PICX8012

Critical Thought and Research Design

Session 1, Online-flexible 2025

School of International Studies

Contents

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General Information

Unit convenor and teaching staff
Jennifer Williams
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Credit points
10

Prerequisites
Admission to MSecStragegicStud or MCrim or MIntell or MCTerrorism or MCyberSec or GradDipSecStudCr or GradCertSecStudCr or MIntPubDip or MPICT or MIntSecStud or GradDipIntSecStud or MPICTMIntSecSt or MCPICT or MCPICTMIntSecSt or MSecStrategicStudMCrim or MSecStrategicStudMIntell or MSecStrategicStudMCyberSec or MSecStrategicStudMCTerrorism or MIntellMCrim or MIntellMCyberSec or MIntellMCTerrorism or MCyberSecMCTerrorism or MCyberSecMCrim or MCTerrorismMCrim or Master of Cyber Security Analysis or 10cps at 6000 level or 10cps 8000 level

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 apply their advanced research skills through critical thinking and problem-solving. 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:

ULO1: Evaluate the theoretical approaches that frame the field of Security Studies and Criminology, including the relationship to their historical context.

ULO2: Demonstrate critical thinking skills through the understanding and questioning of

key concepts, issues and debates.

ULO3: Demonstrate understanding of both the assumptions that underpin key theories, and the methods used for research and investigation.

ULO4: 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

Name	Weighting	Hurdle	Due
Quiz	30%	No	Week 5
Pitch	30%	No	Week 7
Research Design	40%	No	Week 12

Quiz

Assessment Type [1]: Quiz/Test
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 15 hours
Due: **Week 5**
Weighting: **30%**

One quiz will test the understanding and application of key concepts and frameworks from the course.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Pitch

Assessment Type [1]: Presentation
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 15 hours
Due: **Week 7**
Weighting: **30%**

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 manner that conveys their argument and significance of their research to a nonspecialist audience. Students should consider the presentation as a type of "pitch" for their research.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

Research Design

Assessment Type [1]: Essay
Indicative Time on Task [2]: 45 hours
Due: **Week 12**
Weighting: **40%**

Following the pitch presentation assessment and feedback, students will expand their research idea into a research design proposal. The proposal includes the revised research question (what is the focus of your study?), Introduction and Background (significance?), Brief Literature Review, Selected Methodology (how you propose to conduct your study and limitations of selected method), and ethical considerations. Each task during the semester is designed to help construct the components of this final assessment.

On successful completion you will be able to:

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

[1] If you need help with your assignment, please contact:

- the academic teaching staff in your unit for guidance in understanding or completing this type of assessment
- the Writing Centre for academic skills support.

[2] Indicative time-on-task is an estimate of the time required for completion of the assessment task and is subject to individual variation

Delivery and Resources

UNIT REQUIREMENTS AND EXPECTATIONS

- You should spend an average of 12 hours per week on this unit. This includes attending/ watching lectures, reading weekly required materials as detailed in iLearn, participating in Ilearn discussion forums and preparing assessments.
- All students are expected to make significant contributions to online activities.
- In most cases, students are required to attempt and submit all major assessment tasks to pass the unit.

REQUIRED READINGS

- The citations for this unit's required readings are available to enrolled students through the unit iLearn site. Electronic copies of required readings may be accessed through the library or will be made available by other means. A helpful guide including shortcuts for accessing journal articles is available at: https://www.mq.edu.au/about/facilities/library/covid-19-response/journal-survival-guide

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/

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE USAGE

- Responsible and ethical use of Generative AI is allowed.
- The burden of verifying any and all information generated using Artificial Intelligence is

on the student. Failure to verify information (including the legitimacy of citations and the content of these citations) may constitute a violation of academic integrity, at which point further investigation and penalties may apply.

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 an MS Word document by the due date. Assessment due dates in this guide are indicative only and may be adjusted by the course convenor.
- 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 but must be lodged through Special Consideration: https://students.mq.edu.au/study/my-study-program/special-consideratio n

LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT TASKS

Unless a Special Consideration request has been submitted and approved, **a 5% penalty (of the total possible mark) will be applied each day a written assessment is not submitted**, up until the 7th day (including weekends). After the 7th day, a mark of '0' (zero) will be awarded even if the assessment is submitted. Submission time for all written assessments is set at 11:55 pm. A 1-hour grace period is provided to students who experience a technical issue.

This late penalty will apply to non-timed sensitive assessments (including essays, reports, posters, portfolios, journals, recordings, etc). **Late submission of time-sensitive tasks** (such as quizzes/tests, discussion board tasks, etc) **will only be addressed by the unit convenor in a Special consideration application. Special Consideration outcome may result in a new question or topic.**

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 deviates from the limit by more than 10%, then penalties will apply. These penalties are 5% of the awarded mark for every 100-word deviation from the word limit. For instance, if a paper is 300 words over or under, it will lose 3 x 5% = 15% of the total mark awarded for the assignment. This percentage is taken off the total mark, i.e. if a paper were 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
- Per 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 (usually 2 business days). Work email is not monitored outside regular work hours, over the weekend, or during public holiday periods.
- Students are encouraged to read the Unit Guide and look at instructions posted on the iLearn site before emailing staff.

Policies and Procedures

Macquarie University policies and procedures are accessible from Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au). 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
- Assessment Procedure
- Complaints Resolution Procedure for Students and Members of the Public
- Special Consideration Policy

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

To find other policies relating to Teaching and Learning, visit Policy Central (https://policies.mq.edu.au) and use the search tool.

Student Code of Conduct

Macquarie University students have a responsibility to be familiar with the Student Code of Conduct: https://students.mq.edu.au/admin/other-resources/student-conduct

Results

Results published on platform other than eStudent, (eg. iLearn, Coursera etc.) 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 connect.mq.edu.au or if you are a Global MBA student contact globalmba.support@mq.edu.au

Academic Integrity

At Macquarie, we believe academic integrity – honesty, respect, trust, responsibility, fairness and courage – is at the core of learning, teaching and research. We recognise that meeting the expectations required to complete your assessments can be challenging. So, we offer you a range of resources and services to help you reach your potential, including free online writing and maths support, academic skills development and wellbeing consultations.

Student Support

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

The Writing Centre

The Writing Centre provides resources to develop your English language proficiency, academic writing, and communication skills.

- Workshops
- Chat with a WriteWISE peer writing leader
- Access StudyWISE
- Upload an assignment to Studiosity
- Complete the Academic Integrity Module

The Library provides online and face to face support to help you find and use relevant information resources.

- Subject and Research Guides
- Ask a Librarian

Student Services and Support

Macquarie University offers a range of Student Support Services including:

- IT Support
- Accessibility and disability support with study
- Mental health support
- Safety support to respond to bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual assault

- Social support including information about finances, tenancy and legal issues
- Student Advocacy provides independent advice on MQ policies, procedures, and processes

Student Enquiries

Got a question? Ask us via the Service Connect Portal, or contact Service Connect.

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.

Changes from Previous Offering

Participation is no longer an assessable element of this course.

Unit information based on version 2025.02 of the Handbook