



School of Social Sciences and International Studies

**SOCW 3007  
Research Methods 2**

**Semester 2, 2011**

<b>Location</b>			
<b>FACULTY</b>	Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences		
<b>SCHOOL or DEPARTMENT</b>	School of Social Sciences and International Studies		
<b>COURSE CODE</b>	SOCW3007		
<b>COURSE NAME</b>	Research Methods 2		
<b>SESSION</b>	2	<b>YEAR</b>	2011

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<b>Staff contact details</b>	
<b>Course Convener</b>	
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<b>Course details</b>	
<b>Credit Points</b>	6 units of credit
<b>Summary of the Course</b>	Research Methods 2 is a third year course in the BSW program at the UNSW and it builds on SOCW2005 (Research for Social Work). Where SOCW2005 was primarily about reading research for social work and exploring the potential of social work research, this course is more about preparing students to <i>do</i> research for social work. This course provides students with opportunities to extend their understanding of different research methodologies, to obtain skills and knowledge related to various tasks in the process of research, and to understand ethical and

	political issues related to social work research. These skills and knowledge will facilitate students' learning in other courses including Social Policy 2 and will further benefit students in their future professional practice.	
<b>Aims of the Course</b>	1.	Equip students with a critical understanding of research methods for social work
	2.	Provide students with opportunities to acquire skills and knowledge to conduct research in practice
<b>Student Learning Outcomes</b>	1.	Apply forms of research methods appropriate to the research questions
	2.	Demonstrate abilities to perform tasks required at various stages of research
	3.	Critically evaluate the political and ethical issues involved in social work research
	4.	Develop and present a research proposal which is feasible and manageable
<b>Graduate Attributes</b>	1.	The capacity for analytical and critical thinking and for creative problem-solving
	2.	Information literacy the skills to appropriately locate, evaluate and use relevant information
	3.	The skills required for collaborative and multidisciplinary work
	4.	A respect for ethical practice and social responsibility

#### **Rationale for the inclusion of content and teaching approach**

This course enables students to enhance their understanding of research methods. From reading a research report to evaluating the effectiveness of a social intervention program, social work is actively concerned with research. In human service organisations, greater emphasis has been placed on evidence-based practice. Under this circumstance, social workers not only need to be able to critically review research, they also need to be able to conduct research in practice.

#### **Teaching strategies**

The course comprises lecture and tutorial sequences. Two-hour weekly lectures are held on Mondays 2-4pm in Central Lecture Theatre 1. One-hour tutorials are held later on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday of that week in the Morven Brown LG47 or LG49 (computer labs). This course values class discussion as a critical learning method and students are expected to actively participate during the lectures and tutorials. Each student is expected to contribute to the learning of fellow students by bringing their own experiences, by relating them to social work values and knowledge, and by thinking critically.

#### **Lectures**

Lectures involve power-point presentations addressing the course text, other supplementary readings, and examples of social work research. In order to maximize the benefit of lectures, students are encouraged to ask questions and participate in group discussions during lectures.

#### **Tutorials**

Tutorials involve small and large group discussions and skill-building activities. Group discussions and skill-building exercises are designed to enhance understanding of class

materials and to practice skills covered in lectures and reading assignments. The group project assignment is also discussed during the tutorial sessions. It should be noted that participation is not the same as attendance. The crucial element to good tutorials is having all members of the class read the readings and attended the lectures. If you are late for more than 15 minutes, your attendance will not be counted.

### Blackboard

This course will use the Blackboard to assist teaching and learning activities:

<http://lms-blackboard.telt.unsw.edu.au/webapps/portal/frameset.jsp>

If you are not familiar with the Blackboard, please refer the Blackboard user manual on the above website.

Assessment					
Assessment task	Length	Weight	Learning outcomes assessed	Graduate attributes assessed	Due date
Research proposal					
- Annotated bibliography	800	20%	1, 2, 3, 4	1, 2, 3, 4	25.08.11
- Group proposal	N/A	30%			04.10.11
- Essay	2,200	50%			20.10.11

### Submission of Assessment Tasks

In order to pass the course students **must complete and submit each piece of assessment**, and achieve an overall mark of not less than 50% of the total marks. You must make a reasonable attempt at all assessment tasks in order to get a final grade in this course. Please note that marks can be rescaled to allocate an appropriate grade.

Assignments are to be submitted to the School Office, located on the Ground Floor of the Morven Brown Building, usually by being placed in the appropriate box. These will be stamped by the School Office with the receipt date in case of late submission only. Students are also required to submit an electronic copy of the assignment on the Blackboard.

**BOTH HARD COPY AND ELECTRONIC COPY OF YOUR ASSIGNMENT MUST BE SUBMITTED BY 4PM ON THE DUE DATE TO AVOID A LATE PENALTY.**

It is the student's responsibility to keep a copy of their work in case of loss of an assignment. All assignments must be submitted with an Assignment Declaration form signed by the student (required for all assignments) and an Assignment Cover Sheet (if blind marking is done). These are available from outside the School Office, above the assignment submission boxes. Students must read the rules on Student Academic Misconduct relevant to assignment submission (further information given below).

Normally assignments are returned in tutorials. For assignments with due dates from Week 10 onwards please fill out one of the envelopes provided with your address if you want your assignment returned and attach it to your assignment before placing in the box.

Please indicate the number of words at the end of the main text. When the number of words is over the word limit, 5% of the perfect mark will be deducted for every 10% over the word limit. If you don't specify the number of words, it will be assumed that the number of words is 10% over the limit. Please see "Academic Skills for Bachelor of Social Work 2010" for

advice on writing. Detailed marking criteria for assignments will be available later.

### **Research proposal (100%)**

The research proposal is designed to allow students to practice essential skills of research. Students are expected to plan a research project that involves collecting data from human subjects. This assignment consists of three components:

1. Individual annotated bibliography (20% )
2. Group proposal (30% )
3. Individual essay proposal (50% honours students refer to SOCW3005 course outline)

Students are expected to choose a topic as a group that fits their common interests. Students are expected to work together as a group and are encouraged to get consultations from the teaching staff for any difficulties through the process. Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods are all acceptable and the choice of any method will not affect students' grades as long as the chosen method is adequate to answer their research questions. It is required for students to understand the protection of human subjects in research. Skills and knowledge learned from this assignment will be beneficial for students to prepare their own research project in the settings of professional social work practice. Further details of assignment and marking criteria will be distributed later.

### **Research essay proposal (50%) (2200 words)**

The research proposal assignment is designed to allow students to practice essential skills to design their own research project. Quantitative, qualitative, or mixed methods are all acceptable and the choice of any method will not affect students' grades as long as the chosen method is adequate to answer their research questions. However, it is important for students to be able to critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of the chosen method. It is required for students to understand the protection of human subjects in research. Skills and knowledge learned from this assignment will be beneficial for students to prepare their own research project and can be used in the settings of professional social work practice. Please see chapter 3 of the textbook for advice on writing a research proposal. Further details of assignment and marking criteria will be distributed later.

### **Academic honesty and plagiarism**

Students are reminded of their Rights and Responsibilities in respect of plagiarism, as set out in the University Undergraduate and Postgraduate Handbooks, and are encouraged to seek advice from academic staff whenever necessary to ensure they avoid plagiarism in all its forms. The library runs the ELISE tutorial on-line which familiarizes students academic writing, research and using information responsibly. It can be located at:

<http://elise.library.unsw.edu.au/home/welcome.html>

The Learning Centre can provide further information found via

[www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism](http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism)

### **Course schedule**

<b>Week</b>		<b>Lecture content</b>	<b>Tutorial content</b>	<b>Readings*</b>
1	18.07.11	Overview & Ethics	No tutorial	1, 5

2	25.07.11	Developing a research question & hypothesis	Introduction; Group formation	3
3	01.08.11	Planning a research; Literature review	Developing a research question; Concept mapping	2, 4, 7
4	08.08.11	Conceptualisation & operationalisation; Developing questionnaires;	Literature review <i>Sub: A tentative RQ</i>	6, 9, 10
5	15.08.11	Quantitative data analysis 1	Conceptualisation & operationalisation	
6	22.08.11	Quantitative data analysis 2	Quantitative analysis 1 <i>Sub: Individual annotated bibliography</i>	14, 15
7	29.08.11	Quantitative data analysis 3	Quantitative analysis 2	14, 15
	05.09.11	No class/RECESS	No tutorial	
8	12.09.11	Qualitative research	Quantitative analysis 3	16
9	19.09.11	Qualitative research	Qualitative research <i>Sub: Design &amp; Sample (half page for comment)</i>	18
10	26.09.11	Qualitative data analysis	Qualitative analysis	20, 21
11	03.10.11	<b>No lecture or Tutorials</b>	No Tutorials 04.10.11 <i>Sub: Group research proposal (PPT slides)</i>	22, 23
12	10.10.11	Qualitative data analysis 2 Writing up results	RP presentations 1	26, 27
13	17.10.11	No lecture	RP presentations 2 20.10.11 <i>Sub: Individual essay proposal</i>	

\* Reading topics are from Bryman (2008). Additional reading materials will be posted on the Blackboard.

Expected resources for students		
Textbook	Additional readings	Recommended websites
Bryman, A. (2008). <i>Social research methods</i> (3rd ed.). Oxford, England: Oxford University.	Further information will be posted on the Blackboard	<i>UNSW Library:</i> <a href="http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html">http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html</a> Further information will be posted on the Blackboard.

Course evaluation and development
As a formal course evaluation, students have evaluated the course at the end of each semester and the information is used to improve the quality of the course. The information gathered from the process will be used to improve the second half of the course. Feedbacks from

students through verbal or other forms of communications (e.g., email) will be also welcomed in this course.

### **Attendance and Conduct**

Students are expected to attend tutorials/seminars. A satisfactory attendance record of at least 80% is expected. Tutors will keep attendance records for their classes. Students are expected to be punctual; lateness of more than 15 minutes will be considered absence, and students must attend the whole duration of the tutorial to be considered present.

For the UNSW student code of conduct please read:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/academiclife/assessment/StudentConductPolicy.html>

### **Extensions**

All assignments must be submitted by the due date unless an extension of time has been granted. The penalty for late submission without permission is 3% (of the perfect mark, that is /100) per day late, including weekends. This means if an assignment is allocated a mark of 70% and is 1 day late the mark given will be 67%. Late work will not be accepted once the marked assignments have been returned or after two weeks past the due date, whichever is earliest, whether an extension has been granted or not.

### **Special consideration and Review of results**

The purpose of Special Consideration is to enable the University to assess and address the impact on students of short term events, beyond the control of the student, that affect performance in a specific assessment task or tasks. Details of the university policy and procedures on Special Consideration can be found at:

<http://www.gs.unsw.edu.au/policy/documents/specialconsiderationpolicy.pdf>

The University's policy on Special Consideration – Illness and Misadventure is as follows: The **purpose** of Special Consideration is to enable the University to assess and address the impact on students of short term events, beyond the control of the student, that affect performance in a specific assessment task or tasks. Students with a disability, and those with ongoing medical conditions, who require consideration of their circumstances and support, are advised to register with the Equity and Diversity Unit. Registration is advisable but not obligatory.

Where a student believes the mark awarded for an assignment or any assessable task does not adequately reflect the quality of the assignment, the student may request a review of the mark.

Please read the University policy on Review of Results for additional information:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/academiclife/assessment/ReviewofResults.pdf>

### **Occupational health and safety**

UNSW has an Occupational Health and Safety Policy that staff and students must COMPLY WITH. Please refer for details to:

<https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/OccupationalHealth.html>

### Student support services

The Learning Centre is available for individual consultation and workshops on academic skills – see: <http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/>

Student equity and diversity issues are addressed via the Student Equity officers (Disability) in the Student Equity and Diversity Unit (93854734)

Further information for students with disabilities is available at:

[www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au/disabil.html](http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au/disabil.html)

### Additional resources for students

#### Highly recommended resources

Alston, M. & Bowles, W. (2003). *Research for social workers: An introduction* (2nd ed.). St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

Babbie, E. (2007). *The practice of social research* (11th ed.). Belmont: Wadsworth.

Neuman, W.L. (2003). *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches* (6th ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Rubin, A., & Babbie, E. R. (2008). *Research methods for social work* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education.

Holosko, M. J. (2006). *Primer for critiquing social research: A student guide*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Higher Education.

#### Additional resources

The following books and journal articles are recommended resources. It is noted when items are kept on reserve. Students are encouraged to access other material through academic journals (all social work journals publish articles on research and methodology) and the internet. Useful journals include:

*Social Work Research*

*Qualitative Inquiry*

*British Journal of Social Work*

*Journal of Social Service Research*

*Research on Social Work Practice*

*Social Work*

*Journal of Social Work Education*

*Child and Family Social Work*

#### Research ethics

Antle, B. J. & Regehr, C. (2003). Beyond individual rights and freedoms: metaethics in social work research. *Social Work*, 48, 135-144.

Butler, I. (2002). A code of ethics for social work and social care research, *British Journal of Social Work*. 3, 239-248.

Ramcharan, P. & Cutcliffe, J. R. (2001). Judging the ethics of qualitative research: considering the 'ethics as process' model. *Health & Social Care in the Community* 9, 351-66.

#### Developments in social work research

Crisp, B. R. (2000). A history of Australian social work practice research. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 10, 170-194.

- Gibbs, A. (2001). The changing nature and context of social work research. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31, 687-704.
- Powell, J. (2002). The changing conditions of social work research. *British Journal of Social Work*, 32, 17-33.

### **Evidence-based practice & reflective research**

- Crisp, B. (2004). Evidence-based practice and the borders of data in the global information era. *Journal of Social Work Education*, 40, 73-86.
- Fook, J. (Ed.) (1996). *The reflective researcher: Social workers' theories of practice research*. St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.
- Gibbs, L. & Gambrill, E. (2002). Evidence-based practice: counterarguments to objections. *Research on Social Work Practice*, 12, 452-476.
- McDonald, C. (2003). Forward via the past? Evidence-based practice as strategy in social work. *The Drawing Board: An Australian Review of Public Affairs*, 3, 123-142.
- Plath, D. (2006). Evidence-based practice: current issues and future directions. *Australian Social Work*, 59, 56-72.
- Rosen, A. (2003). Evidence-based social work practice: challenges and promise. *Social Work Research*, 27, 197-208.
- Webb, S. A. (2001). Some considerations on the validity of evidence-based practice in social work. *British Journal of Social Work*, 31, 57-79.

### **Program evaluation**

- DePoy, E. & Gilson, S. F. (2003). *Evaluation practice: Thinking and action for social work practice*. Pacific Grove: Thompson/Brooks Cole.
- Everitt, A. & Hardiker, P. (1996). *Evaluating for good practice*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Everitt, A., Hardiker, P., Littlewood, J. & Mullender, A. (1992). *Applied research for better practice*. Basingstoke: Macmillan.
- Royse, D., Thyer, B. A., Padgett, D. K., & Logan, T. K. (2005). *Program evaluation: An introduction* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Wadsworth, Y. (1997). *Everyday evaluation on the run* (2nd ed.). St Leonards: Allen & Unwin.

### **Participation in research & action research**

- Healy, K. (2001). Participatory action research and social work: a critical appraisal. *International Social Work*, 44, 93-105.
- Kanuha, V. K. (2000). 'Being' native versus 'going native': conducting social work research as an insider. *Social Work*, 45, 439-447.
- Munford, R. & Sanders, J. (2003). *Making a difference in families: Research that creates change*. Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin.
- Reason, P. (1994). Three approaches to participative inquiry. In N. K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Thomas, N. & O'Kane, C. (2000). Discovering what children think: connections between research and practice. *British Journal of Social Work*, 30, 819-835.

### **Emancipatory research**

- Barnes, C. (1996). Disability and the myth of the independent researcher. *Disability and Society*, 11, 107-110.
- Beresford, P. & Evans, C. (1999). Research note: research and empowerment. *British Journal of Social Work*, 29, 671-677.

Walmsley, J. (2001). Normalisation, emancipatory research and inclusive research in learning disability. *Disability and Society*, 16, 187-205.

**General social work research texts (quantitative & qualitative)**

Corby, B. (2006). *Applying research in social work practice*. Maidenhead: Open University.

Grinnell, R. M. (Ed.) (1988). *Social work research and evaluation*. Itasca: FE Peacock.

Marlow, C. R. (2005). *Research methods for generalist social work*. Belmont: Brooks/Cole.

Neuman, W. L. & Kreuger, L. W. (2003). *Social work research methods: Qualitative and quantitative applications*. Boston: Pearson Education.

Royse, D. (2004). *Research methods in social work* (4th ed.). Pacific Grove: Brooks/Cole.

Sarantakos, S. (2005). *Social research* (3rd ed.). London: Macmillan.

Walter, M. (Ed.) (2006). *Social research methods: an Australian perspective*. South Melbourne: Oxford.