

# HPSC1007 Investigating Science and Society

## Course Syllabus

2013-14 session | Mr Timothy Nissen | t.nissen@ucl.ac.uk

This module provides an introduction to the academic skills and research methods that underpin all elements of science and technology studies. Content includes basic research and scholarly writing techniques (including identifying appropriate sources, avoiding plagiarism, and writing a convincing argument), as well as an introduction to both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques. In addition to becoming familiar with the underpinning theory and research context, students will also have the opportunity to apply data collection methods practically, for example designing questionnaires and/or conducting interviews relating to a topic of their choice.

### Course Information

#### Basic course information

Course website:	
Moodle Web site:	HPSC1007
Assessment:	
Timetable:	<a href="http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/hpsc">www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/hpsc</a>
Prerequisites:	No pre-requisites
Required texts:	No required texts; a list of key readings will be provided each week where applicable
Course tutor(s):	Mr Timothy Nissen
Contact:	<a href="mailto:t.nissen@ucl.ac.uk">t.nissen@ucl.ac.uk</a>   t: 0207 679 1324
Web:	<a href="http://www.ucl.ac.uk/silva/sts/staff/">www.ucl.ac.uk/silva/sts/staff/</a>
Office location:	22 Gordon Square, Room 3.2
Office hours:	Tuesday 3-4pm Friday 9:30-10:30am

## Schedule

UCL Week	Topic	Date	Activity
21	Welcome and key-skills	17/01	
22	Writing for academic assessment	24/01	
23	Referencing – getting it right	31/01	
24	<b>Essay 1 deadline</b> Introduction to research methods	<b>03/02</b> (due 23:59) 07/02	
25	Research design	14/02	
26	<b>Reading Week</b>	21/02	
27	Presentation skills	28/02	
28	<b>Assessed Presentation – conducted in class</b>	07/03	
29	Identifying and addressing bias	14/03	
30	Introduction to data analysis and presentation	21/03	
31	Data analysis workshop and feedback	28/03	
32	<b>Research Project deadline</b>	<b>04/04</b> (due 23:59)	

## Assessments

### Summary

	Description	Deadline	Word limit
<b>Coursework 1</b>	Essay – review of literature pertaining to chosen research topic	23:59 Mon 3-Feb	1200 words
<b>Coursework 2</b>	Presentation – group oral presentations of chosen research topic and proposed research design	11am-1pm Fri 07-Mar	20 minutes per group
<b>Coursework 3</b>	Research write-up – submission of research in an appropriate format	23:59 Fri 04-April	2400 words

### Criteria for assessment

The departmental marking guidelines for individual items of assessment can be found in the

STS Student Handbook.

## **Aims & objectives**

The aim of the course is to introduce students to the academic skills and research methods that are essential for science and technology studies. By the end of the course, students should be able to:

1. demonstrate effective researching and critical reading skills
2. create relevant and critical bibliographies for STS research projects
3. be able to conduct a critical analysis of specific issues/topics and report such analyses persuasively and coherently
4. design and apply a range of basic research methods employed in the social sciences
5. present their work effectively both orally and in writing
6. demonstrate critical and constructive self- and peer-assessment
7. demonstrate constructive reflection through informal writing
8. demonstrate techniques for improved time and project management, and the ability to work effectively in a team

## **Reading list**

For ease of use an electronic reading list is provided for this module. To access it please visit <http://readinglists.ucl.ac.uk/modules/hpsc1007.html>

It is also available via a dedicated link within Moodle.

## **Course expectations**

This module is taught in 'workshop' format, with each session containing a mixture of mini-lectures interspersed with set tasks and discussion of key issues. Elements of problem-based learning approaches, incorporating student-led elements, will increase the focus on interactivity and student involvement. Students are expected to engage fully with the in-class activities, which includes reading the necessary texts prior to attending class each week. Additionally, specific 'preparation tasks' are set each week that feed into the session content and build on the elements required for the assessments. Former students have noted that this approach worked well to keep them focused and up-to-date with their reading/research elements, and ensured that they received the maximum possible in-class benefit to their assessment preparation.

Finally, it is important to note that students taking HPSC1007 will be expected to work in their group outside class time to collect data with an external audience of their choosing.

## **Attendance**

Regular attendance is mandatory.

## **Requirements to complete modules**

Students are required to be 'complete' in all modules. Normally all assignments must be

attempted in order for students to be considered complete. This is different from 'passing' a module which requires a minimum overall module mark of 40%.

### **Important policy information**

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Details of college and departmental policies relating to modules and assessments can be found in the STS Student Handbook [www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/handbook](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/sts/handbook)

All students taking modules in the STS department are expected to read these policies.

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