



ARTS3875

Decolonising Research Methods

Term One // 2021

Course Overview

Staff Contact Details

Convenors

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Timothy Heffernan	t.heffernan@unsw.edu.au	By appointment on zoom	Morven Brown Building	

School Contact Information

School of Social Sciences

Room 159

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Course Details

Credit Points 6

Summary of the Course

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 term 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%	12/03/2021 11:00 PM	1, 2, 6
Group Presentaton	20%	Seminars 5, 7, 9 & 10	2, 3, 4, 5
Final Essay	60%	04/05/2021 11:00 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 essay which interacts with TWO key texts:

1. The short book *Whitefella Culture* (Hagan 1991)
2. The Introductory chapter to Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies*

The essay should be reflexive in nature. Students are encouraged to 1) read each text, 2) reflect on the main themes discussed and 3) connect these themes to their understanding of decolonising research practices. For instance, in the body of your essay, you may wish to discuss any number 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 research student? etc).

Students should engage with each text by selecting **quotes** or **paraphrasing** points to illustrate their ideas (please do this in moderation, however. There is no need to quote excessively). Students should frame their essay around **epistemology**, **ontology** and **axiology** (which we will cover in class). Small 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: Seminar Five onwards

Length: 40 Minute Group 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, so please be sure to attend the first seminar. Students will be asked to facilitate a discussion on the week's readings, raise broader critical questions for the class to discuss, and to facilitate activities with classmates. Part of this assessment is similar to a "presentation" as you will be presenting your ideas to the class based on the set readings. Part of this assessment is also similar to a "facilitation" as you will be facilitating and guiding discussion and 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? This part of the assessment task will be commenced in class in **Week Four** when we discuss "ways of knowing."

For the **creative methodology reflection** exercise, you are to engage with the chapter '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. This part of the assessment task will be commenced in class in **Week Seven** when we discuss creative methods.

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

Attendance Requirements

Please note that seminar recordings are not available for this course. Students are strongly encouraged to attend **all classes** and contact the course convenor to make alternative arrangements for classes missed. This is particularly important as assessment tasks will be commenced in class (and finalised in your own time after class). If you miss a seminar, you will be required to submit to a 200 word reflection for each prescribed reading in any missed week.

Course Schedule

[View class timetable](#)

Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 15 February - 19 February	Topic	Setting the scene for decolonising research
	Homework	Please finalise your 'learning statement' and upload it to Moodle by 5pm, Fri 19 Feb.
Week 2: 22 February - 26 February	Topic	Social research as "intervention"
Week 3: 1 March - 5 March	Topic	Ethnography and ethnographic praxis
Week 4: 8 March - 12 March	Topic	Ways of knowing: Indigenous and western knowledge constructs
Week 5: 15 March - 19 March	Topic	Ethics: How do we do good, honest and respectful research?
Week 6: 22 March - 26 March	Topic	No seminar this week - Flexibility week
Week 7: 29 March - 2 April	Topic	Creativity and creative methods
Week 8: 5 April - 9 April	Topic	Reflexivity and critical self-awareness
Week 9: 12 April - 16 April	Topic	Oral history and testimony
Week 10: 19 April - 23 April	Topic	Content and discourse analysis

Resources

Prescribed Resources

Three additional texts are required to complete assessment one and three. Please find these texts located in the Course 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>

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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Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the Bedegal people who are the traditional custodians of the lands on which UNSW Kensington campus is located.