

Victoria Management School

MGMT 404/ MMMS 505 RESEARCH METHODS

Trimester One 2011

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course coordinator: Dr Sarah Proctor-Thomson
RH 909
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Office hours: By appointment

Course lecturer: Dr Sally Riad
RH 910, Rutherford House
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Office hours: Thurs 4.15-5.15pm & Fri 1.30-2.30pm (First four weeks of term)

Course administrator: Luisa Acheson
RH 1022,
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Trimester Dates

Teaching and assessment period: Monday 28th February- Fri 10th June 2011 (Last class is on 3rd June).

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before 11 March 2011.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is 14 May 2011. After this date, students forced to withdraw by circumstances beyond their control must apply for permission on an *'Application for Associate Dean's Permission to Withdraw Late'* including supporting documentation. The application form is available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks.

Class Times and Room Numbers

Weeks 1-7, 9 & 12 Friday 9.30am-12:20pm, Railway Building, RWW 129
Week 8 Friday 9.30am-12.20pm, Railway Building, RWW 302
Weeks 10 & 11 Friday **11.30am-2.20pm**, Railway building, RWW 129

Course Content

Organisational and management research can be described as a systematic and organised effort to extend our understanding of how, why, and in what ways, organisations and the workers within, operate. Research in this field can add new insights to an existing body of knowledge in an area of interest, and/or gather information that can guide decision-making within the workplace.

This course involves the methodological examination of theoretical and empirical research and provides the chance to develop and apply quantitative and qualitative data methods. It invites students to consider the purposes and objectives of organisational and management research and provides an overview of the research process. It introduces students to a range of research methods and provides some hands on experience with these. The course also requires students to explore the ethical and moral considerations related to carrying out organisational and management research in New Zealand.

The course provides the foundation on which students will develop their own research project in MGMT 430 in Trimester 2.

Course Learning Objectives

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Explain and differentiate conceptual and philosophical issues as they relate to the research process including research paradigms and related methodologies (Assignment 1).
2. Identify gaps and potential areas of contribution for management and organisational research through analysis of existing research literature (Assignment 1).
3. Evaluate a range of practical and ethical issues related to the research process in local, national and international contexts (Assignment 2 & 3).
4. Apply both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyse data relating to a chosen management or organisational topic (Assignment 2 & 3).

Course Delivery

The course requires students to prepare for and attend a one three-hour session each week. Student achievement is individually assessed but Assignment 3 requires students to work together in groups to develop a qualitative research pilot.

MGMT 404/ MMMS 505 Course Schedule

Wk	Date		Topics	Class Preparation
1	Mar 4	SR & SPT	Introduction Overview of the course; The objectives and processes of organisational and management research; The research process.	O'leary, Ch.1. Easterby- Smith Ch 1 (supplied in class)
2	Mar 11	SR	Philosophies of Research What is a paradigm? And does it matter?; Founding concepts; An overview of predominant western philosophical approaches in management and organizational research; Widening the debate - culture and knowledge; Relevance of theoretical foundations to the research process	Easterby-Smith et al. Ch 4 (supplied) Henry and Pene, (2001) (supplied)
3	Mar 18	SR	Reviewing the Literature Search, access to, and collation of information; Narrowing down and honing a specific topic; Organizing sources and ideas to build an argument (or 'thesis'); Writing and presenting; establishing the relevance of your topic by constructing a space for your contribution	O'Leary Ch. 6 Locke & Golden-Biddle (1997) (supplied)
4	Mar 25	SR	Designing Research Research questions; Exploring the variety in research designs; Contributing to theory; Implications for method.	O'Leary Ch.4
5	April 1	SPT	Introduction to Methods Quantitative/ qualitative divide; Conceptual & theoretical framework dev; Inductive/deductive reasoning; Measurement of variables: types of data, types of questions, types of answers.	O'Leary, Ch. 8 Cavanna et al. (2001), Ch 4. (supplied)
6	April 8	SPT	Quantitative Survey Research I Review of quantitative research article Purpose of surveys; survey research design; principals of question design	O'Leary, Ch.11, p. 180-193 Review of research article: Shelton et al. (2010) (supplied)
7	April 15	SPT	Quantitative Survey Research II Question testing; Questionnaire appearance; Populations & sampling; Reducing non-response.	O'Leary, Ch. 10 esp. p.160-169.
Mid-Trimester Break April 18-29th				
8	May 6	SPT	Quantitative Data Analysis and Interpretation MEET IN COMPUTER LAB RWW 302 at 9.30am Going over piloting of survey; preparing data, describing data; Working with SPSS in the lab.	O'Leary, Ch. 13 Bring completed questionnaires and reflective notes from questionnaire testing.
9	May 13	SPT	Qualitative Research Methods What is qualitative research? Assumptions and dichotomization; Qualitative Research Methods: Observations, Interviews, Focus groups.	Revise O'Leary Ch.8 Barbour & Kitzinger (1999), p. 4-20. (supplied)
10	May 20	SPT	Qualitative Focus Group Research I TIME CHANGE: 11.30am-2.20pm, RWW129 Review of quantitative research article Developing focus group schedule, conducting a focus group in organisational research, ethical considerations.	Review of research article: Anderson-Gough, Grey & Robson (1998) (supplied)
11	May 27	SPT	Qualitative Focus Group Research II TIME CHANGE: 11.30am-2.20pm, RWW129 Writing as qualitative analysis Run focus group; Formal reflection.	O'Leary, Ch. 14
12	June 3	SPT	Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation RETURN TO NORMAL TIME:9.30am-12.30pm Abstracting and coding qualitative data. Course admin & evaluation. What's next?	No reading – bring your 2 page excerpt of focus group transcript and notes on first thoughts.

Lecturers: SPT = Sarah Proctor-Thomson; SR = Sally Riad

Expected Workload

Students can expect the workload to be approximately 10-15hrs per week, including both scheduled contact time and outside class.

Individual and Group Work

Collaboration on individual assignments is not allowed beyond general discussion as to how one might interpret the nature of the assignment question. Please do not work together to formulate a response and do not loan out your completed assignments. You will be expected to work in groups on class exercises and in the development of a focus group research pilot which will form the basis of Assignment 3 (see below for further details).

Readings

The **required** textbook is:

- O'Leary, Zina (2010). *The essential guide to doing your research project*. London: Sage.

Note: this book will also be used on the 2nd semester research courses on the Hons/MMS programmes (MGMT 430/MMMS 530).

Recommended reading:

- Easterby-Smith, M., Thorpe, R. & Jackson, P.R. (2008). *Management research* (3rd Ed). London: Sage.
- Cavanna, B., Delahaye, B. L. & Sekran, U. (2001). *Applied business research: Qualitative and quantitative methods*. Milton: John Wiley & Sons.

Other research methods textbooks are available in the FCA library on the 2nd floor of the Railway Building. Additional readings, articles, chapters, and workshop exercises will be distributed in class or posted on Blackboard.

Materials and Equipment

- Any required readings additional to the textbook will be handed out in class.
- Digital voice recorders for Assignment 3 will be provided.

Assessment Requirements

Assignment	Title	% of Marks Available	Due Date
1	Exploring potential contribution to Management knowledge	30 %	9.00am, Monday 4 April
2	Survey planning and design	35 %	9.00am, Friday 13 May
3	Focus group pilot and analysis	35 %	9.00am, Friday 10 June
	TOTAL	100 %	

Assignment 1. Exploring potential contribution to management knowledge

Due: 9.00am, Monday 4 April

Marks: 30%

Word limit: 2,000 words (excl references)

In this assignment, students are required to choose a topic of interest to them and discuss how they can potentially develop it into a research project that contributes to knowledge on that topic. In its first part, the assignment requires the student to select five journal articles on the topic and examine their theoretical approach, central questions and contribution. In the assignment's

second part, students will pose a relevant research question, ground it in a philosophical position and discuss implications for research design.

Full details of Assignment 1 will be handed out in Week 1 and are posted on Blackboard in the 'Assessment' section.

Assignment 2. Survey planning and design

Due: 9.00am, Friday 13 May

Marks: 35%

Word limit: No word limit for questionnaire & coding instructions.
1,500-2,000 words for report (excl. references).

This assignment builds on the ideas covered in the first section of the course and the work undertaken in the survey methods section of the course. In this assignment you will develop a short survey on an organisational or management topic of your choice. You will need to move through each of the main steps of planning and developing a survey, however, you will NOT be required to execute the survey or analyse any resultant data. You may propose to use existing survey questions and/or scales in your questionnaire, but you must justify your choices and generate some original questionnaire items.

Full details of Assignment 2 will be handed out in Week 5 and are posted on Blackboard in the 'Assessment' section.

Assignment 3. Focus group pilot and analysis

Due: 9.00am, Friday 10 June

Marks: 35%

Word limit: 2,000-2,500 words (excl. references, focus group guide, and excerpt of analysis).

This assignment builds on the previous two assignments and gives you an opportunity to engage in qualitative data collection and analysis via a focus group exercise. In this assignment you will be working with a group of peers to develop and run a focus group on a shared topic of interest. You will then individually analyse an excerpt of your data.

Full details of Assignment 3 will be handed out in Week 9 and are posted on Blackboard in the 'Assessment' section.

Handing in Assignments

Assignments must be submitted in hardcopy and in electronic form.

Hardcopy: A hardcopy of assignments should be submitted by the due date and time to **Assignment Box: 23**, Mezzanine Floor, Rutherford House. Late hardcopy assignments must be handed to Luisa Acheson in RH 1022.

Electronic copy: An electronic copy of assignments should also be emailed to sarah.proctor-thomson@vuw.ac.nz by due date with subject line as follows: MGMT 404 or MMMS 505, ASSIGNMENT X, Name.

Hardcopies received after due date will be deemed to be late and penalised accordingly. Assignments will not be returned to students until an electronic copy is received.

Students must also keep an electronic copy of their work archived. Failure to do so will jeopardise any claim by you that your work was submitted in the rare cases where your work goes astray.

PLEASE NOTE:

Your assessed work may 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.

Format for assignments

Assignments should have the following format:

- Typed or word-processed, 11 or 12 point font.
- A cover sheet stating: Student name, project title and word count.
- Page numbers on each page.
- APA reference style used including in-text referencing and a list of references at the end.

Penalties incurred for late submission of work or for exceeding word limits.

- (i) In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline without prior arrangement of an extension will incur a penalty for lateness. The penalty is 5% of the marks available for an assignment submitted after the due time on the due date for each part day or day late. Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays will be included when counting the number of days late. Assignments received more than 7 days after the due date may not be accepted and the student may fail the Mandatory Requirements.
- (ii) Extensions to submission deadlines for any assigned work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- (iii) Students who are unable to comply with any of the mandatory requirements should make a written application for an extension to the due date for submission of assigned work or for waiver of a penalty, in advance, to the Coordinator, providing documentary evidence of the reasons of their circumstances (e.g. a medical certificate, or counsellor's report that indicates the degree of impairment, and for how long the student has been impaired..
- (iv) In the event of unusual or unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement), that precludes an application in advance, students should make contact with the Coordinator as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.
- (v) Word limits should be adhered to. This is to reinforce the importance of accurate, concise and clear communication in management studies and organisational practice!!

Mandatory Course Requirements

In order to pass this course, you must satisfy the mandatory course requirements (below) and obtain at least 50% of the overall marks available (maximum of 100).

To meet mandatory course requirements, unless you have received the approval of the course coordinator, you must:

- (i) attend a minimum of nine of the 12 scheduled sessions, and
- (ii) submit all assignments within the allowable timeframe (see Penalties section).

Students who fail to satisfy the mandatory requirements for this course but who obtain 50% or more overall, will be awarded a "K" fail grade.

Standard fail grades (D or E) will be awarded when the student's overall course mark falls below the minimum pass mark, whether or not the mandatory course requirements have been satisfied.

Notice of Failure to meet Mandatory Course Requirements will be posted on Blackboard.

Class Representative

A class representative will be elected in the first class, and that person's name and contact details made 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

The course lecturers will convey any additional information to students via blackboard and/or students' VUW email. Please ensure that student VUW email accounts are checked regularly.

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

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study

Find out about academic progress and restricted enrolment at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress.aspx>

The University's statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx> (See Section C).

Further information about the University's academic processes can be found on the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic) at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/default.aspx

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/