

ARTS4268

Methodologies in the Social Sciences: Questions and
Quandaries

Term 1, 2022



Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
A/Prof Geoffrey Brahm Levey	g.levey@unsw.edu.au	by email contact	MB 137	93851376

School Contact Information

School of Social Sciences

Room 159

Morven Brown C20

email: soss@unsw.edu.au

phone: 02 9385 1807

Acknowledgement of Country

UNSW Arts, Design and Architecture Kensington and Paddington campuses are built on Aboriginal Lands. We pay our respects to the Bidjigal and Gadigal peoples who are the Custodians of these lands. We acknowledge the 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.



Image courtesy of the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor Indigenous [UNSW's Indigenous strategy](#)

Course Details

Units of Credit 6

Summary of the Course

Note: This is a 12 UOC course. You will enrol in 6 UOC in each of two successive terms with a result reported by a single grade at the end of the second 6 UOC course.

This is a core course for Honours candidates in the School of Social Sciences and the main focus will be the question of methodology. Each seminar will look at different approaches to research across the sub-disciplines and will explore what we might call the 'so what' of a particular methodology's analytical leverage. Why do the Social Sciences break into myriad, competing methodologies? Can we describe our methodologies as scientific, and if not, then how do we best secure a notion of accuracy and usefulness? How does our understanding of evidence actually change our research methods as well as the outcomes and conclusions that we might reach?

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Apply critical thinking and analytic skills
2. Effectively deploy a particular theory or methodological approach
3. Design and sustain an argument, or point of view
4. Identify and apply the ethical requirements and responsibilities of researchers

Teaching Strategies

- Seminars will be conducted by the coordinator with input from other specialist teaching staff to guide students through the process of conducting research at honours level, working with a supervisor, and planning and executing an independent research project.
- Library resources for honours students will be explained by the outreach librarian to assist students with researching their thesis topic.
- Strategies for choosing a research topic and narrowing down the scope to a manageable project will be workshopped with the assistance of supervisors in the School and recent honours graduates.

Important information: This course runs over Terms 1 and 2, meeting weekly during term time. **Classes begin in week 1 in Term 1.** Please be on time. The details of T1 and T2 course topics and readings will be updated on Moodle as the course proceeds.

As an Honours student, there is an expectation that you will take responsibility for your learning. On a basic level, this means preparing for class by doing the readings, and being actively engaged during class. More critically, it also means providing your input into how the seminars are organized and suggesting any topics you would like to cover as the classes proceed.

Reading Groups: Part of the coursework is meeting regularly with reading groups. In our week 1, you will organize yourselves into groups of between 4-6 students. A suggested format is that each week a student will select a reading and circulate it prior to meeting. During the meeting, the group will then discuss the reading. Again, you should take responsibility for your learning, and while this is the suggested format, you should feel free as a group to modify the session to suit you. Perhaps you want to circulate drafts for peer feedback? Or brainstorm ideas? Or each read a book that you report back on each week? The important thing is to meet regularly and use the time productively. While you can meet at a mutually agreed time, we suggest before or after the seminar will ensure regular participation.

Course design and learning activities

I see UNSW student learners as participants in the production of knowledge and I pursue the implementation of a curriculum responsive to each student's individual needs. This course caters to all School of Social Sciences' Honours students, from disciplinary backgrounds in Criminology, Development Studies, International Relations, Politics, Sociology, Anthropology, and Social Research and Policy. I recognize that you will each have had different experiences of research-integrated learning so far in your academic careers because there are distinct disciplinary differences in how students are prepared for research at the undergraduate level. I see this as a strength rather than a problem to be overcome, and the course has been designed to leverage this disciplinary diversity so that each week we learn by exploring the tensions, similarities, continuities, and ruptures in our disciplinary experiences of the research that we do.

Topic schedule – Term 1 2022

Week	Topic	Date	Topic	Theme
1	1	16 Feb	The Research Endeavour	Overview of the course and introduction to topics and debates
2	2	23 Feb	Epistemology and Methodology	Readings & Analysis
3	2	2 Mar	Epistemology and Methodology	Workshop
4	3	9 Mar	Working with Theories	Readings & Analysis
5	3	16 Mar	Working with Theories	Workshop
6		23 Mar	Flexi week	No classes - Reading and preparation of Discussion paper
7	4	30 Mar	Working with Concepts	Readings & Analysis
8	4	6 April	Working with Concepts	Workshop
9	5	13 April	Working with the Self: Positionality	Readings & Analysis
10	5	20 April	Working with the Self: Positionality	Workshop

Assessment

Details of assessment tasks

All assessments should be:

- ♦ **submitted with your student number included in the file name;**
- ♦ **presented in 12 pt font;**
- ♦ **1.5 or double-spaced with minimum 2cm margins at left and right; and**
- ♦ **presented with consecutively numbered pages at the bottom left.**
- ♦ appropriately referenced in accordance with the *School of Social Sciences Referencing Guide*, with a reference list presented at the end of the paper.
- ♦ The word limit is exclusive of the bibliography but inclusive of everything else.

Assessment task	Weight	Due Date	Course Learning Outcomes Assessed
1. Discussion Paper	20%	Due T1 Friday 1 April (12 pm)	1, 3, 4
2. Discussion Paper	20%	Due T1 Friday 6 May (12 pm)	1, 3, 4
3. Research Paper	60%	Due T2, date TBA	1, 2, 3, 4

Assessment 1: Discussion Paper

Start date: TBA

Assessment length: 1000 words

Due date: Due T1, date TBA

Students submit one 1000 word individual discussion paper on a single specified course theme for assessment. Students receive written feedback and a numerical grade within two weeks of submission.

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

Additional details

The first assignment for this course is the **discussion paper**. This is a 1000 word response to the question, '*What's scientific about research in the Social Sciences?*' The paper should develop, through critical engagement with a range of scholarly sources, an argument in relation to the question.

The question is inviting you to reflect on what is considered valid knowledge/s in your field/disciplines, and to present arguments for the robustness and validity of these knowledge/s. You may like to think about how you would defend the way that knowledge is produced in your discipline to a group of biophysical scientists or other social scientists who have a different epistemological approach.

You should conduct independent research to support your argument and the paper must be appropriately referenced in accordance with the *School of Social Sciences Referencing Guide* linked below, with a reference list presented at the end of the paper. The word limit is exclusive of the bibliography but inclusive of everything else. You will lose 5% per 100 words over the 1000 word limit. The standards against which this assessment will be evaluated are in the rubric, available on Moodle.

You must submit your discussion paper to TurnItIn in Moodle by the due date and time in T1 (which will be advised in the course material). I will not accept submissions by email.

The Faculty late penalty is 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part day that the work is late. Lateness includes weekends and public holidays.

The discussion paper will be marked /100 and will constitute 20% of your grade for this course.

Assessment 2: Discussion Paper

Assessment length: 1000 words

Due date: Due T1, date TBA

Students submit one 1000 word individual discussion paper on a single specified course theme for assessment. Students receive written feedback and a numerical grade within two weeks of submission.

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

Additional details

The second discussion paper is a 1000 word essay on a concept relevant to your thesis. Similar to the essays read for the topic week 'Working with Concepts', you will develop an argument in relation to why your chosen term can be considered a concept, explore the contested nature of that concept, and explain its productiveness in your area of study.

You should conduct independent research to support your rejoinder and the paper must be appropriately referenced in accordance with the *School of Social Sciences Referencing Guide* linked below, with a reference list presented at the end of the paper. The word limit is exclusive of the bibliography but inclusive of everything else. You will lose 5% per 100 words over the 1000 word limit. The standards against which this assessment will be evaluated are in the rubric, available on Moodle.

You must submit your discussion paper 2 to TurnItIn in Moodle by the due date and time in T1 (which will be advised in the course material). I will not accept submissions by email.

The Faculty late penalty is 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part day that the work is late. Lateness includes weekends and public holidays.

The discussion paper will be marked /100 and will constitute 20% of your grade for this course.

Assessment 3: Research Paper

Assessment length: 4000 words

Due date: Due T2, date TBA

4000 word individual research paper. Students receive written feedback and a numerical grade within two weeks of submission. This is the final assessment for this course.

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

Additional details

The third and final assessment task for this course is the **research paper and will be due in Term 2**. In this paper, you must address the following three questions, which are the same three topics that the guest presenters have addressed each week throughout the semester:

1. What disciplinary and scholarly traditions / perspectives / sensibilities do you bring to the research that you will do this year?
2. How do these disciplinary and scholarly traditions / perspectives / sensibilities affect the research that you are doing?
3. How do these lead to particular ways of understanding and researching the social world? What are the strengths and limitations of your disciplinary / scholarly perspective?

You should explore these questions and reflect upon them before writing up a thoughtful and personal yet scholarly paper. Each section should develop an argument or set of arguments and the paper as a whole should be both coherent and cohesive. We will spend time in class discussing how to approach this assessment, and further resources are available on Moodle.

You should conduct independent research to support the arguments you develop in your research paper and the paper must be appropriately referenced in accordance with the *School of Social Sciences Referencing Guide* linked below, with a reference list presented at the end of the paper. The word limit is exclusive of the bibliography but inclusive of everything else. You will lose 5% per 100 words over the 4000 word limit. The standards against which this assessment will be evaluated are in the rubric, available on Moodle.

The Faculty late penalty is 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part day that the work is late. Lateness includes weekends and public holidays.

The discussion paper will be marked /100 and will constitute 60% of your grade for this course.

All assessments should be referenced in accordance with the *School of Social Sciences Referencing Guide*, available on Moodle.

ASSESSMENT TASK	FEEDBACK MECHANISM	FEEDBACK DATE
Discussion paper 1	Numerical grade, general feedback and specific written comments delivered through Moodle.	Within ten working days of submission
Discussion paper 2	Numerical grade, general feedback and specific written comments delivered through Moodle.	Within ten working days of submission
Research paper	Numerical grade, general feedback and specific written comments delivered through Moodle.	Within fifteen working days of submission

Attendance Requirements

Students are expected to attend all the seminars. This is your Honours year, a very special year. You can only get out of it what you put into it.

Resources

Prescribed Resources

Weekly instructions and resources will be available on Moodle.

Course Evaluation and Development

As an Honours seminar that can only sample some of the issues involved in conducting research, this course and its development will benefit from your constructive feedback. Student evaluative feedback is gathered periodically using, among other means, UNSW's Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement process. Informal feedback and class-generated feedback are also important. Student feedback is taken seriously, and improvements will be made to the course based in part on such feedback. Significant changes to the course will be communicated to subsequent cohorts of students taking the course.

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 includes copying materials, ideas or concepts from a book, article, report or other written document, presentation, composition, artwork, design, drawing, circuitry, computer program or software, website, internet, other electronic resource, or another person's assignment without appropriate acknowledgement.

Inappropriate paraphrasing: Changing a few words and phrases while mostly retaining the original information, structure and/or progression of ideas of the original 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 for the purpose of them plagiarising, 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

The [UNSW Academic Skills support](#) offers resources and individual consultations. Students are also reminded that careful time management is an important part of study. 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 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

Academic Information

Due to evolving advice by NSW Health, students must check for updated information regarding online learning for all Arts, Design and Architecture courses this term (via Moodle or course information provided.)

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.unsw.edu.au/arts-design-architecture/student-life/resources-support/protocols-guidelines>

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