

School of Marketing and International Business

IBUS 405
RESEARCH METHODS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

Trimester 1 2006

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

Dr. Elizabeth L. Rose
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Office hours by appointment

Class Times and Room Numbers

Mondays, 11:30 a.m. – 13:20 p.m. (RWW 414)
Wednesdays, 9:30 a.m. – 12:20 p.m. (RWW 414)

Note: Some of the material for IBUS 405 (e.g., qualitative approaches to research), will be covered in Trimester 2, in a series of workshops. This material will not be examinable.

The two-hour final examination for IBUS 405 will be held during the Trimester 1 2006 examination period (5th – 24th June, 2006); the precise date and time will be advised during the trimester.

Course Objectives

IBUS 405 is designed to introduce Honours students in International Business to the principles and practice of research. The course covers the fundamentals of the research process, the statistical analysis and modelling of data, and qualitative approaches to research, all with a focus on issues specific to International Business.

Upon successful completion of IBUS 405, you will:

- Be better able to interpret the international business literature
- Understand the uses and limitations of common tools for analysing qualitative and quantitative data
- Develop competence in using data to assist in decisions
- Be prepared for further study and research in international business

Class sessions will generally consist of lectures and case discussions. All students are expected to take active roles in the discussions. You should plan on attending *each* class session, and on being thoroughly prepared to discuss any case analyses that have been assigned. Active and thoughtful participation is expected during the class meetings. Data analysis is not a spectator sport!

Course Content

The following topics will be covered during the course:

- Introduction to the research process
- Notions of variation
- Descriptive/exploratory analysis of quantitative data
- Notions of significance (confidence intervals, hypothesis tests, contingency tables/ χ^2 analysis, one-way ANOVA)
- Linear regression analysis and modelling (variable selection, residual analysis (issues of heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation), multicollinearity, transformation of variables)
- Logistic regression
- Factor analysis
- Qualitative approaches to research (to be covered in workshop sessions in Trimester 2)

Readings

The following text is required for this course, and should be purchased:

Field, A. (2005). *Discovering statistics using SPSS*. London: Sage Publications.

Additional readings will be distributed in class.

Materials and Equipment

No additional equipment will be required for this course.

You will be permitted one A4 sheet of notes (both sides of the paper) for the final examination. Calculators will not be permitted (or required) for the examination.

Assessment Requirements

The course will be assessed on the basis of 70% coursework and 30% final examination (two hours). All pieces of assessment will contribute to and test the course objectives.

The coursework consists of six assignments:

Assignment	Due date	Percentage of final mark
Data analysis cases (3)	To be advised; approximately weeks 4, 8 and 12	10% each (total of 30%)
Article critique	28 th April 2006	10%
Project	7 th June 2006	30%

Data analysis cases: Three data analysis cases will be assigned during the trimester. They will involve relatively large data sets, and will require you to clarify the business issues, analyse the data, develop a recommendation for action and prepare a memo describing your analysis and recommendations. The memos should be clear, and written in a professional manner. Be careful to write these memos for a general business audience. This means avoiding statistical jargon, while still maintaining precision in your wording. There is little point in being able to do statistical modelling if you are unable to communicate the results effectively. The not-so-hidden message here is that you should not plan on just slapping the assigned memo together at the last minute – both the analysis *and* the presentation are important!

Article critique: This assignment will involve developing a thoughtful and thorough critique of a published article, which will be provided in class. This assignment will be due on **Friday, 28th April 2006, by 5:00 p.m.**

Project: For the project, each student will define an issue to study, identify and collect appropriate data, analyse the data and prepare a written report to be submitted. The report should be in the style of an academic journal article. There is no restriction on the range of topics that can be addressed. The only requirement is that data analysis can shed light on the issue. The project will be due on **Wednesday, 7th June 2006**; please submit your paper to me electronically (Elizabeth.Rose@vuw.ac.nz). A written proposal for your project should be submitted to me, via e-mail, by **Wednesday, 26th April 2006**. The lengths of the written reports will vary, depending on the topic, but 15-20 pages of text (plus technical appendix) would be the norm.

Final examination: The final examination accounts for 30% of the assessment weighting for this course, and students will be expected to draw on what they have learned from the readings, lectures and assignments. The examination will be comprehensive. A single A4 sheet of notes (both sides) will be permitted in the examination room (no calculators). The date and time of the two-hour final will be notified on official university exam timetables.

Penalties

Late work will be accepted without penalty with good reason (e.g., a medical certificate) and prior permission. In other cases, five marks will be deducted (out of 100) for each day, or part day, the assignment is late.

Mandatory Course Requirements

Students must obtain at least 50% in the final exam, and 50% overall, to obtain a pass grade for this course.

Workload

You should expect to devote about 12-14 hours per week of independent study to this course.

Communication of Additional Information

Announcements regarding assignment due dates will be made in class and via e-mail. Data files for the data analysis cases will be distributed via e-mail. Please make sure that I have your up-to-date e-mail address and that your account has sufficient space available to receive the data files.

Additional Details

Return of assignments: Assignments will be returned in class. Uncollected assignments will be held by the SMIB office (RH 1121) for three months following the end of term, and disposed of after that time.

Guidelines for written assignments: Students are encouraged to use the ‘SMIB Guidelines to Written Material and Referencing’ for information as to how to present, submit, organise and reference their work. These guidelines, including examples of appropriate essay, report, and academic research formats, are available online at www.vuw.ac.nz/ibproject/referencing.htm.

Statistical software: We will generally use the SPSS software, version 12.0, for in-class examples. This software is available on the student machines in the Honours area of the Railway West Wing building. If you prefer to do your work using other statistical software, you are welcome to do so.

Some Considerations for Writing

As a postgraduate student, you will be spending a considerable portion of your time writing. Your written work should always be clear and direct. Writing that is sloppy and imprecise conveys an image of cloudy thinking, and you should be working toward clarity in both your thinking and your writing. The following points are intended to assist you in communicating more effectively.

1. Spell-checking and proof-reading are crucial, despite the fact that they are extremely annoying to do. Be careful to leave yourself sufficient time to complete these important tasks prior to submitting your work. While the Word grammar-check is certainly not infallible, it is generally a good idea to have a second look at wording that the software has identified as problematic.
2. Make sure that you are writing to the proper audience. For example, the data analysis cases for IBUS 405 should be written for a general business audience. You should not assume that a general business audience has extensive familiarity with statistical jargon. The project for IBUS 405 should be written for an academic audience.
3. Avoid using contractions in formal writing. Reports and papers that you submit in postgraduate classes should be considered formal writing.
4. The use of complete sentences is extremely important. It is often the case that phrases beginning with gerunds (e.g., ‘Meaning that...’) are difficult to make into complete sentences.

5. Proper punctuation makes your writing much easier to read. Remember to use commas to separate logical thoughts, and that the semicolon (;) should be used to separate two phrases that are each standalone sentences.
6. The typical convention is to spell out integers less than 10 (e.g., ‘two’, rather than ‘2’), and to use digits for integers greater than or equal to 10. In addition, it is best to avoid starting a sentence with digits (e.g., ‘59 percent of the respondents...’).
7. Be sure that you have agreement with respect to numbers and verb tenses throughout your writing.
8. The proper use of possessives is not complicated. Simply remember that the apostrophe (inverted comma), followed by the letter ‘s’, generally replaces ‘belonging to’. Thus:
 - company’s = belonging to the company
 - companies = more than one company
 - companies’ = belonging to more than one company
 - MNE’s = belonging to the MNE
 - MNEs = more than one MNE
 - MNEs’ = belonging to more than one MNE.
9. English, of course, has its grammatical oddities. One that is the source of many errors is ‘it’s’ vs. ‘its’:
 - it’s = it is (see note 3, above)
 - its = belonging to it.
10. When choosing between ‘which’ and ‘that’, a useful rule of thumb is that ‘which’ generally follows a comma (e.g., ‘the results, which were...’).
11. Many words assume rather specific meanings in particular contexts. When writing about the results of empirical analyses, you should be aware of the following:
 - ‘Variance’ is a specific measure of variation. Variance and variation are not equivalent concepts. To make things even more confusing, ‘variance’ has different specific meanings in the finance and accounting literatures.
 - ‘Significant’ should be saved for the situation in which you have conducted statistical testing and found a statistically significant result. Avoid using ‘significant’ as a synonym for ‘important’.
 - ‘Correlate’ has a particular meaning in empirical analysis. It refers to a linear relationship between two variables, not a generic relationship.
12. Information taken from other sources should be properly cited and referenced. Failure to do so represents intellectual dishonesty, which is taken very seriously in the academic community. Cited references should be listed at the end of the paper, in a format that provides complete information, allowing the interested and motivated reader to delve into the finer details of your argument. Please note that this pertains to specific information. Obviously, you do not need to reference the Field book every time you refer to statistical analysis. However, if you are using a particular section of a book as the justification for an argument, then you should point the reader to that part of the book.

Tentative Plan for IBUS 405 – Trimester 1, 2006

Dates	Topic and Readings
27 th February & 1 st March (Week 1)	<p><i>Introduction to the research process</i> <i>Notions of variation</i></p> <p>Field, Chapter 1</p> <p>Gilovich, T. (1991). <i>How we know what isn't so: The fallibility of human reason in everyday life</i>. New York: The Free Press, Chapter 1.</p>
6 th & 8 th March (Week 2)	<p><i>Approaches to research</i> <i>Types of data</i></p> <p>Field, Chapter 2</p> <p>Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2003). <i>Business Research Methods</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 1.</p> <p>Gilovich, T. (1991). <i>How we know what isn't so: The fallibility of human reason in everyday life</i>. New York: The Free Press, Chapter 2.</p>
13 th & 15 th March (Week 3)	<p><i>Descriptive/exploratory analysis</i> <i>Notions of significance</i></p> <p>Field, Chapter 3 (Resist the temptation to panic; we will be going over this material in considerably more detail as the term progresses!)</p> <p>Field, Chapter 7</p> <p>Field, Chapter 16 (sections 16.1 – 16.4)</p> <p>Gilovich, T. (1991). <i>How we know what isn't so: The fallibility of human reason in everyday life</i>. New York: The Free Press, Chapter 3.</p>
20 th March (Week 4, Monday)	<p><i>Regression analysis and modelling</i></p> <p>Field, Chapter 4 (4.1 – 4.5.5)</p> <p>Field, Chapter 8 (8.1, skim 8.2, 8.3 – 8.4, skim 8.5, 8.6 – 8.10)</p> <p>Hyman, R. (1995). How to critique a published article. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i>, 118, 2, 178-182.</p> <p><i>Note: No class meeting on Wednesday, 22nd March</i></p>
27 th & 29 th March (Week 5)	<p><i>Regression analysis and modelling, cont'd.</i></p> <p>Field, Chapter 5 (5.1 – 5.4)</p> <p>Gould, S. J. (1996). <i>The mismeasure of man</i>. New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Chapter 6.</p>

Dates	Topic and Readings
3 rd & 5 th April (Week 6)	<i>Regression analysis and modelling, cont'd.</i> Field, Chapter 5 (5.5 – 5.7)
26 th April (Week 7, Wednesday)	<i>Regression analysis and modelling, cont'd.</i> Field, Chapter 5 (5.8 – 5.12) Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2003). <i>Business Research Methods</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapters 2 & 3. Project proposal due <i>Note: No class meeting on Monday, 24th April</i>
28 th April (Week 7, Friday)	Article critique due (submit hard copy to me by 5:00 p.m.)
1 st & 3 rd May (Week 8)	<i>Regression analysis and modelling, cont'd.</i> Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2003). <i>Business Research Methods</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapters 13 & 21. Sutton, R. I. & Staw, B. M. (1995). What theory is <i>not</i> . <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i> , 40, 371-384. Whetton, D. A. (1989). What constitutes a theoretical contribution? <i>Academy of Management Review</i> , 14, 4, 490-495.
8 th & 10 th May (Week 9)	<i>Logistic regression</i> Field, Chapter 6 Parkhe, A. (1993). “Messy” research, methodological predispositions, and theory development in international joint ventures. <i>Academy of Management Review</i> , 18, 2, 227-268.
15 th May (Week 10, Monday)	<i>Factor Analysis</i> Field, Chapter 15 <i>Note: No class meeting on Wednesday, 17th May</i>
Weeks 11 - 12	No class meetings – time to work on your project!
Wednesday, 7 th June	Project due (e-mail to Elizabeth.Rose@vuw.ac.nz)

Note: Additional readings, providing examples of empirical research, will be provided during the trimester.

General Information

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student Administration Office

The Student Administration Office is located on the ground and first floors of the Railway West Wing. The ground floor counter is the first point of contact for general enquiries and FCA forms. Student Administration Advisers are available to discuss course status and give further advice about FCA qualifications. To check for opening hours, call the office on (04) 463 5376.

Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce & Administration and Law is situated in the Easterfield Building - it includes the ground floor reception desk (EA005) and offices 125a to 131 (Level 1). The office is available for the following:

- Duty tutors for student contact and advice.
- Information concerning administrative and academic matters.
- FCA Student Administration forms (e.g., application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

Check with the Student Administration Office for opening times (04) 463 5376.

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, ensures 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 that undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is **prohibited** at Victoria University of Wellington.

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, phone (04) 463 6070, e-mail: 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 e-mail 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 (04) 463 6983 or (04) 463 6984, e-mail education@vuwsa.org.nz.

Manaaki Pihipihinga Maori and Pacific Mentoring programme (Faculties of Humanities and Social sciences and Commerce and Administration).

- **What:** Academic Mentoring for Maori and Pacific students studying at all levels in the above faculties, including weekly sessions for an hour with a mentor to go over assignments and any questions from tutorials or lectures. Registered students can use the faculty's study rooms and computer suite at any time at Kelburn and Pipitea.
- Mature student and postgrad network - if you would like to register as a mentor or mentee, please contact the coordinator.
- **Where:**
Melissa Dunlop
Programme Coordinator
Room 109 D
14 Kelburn Parade: back courtyard
Phone: (04) 463 6015
e-mail: Maori-Pacific-Mentoring@vuw.ac.nz

Please note: A mentoring room will also be running at Pipitea Campus, starting in January. Please contact the Programme Coordinator for details.