



PICT712

Understanding Critical Thought and Research Design

S2 External 2018

Department of Security Studies and Criminology

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff

Unit Convenor

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Session 1

Unit Convenor

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Session 2

Credit points

4

Prerequisites

Admission to MRes

Corequisites

Co-badged status

Unit description

This unit is a graduate seminar that provides training for student proficiency in critical thinking and research design. The course content utilises inter-disciplinary approaches and methods for the social sciences. Students will practice advanced reading and writing skills, examine the logic of inquiry, investigate methodologies and theoretical approaches, and evaluate diverse sources. Students will then progress to applying their advanced research skills through critical thinking and problem-solving. They will examine what are concepts and measures, how to understand causation and correlation, as well as use and apply qualitative, quantitative and multi-methods research. Students will be assessed based on their application of skills to practice, both in formulating research design and presenting their research for broader consumption.

Important Academic Dates

Information about important academic dates including deadlines for withdrawing from units are available at <https://www.mq.edu.au/study/calendar-of-dates>

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit, you will be able to:

Evaluate the theoretical approaches that frame the field of Security Studies, including the relationship to their historical context.

Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the understanding and questioning of key concepts, issues and debates.

Understand both the assumptions that underpin key theories, and the methods used for research and investigation.

Model academic research skills, particularly the ability to select sources appropriately, to integrate knowledge from diverse sources, to critically evaluate significance and relevance, synthesise materials, and present findings logically, rationally and lucidly.

Demonstrate critical communication skills, including the ability to present sustained, persuasive and original verbal and written arguments cogently and coherently, and mediate in-class debate and discussion.

Engage consistently with the unit through proactive communication with peers and the convener, and demonstrate professional conduct in all class activities and in the submission of assessments.

General Assessment Information

Late Submission Penalty

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) a penalty for lateness will apply – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) no assignment will be accepted more than seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

Assessment Tasks

| Name | Weighting | Hurdle | Due |
|---------------------------------|-----------|--------|------------|
| Engagement | 20% | No | Ongoing |
| Homework Tasks | 40% | No | Ongoing |
| 3-min challenge | 20% | No | 30/08/2018 |
| Research Design | 20% | Yes | 11/11/2018 |

Engagement

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **20%**

Ongoing assessment.

Ongoing assessment. For internal students, attendance and engagement in a two-hour seminar each week (11/13 sessions) is expected.

For external and OUA students, the participation in a minimum of 11/13 online "Key Question" forums is required (approx. 250 words). Students must address all the questions within the word limit, no references are required. Students must also complete the online activity in the weekly "Activities" forum (approx. 250 words).

Engagement involves reflective thinking on the focus questions, demonstrating critical thinking and understanding of the required readings, demonstrated ability to address the focus questions with regards to all unit materials (readings, and pre-recorded lectures and seminars), and demonstrated ability to complete skill-based activities.

Online engagement in both content- and skill-based activities must be completed by the end of the week (for example, if the week begins on Monday 30 July, the week ends on the following Sunday 5 August). Participation will not be counted beyond the allocated timeframe. If you are unable to participate during a set time, and do not wish this to affect your engagement grade, such requests must be put through "Special Consideration."

Please refer to the marking rubric.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate the theoretical approaches that frame the field of Security Studies, including the relationship to their historical context.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the understanding and questioning of key concepts, issues and debates.
- Understand both the assumptions that underpin key theories, and the methods used for research and investigation.
- Model academic research skills, particularly the ability to select sources appropriately, to integrate knowledge from diverse sources, to critically evaluate significance and relevance, synthesise materials, and present findings logically, rationally and lucidly.
- Demonstrate critical communication skills, including the ability to present sustained, persuasive and original verbal and written arguments cogently and coherently, and mediate in-class debate and discussion.
- Engage consistently with the unit through proactive communication with peers and the convener, and demonstrate professional conduct in all class activities and in the submission of assessments.

Homework Tasks

Due: **Ongoing**

Weighting: **40%**

Ongoing assessment.

The weekly homework tasks must be completed by each weekly session (word count is a range: 250 minimum, 500 maximum). Students will also be asked to re-articulate what they learnt from the previous week and how this relates to their homework during the seminar to scaffold knowledge from week to week. The aims are twofold: demonstrating skill, as well as enabling students to do research on their projects. Therefore, each week's homework task must relate to their research questions. All sources and data used must be cited.

Homework tasks will be explained during the 5-7pm class (external students can live-stream the seminar, and guidance will be made available on iLearn) and must be submitted into Turnitin by the following Sunday, 5pm.

Please refer to the marking rubric.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate the theoretical approaches that frame the field of Security Studies, including the relationship to their historical context.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the understanding and questioning of key concepts, issues and debates.
- Understand both the assumptions that underpin key theories, and the methods used for research and investigation.
- Model academic research skills, particularly the ability to select sources appropriately, to integrate knowledge from diverse sources, to critically evaluate significance and relevance, synthesise materials, and present findings logically, rationally and lucidly.
- Engage consistently with the unit through proactive communication with peers and the convener, and demonstrate professional conduct in all class activities and in the submission of assessments.

3-min challenge

Due: **30/08/2018**

Weighting: **20%**

Due Sunday 30 September, 5pm [end of mid-session break].

A critical skill required of all graduates is the demonstrated ability to present one's own research. Students are therefore required to present their research design in 3 minutes in a unique and individual manner that conveys the argument and significance of their research to a non-specialist audience. Consider the presentation as a type of "pitch" for your research. That is, if you wanted an organization to give you funding to carry out your research how would you present it? Here is an example: <https://youtu.be/mGuVqs1BRww>.

Students are to record their presentations through the Echo ALP, and post it to the public presentations page via Padlet, by Sunday 30 September 2018, 5pm. Students are to record audio of themselves over the slide, not a presentation of themselves due to Echo ALP functionality.

Students will also be assessed on their presentation style. Students are asked to use a single static Powerpoint slide to be submitted via Turnitin by Sunday 30 September 2018, 5pm. The slide is to be presented from the beginning of the oration, and no animations, no electronic media, no audio and no props are permitted. We will only watch and mark the first three minutes.

Guidelines: <https://threeminutethesis.uq.edu.au/resources/competition-rules>

Please refer to marking rubric.

On successful completion you will be able to:

- Evaluate the theoretical approaches that frame the field of Security Studies, including the relationship to their historical context.
- Demonstrate critical communication skills, including the ability to present sustained, persuasive and original verbal and written arguments cogently and coherently, and mediate in-class debate and discussion.
- Engage consistently with the unit through proactive communication with peers and the convener, and demonstrate professional conduct in all class activities and in the submission of assessments.

Research Design

Due: **11/11/2018**

Weighting: **20%**

This is a hurdle assessment task (see [assessment policy](#) for more information on hurdle assessment tasks)

Due Week 13, Friday 8 June, 5pm. Hurdle assessment

2000-word research design. In consultation with the convenors, students are required to demonstrate and articulate:

1. The research question (what)
2. The research significance and objectives (why)
3. The methodology and approach (how)
4. Preliminary literature survey
5. Empirical data results demonstrating command of NVIVO/SPSS.

Guide: <http://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/researchdesigns>

Students can use their weekly homework to scaffold into their research design, however, they must take on board the feedback provided. Please refer to marking rubric.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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- Understand both the assumptions that underpin key theories, and the methods used for research and investigation.
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Delivery and Resources

UNIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- You should spend an average of 12 hours per week on this unit. This includes listening to lectures prior to seminar or tutorial, reading weekly required materials as detailed in iLearn, participating in iLearn discussion forums and preparing assessments.
- Internal students are expected to attend all seminar or tutorial sessions, and external students are expected to make significant contributions to on-line activities.
- In most cases students are required to attempt and submit all major assessment tasks in order to pass the unit.

REQUIRED READINGS

- The citations for all the required readings for this unit are available to enrolled students through the unit iLearn site, and at Macquarie University's library site. Electronic copies of required readings may be accessed through the library or will be made available by other means.

TECHNOLOGY USED AND REQUIRED

- Computer and internet access are essential for this unit. Basic computer skills and skills in word processing are also a requirement.
- This unit has an online presence. Login is via: <https://ilearn.mq.edu.au/>
- Students are required to have regular access to a computer and the internet. Mobile devices alone are not sufficient.
- Information about IT used at Macquarie University is available at

http://students.mq.edu.au/it_services/

SUBMITTING ASSESSMENT TASKS

- All text-based assessment tasks are to be submitted, marked and returned electronically. This will only happen through the unit iLearn site.
- Assessment tasks must be submitted as a MS word document by the due date.
- Most assessment tasks will be subject to a 'Turnitin' review as an automatic part of the submission process.
- The granting of extensions is subject to the university's Special Consideration Policy. Extensions will not be granted by unit conveners or tutors, but must be lodged through Special Consideration: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideration>

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, (a) **a penalty for lateness will apply** – two (2) marks out of 100 will be deducted per day for assignments submitted after the due date – and (b) **no assignment will be accepted seven (7) days (incl. weekends) after the original submission deadline**. No late submissions will be accepted for timed assessments – e.g. quizzes, online tests.

WORD LIMITS FOR ASSESSMENT TASKS

- Stated word limits include footnotes and footnoted references, but not bibliography, or title page.
- Word limits can generally deviate by 10% either over or under the stated figure.
- If the number of words exceeds the limit by more than 10%, then penalties will apply. These penalties are 5% of the awarded mark for every 100 words over the word limit. If a paper is 300 words over, for instance, it will lose $3 \times 5\% = 15\%$ of the total mark awarded for the assignment. This percentage is taken off the total mark, i.e. if a paper was graded at a credit (65%) and was 300 words over, it would be reduced by 15 marks to a pass (50%).
- The application of this penalty is at the discretion of the course convener.

REASSESSMENT OF ASSIGNMENTS DURING THE SEMESTER

- Macquarie University operates a Grade Appeal Policy in cases where students feel their work was graded inappropriately: <http://www.mq.edu.au/policy/docs/gradeappeal/policy.html>
- In accordance with the Grade Appeal Policy, individual works are not subject to regrading.

STAFF AVAILABILITY

- Department staff will endeavour to answer student enquiries in a timely manner. However, emails or iLearn messages will not usually be answered over the weekend or public holiday period.
- Students are encouraged to read the Unit Guide and look at instructions posted on the iLearn site before sending email requests to staff.

Unit Schedule

| Week | Topic | Homework | Skill/LAB |
|------|---|--|---|
| 1 | Introduction: Critical thought, research design, research ethics | What is a research question you would like to answer? Why? | Introducing software |
| | Critical Thought | | |
| 2 | Inductive vs deductive 1: When to choose qualitative or quantitative | Inferences | NVIVO 1: Basic importing and coding |
| 3 | Inductive vs deductive 2: Laws, theories and hypotheses | NVIVO Frequencies and queries | NVIVO 2: NCapture and importing from social media; word frequencies; text queries |
| 4 | Inductive vs deductive 3: Concepts, measures and indicators | NVIVO Node matrices | NVIVO 3: Source classifications and matrix coding |
| | Research Design | | |
| 5 | Ethnography and observation approaches (Julian Droogan and Lise Waldek) | Mini-observation | NVIVO 4: Mindmaps, hierarchies, Comparison diagrams |
| 6 | Case study approaches (Sheryn Lee) | NVIVO Case studies | NVIVO 5: Datasets and Auto-coding |
| 7 | Historical approaches (Brian Cuddy) | NA | NVIVO6: Using NVIVO in research (Shane Peattie) |
| 8 | Research design 1 | STATS: Data entry and descriptive statistics | STATS 1: Importing and data entry |
| 9 | Research design 2 | STATS: Frequencies | STATS 2: Frequencies |
| 10 | Research design 3 | STATS: Contingency tables | STATS 3: Contingency tables and graphs |

| | | | |
|----|---|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 11 | Interpreting qualitative and quantitative sources 1 | NA | STATS 4: Correlations and regression |
| 12 | Interpreting qualitative and quantitative sources 2 | STATS: Correlations and regression | STATS 5: Correlations and regression |
| | Skill to Practice | | |
| 13 | Interpreting qualitative and quantitative sources 3 | NA | STATS 6: Using STATS in research |

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central). Students should be aware of the following policies in particular with regard to Learning and Teaching:

- [Academic Appeals Policy](#)
- [Academic Integrity Policy](#)
- [Academic Progression Policy](#)
- [Assessment Policy](#)
- [Fitness to Practice Procedure](#)
- [Grade Appeal Policy](#)
- [Complaint Management Procedure for Students and Members of the Public](#)
- [Special Consideration Policy](#) (**Note: The Special Consideration Policy is effective from 4 December 2017 and replaces the Disruption to Studies Policy.**)

Undergraduate students seeking more policy resources can visit the [Student Policy Gateway \(https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway\)](https://students.mq.edu.au/support/study/student-policy-gateway). It is your one-stop-shop for the key policies you need to know about throughout your undergraduate student journey.

If you would like to see all the policies relevant to Learning and Teaching visit [Policy Central \(https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central\)](https://staff.mq.edu.au/work/strategy-planning-and-governance/university-policies-and-procedures/policy-central).

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: <https://students.mq.edu.au/study/getting-started/student-conduct>

Results

Results shown in *iLearn*, or released directly by your Unit Convenor, are not confirmed as they are subject to final approval by the University. Once approved, final results will be sent to your student email address and will be made available in [eStudent](#). For more information visit ask.mq.edu.au.

Student Support

Macquarie University provides a range of support services for students. For details, visit <http://students.mq.edu.au/support/>

Learning Skills

Learning Skills (mq.edu.au/learningskills) provides academic writing resources and study strategies to improve your marks and take control of your study.

- [Workshops](#)
- [StudyWise](#)
- [Academic Integrity Module for Students](#)
- [Ask a Learning Adviser](#)

Student Services and Support

Students with a disability are encouraged to contact the [Disability Service](#) who can provide appropriate help with any issues that arise during their studies.

Student Enquiries

For all student enquiries, visit Student Connect at ask.mq.edu.au

IT Help

For help with University computer systems and technology, visit http://www.mq.edu.au/about_us/offices_and_units/information_technology/help/.

When using the University's IT, you must adhere to the [Acceptable Use of IT Resources Policy](#). The policy applies to all who connect to the MQ network including students.

Graduate Capabilities

PG - Capable of Professional and Personal Judgment and Initiative

Our postgraduates will demonstrate a high standard of discernment and common sense in their professional and personal judgment. They will have the ability to make informed choices and decisions that reflect both the nature of their professional work and their personal perspectives.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Evaluate the theoretical approaches that frame the field of Security Studies, including the relationship to their historical context.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the understanding and questioning of key concepts, issues and debates.

- Model academic research skills, particularly the ability to select sources appropriately, to integrate knowledge from diverse sources, to critically evaluate significance and relevance, synthesise materials, and present findings logically, rationally and lucidly.
- Demonstrate critical communication skills, including the ability to present sustained, persuasive and original verbal and written arguments cogently and coherently, and mediate in-class debate and discussion.
- Engage consistently with the unit through proactive communication with peers and the convener, and demonstrate professional conduct in all class activities and in the submission of assessments.

Assessment tasks

- Engagement
- 3-min challenge

PG - Discipline Knowledge and Skills

Our postgraduates will be able to demonstrate a significantly enhanced depth and breadth of knowledge, scholarly understanding, and specific subject content knowledge in their chosen fields.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Evaluate the theoretical approaches that frame the field of Security Studies, including the relationship to their historical context.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the understanding and questioning of key concepts, issues and debates.
- Understand both the assumptions that underpin key theories, and the methods used for research and investigation.

Assessment tasks

- Homework Tasks
- Research Design

PG - Critical, Analytical and Integrative Thinking

Our postgraduates will be capable of utilising and reflecting on prior knowledge and experience, of applying higher level critical thinking skills, and of integrating and synthesising learning and knowledge from a range of sources and environments. A characteristic of this form of thinking is the generation of new, professionally oriented knowledge through personal or group-based critique of practice and theory.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Evaluate the theoretical approaches that frame the field of Security Studies, including the relationship to their historical context.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the understanding and questioning of key concepts, issues and debates.
- Understand both the assumptions that underpin key theories, and the methods used for research and investigation.

Assessment tasks

- Homework Tasks
- Research Design

PG - Research and Problem Solving Capability

Our postgraduates will be capable of systematic enquiry; able to use research skills to create new knowledge that can be applied to real world issues, or contribute to a field of study or practice to enhance society. They will be capable of creative questioning, problem finding and problem solving.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Evaluate the theoretical approaches that frame the field of Security Studies, including the relationship to their historical context.
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the understanding and questioning of key concepts, issues and debates.
- Understand both the assumptions that underpin key theories, and the methods used for research and investigation.
- Demonstrate critical communication skills, including the ability to present sustained, persuasive and original verbal and written arguments cogently and coherently, and mediate in-class debate and discussion.

Assessment tasks

- Homework Tasks
- 3-min challenge
- Research Design

PG - Effective Communication

Our postgraduates will be able to communicate effectively and convey their views to different social, cultural, and professional audiences. They will be able to use a variety of technologically

supported media to communicate with empathy using a range of written, spoken or visual formats.

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Model academic research skills, particularly the ability to select sources appropriately, to integrate knowledge from diverse sources, to critically evaluate significance and relevance, synthesise materials, and present findings logically, rationally and lucidly.
- Demonstrate critical communication skills, including the ability to present sustained, persuasive and original verbal and written arguments cogently and coherently, and mediate in-class debate and discussion.
- Engage consistently with the unit through proactive communication with peers and the convener, and demonstrate professional conduct in all class activities and in the submission of assessments.

Assessment tasks

- Engagement
- Homework Tasks
- 3-min challenge

PG - Engaged and Responsible, Active and Ethical Citizens

Our postgraduates will be ethically aware and capable of confident transformative action in relation to their professional responsibilities and the wider community. They will have a sense of connectedness with others and country and have a sense of mutual obligation. They will be able to appreciate the impact of their professional roles for social justice and inclusion related to national and global issues

This graduate capability is supported by:

Learning outcomes

- Model academic research skills, particularly the ability to select sources appropriately, to integrate knowledge from diverse sources, to critically evaluate significance and relevance, synthesise materials, and present findings logically, rationally and lucidly.
- Demonstrate critical communication skills, including the ability to present sustained, persuasive and original verbal and written arguments cogently and coherently, and mediate in-class debate and discussion.
- Engage consistently with the unit through proactive communication with peers and the convener, and demonstrate professional conduct in all class activities and in the submission of assessments.

Assessment tasks

- Engagement
- 3-min challenge

Unit Resources

A core objective of this unit is to equip students with basic skills in NVIVO and SPSS in order to further graduate employability skills. Therefore, all students will be required to download NVIVO via the MQ software download page, available here: <https://students.mq.edu.au/support/technology/software-downloads>; and SPSS through MQ iLab, available here: <https://wiki.mq.edu.au/display/iLab/About>. Please do so before the start of session in order to best utilise our seminar times.

Seminar structure:

1. Homework, Rearticulation and Readings (20min)
2. Weekly Topic (40min)
3. Skill (1 hour lab of NVIVO or SPSS)

All **required readings** will be available via the Library's Leganto platform. Students are expected to have completed all the required readings before attending seminars.

The **required textbook** available at the Co-op Bookshop:

Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 5th edition.

[Please note that this textbook will be useful throughout your studies!!]