for academic writing, research and the responsible use of information. <http://subjectguides.library.unsw.edu.au/elise>

1. Course schedule

Date	Time	Location	Seminar/Workshop content
Week 1 27 February	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Introduction to the course: expectations, organization, and assessments. Workshop: What are you interested in researching, and why?
Week 2 6 th March	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Seminar: The Student-Supervisor Relationship Workshop: What is your research question?
Week 3 13 March	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Seminar: Reading and criticism. Workshop: How do you construct a literature review, and why should you do so?
Week 4 20 March	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Seminar: Academic writing. Workshop: How do you write for an academic audience, and how do you present your research?
Week 5 27 March	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Student presentations: thesis critiques. Thesis Critique due this Friday, 30 March
			<i>Mid Semester Break</i>
Week 6 10 April	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Seminar: Research methodologies. Workshop: what is a research methodology, and why do you need one?
Week 7 17 April	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Seminar: Practice-based research methodologies
Week 8 24 April	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Student presentations: research proposals. Research Proposal due this Friday 27 April

Week 9 1 May	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Seminar: Academic presentation. Workshop: speaking to an audience.
Week 10 8 May	Tutorial 1: 9am-11am Tutorial 2: 12pm – 2pm	Webster 332	Seminar: Broaching the future. Workshop: what are the key characteristics of a good thesis?
TBA	TBA	TBA	Research Presentations: AKA: SAM Honours Symposium

2. Course evaluation and development

Periodically student evaluative feedback on courses is gathered, using among other means, UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI). Your feedback is extremely important and is taken seriously, and continual improvements are made to the course based in part on such feedback. You will also have the opportunity to provide informal feedback during the class.