

SCHOOL OF MARKETING AND INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS

IBUS 409
DISSERTATION

Trimester Two 2010

COURSE OUTLINE

Contact Details

Course Co-ordinator Dr. Audra I. Mockaitis Room 1107, Rutherford House Telephone: (04) 463 6499 Fax: (04) 463 5231 Email: audra.mockaitis@vuw.ac.nz Homepage: www.mockaitis.com	Yang Yu Room 1111, Rutherford House Telephone: (04) 463 6486 Fax: (04) 463 5231 Email: cruise.yu@vuw.ac.nz
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Supervisors

Dr. Audra I. Mockaitis
Dr. Thomas Borghoff
Dr. Revti Raman
Dr. Hongzhi Gao
Mr. Yang Yu

Office Hours (*Other times by appointment only*)

Mockaitis	Trimester 1:	Wednesday	11:30-12:30
	Trimester 2:	Tuesday	13:00-14:00
Yu	Trimester 1:	Wednesday	11:30-12:30
	Trimester 2:	Friday	16:00-17:00

Class Times and Room Numbers

You will not have regular class meeting times in this course. However, you will have three compulsory seminars (see the section '*Seminars*' below).

Teaching Period: Trimesters 1 and 2

End of Year Study Period: 18th October to 14th November, 2010

Examination Period: This course does not have an examination.

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

Course Content

The Honours dissertation is a two-semester course. Students will complete an individual research project that combines learning from other courses in the Honours programme and individual research on a topic agreed upon by the student and the supervisor. Students will demonstrate expert knowledge in a chosen area of study and appropriate scholarly and ethical behaviour in conducting and reporting their research. The dissertation must have a well-developed conceptual foundation and include a primary research component.

Course Learning Objectives

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 15 hours of independent study per week to this course.

Readings

References will be specific to the chosen topic. 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 for reimbursement of research-related expenses incurred in the development of the dissertation. Original receipts for approved expenses should be submitted to Jessie Johnston, the School Administrator. More information about this is found in your Honours programme welcome folder.

Supervision

Each student will be allocated an academic supervisor whom you may consult in the development of your work. You will meet with your supervisor for a total of 12 hours. Please ensure that you plan your time with your supervisor accordingly. These 12 hours are to be spread over the duration of the course.

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.

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 not be accepted without 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, that 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 obtain a passing mark on the final dissertation, prepare for and attend all three seminars in order to pass IBUS 409.

Dissertation

Format. The honours dissertation is normally around 10,000 words in length, or 30-40 pages. Please use 12-point, font and double-space your text.

The dissertation will include (as a guide):

- A 150-200 word abstract of the written work
- An introduction, outlining the salience/relevance of the research topic and background to the study
- A current literature review
- Properly justified research questions or hypotheses
- Cogent argument
- A presentation of the research methods
- Clear and concise results
- Logical conclusions, directions for future research and, where appropriate or necessary, recommendations.

Referencing must be thorough, and must follow the referencing style of the Journal of International Business Studies. Please consult the journal (www.jibs.net) for examples of proper style.

Due Dates. A complete draft of the dissertation must be submitted to the supervisor no later than **Friday, 15th October, 2010**. 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.

Your final dissertation draft is due on **Monday, 8th November, 2010**. You must submit two hardcopies to the dissertation coordinators, as well as an electronic version to your supervisor.

We strongly advise each student to prepare a schedule of meetings with your supervisor **by April 1st, 2010** (Wk 5). This will allow you to manage your dissertation by setting realistic goals or milestones. You should plan your time so that you get the most benefit from your meetings. It is up to you to complete your dissertation by the deadline; however, to ensure that your supervisor is abreast of your progress and able to assist you as much as possible, you should draft a plan of the specific tasks that you hope to accomplish by the dates that you set for each. Please prepare a schedule similar to the one below, so that your supervisor is able to track your progress and assist you in keeping on schedule throughout the academic year. Also, do not forget to include important dates and mandatory deadlines in your schedule.

Table. An example of a dissertation schedule (please use as a guide only).

Goal Due date: Week	3	5	6	10	11	12	14	18	19	20	22	24	26	28	30	31	33	34	36	38
Topic formulation																				
Literature review																				
Formulation of research questions/ development of hypotheses																				
Outline of research methods																				
Interview schedule/ survey development																				
HEC application																				
Data collection																				
Dissertation draft																				
Revision																				
Final draft																				
Scheduled meetings with supervisor (max 12 hours):	●		●		●		●	●	●	●		●		●	●	●				

Note: You should schedule, as far as possible, the meeting dates with your supervisor and include them in your plan (instead of ●). Red highlighted weeks indicate due dates or scheduled seminars.

Important dates and deadlines:

- HEC application **July 1st** (Wk 19)
- Submission of full draft to supervisor **Monday, October 4th, 12 pm** (Wk 33)
- Review, revise, submit final version **Monday, November 8th, 12 pm** (Wk 38)

Seminars

This course will run three seminars to assist you with refining your research topic, sharing knowledge with peers, and completing required documentation - the HEC approval application. Seminars are mandatory and will be held three times during the trimester. These seminars will also allow your lecturers and supervisors to track your progress on the dissertation and provide you with feedback.

The seminar dates (and room numbers) are:

- **Seminar 1.** (Wk 10) Tuesday, May 4th, 1-4 pm (Location to be advised)
- **Seminar 2.** (Wk 12) Tuesday, May 18th, 1-2 pm (Location to be advised)

- **Seminar 3.** (Wk 26) Friday, August 20th, 11 am – 2 pm (Location to be advised)

Seminar One will be held on May 4th. You will submit a three-page long research statement (approximately 1,500 words) to Yang Yu two weeks in advance. In the proposal, you should outline your proposed topic, its relevance and any ideas that you have about how you will organise your dissertation (e.g., a general research problem/question, key literatures that you will explore, and your methodological approach). Students will be organised into four groups, based on similarity of research interests. Information about the groups will be provided one week before the seminar, and you are expected to read the materials of all members in your group and prepare a commentary for each (5 minutes). Each group will be facilitated by an academic supervisor.

In the seminar, you will present (15 minutes) your research proposal to your group members. After the presentation, you will receive comments from your group members and have the opportunity to discuss or address any questions raised by the audience. Likewise, you will have the opportunity to listen to other group members' presentations and ask questions. There will be a short break after all the presentations. Then, the academic in each group will comment on the students' research projects.

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 submit the work you have done on your thesis to-date to Cruise Yu, who will circulate it to other members of your assigned group, supervisors and the course co-ordinator on **April 19th** (before 5 pm);
- 2) read all drafts circulated by the class;
- 3) prepare a 5 minute commentary on the drafts of your group members (see tips below); and
- 4) prepare a 15 minute presentation on your progress to-date.

Tips for commentaries

- Read the draft well in advance of the seminar date.
- Comment on the feasibility and appropriateness of the research e.g., 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.
- Be as specific as possible as to things that could be improved. 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 Two will be held on May 18th. This will be a one-hour seminar devoted to assisting you in preparing your HEC application. This seminar will be led by Dr. Audra Mockaitis who served on the Pipitea Campus and FCA Human Ethics Committee for 3 years. You will be taken through the procedure and guidelines and will receive numerous tips to calm your nerves and help ensure that your application is submitted by the

deadline, you obtain approval for your research and are able to commence with your data collection in Trimester 2.

Seminar Three will be held on August 20th. Unlike Seminar One, you will not need to submit an outline of your work in advance, as your supervisor will already be familiar with your research topic and progress. By this stage, we believe that you should have already obtained your HEC approval and begun your data collection; some of you may even be in the data analysis stage. In this seminar, you will again be organised into groups, and will present (15 minutes) your research to other group members. This is an opportunity to report your research progress and share knowledge and experience on doing your own research with peers. After the group presentations and discussion with your peers, the academic assigned to your group will comment on your ongoing research project, and offer feedback or advice.

It is important to note that, while the seminars aim to provide you with a research-oriented working environment for the course, you should not rely solely on the seminars for feedback from your classmates and the lecturers/supervisors.

Communication of Additional Information

Additional announcements will be communicated via e-mail. Each student should make sure that the course co-ordinators have 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*. Please consult the advice for authors sections of the websites for each of these journals for very useful advice on writing style.
3. Avoid using contractions in all of your work.
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.
13. As with all courses in the IBUS programme, referencing should follow the style of the *Journal of International Business Studies*.

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>

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/