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IMPORTANT:
For student policies and procedures relating to assessment, attendance and student support, please see website, https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/

The School of Education acknowledges the Bidjigal and Gadigal people as the traditional custodians of the lands upon which we learn and teach.
1. LOCATION

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
School of Education
EDST 5201 Critical Thinking in Education (6 units of credit)
Semester 1, 2016

2. STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

Course Coordinator: Greg Leaney
Office Location: John Goodsell 132
Email: g.leaney@unsw.edu.au
Phone: 
Availability: By appointment

3. COURSE DETAILS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name</th>
<th>Critical Thinking in Education</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credit Points</td>
<td>6 units of credit (uoc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>Includes 150 hours including class contact hours, readings, class preparation, assessment, follow up activities, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Schedule                     | Lecture/seminar Wednesday 7-9pm, John Goodsell LG21 Weeks 1-12 |

Summary of Course

This course addresses ethical, political, epistemological and metaphysical views underlying educational practices and debates. It examines topics such as the aims in education, the ideal of an educated person, neutrality and indoctrination in teaching, authority and professional relations in schooling, knowledge and curriculum construction, learning and understanding, and social justice considerations, in order to develop philosophical and critical competence and knowledge.

The main ways in which the course has changed since last time as a result of student feedback are:
- Not applicable this year as this course is being re-offered for the first time in several years.

Aims of the Course

Through critical reflection and evaluation this course aims to develop your knowledge and understanding of:
- Differing goals and approaches towards education;
- Student characteristics and how students learn;
- Ethical principles and their relevance for education and teaching.

Important Information

Attendance: Students are expected to give priority to university study commitments. Unless specific and formal permission has been granted, failure to attend 80% of classes in a course may result in failure.
Assessment: Students must pass ALL assignments in order to pass the course. Students are required to follow their lecturer’s instructions when submitting their work for assessment. All assessment will be submitted online via Moodle by 5pm. Students no longer need to use a cover sheet. Students are also required to keep all drafts, original data and other evidence of the authenticity of the work for at least one year after examination. If an assessment is mislaid the student is responsible for providing a further copy. Please see the Student Policies and Procedures (https://education.arts.unsw.edu.au/students/resources/policies-guidelines/) for information regarding submission, extensions, special consideration, late penalties and hurdle requirements etc.

Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Assessment/s</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Critically reflect on the conceptions of, purposes for, and goals of education, and how these relate to the student, the teacher and schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Critically examine the conceptual issues of knowledge, meaning, curriculum, and pedagogy through theories of learning, and come to a considered evaluative position on the interplay of these conceptual issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Understand and critically evaluate the socio-political purposes of education, including an examination of the philosophical underpinning and practice of teaching in a democracy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Acquire and/or improve, through philosophical examination, the use of the critically reflective skills of explanation, evaluation, analysis and argumentation</td>
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Graduate Attributes

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Assessment/s</th>
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</table>
| 1        | **Advanced disciplinary knowledge and practices**  
Demonstrate an advanced understanding of the field of education as it relates to their specialist area of study, and the ability to synthesise and apply disciplinary principles and practices to new or complex environments. | 1,2,3 |
| 2        | **Enquiry-based learning**  
Demonstrate an in-depth understanding of research-based learning and the ability to plan, analyse, present implement and evaluate complex activities that contribute to advanced professional practice and/or intellectual scholarship in education. | 1,2,3 |
| 3        | **Cognitive skills and critical thinking**  
Demonstrate advanced critical thinking and problem solving skills. | 1,2,3 |
| 4        | **Communication, adaptive and interactional skills**  
Communicate effectively to a range of audiences, and be capable of independent and collaborative enquiry and team-based leadership. | 1,2 |
| 5        | **Global outlook**  
Demonstrate an understanding of international perspectives relevant to the educational field. | 1,2 |
| 6        | **Ethics**  
Demonstrate an advanced capacity to recognise and negotiate the complex and often contested values and ethical practices that underlie education. | 1,2,3 |
4. RATIONALE FOR THE INCLUSION OF CONTENT AND TEACHING APPROACH

- Education is a critically reflective enterprise:
The content, conduct, and organisation of education give rise to a number of critically reflective questions, which ask things like:
  o What are the meanings of various claims or arguments made in the field of education?
  o How should schools be structured and how should students be taught?

- As a critically reflective enterprise, questions about education cannot only be answered by gathering empirical information:
Examining questions about education can, and typically does (and justifiably so), involve gathering empirical information. However, critically reflective questions are not empirical questions: they are normative, evaluative, political, moral and/or philosophical questions.

- Critical thinking includes a range of skills that need to be acquired, and continually practised and improved upon:
This course will explore what is involved in critically thinking about education, and will require you to utilise critically reflective thinking skills in classroom and assessment activities.

5. TEACHING STRATEGIES

Teaching strategies used during the course will include:
  o explicit teaching including lecture instruction and a range of strategies to foster interest and support learning;
  o structured occasions for reflection on learning to allow students to reflect critically on issues discussed;
  o opportunities for whole group and small group dialogue and discussion, allowing students the opportunity to demonstrate their capacity to communicate;
  o online learning from readings and web links on the EDST5201 Moodle website.
These activities will occur in a classroom climate that is supportive and inclusive of all learners.
6. COURSE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week Date</th>
<th>Lecture topic</th>
<th>Required reading</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 1</strong></td>
<td><strong>What is education and schooling?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2 9 Mar</td>
<td>Goals of Australian education</td>
<td>Peters (1972)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 4 23 Mar</td>
<td>The profession of teaching, professional obligations &amp; rights</td>
<td>Carr (2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mid-semester break 25/3-3/4</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 2</strong></td>
<td><strong>What can, and should, be taught and learned?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 5 6 Apr</td>
<td>Conceptions of knowledge: Empiricism, rationalism, social constructivism</td>
<td>Musgrave (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 6 13 Apr</td>
<td>Conceptions of meaning: Scepticism, empiricism, constructivism</td>
<td>Groundwater-Smith, Ewing &amp; Le Cornu (2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 7 20 Apr</td>
<td>Meaning &amp; curriculum. Subject disciplines, constructivism, constructionism</td>
<td>Mercer &amp; Howe (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 8 27 Apr</td>
<td>Approaches to learning: Individual, social, critical</td>
<td>Mulnix (2012)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Module 3</strong></td>
<td><strong>What are schools for politically?</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 9 4 May</td>
<td>Values &amp; ethics</td>
<td>Lovat, et al (2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 10 11 May</td>
<td>Ethical theories &amp; political models of education</td>
<td>Beauchamp &amp; Childress (2009)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 11 18 May</td>
<td>Multiculturalism &amp; the politics of difference</td>
<td>Balint (2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 12 25 May</td>
<td>Socially just democratic education: Freedom &amp; fairness</td>
<td>Reich (2007)</td>
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</table>
7. ASSESSMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Task</th>
<th>Length</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Learning Outcomes Assessed</th>
<th>Graduate Attributes Assessed</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1: Reflective Learning Journal – Module 1</td>
<td>1,500 words</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1,4</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,6</td>
<td>29/3/2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>2: Reflective Learning Journal – Module 2 &amp; 3</td>
<td>3,000 words</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
<td>1,2,3,4,5,6</td>
<td>30/5/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3: Essay</td>
<td>2,000 words</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>1,2,3,4</td>
<td>1,2,3,6</td>
<td>6/6/2016</td>
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</table>

Assessment Details

Assessment 1: Reflective Learning Journal – Module 1

Length: 1,500 words approx., 12-pt double-spaced (1,000 + 400 + 100 = 1,500). This is a guiding suggestion – it is not a strict upper word limit (as I do not require nor want you to artificially limit your notes). You might need to rework or ‘clean up’ your weekly reactions for the Reflective Learning Journal submissions, so that they are sufficiently clear and comprehensive.

Due: 5pm on Tuesday 29th March 2016 (i.e. Tuesday after Week 4). This assessment piece is due early in the semester so that you can evaluate if you would like to continue in the course prior to the census date of 31/3/2016.

Weight: 20%

Purpose: To assess your understanding and evaluation of the course’s material, and to receive feedback from the marker for how you are progressing in the reflective learning journal process (Thorpe, 2004).

Method: Record your thoughts on the course’s reading and class material for each week:

(a) Readings: The first part of this record should be your brief reaction to each of the required weekly readings for Module 1 in the Course Outline placed on the course’s Moodle website: **250 words for each of the 4 required readings (1,000 words approx.).**

You are **required** to read the set reading scheduled for each week **prior** to the relevant class, as in-class discussions are in part based upon your reactions to these readings. **You are strongly encouraged to engage in some way with all of the required readings before the face-to-face classes begin;** reading complex academic articles more than once helps you to clarify, understand and evaluate the concepts and issues they raise.

Structure your 250 word written reaction to the readings using these 4 headings of “Main point”, “Support”, “Evaluation” & “Interesting”:

- Main point: What is the main point or argument of this reading?
- Support: Briefly identify and explain the reasons, evidence, or premises that the author/s give/s in support of this main point or argument.
- Evaluation: Evaluate the reading. Do you agree with the author/s/authors’ position? Why or why not?
- Interesting: You should take note of anything that you find interesting, or confusing, or about which you would like to raise as a question.

Bring these thoughts, questions, etc. to each class, as in-class discussions will be based upon the interaction of the class’s prepared thoughts. It is also encouraged for you to bring anything of relevance that you see in the media or other outside sources.

(b) Classes: The second part of this record should be your brief reaction to the class material and discussions following each week: **100 words for each of the first 4 weeks of class (400 words approx.).** For example, any one or more of the following are acceptable:
What did you learn? What (if anything) did you find interesting, or informative, or clearer, or still puzzling? Which example/s can you give that illustrate, confirm or conflict with that week’s material? These questions are different ways for you to engage in self-evaluation of your current state of understanding of the course’s material, and the debates and issues that it has raised.

(3) Module summary: At the end of each module you should come to an evaluative position on the central questions and theme involved. **100 words for the 1st module (100 words approx.).**

**Assessment 2: Reflective Learning Journal – Module 2 & 3**

Length: 3,000 words approx., 12-pt double-spaced (2,000 + 800 + 200 = 3,000). This is a guiding suggestion – it is not a strict upper word limit (as I do not require nor want you to artificially limit your notes). You might need to rework or ‘clean up’ your weekly reactions for the Reflective Learning Journal submissions, so that they are sufficiently clear and comprehensive.

**Due:** 5pm on Monday 30th May 2016 (i.e. Monday after Week 12).

**Weight:** 40%.

**Purpose:** To assess your understanding and evaluation of the entire course’s material, and how that has developed over the course.

**Method:** Record your thoughts on the course’s reading and class material for each week:

**(a) Readings:** The first part of this record should be your brief reaction to each of the required weekly readings for Module 2 & 3 in the Course Outline placed on the course’s Moodle website: **250 words for each of the 8 required readings (2,000 words approx.).** You are **required** to read the set reading scheduled for each week **prior** to the relevant class, as in-class discussions are in part based upon your reactions to these readings. Structure your 250 word written reaction to the readings using these 4 headings of “Main point”, “Support”, “Evaluation” & “Interesting”:

- **Main point:** What is the main point or argument of this reading?
- **Support:** Briefly identify and explain the reasons, evidence, or premises that the author/s give/s in support of this main point or argument.
- **Evaluation:** Evaluate the reading. Do you agree with the author’s/authors’ position? Why or why not?
- **Interesting:** You should take note of anything that you find interesting, or confusing, or about which you would like to raise as a question.

Bring these thoughts, questions, etc. to each class, as in-class discussions will be based upon the interaction of the class’s prepared thoughts. It is also encouraged for you to bring anything of relevance that you see in the media or other outside sources.

**(b) Classes:** The second part of this record should be your brief reaction to the class material and discussions following each week: **100 words for each of the 8 final weeks of class (800 words approx.).** For example, any one or more of the following are acceptable:

- What did you learn? What (if anything) did you find interesting, or informative, or clearer, or still puzzling? Which example/s can you give that illustrate, confirm or conflict with that week’s material?
- These questions are different ways for you to engage in self-evaluation of your current state of understanding of the course’s material, and the debates and issues that it has raised.

(3) **Module summary:** At the end of each module you should come to an evaluative position on the central questions and theme involved. **100 words for each of the 2nd & 3rd modules (200 words approx.).**
**UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**FEEDBACK SHEET**

**EDST5201 CRITICAL THINKING AND EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Name:</th>
<th>Student No.:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Task: Reflective Learning Journal</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### SPECIFIC CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Understanding of the question or issue and the key concepts involved:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• understanding of the set readings and their relationship to relevant areas of theory, research and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understanding of the lecture and tutorial material and their relationship to relevant areas of theory, research and practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clarity and accuracy in use of key terms and concepts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• understanding of the key principles described in codes of ethics and conduct for the teaching profession.</td>
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</table>

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Depth of analysis and/or critique in response to the task:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• depth of analysis of relevant key concepts and principles in the set readings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• depth of analysis of areas of educational impact of the issues/concepts raised in the lecture and tutorial material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• clarity and depth of argument in relation to the issues/concepts raised in the course material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• evidence of personal responses to the issues/concepts raised in the course material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• demonstration of knowledge and understanding of physical, social and intellectual development and characteristics of students and how these may affect learning, demonstration of knowledge and understanding of research into how students learn and the implications for teaching.</td>
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<th>Familiarity with and relevance of professional and/or research literature used to support response:</th>
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<td>• clarity and appropriateness of sentence structure, vocabulary use, spelling, punctuation and word length.</td>
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### GENERAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT TIME

**Lecturer**

**Date**

**Recommended:** /20 (FL PS CR DN HD)

**Weighting:** 20% or 40%

**NB:** The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualize and/or amend these specific criteria. **The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.**
Assessment 3 – Essay

Length: 2,000 words, 12-pt double-spaced.  
Due: 5pm on Monday 6th June 2016 (i.e. two Mondays after Week 12).  
Weight: 40%.  
Purpose: To examine and evaluate one of the educational debates raised in the course material once you have already engaged with all the course’s material.

Method: Choose one of the essay questions from the options below. Produce a succinct formal academic essay with: correct structure (i.e. introduction, body, and conclusion); utilisation of relevant academic and professional resources; correct APA referencing and overall academic presentation; and personal deliberation and argumentation.

Select one of the following topics and write an essay:

(1) Peters (1972) describes a conception of education that values “it because it has now become the royal road to better jobs and to getting on in the world”; that is, education being for vocational and social purposes. He describes an alternative conception of education which aims at producing the “educated person”, which is “someone who is capable of delighting in a variety of pursuits and projects for their own sake and whose pursuit of them and general conduct of his [or her] life are transformed by some degree of all-round understanding and sensitivity” (p.9).

Central question: What should the purpose of education be?

Involved steps and questions: Explain what is involved in each of these conceptions of education. Which view or views do you agree with, and why? Briefly describe what approach to pedagogy and content would be involved in your evaluation of the purpose of education.

(2) Neill (1982) states that at Summerhill they “set out to make a school in which we should allow children freedom to be themselves. In order to do this, we had to renounce all discipline, all direction, all suggestion, all moral training, all religious instruction. We have been called brave, but it did not require courage. All it required was what we had – a complete belief in the child as a good, not an evil, being” (p.369).

Wringe (1988) explains that educators “characteristically oblige children to do things they do not immediately want to do in the belief that restriction placed on their negative freedom now will be more than compensated by their enhanced autonomy or positive freedom later on (White, 1973, p. 22), as a result of the useful things they are about to learn” (p.47).

Central question: Is freedom or compulsion/obligation the best way to educate the young?

Involved steps and questions: Explain the views of freedom and compulsion discussed by these educational theorists. Which view do you agree with, and why? Briefly describe what approach to pedagogy and content would be involved in your evaluation of the best view of education.

(3) Carr (2003) claims “first, that education is – no less than health and justice – an inherently normative concept; secondly (and consequently), that teaching is – no less than medicine and law – an essentially moral practice” (p.39).
He further claims that “since many if not most professional issues will be as much moral as technical, some capacity for authentic and intellectually responsible engagement with controversial questions about the ultimate contribution of professional practice to human flourishing must surely be a sine qua non [that is, defining or intrinsic characteristic] of effective professionalism, and the job of the professional academy cannot therefore be merely that of instruction in second-hand or uncontroversial techniques” (Carr, 2003, p.41).

Central questions: Is teaching a professional enterprise? What does this mean for how teachers are trained?

Involved steps and questions: What defines a profession? Is teaching a profession? Do you agree that teaching is an inherently moral enterprise? Why or why not? What implications for the training of teachers would result from your position? What implications for your approach to pedagogy and content would result from your position?

(4) Musgrave (1993) contends that “[r]ather than trying to defend the reducibility of all knowledge to propositional knowledge, I think it better to admit that the justified true belief account really applies only to one kind of knowledge” (p.8).

Central question: What, if any, knowledge can be taught by teachers to students?

Involved steps and questions: What is the justified true belief account of knowledge? Are there other kinds of knowledge? Do we really know anything? If we have knowledge, what do we know? If we have knowledge, how do we know it? Briefly describe what approach to pedagogy and content would be involved in your evaluation of the question of knowledge.

(5) The 2004 NSW Department of Education and Communities Ministerial Statement Values in NSW Public Schools states has as one of its social outcomes that in “classrooms and school communities the core values of NSW public schools will contribute to a society that: values all people” (Refshauge, 2004, p.6).

Balint (2010) argues, however, “that using education to encourage the respect and appreciation of difference is deeply problematic for both adults and children” because “it is a poor servant of those whose differences it is meant to protect, and crucially that it cannot be justified on the key liberal premise of protecting the freedom of individuals to live their (non-harming) lives as they see fit” (p.129).

Central question: Should we try to teach values in schools and, if so, how?

Involved steps and questions: What is the overall approach to teaching values in NSW public schools? How can it be justified? How can it be challenged? If you agree with teaching values in schools briefly describe what approach to pedagogy and content would be involved in your approach to values education.
### UNSW SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
### FEEDBACK SHEET
### EDST5201 CRITICAL THINKING AND EDUCATION

**Student Name:**

**Assessment Task:** Essay

### SPECIFIC CRITERIA

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### GENERAL COMMENTS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NEXT TIME

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**Lecturer**

**Date**

**Recommended:** /20 (FL PS CR DN HD)

**Weighting:** 40%

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**NB:** The ticks in the various boxes are designed to provide feedback to students; they are not given equal weight in determining the recommended grade. Depending on the nature of the assessment task, lecturers may also contextualize and/or amend these specific criteria. **The recommended grade is tentative only, subject to standardisation processes and approval by the School of Education Learning and Teaching Committee.**
TIPS FOR ASSESSMENT PIECES

The assessments pieces will be assessed on your demonstrated understanding of the material, and on the quality of your argument. Arguments may, and usually are, contestable. However, some arguments are good ones, and others are poor. You should endeavour to make sure that yours are good, and good arguments are clear, coherent and comprehensive.

A good argument (amongst other things) takes account of objections that have been made or might reasonably be made – not just to the conclusion, but also to the premises or the logic. You should look therefore at arguments against the conclusion that you think you should draw, and against your premises and logic. And you should give a careful reply. Ask yourself if your argument is coherent, plausible, and defendable.

Your argument’s premises may include some value premises and some factual ones, or some that are both at once. (There are problems with the distinction that is claimed to exist between facts and values.) If you can defend them against plausible alternative views, so much the better.

Your argument will need to include support from academic references. Although simply relying on piecing together material from outside references will not replace having a good argument, utilising academic references appropriately will strengthen your argument. Any references must be referenced correctly in APA style, and this includes the relevant page/s number/s of the source material used where appropriate.

For the essay, there is likely to be more than one plausible answer to the educational issue you choose. You should combat the arguments for this/these alternative/s, if it/they clash/es with yours (which often will be the case).

Note: It is quite acceptable in this subject, and usually significantly grammatically easier, to write in the first person (e.g. “I argue that…”; “First I will examine…”) in all the assessment tasks.
8. RESOURCES

Required Readings

Note: A copy of all 12 of the required readings will be posted on the course’s Moodle website.

Module 1


Module 2


Module 3


Further Resources


Other resources materials will be uploaded to the course’s Moodle website if they become relevant to the course content.