

**MASTER OF PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES**  
**DISSERTATION and TREATISE GUIDE**

**Timetable for PACS6904 Dissertation Sessions, Semester 2 -- 2011**

Students enrolled in PACS6904 Dissertation Part 1 or PACS6919 Treatise Part 1 are required to attend dissertation sessions held on Mondays during semester from 12 noon to 2 pm as indicated in the timetable below. All CPACS students enrolled in coursework or research degrees are invited to attend the dissertation sessions as well as the research seminars listed below.

**All dissertation sessions will be held in  
Mackie Room 107, Mondays 12 noon-2 pm.**

Week 2. Monday 1 August           Dissertation Session Dr Wendy Lambourne  
*Deciding to do a Dissertation, Selecting a Topic, Finding a Supervisor and Developing a Research Proposal – Enrolment and Timelines*

Week 3. Monday 8 August           Dissertation Session with Dr Ken Macnab  
*Researching and Writing a Dissertation in Peace and Conflict Studies*

Week 4. Monday 15 August        Dissertation Session with Dr Wendy Lambourne  
*Research in the Social Sciences: Process, Experience, Ethics and Methods*

Week 9. Monday 19 September   Dissertation Session with Dr Wendy Lambourne  
*Dissertation Progress Q & A and Preparing the Dissertation Proposal*

Week 13. Monday 24 October     Dissertation Session with Dr Wendy Lambourne  
*Dissertation Progress and Plans*

**Getting Started**

- The Dissertation Coordinator, Dr Wendy Lambourne, is available for individual consultations regarding choice of topic, supervision and processes for completing and submitting dissertations.
- Potential supervisors include Associate Professor Jake Lynch, Dr Wendy Lambourne, Dr Ken Macnab and Dr Erik Paul as well as other CPACS Lecturers and Honorary Associates.

- Details of proposed topic and supervisor should be discussed with the Dissertation Coordinator before the deadline recommended in the timeline. A 1000 word written research proposal should be submitted to the Dissertation Coordinator.
- Copies of MPACS dissertations and MLitt treatises completed by former students are available for consultation in the CPACS Resource Centre.

*Dissertation Coordinator, Semester 2 2011:*

Dr Wendy Lambourne, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, Room 106, Mackie Building  
Email: wendy.lambourne@sydney.edu.au      Tel: 9036 9286      Fax: 9660 0862

### **Developing a Research Proposal**

1. draw up a shortlist of topics
2. consult with potential supervisor and agree on a topic that you feel passionate about
3. read enough to establish the topic's 'place in the scholarship' (how it relates to other relevant research) and to confirm that you're on the right track – and to get inspiration regarding conceptual, theoretical and/or practical questions to be answered by your research
4. focus the research question or group of related questions, taking into account significance and feasibility, including appropriate size and scope, availability of resources and supervision
5. decide how you will gather the evidence required to answer the question/s: what type of methodology will be required, what type of evidence/sources and how might it be analysed
6. prepare a research proposal (or draft Introduction) of 1000 words including:
  - 1) why you are doing this research (inspiration, significance)
  - 2) scope and parameters of topic: key areas of enquiry and key concepts
  - 3) how your topic relates to other relevant research (place in scholarship)
  - 4) what question/s you will be answering (research question/s)
  - 5) how you will do it (methodology and sources)
  - 6) what you will be covering in the dissertation (chapter structure)
  - 7) a preliminary bibliography (identifying potential primary as well as secondary sources).

## Researching and Writing a Dissertation

### Nature of Dissertation

- extensive exploration of topic of interest/relevance, combination of passion and scholarship
- skills: handling of issues, methodology, research, analysis, presentation, persuasion, scholarship
- importance: weighted as two units, one-quarter of aggregated marks for MPACS, impact on final grade, need to allocate sufficient time for dissertation as well as coursework units
- look at previous examples of MPACS dissertations (in CPACS Resource Centre)
- start now, work systematically (see *Timelines for Dissertation Completion*), finish on time, leave time for revision: remember you can't do everything!

### Research

- more than simply replication of opinions and prejudices: research substantiates, refutes, organises or generates theories and produces evidence that may challenge beliefs
- systematic and comprehensive; note both positive and negative outcomes
- think about strengths, limitations and implications of sources in terms of credibility and category (e.g. primary, secondary or self-generated)
- analysis rather than description or reportage; balance – acknowledge other perspectives
- keep precise information on location of sources, for re-examination and documentation
- start files: quotable material, bibliography, sections, appendices

### Presentation

- emphasise analysis and argument, use own words, make quotations clear, avoid plagiarism
- keep questions, issues, themes (from *Introduction*) to forefront throughout
- exercise in persuasion – assertion insufficient; blend of source material and commentary
- writing style: conciseness, relevance, readability, correctness – importance of proofreading!
- comprehend perspective of examiners, fellow students and other readers
- full and balanced *Conclusion* crucial, summarising findings, linking back to *Introduction*
- allow time for revision of drafts (see *Timelines for Dissertation Completion*)

### Documentation

- purpose of scholarly apparatus: needs to be thorough and consistent in style
- two components: source references and bibliography
- source referencing styles: footnote model (recommended) or in-text social science model (refer to *CPACS Assignment Presentation and Assessment Guidelines* for referencing advice)

Useful information on referencing and other aspects of dissertation-writing may also be obtained from the SUPRA *Thesis Guide* available in the CPACS Resource Centre, from SUPRA and online at: [http://www.supra.usyd.edu.au/Sections/Publications/Regular\\_Publications/Thesis\\_Guide.html](http://www.supra.usyd.edu.au/Sections/Publications/Regular_Publications/Thesis_Guide.html).

### Research Methods

Research methods could include qualitative research and analysis; quantitative measurement and statistical analysis; primary or secondary documentary research; social surveys or interviews; participant observation, ethnographic methods or action research; case studies or comparative research. Students are encouraged to consult research methodology textbooks and the recommended texts: Norman Denzin and Michael Giardina (2008) *Qualitative Enquiry and the Politics of Evidence* California: Left Coast Press; Norman Denzin (1989) *The Research Act: A Theoretical Introduction to Sociological Methods*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall. FISHER 301.108 26B; Colin Robson (1993) *Real World Research: A Resource for Social Scientists and Practitioner-Researchers*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell. CPACS RESOURCE CENTRE 001.4 ROB.

### Timelines for Dissertation Completion

These timelines are designed for students completing Dissertation Parts 1 and 2 in consecutive semesters. Please consult with the Dissertation Coordinator about an appropriate timeline if you are completing both parts of the dissertation in one semester, or any other structure of dissertation completion

#### *PACS6904 Sem 1 & PACS6905 Sem 2 2011*

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH + CONFIRMATION OF TOPIC AND SUPERVISOR	Monday 2 May 2011
RESEARCH PROPOSAL PRESENTATION + SUBMISSION OF 1000 WORD RESEARCH PROPOSAL	Monday 17 and 24 May 2011
BULK OF RESEARCH COMPLETED + DRAFT OF FIRST CHAPTERS SUBMITTED TO SUPERVISOR	Monday 1 August 2011
FURTHER RESEARCH, WRITING & REVISION	Ongoing
FULL DRAFT TO SUPERVISOR	Monday 10 October 2011
FINAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE	Monday 24 October 2011

*PACS6904 Sem 2 2011 & PACS6905 Sem 1 2012*

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH + CONFIRMATION OF TOPIC AND SUPERVISOR	Monday 5 September 2011
SUBMISSION OF 1000 WORD RESEARCH PROPOSAL	Tuesday 4 October 2011
BULK OF RESEARCH COMPLETED + DRAFT OF FIRST CHAPTERS SUBMITTED TO SUPERVISOR	Monday 5 March 2012
FURTHER RESEARCH, WRITING & REVISION	Ongoing
FULL DRAFT TO SUPERVISOR	Monday 14 May 2012
FINAL SUBMISSION DEADLINE	Monday 25 June 2012

**Formal Presentation and Submission Requirements**

Please refer to the *CPACS Assignment Presentation and Assessment Guidelines* for essential information about presentation and submission of written work including dissertations. Dissertations are to be between 12,000 and 15,000 words in length. **(NB: Penalties apply for exceeding word limit).** Bibliography, appendices and footnote citations are not normally included in the word count. Quotations should be in the main body of the dissertation and are included in the word count. Quotations over three lines are to be indented and single spaced. Preferred font size is 12 for main text and 10 for footnotes. and preferred font style is Times New Roman.

Two bound typed copies must be submitted to the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies by the due date (see *Timelines for Dissertation Completion*). Dissertations should be on A4 size paper, one and a half line spacing, with generous left hand margins to allow for binding. Dissertations should be bound using either cerlox, spiral or thermal binding available on campus in the Wentworth Building or at Officeworks. The title page should include the title of the dissertation, student's name, name of the degree, university name and date submitted (see previous examples of submitted dissertations).

**Please consult the *CPACS Assignment Presentation and Assessment Guidelines* for information regarding extension and special consideration requests for late submission of work.**

## What Makes a Good Dissertation?

- original and significant: worth doing
- answers a question, develops a thesis
- feasible and manageable: within the timeframe, with the available resources, appropriate to the skills of the researcher
- adds to conceptual or theoretical knowledge (with the potential to be published), and has the capacity to produce practical outcomes such as policy change or improved practice
- pays attention to ‘peace with justice’ tradition of inquiry and action
- embraces lateral thinking as well as intellectual curiosity
- displays humility, sensitivity, creativity and insight

Following is a summary of points made by University of Sydney academics about exceptional dissertations:

• Coverage of relevant literature	• A logical structure
• Sustained focus on topic	• Original ideas and insights
• Clear, concise writing style	• Credibility and persuasiveness
• Professional presentation	• Balance and measure
• Readability	• A critical, detailed analysis
• Synthesis of essential information	• Appropriate documentation and meticulous referencing
• Attention to detail	• Theoretical treatment of the material
• Ability to grasp the ‘big picture’, i.e. historical, political, social, economic context	• Addresses the research question or topic as stated in the title and introduction in the body and conclusion

See also the separate document: “Graduate Attributes: Arts Faculty Statement”