

**Department of Sociology**

**END OF YEAR COURSE REPORT 2016/17**

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| Name of Course and Mnemonic: Critical Methods in MCS SOCL923 |
| Course Convenor(s): Adrian Mackenzie |
| Term Taught: 2 |
| Number of students taking the module (including break-down of those doing it for credit, auditor, students' degree scheme):  16 all for credit; all MA MCS (I think) |
| Any important elements of student feedback from the University electronic survey and/or the departmental paper survey:  The paper survey comments reflect generally positive experiences of the course (with one exception – ‘boring, irrelevant, not useful, not focused on my personal research project’). Students like the project component, the guest visits and the group work. |
| Any logistical, organisational issues (timetabling, rooms, etc.):  None to report really. The room was slightly too small, but this is fairly normal.  Students and I really appreciate colleagues (Deville, Meissner, Gilloch, Jensen, Fish) who give up time to be interviewed. But I do have trouble coordinating colleagues visits with course content. |
| Reflections on module content and structure:  This module is based around groupwork research, as well as a series of talks with colleagues from the department. As a structure, the mixture of regular work on a project and encounters with different approaches to research seems to work well.  Although this is ostensibly a methods course, it places a lot of emphasis on engagement with substantial issues in contemporary media and culture. That sometimes poses problems for students new to MCS. |
| Comments about teaching issues (lessons learned, examples of good practice, reflections on new LT strategy introduced this year, etc.):  The best idea I had for the course this year was to unilaterally asssign group research topics, and to assign them all the same topic. In past years, I’ve allowed them to choose their own, and they’ve often floundered. This year I just set a single topic – fake news – and all the groups worked on it in different ways. That become a key part of the course experience – groups could see how other groups were developing research question or their methodology, and they seemed to learn quite a bit from that. Not sure if this is generalizable. |