

School of Marketing and International Business

## **IBUS 405**

# **RESEARCH METHODS IN INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**

Trimester One 2007

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Contact Details**

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Office hours: Wednesdays, 1:30 – 3:30 p.m., and by appointment

### **Class Times and Room Numbers**

Mondays, 10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. (RWW 501)

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The two-hour final examination for IBUS 405 will be held during the Trimester 1 2007 examination period (5<sup>th</sup> – 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2007); 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. Research and data analysis are not spectator sports!

## 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/ $\chi^2$  analysis, one-way ANOVA)
- Linear regression analysis and modelling (variable selection, residual analysis (issues of heteroscedasticity and autocorrelation), multicollinearity, transformation of variables)
- Factor and reliability analysis
- Logistic regression
- Qualitative approaches to research (to be covered in additional workshop sessions in Trimester 2)

## Expected Workload

You should expect to devote about 15 hours per week of independent study to this course.

## Group Work

Some of the assignments will involve working in teams. For each group assignment, a common mark will be awarded to all members of each group. All group members are expected to contribute to the group assignment.

## 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 five assignments:

Assignment	Due date	Percentage of final mark
Data analysis cases (4)	To be advised; approximately weeks 3, 6, 9 and 11	10% each (total of 40%)
Project	1 <sup>st</sup> June 2007	30%

**Data analysis cases:** Four 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. These memos should be written 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!

**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 article in a top-tier International Business journal (e.g., *Journal of International Business Studies*). 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 **Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> June 2007**; 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 **Monday, 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2007**. The lengths of the written reports will vary, depending on the topic, but approximately 20 pages of text (about 5000 words), 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.

### **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](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/ibproject/referencing.htm).

**Statistical software:** We will generally use the SPSS software, version 14.0, 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 One 2007

Dates	Topic and Readings
26 <sup>th</sup> February & 2 <sup>nd</sup> March (Week 1)	<p><b><i>Introduction to the research process</i></b> <b><i>Notions of variation</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 1</li> <li>➤ 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.</li> </ul>
5 <sup>th</sup> & 9 <sup>th</sup> March (Week 2)	<p><b><i>Approaches to research</i></b> <b><i>Types of data</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 2</li> <li>➤ Bryman, A. &amp; Bell, E. (2003). <i>Business Research Methods</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapter 1.</li> <li>➤ 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.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Commerce librarian Janet Keilar will give an introduction to using the library for research on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> March, 12:30 – 1:20 p.m.</p>
12 <sup>th</sup> March (Week 3, Monday)	<p><b><i>Descriptive/exploratory analysis</i></b> <b><i>Notions of significance</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 3 (Resist the temptation to panic; we will be going over this material in considerably more detail as the term progresses!)</li> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 7</li> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 16 (sections 16.1 – 16.4)</li> <li>➤ 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.</li> <li>➤ Oppenheimer, D.M. (2006). Consequences of erudite vernacular utilized irrespective of necessity: Problems with using long words needlessly. <i>Applied Cognitive Psychology</i>, 20, 139-156.</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> We will not have class on Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> March.</p>
19 <sup>th</sup> & 23 <sup>rd</sup> March (Week 4)	<p><b><i>Regression analysis and modelling</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 4 (4.1 – 4.5.5)</li> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 8 (8.1, skim 8.2, 8.3 – 8.4, skim 8.5, 8.6 – 8.10)</li> <li>➤ Hyman, R. (1995). How to critique a published article. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i>, 118, 2, 178-182.</li> <li>➤ Maxwell, S.E. &amp; Cole, D.A. (1995). Tips for writing (and reading) methodological articles. <i>Psychological Bulletin</i>, 118, 2, 193-198.</li> </ul>
26 <sup>th</sup> & 30 <sup>th</sup> March (Week 5)	<p><b><i>Regression analysis and modelling, cont'd.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 5 (5.1 – 5.4)</li> <li>➤ Gould, S.J. (1996). <i>The mismeasure of man</i>. New York: W. W. Norton &amp; Company, Chapter 6.</li> </ul>

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Topic and Readings</b>
2 <sup>nd</sup> April (Week 6, Monday)	<p><b><i>Regression analysis and modelling, cont'd.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 5 (5.5 – 5.7)</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> We will not have class on Friday, 6<sup>th</sup> April.</p>
23 <sup>rd</sup> & 27 <sup>th</sup> April (Week 7)	<p><b><i>Regression analysis and modelling, cont'd.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 5 (5.8 – 5.12)</li> <li>➤ Bryman, A. &amp; Bell, E. (2003). <i>Business Research Methods</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapters 2 &amp; 3.</li> </ul> <p><b>Project proposal due, 23<sup>rd</sup> April</b></p>
30 <sup>th</sup> April & 4 <sup>th</sup> May (Week 8)	<p><b><i>Regression analysis and modelling, cont'd.</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Bryman, A. &amp; Bell, E. (2003). <i>Business Research Methods</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Chapters 13 &amp; 21.</li> <li>➤ Sutton, R.I. &amp; Staw, B.M. (1995). What theory is <i>not</i>. <i>Administrative Science Quarterly</i>, 40, 371-384.</li> <li>➤ Whetton, D.A. (1989). What constitutes a theoretical contribution? <i>Academy of Management Review</i>, 14, 4, 490-495.</li> </ul>
7 <sup>th</sup> & 11 <sup>th</sup> May (Week 9)	<p><b><i>Logistic regression</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 6</li> <li>➤ Parkhe, A. (1993). “Messy” research, methodological predispositions, and theory development in international joint ventures. <i>Academy of Management Review</i>, 18, 2, 227-268.</li> </ul>
14 <sup>th</sup> & 18 <sup>th</sup> May (Week 10)	<p><b><i>Factor analysis</i></b> <b><i>Course review</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Field, Chapter 15</li> </ul>
Weeks 11 & 12	<p><b>No class meetings – time to work on your project!</b></p> <p><b>Project due, 1<sup>st</sup> June (e-mail to <a href="mailto:Elizabeth.Rose@vuw.ac.nz">Elizabeth.Rose@vuw.ac.nz</a>)</b></p>

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

## **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](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy).

For information on the following topics, go to the Faculty's website [www.vuw.ac.nz/fca](http://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
- Notice of Turnitin Use

## **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](mailto: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](mailto:pacific-support-coord@vuw.ac.nz) or phone (04) 463 5842.