

School of Accounting & Commercial Law

ACCY 320 ACCOUNTING THEORY

Trimester One 2007

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

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Class Times and Room Numbers

Monday and Wednesday, 2.40-4.30pm in RWW501.

There is no additional tutorial. However, group discussions will form an integral part of the class sessions and students are expected to prepare for and actively participate in these discussions. Also see Class Participation under Assessment Items below.

Course Objectives

By the end of the course students should have:

- an overview of the historical development of theoretical frameworks in accounting;
- an understanding of different approaches to accounting theory and research and the roles of accounting in capital markets, organisations and the wider society;
- the ability to reflect critically on key theoretical concepts used in accounting frameworks; and
- an appreciation of theory-practice relationships.

Course Content

This course provides students with an introduction to accounting theory, building on and drawing together concepts and frameworks introduced in 100- and 200- level courses. It explores the historical development of theoretical frameworks, provides an overview of current accounting theories and illustrates the application of specific theories in accounting research.

Required Text and Course Materials

The text for the course is:

Hoque, Z. (2006), *Methodological Issues in Accounting Research: Theories and Methods*, London, Spiramus. Copies of this text may be purchased from the Victoria University bookshop.

Additional readings will also be provided, amounting to approximately one article per week. A fee will be charged for course materials.

It is expected that the reading for each session will be completed before coming to class as it will often form the basis for class discussion.

Assessment Requirements

(See below for further details)

Assessment will be based on the following:

Essay 1	20%	Due by 5pm April 23
Essay 2	20%	Due by 5pm May 28
Class Participation	10%	
Final Exam	50%	

Penalties – Late Assignments

In fairness to other students, assignments submitted after the deadline will incur a 5% penalty of the original mark for each day (including weekends) they are late. Assignments handed in more than 10 days after the due date will not be accepted. Extensions may be granted with no penalty to those who meet the University's aegrotat rules (e.g. medical certificate, family bereavement) **only**. You must discuss such extensions with the course coordinator at your first opportunity.

Mandatory Course Requirements

To pass the course it is necessary to

- (a) Complete all assessment items
- (b) Attend at least 75% of the lectures
- (c) Obtain a minimum of 40% in the Final Exam

Assessment Items

Essay 1

20%

Due by 5pm Monday April 23

Critically discuss the following quotation with specific reference to Chambers (1999) and associated readings:

“Academics tell us that sophisticated research tools cannot be employed if the requisite data are lacking, which is often the case with ‘before the case’ questions. But what then? Should academics do nothing? Or should they use the tools that are available, even if those tools are not as sophisticated as those currently in favour? For example, if the best tools available are thoughtful analysis and logical argumentation, should academic researchers not use them?” (Dennis Beresford, Chairman of the Financial Accounting Standards Board, 1987-1997).

Expected length: 1,500-2,000 words.

Essay 2

20%

Due by 5pm Monday May 28

"Theories (e.g. positivist, interpretivist and critical theory approaches) are developed as a result of applying various value judgements. Acceptance of one theory, in preference to others, will in part be tied to one's value judgements and starting assumptions."

Critically discuss the above quotation with specific reference to the way your own value judgements and starting assumptions influence your reaction to different theoretical approaches in accounting research.

Expected length: 1,500-2,000 words.

Class Participation

10%

Class participation will be assessed on the basis of attendance, effort and quality of contribution.

Final Exam

50%

The final exam will be comprehensive and will consist of essay type questions. It will be two hours in length. Please note that students must obtain a minimum of 40% in this exam to pass the course (see Mandatory Course Requirements).

Lecture Programme

Week

beginning:

Weeks 1-3

Introduction to Accounting Theory and Research (JB)

Feb 26-Mar 12

What does 'accounting theory' mean? What does 'research' mean?

Key concepts (e.g. ontology, epistemology)

Types of accounting theory (e.g. normative, descriptive and predictive)

History and development of accounting theory and research

Positivist, interpretivist and critical theory approaches

Weeks 4-5

Relationships between Accounting Theory and Practice (CO)

Mar 19-26

Theory and 'common-sense' understandings of the world

Approaches to theory-practice relationships

Accounting theory and policy-making

Weeks 6-11

Different Approaches to Accounting Theory and Research

Apr 2-May 21

Weeks 6-7 - Positivist Approaches (CO)

Weeks 8-9 - Constructionism and Interpretivism (DC)

Week 10-11 - Critical Theory, Postmodernism and Poststructuralism (JB)

Illustrations of key theories and methods across various sub-disciplines of accounting and utilizing a variety of research approaches.

Week 12

Research and Theory Choices (JB)

May 28

What factors influence research and theory choice?

Course reflections

Communication of Additional Information

Additional information will be posted onto Blackboard. It is essential that students have access to Blackboard throughout the course.

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices

Railway West Wing (RWW) - FCA Student and Academic Services Office

The Faculty's Student and Academic Services 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 Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

Easterfield (EA) - FCA/Education/Law Kelburn Office

The Kelburn Campus Office for the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, Education 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.
- Forms for FCA Student and Academic Services (e.g. application for academic transcripts, requests for degree audit, COP requests).
- Examinations-related information during the examination period.

To check for opening hours call the Student and Academic Services Office on (04) 463 5376.

General University Policies and Statutes

Students should familiarise themselves with the University's policies and statutes, particularly the Assessment Statute, the Personal Courses of Study Statute, the Statute on Student Conduct and any statutes relating to the particular qualifications being studied; see the Victoria University Calendar or go to www.vuw.ac.nz/policy.

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website www.vuw.ac.nz/fca under Important Information for Students:

- Academic Grievances
- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
- Student and Staff Conduct
- Meeting the Needs of Students with Impairments
- Student Support

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme

Manaaki Pihipihinga is an academic mentoring programme for undergraduate Māori and Pacific students in the Faculties of Commerce and Administration, and Humanities and Social Sciences. Sessions are held at the Kelburn and Pipitea Campuses in the Mentoring Rooms, 14 Kelburn Parade (back courtyard), Room 109D, and Room 210, Level 2, Railway West Wing. There is also a Pacific Support Coordinator who assists Pacific students by linking them to the services and support they need while studying at Victoria. Another feature of the programme is a support network for Postgraduate students with links to Postgraduate workshops and activities around Campus.

For further information, or to register with the programme, email manaaki-pihipihinga-programme@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5233 ext. 8977. To contact the Pacific Support Coordinator, email pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5842.