TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Information Management

INFO 403 RESEARCH METHODS IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Trimester One 2010

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator	Name	Dr Val Hooper		
	Room	EA217		
	Tel	463-5020	E-mail	val.hooper@vuw.ac.nz
	Office hours	By appointment		
Course Lecturer	Name	Dr Brian Harmer		
	Room	EA228		
	Tel	463-5887	E-mail	brian.harmer@vuw.ac.nz
	Office hours	By appointment		
Course Administrator	Name	Tiso Ross		
	Room	EA121 (SIM Reception		
	Tel	463-5309	E-mail	tiso.ross@vuw.ac.nz

Trimester Dates
Monday 1 March to Friday 4 June 2010

Withdrawal from Courses:
Withdrawal dates: Late withdrawals with Associate Dean (Students) permission
      (See Section 8: Withdrawals - from the Personal Courses of Study Statute)
      http://policy.vuw.ac.nz/Amphora!~~policy.vuw.ac.nz~POLICY~000000001743.pdf
Withdrawal dates: refunds:
      http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawlsrefunds.aspx

Class Times and Room Numbers
Wednesdays 09:00 – 12:00 in MY303

Course Content

This course provides an introduction to the research methods used in information systems research. An initial exploration of the philosophical underpinnings of academic research will be followed by a critical examination of the more common methodologies used in theoretical and empirical research in information systems (IS). Students will be required to participate in class discussions and exercises to expand their knowledge of such methodologies. As this is an introductory course none of the research methods will be dealt with in sufficient detail as to allow a student to become an expert practitioner of that method. For such purposes, further study in a specific method will be required. However, as this course is a

preliminary course for the INFO 408 research project, the focus of the methodologies will take the scope of these projects into account, and student should be sufficiently well equipped to be able to execute the project competently.

Week	Date	Lecturer	Topic	Deliverable
1	3 March	Brian Val	Introduction to the course and Introduction to the domain of research methods, including topics such as the underlying philosophy, paradigms, theories and ethics	
2	10 March	Val	Quantitative research – introduction, design Introduction to quantitative research, the concepts of validity and reliability, research design and survey instrument development	
3	17 March	Brian	Quantitative research – introduction, design Introduction to qualitative research, the concepts of goodness and reliability, research design and interview planning	
4	24 March	Val	Quantitative research – data collection Sampling fundamentals in surveys Experimental design	
5	31 March	Brian	Qualitative research – data collection Identifying and accessing appropriate participants.	
			Mid-trimester break	
6	21 April	Val	Quantitative research – data analysis and interpretation (1) Preparing the data for analysis, basic statistical analysis guidelines and interpretation	Assignment
7	28 April	Brian	Qualitative research – data analysis and interpretation (1) Various forms of interpretation based on the hermeneutic cycle	
8	5 May	Brian Val	Presentation of project outline	Project outline
9	12 May	Val	Quantitative research – data analysis and interpretation (2) Basic statistical analysis and interpretation	
10	19 May	Brian	Qualitative research – data analysis and interpretation (2) Thematic analysis, and the use of analytical software	
11	26 May	Brian Val	Reporting the research – what constitutes a good report	Test (2hrs)
12	2 June	Brian Val	Presentation of project proposal	Project proposal

This schedule is subject to change but students will be informed as far in advance as possible of any changes.

Course Learning Objectives

At the end of the course students should be able to:
1. demonstrate a critical awareness of the key underpinnings of IS research
2. identify, describe and determine the applicability of a selection of qualitative and quantitative research methods applicable in the field of IS
3. design an appropriate research approach for a given situation
4. formulate a research proposal in a particular topic of IS.

Course Delivery
Classes will be delivered in interactive seminar mode. Students will be expected to do preparatory work and participate in class discussions on the various topics.

Expected Workload
On average students will be expected to spend at least 10 hours per week on their course work preparation, including the mid-term break period.

Group Work
There will be no formal group assignments. However, class discussion will often take place in groups and students might be required to prepare material for class discussion in pairs.

Readings
The list of prescribed readings for each class will be available on the Blackboard site. Students are required to acquire their own copies of these texts, unless otherwise informed, and to acquaint themselves with the content before each respective class. There will be no textbook for this course, although students will be required to study prescribed chapters of the following book which has been placed in the closed reserve section of the Library.

Punch, K.F. (2005). Introduction to Social Research. London: Sage.

Students will also be required to source prescribed articles as per the reading list which will appear on Blackboard. On average, three articles per week will have been prescribed.

Assessment Requirements
There will be four different assessments, two of which will consist of two parts.

Assessment	Weight		Date
Assignment	30%		21 April
Project outline • Submission • Presentation (not for PhD students)	5% 5%	10% for PhD students	5 May
Test	15%		26 May
Project proposal • Submission • Presentation (not for PhD students)	30% 15%	45% for PhD students	2 June

Assignment (30%) – 21 April
(Addresses objectives 1, 3)

This will be divided equally between the requirement to develop a data collection instrument for a qualitative research project and one for a quantitative research project. Students will be required to submit

the two instruments together with a sound justification for why the particular approaches were suitable for each research project.

More details regarding the topic and length of the assignment will be provided at least two weeks prior to submission date.

Project outline (10%) – 5 May
(Addresses objectives 1, 2, 3)

This will consist of a short overview of the proposed research project that will be executed for INFO 408. It needs to include:
- a critical review of the existing literature including no fewer than 15 references to relevant literature (30 references for PhD students)
- the research problem, question and objectives
- the research approach selected
- an indication of:
  - the research design and data collection method
  - how the data will be analysed, interpreted and reported

The total length of this submission should be 15 pages maximum (20 pages for PhD students).

Students will be expected to deliver a 10-minute presentation of the proposed project, and allow for a 10-minute question session afterwards – 20 minutes in total. (PhD students will not be required to make a presentation.)

More details will be provided prior to the mid-trimester break.

Test (15%) – 26 May
(Addresses objectives 1, 2, 3)

This two-hour test will test the student's knowledge of both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Questions will be divided equally between the two methodological approaches and will require mainly short paragraph answers.

Project proposal (45%) – 2 June
(Addresses objectives 1, 2, 3, 4)

This will be an expansion on the Project Outline submission. It will comprise a detailed plan for conducting the research. It will also include potential limitations, usefulness and contribution of the research. It should include at least 20 references to relevant literature (40 references for PhD students).

The total length of this submission should be 30 pages maximum (40 pages for PhD students).

Students will be expected to deliver a 10-minute presentation of the proposed project, and allow for a 10-minute question session afterwards – 20 minutes in total. (PhD students will not be required to make a presentation.)

More details will be provided immediately after the mid-trimester break.

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.

Examinations

There will be no examination for this course.

Grading standards

Letter grade	Number grade	Simple description	Extended description
A+	Over 84	Outstanding	Far exceeds requirements, flawless, creative
A	80-84	Excellent	Polished, original, demonstrating mastery
A-	75-79	Very Good	Some originality, exceeds all requirements
B+	70-74	Good	Exceeds requirements in some respects
B	65-69	Satisfactory	Fulfils requirements in general
B-	60-64	Acceptable	Only minor flaws. Unoriginal
C+	55-59	Pass	Mistakes, recapitulation of course material
C	50-54	Minimum pass	Serious mistakes or deficiencies
D	40-49	Unacceptable	Little understanding, poor performance
E	00-39	Fail	Below the minimum required

Penalties

In fairness to other students, work submitted after the deadline will be subject to a penalty of 5% of the marks earned per day of lateness. Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted and a "zero" mark will be applied. In the event of unusual, unforeseen circumstances, e.g., serious illness, family bereavement, students should discuss waiver of the penalty with the Course Coordinator.

Expectations and Mandatory Course Requirements

Students are expected to attend all lectures, read assigned material and contribute to class discussions.

To meet mandatory requirements, students are expected to submit each assignment and to obtain an overall course mark of at least 50%.

Failure to meet mandatory requirements does not prevent a student completing other pieces of assessment, including any final examination. (See section 2 of the Assessment Handbook).

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

Communication of Additional Information

Additional information or information on changes will be announced in class, posted on Blackboard and/or e-mailed to students, depending on the situation. It is imperative that students monitor Blackboard regularly as well as their student e-mail accounts.

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 compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of

School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. 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

AVC (Academic) Website: information including: Conduct, Academic Grievances, Students with Impairments, Student Support
http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx

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

Manaaki Pihipihinga Programme
http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/mentoring/