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@MU\_\_Politics

### What are Special Topics?



This is your undergraduate dissertation where you conduct your own research and produce a body of work of between 8-10,000 words.

You attend core lectures covering **general** issues in research design, and project completion, such as drafting research

questions, sourcing literature, finding and analysing data, and writing up.

You also attend special topics groups led by individual staff covering **specific** areas of politics and sociology, and define the topics on which you will conduct your research. These change year to year, but have included topics such as gender, work, sport, inequality, education, culture, politics, and social movements.

Examples of previous student projects include:

- Covid 19 and Youth Employment
- Gendered Childhood and Children's Future Aspirations
- Food and Identity among Immigrant Communities
- Childcare and Lone Parenthood in Dublin and Zimbabwe
- Women's Experiences of Breastfeeding
- Visualisations and Representations of Place
- Biopolitics and Drug Users
- Bodies and Celebrity Culture



### When does it happen?



#### SEMESTER 1

- Week 1-10** Core lectures
- Week 2** Sign up online to your individual special topic group
- Week 3** Special topic groups meet weekly until week 8 semester 2
- Week 10** Core lectures end
- Week 12** Submit Research proposal with a preliminary literature review

#### SEMESTER 2

- Week 1** Continue with your special topic weekly group
- Week 1-8** Methods chapter, data collection, analysis write up
- Week 8** Special topic weekly group ends
- Week 10** Submit your final dissertation

### How is it graded?

<b>Worth a total of 10 credits</b>	(30% final subject grade)
<b>Proposal</b>	25%
<b>Final dissertation</b>	65%
<b>Participation mark</b>	10% (Core 3%, Groups 7%)

### What do I do?



**MID DECEMBER:** Submit a Research Proposal, this includes a preliminary literature review due (minimum of 10 sources/citations and a maximum of 2,000 words). This is worth 25% of the overall mark. You will not be awarded a mark for your final thesis without first having your proposal approved by your special topic leader.

**MID APRIL:** Submit your final Special Topic Research Project – the following format is recommended but you may adapt these guidelines in consultation your Special Topic Leader.

You will collect and analyse data on a topic based on your special topic group theme. This could include:

1. 8-10 semi-structured interviews or 50 surveys.
2. Analysis of media documents.
3. Secondary analysis of existing datasets.
4. Exploration of historical public or policy documents.
5. Analysis of audio-visual or online material such as websites, blogs, or social media.

Your final project will comprise a review of literature, methodology, analysis of data, and discussion of findings. You will be given a 'style guide' using the following general format.

In general, projects are expected to be between 8,000 and 10,000 words in length, which is between 25-35 double-spaced, typed pages. Please use font size of 12 points, double-spacing format, and include page numbers. There is a 'how to format your thesis in MS Word' document available on the SO3030A Moodle page.

Please adhere to the CITATION STYLE GUIDE on SO303A Moodle page and department website. [https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/ASA%20Referencing%20Guide%20for%20MU%20Studentsfinal\\_0.pdf](https://www.maynoothuniversity.ie/sites/default/files/assets/document/ASA%20Referencing%20Guide%20for%20MU%20Studentsfinal_0.pdf)

Submit as a pdf document to Special Topic Leader but retain a digital and/or hard copy.



# 3RD YEAR UNDERGRADUATE DISSERTATION SPECIAL TOPICS

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