



**UNSW**  
SYDNEY

**School of the Arts and Media**

**Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences**



**ARTS4100**

**Research Methods and Thesis Writing**

**Session 1, 2017**

## Course Outline

### Staff Contact Details

#### Conveners

Name	Email	Availability	Location	Phone
Mark Steven	m.steven@unsw.edu.au	By appointment	231n Robert Webster	

### School Contact Information

Room 312, level 3 Robert Webster Building

Phone: (02) 9385 4856

Email: [sam@unsw.edu.au](mailto:sam@unsw.edu.au)

Website: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au>

### Attendance Requirements

A student is expected to attend all class contact hours for a face-to-face (F2F) or blended course and complete all activities for a blended or fully online course.

A student who arrives more than 15 minutes late may be penalised for non-attendance. If such a penalty is imposed, the student must be informed verbally at the end of class and advised in writing within 24 hours.

If a student experiences illness, misadventure or other occurrence that makes absence from a class/activity unavoidable, or expects to be absent from a forthcoming class/activity, they should seek permission from the Course Authority, and where applicable, their request should be accompanied by an original or certified copy of a medical certificate or other form of appropriate evidence.

A Course Authority may excuse a student from classes or activities for up to one month. However, they may assign additional and/or alternative tasks to ensure compliance. A Course Authority considering the granting of absence must be satisfied a student will still be able to meet the course's learning outcomes and/or volume of learning. A student seeking approval to be absent for more than one month must apply in writing to the Dean and provide all original or certified supporting documentation.

For more information about the SAM attendance protocols, see the SAM policies and guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

### Essential Information

All SAM students must make a valid attempt at all assessments in order to pass the course.

For essential student information relating to: attendance requirements; requests for extension; review of marks; occupational health and safety; examination procedures; special consideration in the event of illness or misadventure; student equity and disability; and other essential matters, see the SAM Policies

and Guidelines webpage: <https://sam.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/>

## **Course Details**

### **Credit Points 6**

### **Summary of the Course**

This Honours-level seminar course is designed to introduce students to higher-level academic research and writing in the disciplines of English, Film, Media, Music, Theatre, Dance and Performance Studies. It will extend the research and analysis skills developed in the first three years of the degree to support the preparation and completion of students' first major piece of independent research – the Honours thesis and/or production project. It will introduce students to core issues in and approaches to research which will help them consolidate and extend their understanding of their chosen discipline and of the place of their research within it. The course is organised around a structured seminar series, beginning with a consideration of the nature of disciplinary research in the Humanities and moving on to consider the genre of the Honours thesis, and to developing a Research Plan and Thesis and/or project timetable.

### **At the conclusion of this course the student will be able to**

1. work independently to develop a complex research project;
2. analyse critically the structure, argumentation and quality of a thesis and/or practical project, and identify the methodological approaches employed;
3. engage with peers' and colleagues' research critically and in the spirit of intellectual openness and generosity;
4. present an outline of specific research questions developing out of their research, and identify research methods suitable for their project;
5. develop a formal research proposal for their Honours thesis and/or project.

### **Teaching Strategies**

The course will be taught through a two-hour seminar each week. Discipline-speakers may be invited to contribute in several of the weeks. Students will present one aspect of their own research (major Honours project) at a symposium at the end of semester.

The approach to teaching is informed by principles of interactivity, student agency and the pleasure of scholarly knowledge and learning. Our aim is to facilitate ways for students to access and foster a range of productive possibilities from the disciplinary bases of their study. This ability will be an ongoing resource in students' professional and personal lives, continuing beyond the immediate context of any one course or program.

## Assessment

All the assessments will be discussed in detail in class, where you will also be supplied with marking criteria and given time to ask questions. You will have the opportunity to present a short thesis critique to your colleagues and there will be time for individual consultations regarding the Research Proposal.

### Assessment Tasks

Assessment task	Weight	Length	Due Date	Submission
Formal research proposal	50%	3500 words	null	null
Thesis critique	25%	1500 words	null	null
Research presentation	25%	5-10 mins	null	null

### Assessment Details

#### Assessment 1: Formal research proposal

**Details:** 3500 words. Grade and written comments provided.

#### Additional details:

Your research proposal must cover the following (we will discuss the suggested lengths for each part during class):

- a. Tentative title: this should reflect the precise research question you intend to investigate or explore in your thesis.
- b. Rationale: what are you seeking to research, or what problems do you intend to address in your thesis? Why is the topic of interest to you, and why do you think this research is necessary? How does it relate to existing, on-going debates in your discipline/field? (Creative Practice/Production students: describe in detail the project you are going to undertake and how it relates to your research questions.)
- c. Literature review: this will form the major part of the research proposal, and will establish both the broad academic context of your research topic and its academic rationale. It will provide a succinct and critical evaluation of relevant literature and its bearing on your topic, demonstrate your understanding of the area of your research topic, and locate gaps in the existing literature that justifies your topic.
- d. Methodology: what approach will you use to address your topic? If your research involves data, what methods will you use to collect and analyse data? What conceptual, methodological or scholarly approach have you chosen to complete your carry out your analysis or production?
- e. Tentative chapter outline: what are your chapter/section titles, and how do they relate to the topic and your research questions? Outline how they develop the argument of your thesis.
- f. Timeline: outline your timeline for conducting your research and writing and redrafting your chapters (Creative Practice/Production students: provide details of your production timeline for the completion and exhibition of your Honours project, as well as the timeline for the writing and redrafting of your thesis. Please provide a list of technical requirements for your project and the resources you will need to show/performance the project.)
- g. References: provide a list of references relevant to this assignment, and an indicative

bibliography of other sources that you intend to use in your thesis.

### **Learning outcomes:**

- work independently to develop a complex research project;
- present an outline of specific research questions developing out of their research, and identify research methods suitable for their project;
- develop a formal research proposal for their Honours thesis and/or project.

### **Assessment 2: Thesis critique**

**Details:** 1500 words. Grade and written comments provided.

#### **Additional details:**

Choose ONE recent (post–2005) article from a top-tier journal in your discipline.

Your task is to submit a critical evaluation of the article you have chosen. Your critique should consider the following:

- a. Thesis topic – does the author justify their research topic and explain the relevance of the research project? Do they explain how the topic relates to broader issues and debates within their discipline?
- b. Literature review – does the author cover relevant debates in the field or discipline, and how sound is the critical evaluation of relevant literature? Does the author successfully locate their thesis topic and research question within ongoing debates in their field or discipline? What awareness of other relevant research is displayed? How wide is the range of literature covered in the review, and how accurate and relevant is the critique of this literature?
- c. Thesis structure – does the thesis follow a logical structure? How does the structure of the thesis relate to the research question and the analysis of relevant material? How well do the various chapters/sections relate to each other, and to the whole thesis? Is there an irrelevant section, or a chapter/section that is insufficiently developed?
- d. Argument – how original and valid is the central argument? What, in your estimation, does it contribute to the discipline? How effectively does the author articulate their contribution to the discipline? Are there any identifiable gaps or jumps in the argument?
- e. Quality of writing – is the writing clear and appropriate for its academic purpose? How skillfully does the author construct their argument? Does the writing display an engaging and original 'voice'? Is there an identifiable narrative that runs through the thesis? Is the referencing proper and accurate? Does the thesis meet academic standards regarding appropriate acknowledgement of sources?

### **Learning outcomes:**

- analyse critically the structure, argumentation and quality of a thesis and/or practical project, and identify the methodological approaches employed;
- engage with peers' and colleagues' research critically and in the spirit of intellectual openness and generosity;

### **Assessment 3: Research presentation**

**Details:** Also known as SAM Symposium. 5-10 mins. This is the final assessment task. Grade and written comments provided.

#### **Additional details:**

Your research presentation will be 5 to 10 minutes in duration, and will provide a summary of your research proposal, covering the research topic and rationale, literature review, and methodology. It will be presented in the format of an academic conference paper, and members of the School and Faculty will be invited to watch.

The Symposium, of which your presentation will be a part, will take place over two days. Your attendance on both days is mandatory: engaging with your colleagues work in this format is both a matter of collegiality and professionalism.

The marking criteria for this assessment will be distributed in class.

#### **Learning outcomes:**

- work independently to develop a complex research project;
- engage with peers' and colleagues' research critically and in the spirit of intellectual openness and generosity;
- present an outline of specific research questions developing out of their research, and identify research methods suitable for their project;
- develop a formal research proposal for their Honours thesis and/or project.

## Submission of Assessment Tasks

Students are expected to put their names and student numbers on every page of their assignments.

## 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](mailto: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 in SAM there will no longer be any hard-copy submission; assessments 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.

## Late Assessment Penalties

An assessed task is deemed late if it is submitted after the specified time and date as set out in the course Learning Management System (LMS).

The late penalty is the loss of 5% of the total possible marks for the task for each day or part thereof the work is late. Lateness will include weekends and public holidays. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted fourteen days after the due date will be marked and feedback provided but no mark will be recorded. If the work would have received a pass mark but for the lateness and the work is a compulsory course component a student will be deemed to have met that requirement. This does not apply to a task that is assessed but no mark is awarded.

Work submitted twenty-one days after the due date will not be accepted for marking or feedback and will receive no mark or grade. If the assessment task is a compulsory component of the course a student will automatically fail the course.

## Special Consideration Applications

You can apply for special consideration when illness or other circumstances interfere with your assessment performance.

Sickness, misadventure or other circumstances beyond your control may:

- \* Prevent you from completing a course requirement,
- \* Keep you from attending an assessable activity,
- \* Stop you submitting assessable work for a course,



\* Significantly affect your performance in assessable work, be it a formal end-of-semester examination, a class test, a laboratory test, a seminar presentation or any other form of assessment.

For further details in relation to Special Consideration including 'When to Apply', 'How to Apply' and 'Supporting Documentation' please refer to the Special Consideration website:  
<https://student.unsw.edu.au/special-consideration>

## 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 information without acknowledgement. This also applies in presentations where someone paraphrases another's ideas or words without credit. It also applies to piecing together quotes and paraphrases into a new whole, without referencing and a student's own analysis to bring the material together.

**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. 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.

## Course Schedule

### Timetable

Date	Type	Content
Week 1: 27 February - 5 March		
Week 2: 6 - 12 March		
Week 3: 13 - 19 March		
Week 4: 20 - 26 March		
Week 5: 27 March - 2 April		
Week 6: 3 - 9 April		
Week 7: 10 - 16 April		
Week 8: 24 - 30 April		
Week 9: 1 - 7 May		
Week 10: 8 - 14 May		
Week 11: 15 - 21 May		

## **Resources**

### **Prescribed Resources**

Not available

### **Recommended Resources**

Not available

## **Course Evaluation and Development**

[Briefly outline how student feedback (both formal and informal) on the course will be gathered, how it will be analysed and how it will be acted upon to improve the student learning experience. For example, you might discuss what was identified in past feedback and how this course was changed to address the issue.]

## **Image Credit**

