



SCHOOL OF INFORMATION MANAGEMENT

**INFO 528: RESEARCH METHODS FOR
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
ENVIRONMENTS**

Trimester Two 2009

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

Course Coordinator:	Name	Gary Gorman
	Room	Easterfield Building; EA 211
	Tel	+64 4 463 5782
	Email	gary.gorman@vuw.ac.nz
Course Instructor:	Name	Brenda Chawner
	Room	Easterfield Building; EA 201
	Tel	+64 4 463 5780
	Email	brenda.chawner@vuw.ac.nz
Programme Administrator:	Name	Chris King
	Room	121 Easterfield Bldg, Kelburn Pde, Wellington
	Tel	463 5309
	Email:	chris.king@vuw.ac.nz

Additional modules will be prepared by **Senior Tutor Lynley Stone (Module 3, Theory and Ethics)** and **Dr Sydney Shep (Module 9, Information History and Document-based Research)**.

If you have questions or comments about course material and activities, the preferred “channel” is the appropriate Blackboard discussion forum, so that all students can see your message, and participate in any subsequent discussion. The Blackboard discussion forums will be checked regularly for new messages.

However, if you prefer to send your message via email (particularly if it is sensitive or involves personal information), you should begin the subject line with

[INFO 528]

Assignments should *not* be sent to the above address; see the details under 'Assessment' below. Non-assignment material being delivered by courier or in person should go to the Administration Office, EA 121, Easterfield Building, Kelburn Campus, Victoria University of Wellington.

If you wish to send something by **post**, the address is:

Gary Gorman or Brenda Chawner

School of Information Management

Victoria University of Wellington

PO Box 600, Wellington

Course description

INFO 528 covers the principles of social science research as applied to library and information studies problems. The course is intended to provide students with the information and skills needed to implement the research topic option of INFO 580, and to equip them for research in the workplace. The goals of the course are to:

1. Provide an understanding of the role of research in library and information management (LIM). This role includes adding to knowledge, advancing LIM as a discipline and as a profession, and providing information essential for planning and decision-making.
2. Encourage students to be intelligent consumers of research. This involves the ability to review research literature critically, to assess the methodologies, and to understand findings and conclusions.
3. Provide an understanding of the processes and steps involved in conducting research.
4. Enable students to apply the concepts central to the research process to problems related to LIM.

Course objectives

By the end of the INFO 528 course, students should be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of and appreciation for the research process.
2. Review the literature on a specific topic.
3. Develop a procedure for investigating an actual problem in library and information studies.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how research is applied to problem solving in an information environment.

Required text

Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. Oxford, New York: OUP. The price to VUW students is approximately \$120.99.

The prescribed text is available from Vic Books, PO Box 12-337 (or c/- Students' Union Building), Wellington, ph. (04) 463 5515 or freephone 0800 370 370, fax (04) 471 2124, email vuwtexts@vicbooks.co.nz.

It is also possible to order texts through the Vic Books' online book ordering service, http://www.vicbooks.co.nz/cms_display.php. You can use any of these methods to place an order.

Course schedule

INFO 528 will be held in the second trimester (July-October) of the 2009 academic year. There will be no sessions for two weeks during the mid-trimester break (24 August-6 September).

- **Internal students**
There will be a seminar on Tuesdays (from 12.00-2.00 p.m.) in the Kirk Building, KK 203.
- **Open learning students (including Auckland)**
There will be two streams of up to 28 students. The weekly Internet conference sessions will be held on Tuesdays from 5.00-6.30 p.m. and 6.45-8.15 p.m. (**Please contact the LIM Administrator to book your preferred stream.**)

Note: Open Learning and Auckland students can select their preferred evening class. As long as the numbers balance out, you will be given your first choice and will be asked to **remain in that session for the term.**

Timetable

Week	Date	Topic	Lecturer
1	14 July	Introduction to LIM research & the research process	GG
2	21 July	Literature review	GG
3	28 July	Theory and ethics	LS
4	4 Aug.	The research plan and proposal	BC
5	11 Aug.	Quantitative methods and analysis - 1	BC
6	18 Aug.	Quantitative methods and analysis - 2	BC
Mid-term break			
7	8 Sept.	Quantitative methods and analysis - 3	BC
8	15 Sept.	Qualitative methods and analysis - 1	GG
9	22 Sept.	Qualitative methods and analysis - 2	GG
10	29 Sept.	Information history and document-based research	SS
11	6 Oct.	Mixed methods and analysis	GG
12	13 Oct.	Managing a research project and reporting	GG

Withdrawal dates: Information available via <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

Time commitment and workload

To achieve a satisfactory result in INFO 528, a time commitment of at least 12.5 hours per week is likely to be needed. Students who have completed university courses in statistics or research methods in a social science discipline, or who have written a

thesis, may need less time. Part of this time commitment will be taken up in your weekly internal or Internet conference session. The remaining time should cover:

- reading set texts and articles — you are expected to have read these *before* the weekly session;
- thinking about the module and taking notes on assigned practical work in preparation for the weekly session; and
- writing assignments.

Please note that you are required to select a specific research topic very near the beginning of the course that you can use for Assignments 1 and 2, and ideally for INFO 580 as well. Although a list of general topic areas will be available on Blackboard from which you can develop your own particular research question, you should also be reading from the material on your CD-ROM, textbook, and other literature, as well as consulting colleagues, with this in mind. Some class time as well as group exercises will be used to hone your topic; you should have decided on a specific research topic before studying Module 3. Either course lecturer may approve your topics — **but you must obtain this approval before beginning any substantive work on the topic.**

Assessment

None of the LIM courses has a formal final examination. INFO 528 is internally assessed, with the following assignments to be completed in order to satisfy the mandatory course requirements. In addition, there may be self-assessed exercises set for specific modules. **Full details, including explanatory notes and criteria, are available under "Assignments" on Blackboard.**

Assignments	Date due	Value	Length
1. Integrative literature review	Monday 24 August	50%	2500 words approx. plus Delicious contribution
2. Project concept	Monday 12 October	50%	3500 words approx.

Please note that you are required to select a specific research topic very near the beginning of the course that you can use for Assignments 1 and 2, and ideally for INFO 580 as well. Although a list of general topic areas will be available on

Blackboard from which you can develop your own particular research question, you should also be reading from the material on your CD-ROM, textbook and other literature, as well as consulting colleagues, with this in mind. Some class time, along with group exercises, will be used to hone your topic; **you should have decided on a specific research topic before studying Module 3**. Either course lecturer may approve your topics -- but you must obtain this approval before beginning any substantive work on the topic.

Late assignments

Note: This response to late assignments supersedes any equivalent statement noted in the LIM Administration Handbook.

Assignment 1: Assignments submitted or postmarked up to one week after the due date will have a 10% penalty imposed, unless an extension on the grounds of medical emergency or family circumstance has been granted in writing in advance by the course coordinator. Assignments submitted or postmarked more than one week after the due date will NOT be accepted without prior written approval of the course coordinator.

Assignment 2: Any assignments received after the due date will NOT be accepted, except in cases of medical emergency. This is because

- funding bodies do not give extensions;
- you will be able to start work on the draft project concept for INFO 580 during the break; and
- many of the module exercises are designed to build up to Assignment 3.

If you keep up with the course work, you should have no difficulty getting this assignment in on time.

Presentation

The following items are meant to help you do well on your assignments. Please refer to this list before submitting your work.

1. The word count should appear under your name.
2. Faxed or emailed assignments cannot be accepted.
3. All pages must be numbered.
4. All work is to be double-spaced and keyboarded.

5. Information professionals use information. That means that your work should indicate use of the professional literature, and should do so in the required format (see point 9 below).
6. All material taken from published work must be attributed. You should acknowledge the use of another writer's ideas or arguments, even if you have not used the same words in expressing them. All direct quotations must be attributed to the source with author's surname and page numbers incorporated into the text. (See the *LIM Administration Handbook* if in doubt about attribution.)
7. Items for the bibliography should be pertinent and recent or else they should be classics.
8. Items in the bibliography are to be cited *consistently*. For information on APA citation formats, look at "Citation Guide", which is available in the LIM Programmes Information on Blackboard, under 'LIM Resources'.
9. The standard of spelling and grammar, the facility of written expression, and the proper citation of references are evaluated when assessing every written assignment.
10. The conventions of academic and research writing may be somewhat different from your normal writing style. In particular, avoid the use of the first person; scholarly writing should be objective and detached. Avoid the use of superlatives or comparatives where these cannot be substantiated. Consider adjectives and adverbs carefully, and use them only when they attribute qualities that can be proved (for example, a claim that a result is 'surprising' or a development is 'significant' would have to be substantiated).

Plagiarism

You should read and take heed of the statement on collaboration and plagiarism on the University website at <http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html> and also in the *Administration Handbook*; you *must* acknowledge all sources you use. You are expected to present information in your own words, based on your understanding of the background material you read. ***Any assignment which is extensively plagiarised will receive an automatic fail grade.***

Note: student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by <http://turnitin.com>, which is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a large database of existing material. 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.

Submission

Electronic submission via Blackboard is required; instructions are available on Blackboard under 'Assignments'. Remember to keep a hard and soft copy of each assignment you send us, just in case the original goes astray.

Mandatory course requirements

To fulfil the mandatory course requirements for this course, you must:

- attend a minimum of 75% of the scheduled class sessions, and participate in class discussions;
- complete all of the assignments in the required timeframe.

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.

Criteria for assessment

A standard evaluation sheet will be used when assessing Assignments 1 and 2 for this course — a copy of this appears below. Note that there are eight assessment criteria, all of which are important in presenting work of high quality. Nevertheless, the first four criteria have greater weight for both assignments, accounting for approximately 60 per cent of the total mark, with the final four criteria accounting for the remaining approximately 40 per cent. In other words, we place particular value on the knowledge you display of the topic, on your understanding of theories and concepts, on the coherence and development of ideas, and on original thought and critical evaluation. Based on past experience, the criteria most likely to cause problems are development of ideas and critical evaluation — pay particular attention to these aspects in your writing.

Even though there is a 60/40 split between the two groups of evaluation criteria, it is still possible for a work that shows promise in terms of knowledge base and development of ideas to fare poorly if the grammar and expression are totally unacceptable. In other words, all criteria need to be met to an acceptable standard for the work as a whole to be acceptable. Also, bear in mind that this is postgraduate work and that it will be assessed to the high standards expected of postgraduate students of Victoria University.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON
 Te Whare Wānanga o te Ūpoko o te Ika a Māui



School of Information Management

EVALUATION SHEET

Student's Name:

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Course:

Assignment No:

Essay Evaluation:

- ☆ A blank space is left when an item is not applicable to the essay
- ☆ Items are assigned different weights in your total grade
- ☆ 1=poor, 2=Marginal, 3=Adequate, 4=Good, 5=Excellent

	1	2	3	4	5
Knowledge of topic					
Understanding of theories & concepts					
Coherence, relevance & development of ideas					
Original thought & critical evaluation					
Structure					
Presentation, layout, paragraphing, length					
Spelling, vocabulary, grammar, expression					
Adequacy & acknowledgement of sources (including footnoting & bibliography)					

Comments:.....

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GRADE:

DATE:

MARKED BY:

Course delivery and resources

The course material for INFO 528 includes:

- this course outline (in which the contents of the INFO 528 course are discussed along with course-specific administrative information and Internet conference or internal session details);
- materials (including study notes) on the Blackboard website for INFO 528 (see 'Online information' for more on this), which will be used to post course information notices, and enable ongoing electronic discussion forums on topics or issues introduced in or out of class. Students are also encouraged to use Blackboard for information sharing, and to post questions for electronic and in-class discussion.
- a CD-ROM containing readings associated with each module.

The study notes for each module include a section giving work to prepare for the weekly session. **You should prepare the work listed in this section before the weekly Internet or internal session for that module. The discussion/tutorial sessions should not be regarded as a time to catch up on reading and/or exercises not done. Active participation in these sessions will be expected.** Reading through the work to prepare for the weekly session **before** starting work on the module will help you to use your study time effectively.

The activities and exercises included in the study notes are a valuable self-assessment tool intended to help focus your thinking, prepare you for the next module, or provide assistance with revision of a particular topic. You should consider these, and jot down your answers or conclusions, before continuing with the module text. The exercises will form part of the discussion in the weekly session, and completing them should therefore be viewed as part of the preparation for these sessions.

Using or quoting course notes

The course notes used in the LIM programmes have been developed over a period of time. As a result, they are likely to include new material contributed by the coordinator and staff involved in the current offering of the course, as well as material contributed by staff involved in earlier offerings. Every effort has been made by our academic and editorial staff to ensure that all material is correctly attributed and complies with the University's copyright license obligations.

If quoting or referring to material written for this course, you should treat it as being contributed anonymously rather than being attributable to the person delivering the particular module in which it appears, unless the authorship is clearly indicated.

Online information

In addition to material on the CD-ROM, you will be required to use the online resources for this course that are available in the School's Blackboard online learning environment:

<http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz/>

The Blackboard environment will contain a Web-based forum for discussion of issues related to the course, links to sites of interest, additional readings and information, updates, etc. You should read the appropriate module pages and any additional notes in conjunction with the material on your CD-ROM. Details on how to access Blackboard are in the *Administration Handbook*, but if you have any difficulties logging on please contact the Help Desk, at:

its-service@vuw.ac.nz

All LIM students will be automatically enrolled in LIM Programmes Information on Blackboard. General announcements and information will be posted here, and students should check this site regularly.

Internet conferencing

Distance sessions are conducted via the Internet using the Chatterbox application; in order to participate students will need an Internet-connected PC running Vista, Windows XP or Windows 2000, microphone, and headphones/speakers. To connect, go to the Internet conferencing page (and read the "Getting Started" information) at

<https://conferencing.sim.vuw.ac.nz/>

There is also an 'i-Conferencing' button linking to this page in Blackboard.

Some days before your first session, and at least 15 minutes before each subsequent session, you should test your system by going to the Echo Room.

Regular classes will be held in the LIM Room; additional Discussion Rooms are available for breakout groups, and as a "waiting room" if a class is proceeding in the

main LIM room. Study groups can use the discussion rooms out of regular class times. For further information, follow the help links on the Internet Conferencing page; details, including screen name conventions, are also available on Blackboard under LIM Programmes Information. For further information, follow the help links on the Internet Conferencing page; details, including screen name conventions, are also available on Blackboard under LIM Programmes Information.

LIM Students email list

Staff of the LIM programmes use the lim-students email discussion list to make important announcements, and to share news and ideas relating to the LIM programmes. **It is very important that you are subscribed to this list.** Please make sure that a current email address which you check regularly is subscribed. We suggest that you remain a member of this list until **after you graduate**, because the list is used as the main channel to communicate important administration messages (including those about arrangements for graduation).

Emails are sent to lim-students regularly, so if you have not received any list messages for a few weeks it is a good idea to make sure you are still subscribed. If a list message is rejected by your email account you will automatically be unsubscribed from the list.

To subscribe, unsubscribe, and change your email address or options, go to

<http://lists.vuw.ac.nz/mailman/listinfo/lim-students>

General University information

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/