

**SCHOOL OF MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS**

**IBUS 409  
DISSERTATION**

Trimester Two 2009

**COURSE OUTLINE**

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**Contact Details**

**Course Co-ordinator**

Dr Joanna Scott-Kennel  
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**Supervisors (students)**

Dr Audra Mockaitis (Frances Doran, David Hunter)  
Dr Thomas Borghoff (Sabastian Huehne, Rick Purvis)  
Dr Joanna Scott-Kennel (Melissa Lopez, Jason Ng)  
Assoc.Prof. Val Lindsay (Daniel Taumoepeau, Yiyiing (Cindy) Zhang)

**Office Hours**

Monday            2.30-3.30pm            *Other times by appointment only*

**Class Times and Room Numbers**

Seminars are to be held on the following Mondays 10-1pm, RH1113. Note these seminars are **COMPULSORY**, so mark them in your diaries **NOW**.

20 July (draft proposals)  
10 August (progress report 1)  
14 September (progress report 2)

In addition each student should arrange for regular (weekly or fortnightly) meetings with his or her supervisor during the trimester.

**Teaching Period** Monday 13 July to Friday 16 October 2009

**End of Year Study Period** Monday 19 October to Monday 26 October 2009

**Examination Period** (this course does not have an exam)

Tuesday, 27 October to Saturday 14 November 2009

**Note:** Students who enrol in courses with examinations should be able to attend an examination at the University at any time during the formal examination period.

**Withdrawal dates** Information is available on the university website:  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

### **Course Content**

Each student undertakes a research project that utilises learning from other courses in the Honours programme, combined with individual research on a topic agreed upon by the student and his or her supervisor.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

IBUS 409 is a supervised research project that results in an original dissertation written, individually by each student. By the end of this course, students should be able to:

1. Produce independent research including setting initial research questions and forming conclusions.
2. Identify, plan, design and manage a significant research project (under supervision).
3. Apply appropriate methodology for the research.
4. Write up and present the research using the appropriate structure and format.
5. Make an original contribution to research in the field of international business.

### **Expected Workload**

Students should expect to devote approximately 30 hours of independent study, per week, to this course. This time will be allocated throughout the term, including the mid-trimester break (assignment due after the break).

### **Group Work**

There is no formally assessed group work, but all students enrolled in IBUS 409 are expected to participate in and prepare for ALL THREE seminars during the term.

### **Readings**

Readings necessary for completing the dissertation research will be identified by the student, with guidance from the academic supervisor.

### **Materials and Equipment**

There is no standard list of materials and equipment. Students have access to an Honours grant of up to \$500, to reimburse research-related expenses incurred in the development of the

dissertation. Original receipts for approved expenses should be submitted to Jessie Johnston, the School Administrator.

### **Assessment Requirements**

The final mark for IBUS 409 is based solely on the assessment of the dissertation. Each dissertation is assessed by two academic staff members, one of whom is the supervisor.

*Note: Your assessed work may also be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation and audit purposes. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of FCA programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.*

### **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. Late submission of the final dissertation is likely to result in delayed reporting of the final results for the Honours degree.

### **Mandatory Course Requirements**

Students must submit the final dissertation AND prepare for and attend all three seminars in order to pass IBUS 409.

### **Dissertation**

#### ***Due Dates***

A complete draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the supervisor no later than **Friday, 16<sup>th</sup> October 2009**. This will allow time for the supervisor to provide feedback and the student to make revisions. The due date for the final version of the dissertation will be in early November, with the exact date to be advised.

#### ***Schedule*** (guide only)

Selection of topic and initial research questions

Literature review (first draft)

Research questions, methodology

#### **HEC application**

Data Collection

Writing up

Review, proofing etc.

Submission

Review, revise, submit

#### *to be completed before*

July 22

Late July

Early-August

**August 1**

September 15

October 10

October 14

October 16

*tba*

#### ***Format***

In terms of length your thesis should aim for quality rather than quantity. 30-40 pages (plus any appendices) – on the order of 10,000 words is about right. Please use 12 point font and double space your text. For more details on content and structure see the Perry (1995) article (below), and for tips on writing style see page 4 of this course outline.

Perry, Chad (1995) *A structured approach to presenting PhD theses: Notes for candidates and their supervisors*.  
Paper presented to the ANZ Doctoral Consortium, University of Sydney, February 1994  
(with later additions to 18 September 1995).

## Seminars

Seminars are mandatory and will be held three times during the trimester. Each student will present (10 minutes), receive comments from the class and supervisors (10 minutes) and then hear the commentary from another class member (5 minutes). Students should have met with their supervisor to discuss their research questions and approach prior to the first seminar.

### *Preparation*

Preparation prior to the seminar will involve the following tasks:

- 1) draft and circulate the work you have done on your thesis to-date to other members of the class, supervisors and the course co-ordinator on the Thursday prior to the seminar the following week (before 5pm);
- 2) read all drafts circulated by the class;
- 3) prepare a 5 minute commentary on one draft thesis (see schedule and tips below); and
- 2) prepare a 10 minute presentation on your progress to-date to be given in class.

### *Tips for commentaries*

- Read over the draft in plenty of time.
- Comment on the feasibility and appropriateness of the research eg. methodology, literature chosen, research questions etc. Outline any areas you believe need more explanation or more refinement or more supporting literature.
- Critically assess the arguments, research questions or hypotheses given.
- Be as specific as possible as to things that could be changed for the better. Make constructive suggestions.
- Highlight areas that don't seem right are not clear or you think will not work. Write your comments either on a copy of the draft or on an extra sheet of paper (these will be given to the presenter).

## Seminar Schedule

Seminar	Content	Presenter	Commentary
20 July 10-12noon RH1113	Draft proposal	Frances Doran David Hunter Sabastian Huehne Rick Purvis Melissa Lopez Jason Ng Daniel Taumoepeau Yiying (Cindy) Zhang	David Hunter Frances Doran Rick Purvis Sabastian Huehne Jason Ng Melissa Lopez Yiying (Cindy) Zhang Daniel Taumoepeau
10 August 10-12noon RH1113	Progress Report 1 (Literature, method)	Daniel Taumoepeau Melissa Lopez Jason Ng Yiying (Cindy) Zhang David Hunter Frances Doran Rick Purvis Sabastian Huehne	Melissa Lopez Sabastian Huehne Yiying (Cindy) Zhang Jason Ng Daniel Taumoepeau Rick Purvis Frances Doran David Hunter
14 September 10-12noon RH1113	Progress Report 2 (Data collection, preliminary results)	Melissa Lopez Sabastian Huehne Yiying (Cindy) Zhang Jason Ng Daniel Taumoepeau Rick Purvis Frances Doran David Hunter	Rick Purvis Frances Doran Sabastian Huehne Daniel Taumoepeau Jason Ng David Hunter Yiying (Cindy) Zhang Melissa Lopez

## Communication of Additional Information

Additional announcements will be communicated via e-mail. Each student should make sure that the course co-ordinator has his or her current e-mail address.

## Some Considerations for 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 MS 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. The IBUS 409 dissertation should be written for an academic audience, and follow the format of an article in a top-tier journal. Exemplar journals are *Journal of International Business Studies*, *Strategic Management Journal*, *Academy of Management Review* (especially for conceptual dissertations) and *Academy of Management Journal*.
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 **must** 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 from IBUS 405 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.
13. Referencing should take the form adopted by the *Journal of International Business Studies*, although other referencing styles are acceptable as long as they are used correctly and consistently.

### **Use of Turnitin**

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <<http://www.turnitin.com>>. Turnitin is an on-line plagiarism prevention tool which identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. *At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy- typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin.* You are strongly advised to check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions will not be made available to any other party.

**For the following important information follow the links provided:**

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

General University Policies and Statutes:  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/academic.aspx>

Faculty of Commerce and Administration Offices:  
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fca/studenthelp/Contactus.aspx>

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme: [http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/mentoring/](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/mentoring/)