

## Third Year Research Project (SC3055) Handbook 2021/2022



This module will be taught during First AND Second Semester. This document contains all necessary module information. Please read it carefully.

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**Supervisors:** Sociology Staff

**Module Objective:** To provide a discursive environment enabling student to carry out an extensive research project.

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## Module Information

This module allows students to pursue sociological research on a topic of their choice, based on a research proposal submitted at the end of Year 2. Students will be assigned to a member of staff who will act as their research supervisor. Please note that it may not be possible to assign students to the supervisor of their choice.

The research project will consist of a literature review chapter to be compiled in Semester 1, and a final project based on primary research submitted at the end of Semester 2.

**In week 2 (2-3pm, Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2021)**, Sociology staff will deliver 1-hour online workshop (time and date to be confirmed) to familiarise students with the process of completing the research project. Topics to be covered include an overview of requirements and what is expected of the student, the role of the supervisor, elements of a strong research project, and a healthy timeline for successful completion the project.

## Assessment

Total marks 300, consisting of:

- Literature review (3000 words): 45 marks (Due in S1)
- Final Project (10,000 words): 255 marks (Due in S2)

Submission date for completed work (maximum 10,000 words) will be announced via Canvas. Only typed or word-processed projects can be accepted. The supervisor and a second reader will assess the project. The external examiner will validate the final mark.

## What to Expect from Your Supervisor?

Students will be expected to meet with their supervisor on a regular basis (either in seminar or on a one-to-one level) to plan, research and write their module work. The schedule for these meetings is not timetabled but will be agreed between you and your supervisor. This will typically consist of an introductory meeting and four subsequent hours of supervision throughout the course of the year. Your supervisor will contact you to arrange the initial meeting and it is your responsibility to maintain subsequent contact.

**Please note that due to the ongoing pandemic, supervision sessions will take place in a blended format, with online and in person meetings, depending on public health advice and guidelines, and staff circumstances.**

The supervisor will guide you through the research process and will read and mark one full chapter (the literature review). Supervisors will also offer feedback on any questions in the allotted sessions. Your supervisor, a second reader and the external examiner review the final project.

## General Project Guidelines

The research upon which this project is based can be primary or secondary. Your supervisor will work with you to determine the size and scope of the research, however, if you are conducting empirical research such as interviews or archival work you should expect to undertake the equivalent of 6-8 hours of research.

Students must apply for ethical approval before conducting any research with human participants, or animals, including, but not limited to:

- direct interaction with human participants for the purpose of data collection using research methods such as questionnaires, interviews, observations, focus groups etc.;
- indirect observation with human participants for example using observation, web surveys etc.;
- access to, or utilisation of, anonymised datasets;
- access to, or utilisation of, data concerning identifiable individuals.

Before planning to conduct any research the student should talk to a member of the lecturing staff, who will guide them through the ethical approval process. This will entail the completion of an ethics review form to be submitted for approval by the Undergraduate Committee.

**Please note that before engaging in any research which may require ethical approval you should submit an ethics form to your supervisor and only when you have received approval to go ahead, should you proceed with your research.**

Please note that due to the ongoing pandemic, it may not be possible to conduct research which requires face-to-face interactions and alternative or contingency plans (for example online interviews) should be made and anticipated. The student should discuss this with their supervisor.

**Any research which has not been approved will be graded 0% and disciplinary action will be taken.** Further information can be found here <https://www.ucc.ie/en/research/support/ethics/#ethics>

Projects should be written using standard academic conventions as they pertain to language, grammar, spelling, syntax, punctuation, and format.

## Project Structure and Submission

Final projects should have front matter, an introduction, a body consisting of a number of chapters, and a conclusion.

**Front matter** typically includes the following:

- an abstract, which summarises the research project in a couple of paragraphs;
- acknowledgements;
- a table of contents (including chapter titles, sub-headings/sections and page numbers);
- if applicable, a **list of figures** and/or a **list of tables** to be placed after the table of contents.

The **introduction** should address the following:

- what the author intends to focus on (the problem or issue);
- what the author seeks to accomplish in the project (the aim);
- how the author intends to deal with the problem and reach the aim of the text (the methodology);
- the reason or reasons why the author sees fit to select this problem, to pursue this aim, and apply this methodology (the rationale);
- the contribution the author seeks to make by writing the text (e.g. systematizing existing knowledge, filling a gap in the literature, exploring a new area, producing new knowledge, etc.).

In the **development** of the text (main body), the following should be covered:

- a review of literature relevant to the problem (literature review chapter);
- a theoretical clarification or framework in terms of which sense can be made first of the problem and, second, of the aim of the project;
- an extended treatment of the problem in pursuit of the realisation of the aim.
- if based on empirical research, a methodology chapter that speaks to the methods, techniques, and ethical considerations undertaken in relation to the project;
- if based on empirical research, a findings chapter that analyses the data collected throughout the course of the research.

The **conclusion** should include a summary of the following:

- the state of the development of the problem reached;
- the degree to which the aim was achieved;
- a self-critical, reflexive assessment of the limitations and strengths of the work done, including a statement of the contribution of the author to the literature and how it could be taken further.

Such work should comply with the technical requirements expected of sociological work. They should contain:

- **a table of contents** specifying the structure and direction of argumentation of the text according to section and sub-section titles, as well as page numbers. **references in the text** to literature employed according to the reference system learned in First Year and consistently applied by the author;
- **footnotes or end notes** in order to comment on any point or to situate it in the context of current debates;
- **appendices**, if applicable, to be placed at the end of the document, before the bibliography. Items appropriate to an appendix include, interview questionnaire, anonymised list of respondents, consent form and information sheet.
- **a bibliography** or list of works referred to at the end of the text, including author's name and initials, title, place of publication, publisher and date of publication; and in the case of articles also the journal title, volume, and page numbers.

The Department recommends the currently most widely used system, the **Harvard system** of referencing. We have a Referencing Booklet available on our website (and in the 'Information' section of modules on Canvas).

Referencing guide available at:

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/academic/sociologydepartment/ReferencingHarvardDeptofSociologyUCCfinalSeptember2017.pdf>

**It is also strongly recommended that students keep copies of all of the work that they submit, as the department may have to retain the originals for examination purposes.**

The following are the regulations of the department in relation to the submission and return of module work:

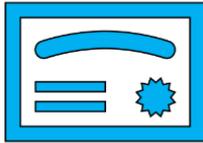
All work submitted to meet module requirements must have a **signed** departmental **cover sheet** which can be downloaded from our website at

<https://www.ucc.ie/en/sociology/undergraduate/current/>

This should include:

- Student's name
- Student I.D. number
- Year of study, i.e. 1st, 2nd or 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Type of Degree, e.g. B.A., B. Soc. Sc., Visiting Student, Higher Diploma
- Module Title and Code, e.g. Social Theory SC3001
- Type of Degree, i.e. Joint Honours, Single Honours, Major, Minor, Language and Cultural Studies
- Name of supervisor

This information is essential to ensure that the marks are assigned correctly. We regret that we are unable to accept work that does not contain this information.



*There will be a prize for the Third Year Project that receives the highest grade.*

## Plagiarism

It is important in all written work to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is the presentation of material taken directly and without explicit acknowledgement from another source, whether that is a book, an article, the Internet or another student's work, as your own. Your project must be substantially your own work. When you draw on someone else's work, you must acknowledge your source. You do this by giving the reference to it, following the guidelines to referencing learned in First Year. If you quote directly, you must put that quotation in inverted commas, indicating clearly where the quotation begins and ends (see below for guidelines on plagiarism).

**Please note that any work containing material that is transcribed from books, articles, or web sources (other than normal, properly acknowledged quotations) will be given a mark of 0.**

All work submitted by students of the Department of Sociology, UCC is expected to represent good academic practice.

Students are advised to ensure they make use of RED @UCC (Resources for Education) to familiarize themselves with some of the issues around academic cheating but also to be aware of what constitutes good academic practice. Both RED@UCC and internal documentation supplied by the Dept. of Sociology (style sheet and handbook) - available on the department home page - provide information about referencing, writing and academic misconduct.

The University has produced a plagiarism policy that clearly outlines what constitutes plagiarism and the procedure to be followed when a case of plagiarism is suspected. This document informs all Department policy in such instances. Please see <http://www.ucc.ie/en/exams/procedures-regulations/>

In the case of suspected plagiarism in 'non-invigilated' assessment (e.g. essays/dissertations), the assignment in question will be, in the first instance, referred to the Head of School (HOS)/Head of Department (HOD) or nominee.

If the HOS, HOD or nominee deems that there is a case to answer, the case can be either passed to the Exams and Records office, or a penalty can be applied locally. The penalties include:

- A reduction in mark
- Award of zero

If there is evidence of plagiarism (or other academic misconduct) the student will be given the opportunity to respond to the allegation via email or in person. If a meeting is held, students are entitled to have a witness (non-contributing) present.

If a penalty is applied locally, the student can choose to accept this penalty, or refer their case to the Exams and Records office (see the University Plagiarism Policy).

As a means of ensuring good academic practice, the Dept. of Sociology reserves the right to use Turnitin software on any and all student submissions.

## Late Submissions

All module work must be submitted by the stated deadlines. These deadlines will be set by individual lecturers and are available in the department's booklet of module outlines or will be communicated directly to students in class.

Penalties will be applied to late work. These are:

- 3 days late a **5%** deduction will be made from the assigned mark.
- 4 -7 days late a **10%** deduction will be made from the assigned mark.
- 8-14 days late a **20%** deduction will be made from the assigned mark.

**Example:** If a piece of work is given a mark of 60% by the lecturer and the work is 1- 3 days late, the mark recorded for examination purposes will be 57%. If the work is 4 - 7 days late, the recorded mark will be 54, and if 8 -14 days late, it will be 48.

**We regret that we cannot accept work that is submitted 14 days or more after the submission deadline.**

## Resources:

The Sociology Resource Centre has a wide range of material that may be of use as you draft your literature review and methodology chapters. The **Resource Centre** is **ONLINE** this College Year 2021-22, email [p.meaney@ucc.ie](mailto:p.meaney@ucc.ie) with request for readings.

UCC Skills Centre is a useful resource for tips on writing and organisation. The Centre enhances the student experience through the provision of customised workshops and sessions. For more information: <http://skillscentre.ucc.ie/>

If you are conducting empirical research the following textbooks offer a good guide:

- Bryman, A., 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford University Press.
- Schutt, R.K., 2016. *Understanding the Social World: Research Methods for the 21st Century*. Sage Publications.
- O'Leary, Z., 2017. *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. Sage.

Sample research projects are available on Canvas.