



Victoria Management School

MGMT 404 MMMS 505 - RESEARCH METHODS

Trimester 1 2005

COURSE OUTLINE

COURSE COORDINATOR

Dr Bob Cavana

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Website: www.vuw.ac.nz/vms

ADMINISTRATION ASSISTANT

Mrs Tricia Lapham

Room: RH 919, Rutherford House
Phone: 463-5381

LECTURE TIME AND LOCATION

Wednesday 8:30-11:20am RLWY 129

EXAM

A 3 hour 'closed book' final exam will be held during the period 30 May – 18 June 2005, at a date and time to be advised.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of this course, we expect that students should be able to:

- Have an overview of the purpose of business and management research, the qualities of a good researcher, types of research, the research process and the characteristics of a good research project.
- Have a broad understanding of conceptual & philosophical issues as they relate to the research process including research paradigms and related methodologies.
- Be able to understand and critically evaluate qualitative and quantitative research in the business and management fields.
- Search relevant literature and develop appropriate research designs for their own research questions.

- Understand practical issues as they relate to the research process including ethics, negotiating access, relationships with stakeholders, and the writing process.
- Prepare a research proposal.
- Understand and be able to apply a range of qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection, data analysis and interpretation.

COURSE CONTENT

The learning approach on this course will be through a combination of lectures, class discussion, workshop activities and student presentations. The course content is summarized in the schedule below.

MGMT 404 / MMMS 505 Research Methods Course Schedule – 2005

Week	Date	Topics	Readings	Assignments
1	Feb 23	Intro & course overview Intro to management & business research Ethical issues Scientific research & the research process	ABR, ch 1 & 2	
2	Mar 2	Research reporting Evaluating research Case – Sutton & Rafaeli AMJ article	ABR, ch 14 & 15 Reading 10 -Frost & Stablein, pp 113-140	
3	Mar 9	Prelim info gathering & problem definition Framework development & research objectives Research design & planning	ABR, ch 3, 4 & 5	
4	Mar 16	Intro to qualitative research I	ABR, ch 6 & 7	
5	Mar 23	Intro to qualitative research II (Guest lecturer – Dr Deborah Jones, VMS)	Handouts	
<i>Mid-Trimester Break</i>				Assignment 1 due by 5pm April 4
6	Apr 13	Intro to qualitative research III Student presentations - evaluations of qualitative research articles		Assignment 2 due in class
7	Apr 20	Measurement of variables Scaling, reliability & validity	ABR, ch 8 & 9	
8	Apr 27	Questionnaire design	ABR, ch 10	
9	May 4	Sampling Experimental designs	ABR, ch 11 & 12	
10	May 11	SPSS workshop – descriptive statistical analysis	ABR, ch 13 & App I	
11	May 18	SPSS workshop – inferential statistics & hypothesis testing	ABR, ch 13 & App I	
12	May 25	SPSS workshop – further data analysis End of course review		Assignment 3 due in class
<i>Study/Exam period</i>				Assignment 4 due 5pm June 1 Exam

TEXTS AND READINGS

The **required textbook** which can be obtained from the University bookstore for the course is:
Cavana, R.Y., Delahaye, B.L., & Sekaran, U. (2001). *Applied business research: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. Brisbane: John Wiley and Sons.

A **supplementary textbook** (not compulsory) that students may find useful is:
Frost, R. & Stablein, R. (1992). *Doing exemplary research*. Newbury Park, Ca.: Sage.

Course Notes: These will include a book of readings, additional articles and chapters, and workshop exercises that will be distributed in class.

ASSESSMENT

The course will be assessed as follows:

	<u>Max Marks</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
1. Research Proposal	20%	5pm Monday, April 4
2. Evaluation of Qualitative Research Article	15%	Wednesday, April 13
3. SPSS data analysis exercises	10%	Wednesday, May 25
4. Evaluation of Quantitative Research Article	15%	5pm Wednesday, June 1
5. Final Exam	<u>40%</u>	June Exam Period
TOTAL ASSESSMENT	<u>100 %</u>	

Overall, the pass mark will be 50% of the total marks available in the course.

Except for work related to the group critical evaluations of research articles, all work submitted for assessment is to be your own, although you are encouraged to discuss your ideas as they develop with other students.

Assignment 1. Research Proposal (Due in MZ Box 23, RH by 5pm Monday, 4 April)

After the mid trimester break students will undertake a small guided pilot research project, as part of the course prescription for MGMT 430 & MMMS 530 (Research paper on a selected aspect of management). The scope of the pilot project will depend on the method (or combination of methods) you use. A rough guide is:

- in-depth interviews (say 1 hour plus) – up to 5 or
- short interviews (say 30 mins) – up to 15 (or more depending length) or
- questionnaires – 30 or more or
- observation – about 4 hours

Work should commence from week 2 onwards on preparing a *Research Proposal* for this project. The first major step in preparing a proposal is to gain the approval, for your *Topic Analysis* (or client brief) from the course coordinator. Generally the Topic Analysis demonstrates two major points: “firstly that you have identified an interesting and worthwhile problem for investigation and secondly, that you have a means of conducting a viable investigation within the time frame available. A topic analysis need not be a lengthy document and is equivalent of a preliminary client brief. Its main purpose is to convince your supervisor and others formally involved in its approval that you have a viable project” (Monica Cartner, July 1995, GSBGM).

The topic analysis will form the basis of your Research Proposal, which could serve as a working plan for your Research Project. This should be a maximum of 3000 words (excl. appendices). The research proposal could follow the guidelines outlined in detail by John Davies, David Smith and Mike Underhill (1989) in “*A Guide to Writing a Research Proposal*”, FC&A. (Reading 18) or summarised on pp 123-127 of the textbook, ‘*Applied Business Research*’. Or you may use other guidelines for preparing a research proposal if appropriate.

The research proposal will require you to:

- prepare an introduction;
- select a management or business issue to investigate;
- collect any preliminary information and undertake a literature review for the area;
- for quantitative research, develop a theoretical framework, define your research objective(s) and formulate at least three hypotheses;
- for qualitative research develop a conceptual framework, define your research objective(s) and formulate at least two research questions;
- your research may involve a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods;
- outline the research design for the project;
- attach a research budget & research schedule;
- attach also a draft VUW human ethics committee research agreement form.

Assignment 2. Critical Evaluation of a Qualitative Research Article

This assignment requires the critical evaluation of a predominantly qualitative research article (*due for presentation in class on Wednesday 13 April*).

This critical evaluation will be presented in class and a written form provided to the course coordinator (max 2,500 words, typed or prepared on a word processor) on the due date.

The article should be obtained from recognized management or business journals, and a copy of the article should be provided to the course coordinator with the written critique.

Guidelines for the critical evaluation of research articles are provided in the text book, supplementary text and readings. Students can use these guidelines as a basis for their critical evaluations.

The critical evaluation may be undertaken individually or jointly in groups of up to 3 students. All members of the group will receive the same mark unless their contributions are unequal, in which case the course coordinator will make an equitable adjustment. A statement should be provided with each critical evaluation outlining the percentage contribution of each group member.

Assignment 3. SPSS data analysis exercises

To encourage participation in SPSS workshops, a number of computer based exercises will be set involving the statistical analysis of management and business data. They will be due in class on Wednesday 25 May. Further details will be provided at the SPSS workshops.

Assignment 4. Critical Evaluation of a Quantitative Research Article

This assignment requires the critical evaluation of a predominantly quantitative research article (*due in MZ Box 23, RH by 5pm Wednesday 1 June*).

The critical evaluation will be presented in written form provided to the course coordinator (max 2,500 words, typed or prepared on a word processor) on the due date.

A few articles will be circulated to the class and students will be able to select one to critique.

The critical evaluation may be undertaken individually or jointly in groups of up to 3 students. All members of the group will receive the same mark unless their contributions are unequal, in which case the course coordinator will make an equitable adjustment. A statement should be provided with each critical evaluation outlining the percentage contribution of each group member.

5. Final Exam

This will be a 3 hour 'closed book' final examination covering all aspects of the course. Further details will be provided later in the course.

HANDLING ASSIGNMENTS

Handing in assignments

Assignments should be submitted, in hard copy form in class or in the course coordinators Post Box no. 23 on the Mezzanine floor of Rutherford House on the due date. Assignments received after that time will be deemed to be late.

Format for assignments

All assignments must be typed or word-processed. They all should have: a cover sheet stating your name, the course name, course coordinator name, assignment name and number, a word count and due date. You should also put page numbers on each page, and use in-text referencing and include a list of references at the end (see pp 72-75 of the Textbook (ABR).

All assignments will be marked for writing - that is, correctness, clarity, organisation, referencing - as well as for meeting the specific assignment objectives.

Penalties for lateness

We expect that deadlines will be honoured. In fairness to students who complete on time, work submitted after the due date will incur a penalty for lateness. The penalty is 5% of the original grade per day (or part of a day) late. Please let the course coordinator know as soon as you can if you think you might be late handing work in. In the event of unusual/unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement), please discuss waiver of the penalty with the course coordinator.

Penalties for exceeding word limit

Assignments exceeding the word limit will have 2.5% of the original grade per 100 words over the word limit. This is to reinforce the importance of 'accuracy, brevity & clarity' in business/management report writing!!

MANDATORY COURSE REQUIREMENTS (Terms)

Unless you have received the prior approval of the course coordinator, you must:

1. attend a minimum of nine of the 12 sessions,

2. submit all the assignments by the due dates,
3. participate in the class presentations of the group research critiques, and
4. attend the final exam.

In order to pass this course, you must satisfy the mandatory requirements and obtain at least 50% of the overall marks available (maximum of 100).

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Notices for this paper will be circulated by email. Please provide your email address to the course coordinator. For students unable to attend a session, please contact the course coordinator.

GENERAL UNIVERSITY POLICIES AND STATUTES

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly those regarding assessment and course of study requirements, and formal academic grievance procedures.

Student Conduct and Staff Conduct

The Statute on Student Conduct together with the Policy on Staff Conduct ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an atmosphere of safety and respect. The Statute on Student Conduct contains information on what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. For queries about complaint procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct, contact the Facilitator and Disputes Advisor. This Statute is available in the Faculty Student Administration Office or on the website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StudentConduct.

The policy on Staff Conduct can be found on the VUW website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/StaffConduct.

Academic Grievances

If you have any academic problems with your course you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Head of School or the Associate Dean (Students) of your Faculty. Class representatives are available to assist you with this process. If, after trying the above channels, you are still unsatisfied, formal grievance procedures can be invoked. These are set out in the Academic Grievances Policy which is published on the VUW website:

www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/AcademicGrievances.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity is about honesty – put simply it means **no cheating**. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct (www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at: www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html.

Students with Disabilities

The University has a policy of reasonable accommodation of the needs of students with disabilities. The policy aims to give students with disabilities an equal opportunity with all other students to demonstrate their abilities. If you have a disability, impairment or chronic medical condition (temporary, permanent or recurring) that may impact on your ability to participate, learn and/or achieve in lectures and tutorials or in meeting the course requirements, then please contact the Course Coordinator as early in the course as possible. Alternatively you may wish to approach a Student Adviser from Disability Support Services to confidentially discuss your individual needs and the options and support that are available. Disability Support Services are located on Level 1, Robert Stout Building, or phoning 463-6070, email: disability@vuw.ac.nz. The name of your School's Disability Liaison Person can be obtained from the Administrative Assistant or the School Prospectus.

Student Support

Staff at Victoria want students' learning experiences at the University to be positive. If your academic progress is causing you concern, please contact the relevant Course Co-ordinator, or Associate Dean who will either help you directly or put you in contact with someone who can.

The Student Services Group is also available to provide a variety of support and services. Find out more at www.vuw.ac.nz/st_services/ or email student-services@vuw.ac.nz.

VUWSA employs two Education Coordinators who deal with academic problems and provide support, advice and advocacy services, as well as organising class representatives and faculty delegates. The Education Office is located on the ground floor, Student Union Building, phone 463 6983 or 463 6984, email education@vuwsa.org.nz.