

Coursework for Mental Health and Society

Assessment for this module will be based on an exam (60% of the marks) and a piece of coursework (40%) of the marks. More guidance will be given about the exam a little nearer the time.

Coursework Topic Choice

i) Finding a topic: The choice of topic is up to you. As you may know, I believe it's good to define your own topic of enquiry. The skill of finding questions, defining problems and identifying areas for research is a valuable quality to be developing in your final year. In later life you won't find people giving you lists of titles for things – you'll have to define your own problems to solve. Some of you will already have had some practice at this in designing final year project proposals.

You might want to decide based on: a) What you're interested in b) Things that might be relevant to what you'd like to do later – some people want to work with kids, become counsellors, social workers or clinical psychologists and so on. This is a good opportunity to gain some knowledge or skills that will help you later. Thus, it can help with the PDP process too. c) What your friends are doing so you can help each other d) What you can find the most literature on. e) Something that no one's ever studied before.

ii) Format: This is something I want you to decide upon too. In the past people have used conventional essay and practical report formats, but others have created magazines, websites, videos and other formats, including music. I will not be setting a particular word limit. Again, it is good for you to have the experience of deciding for yourself how much to write to do justice to the material. It's also good practice to be able to weigh up how much time you want to spend on this in relation to your other commitments and in relation to the proportion of your assessment it represents. Deciding how much time and effort to devote to your various commitments is a valuable skill

ii) How shall we do it? Many people work individually, but work in pairs or a small group is also acceptable, provided the finished items of work are sufficiently different to enable me to give a mark to each individual. The best work arises as a result of a sustained process and not as a result of a sudden burst of activity near the deadline!

Deadline

The coursework deadline is Wednesday 25th April 2012 at 12.00 p.m. By this time you should have completed your work, checked the spelling and grammar and checked that all the references are present in the list at the end!

Criteria for assessment

I shall be particularly impressed by work which shows evidence of some or all of the following:

- 1, Evidence of independent study and reading over and above introductory textbook material. Library work, literature searching and the exploitation of other sources such as archive material, comments from professionals or other scholars, and even electronic sources. In dealing with different sources in your coursework, do take the trouble to say where ideas, opinions and evidence have come from and treat it with an appropriate degree of scepticism. I'm also very particular about referencing being done properly!
- 2, Evidence of an ability to make new arguments, or bring fresh perspectives to the question of how abnormality or unhappiness can be understood. Originality, in other words!
- 3, Evidence that you've undertaken a good and thorough search of academic literature relating to the topic. I like to see lots of nice new references in your work from the last three years or so. Evidence that you have been using Psycinfo, Cinahl, Medline/Pubmed and full

text journal article services like Ebsco Host (<http://search.ebscohost.com>), Science Direct (<http://www.sciencedirect.com>) or Ingenta (<http://www.ingentaconnect.com>) and have succeeded in discovering new research and theory on your chosen topic will be favourably evaluated.

4, Evidence that academic literature has been used to throw new light on people and their problems.

5, Evidence that you've tried to make the work relevant to UK policy issues or the UK context. Finding out about what's going on in the UK is aided by the use of the electronic database of newspaper articles that the library subscribes to - Lexislibrary. Of course, you can't believe everything you read in the papers. However, it is useful in that it tells you about useful information, such as when government ministers make speeches or announce policies, reports are published, scientific breakthroughs are made, and so on. This can then give you an idea of where to look for more formal evidence.

6, A few people have already talked to me about ideas they'd like to work on for their coursework. I've been impressed by some folks who said they'd be liaising with another scholar who was already working on their chosen area. Great. Evidence like this that you're engaged with the human process of research and scholarship is likely to get me excited.

Guidance and formative feedback

As well as the above guidance please do come and find me, phone me or email me about ideas you have for coursework or anything else. I always enjoy discussing ideas for pieces of work, so try me. I might have some idea where you can look or what you can do to take your ideas further. Obviously, making the best use of me does entail a bit of work on your part. Give me a few clues - 'I don't know' is a conversation killer - write a few ideas down for me to think about before talking to me. Do something to remind me who you are as well. It's a lot easier for me if you say 'I'm the one who's doing near death experiences' (or whatever). This is intended to get you thinking about your coursework early.

This assignment should be submitted to the Student Advice Centre by the deadline of **12 noon on Wednesday, 25th April 2012**. An **identical** copy should also be submitted to Turnitin **by the same deadline**.

PLEASE NOTE: Failure to submit either the paper version or the Turnitin version of this work by the deadline will be taken as failure to submit on time. Standard penalties for late submission of coursework will then be applied.