TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Government

STRA 527
PROJECT
(30 Points)

Trimester F / 2011 (Trimesters 1 + 2)

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator:
Professor Robert Ayson
Room RWW 503, Level 5, Railway West Wing, Pipitea Campus
Email: robert.ayson@vuw.ac.nz   Telephone: (04) 463 6445

Robert is responsible for ensuring that you have a suitable topic for a strategic studies project and that you have appropriate and timely research supervision.

For specific inquiries of an administrative nature, please contact:
Bun Wong, Senior Programme Coordinator
Email: bun.wong@vuw.ac.nz   Telephone: (04) 463 5453

Darren Morgan, Master's Administrator
Email: darren.morgan@vuw.ac.nz   Telephone: (04) 463 5458

Bun and Darren look after your enrolment and fees, provide support materials and track your progress.

For Human Ethics Committee matters, (if applicable) please contact:
Dr Valentina Dinica, HEC representative
Email: valentina.dinica@vuw.ac.nz   Telephone: (04) 463 5711

Valentina is delegated by the Head of School to ensure that HEC standards are met, and to check all applications to the HEC from School staff and students.

Office Hours:
8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Trimester Dates

This research project is completed over two consecutive trimesters. Trimester F/2011 covers the period of trimesters 1/2011 **AND** 2/2011, as follows:

Monday 28 February to Wednesday 19 October 2011

Withdrawal from Course

Notice of withdrawal must be in writing / emailed to the Masters Administrator. Ceasing to attend or verbally advising a member of staff will NOT be accepted as a notice of withdrawal.

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before **Friday 11 March 2011**.

2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 19 August 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.

Course Content

The 30 point Project in Strategic Studies is an opportunity for students in approved topics to conduct an extended study of an applied issue of particular contemporary relevance to the strategic studies community, either in New Zealand or further afield (or both). In a number of cases, this may connect students to current work being undertaken by the Centre for Strategic Studies, and in all cases the subject chosen needs to be an area of interest for the Centre.

Course Learning Objectives

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

1. Identify the challenges and requirements of a strategic studies research project
2. Connect their research for the project to the strategic studies agenda
3. Communicate their research findings in a scholarly and accessible manner

Course Delivery

No formal classes are associated with this course. This course is an independent research course.

Expected Workload

As this is an individual course of study, and courses vary between students, it is not possible to indicate the amount of time you can expect each part to take. However, as a rough overall guide, the University considers that a 120-point Master's thesis is a full-time, full-year course of study. Thus, your 30-point project is about 1/4 of a full-time year of study.

Readings

There are no specified readings. Materials consulted by students in their research will depend upon the topic which is selected and approved in consultation with the Centre for Strategic Studies.

Assessment Requirements

OVERVIEW

Your grade is based on a final written project. However, there are four additional requirements along the way, which are summarised and explained in detail below.

Requirement	Due Dates
1. Initial assessment of proposed area of study	Monday 7 March 2011 *
2. Proposal for specific work to be undertaken, approx 1,000 words	Wednesday 20 April 2011
3. Review of base documents/literature	Wednesday 15 June 2011
4. Presentation to Centre for Strategic Studies	August / September 2011
5. Final project, 10,000-15,000 words	Wednesday 19 October 2011

* Note that the final date for withdrawal with refund from this course is **Friday 11 March 2011**. If you do not provide a satisfactory topic assessment, you will be advised to withdraw and re-enrol in a later trimester.

YOU SHOULD AIM TO SUBMIT A PENULTIMATE DRAFT OF THE FINAL PROJECT TO YOUR SUPERVISOR BY **WEDNESDAY 21 SEPTEMBER 2011** AT THE LATEST.

The assessment details are set out below: please take careful notice of the specific requirements for format and submission.

1. ASSESSMENT DETAILS: Initial Assessment of Proposed Area of Study, due Monday 7 March 2011

Please provide a paragraph to be sent to Professor Robert Ayson of the Centre for Strategic Studies indicating (i) the proposed area in which you wish to conduct your research (this can be fairly general – e.g. current developments in NZ-Australian defence relations); (ii) the policy/practical relevance of this area of study (e.g. why it is important to policymakers in both New Zealand and Australia) and (iii) why you believe it intersects with the work of the Centre for Strategic Studies.

Your paragraph should be presented on *one page*, with the following information:

- Course code and name: i.e. STRA 527 Project
- Title of item: 'Initial Assessment: Project in Strategic Studies'
- Due date (and date submitted, if different) for this initial piece of work
- Name of candidate
- Student ID number

Please email to robert.ayson@vuw.ac.nz by **5.00pm on Monday 7 March 2011.**

Professor Ayson will respond to you with some comments on your paragraph, and, in the majority of cases, indicate a supervisor for the project.

2. ASSESSMENT DETAILS: Proposal for Specific Work to be Undertaken, approx 1,000 words, due Wednesday 20 April 2011

You will work on this proposal using the advice of your supervisor, including in respect to the particular interests the Centre for Strategic Studies may have in your approved topic area. This is an opportunity to provide an initial focused account of what specific work you plan to undertake in your area. It should contain the following:

1. Proposed Title: This should be posed as a question you wish to ask and answer: e.g. 'Does New Zealand's 2010 Defence White Paper offer a series of capabilities that are suitable for the future operations New Zealand envisages in the wider Asia-Pacific region?'

2. Main Sections of Work: This is where you identify what you expect the main parts of your project work will be: e.g. (a) An assessment of NZ's operational requirements in the Asia-Pacific region; (b) Identification of the capabilities outlined in the Defence White Paper for Asia-Pacific missions; (c) An evaluation of the suitability of those capabilities for the demands of Asia-Pacific operations, and (d) Recommendations for future policymakers.

3. Main Base Literature: This is where you identify what main primary source documents you will need to master as you conduct this work. In the case of some projects, this may be quite an obvious choice (e.g. the New Zealand Defence White Paper and supporting documents released by the New Zealand government). In other cases, you will face a choice of what to look at: for example, US Government reports (including congressional reports) on North Korea, reports on the same issue by the RAND Corporation, the statements of the Six Party Talks. You will need to be sure that there is enough meat in the documents/other sources you choose to focus on to sustain a 30 point research project.

4. Policy/Practical Importance: Provide a more detailed account than in your Initial Assessment of the practical and/or policy significance of the topic and a description of what you are hoping to achieve with your study. One way of addressing this issue is to wonder what would happen if the issue you plan to study was completely ignored? You can also include here a statement of the particular relevance of your project to the work of the Centre for Strategic Studies: e.g. Centre staff have been writing on the New Zealand Defence White Paper and have raised questions about the suitability of the force structure envisaged in the White Paper for likely operations in the Asia-Pacific region.

5. Conditions: State any particular conditions that apply, such as the involvement of a third-party mentor (such as a workplace supervisor), the relationship of the research to your paid employment, or whether the research builds on a paper you submitted to another course in your current degree or previous study. If your research may suggest conflicts of interests or political sensitivities or similar, discuss how you plan to deal with these.

6. HEC: You need to indicate whether HEC approval will need to be sought for your project: State either: "HEC approval is not required" OR "HEC approval is required"
   NOTE: If your research will involve getting information from people, you may find that working through the Human Ethics Committee application at the same time as you write your proposal will make both processes easier. Remember that HEC approval must be secured before you embark on research involving people.

7. Bibliography: Please provide an initial bibliography consisting of two sections: (i) your primary/base documents that you have discussed above, and (ii) your 'secondary' sources, these are commentaries on your topic area which have already been published by scholars and others [Note that a study of these secondary sources (e.g. articles on the New Zealand Defence White Paper which have appeared in academic journals or books on North Korea's nuclear weapons program) will help you identify what your particular contribution or niche will be].

You should aim to provide your supervisor with a draft of this proposal by **Friday 1 April 2011**. Feedback from your supervisor on at least one draft of the proposal is almost always needed in order for the final proposal to be of an acceptable standard.

When your supervisor advises you, but by **Wednesday 20 April 2011** at the latest, you can submit your final proposal by email, in a Microsoft Word attachment (please DO NOT pdf the file) to robert.ayson@vuw.ac.nz .

This proposal is a mandatory requirement. There are penalties for lateness and for proposals that are unacceptable (see the deadlines section in this outline).

When submitting your proposal, include a front page with the following details:

- Course code and name: STRA 527 Project
- Title of item (i.e. Proposal for Strategic Studies Project)
- Due date (and date submitted, if different) for this final proposal
- Name of candidate
- Student ID number

Your proposal will be reviewed by your supervisor and may also be reviewed by other staff in the Centre for Strategic Studies. You will then be provided with comments and suggestions.

Proposal Approval

The approval of research project proposals is the responsibility of the course coordinator for STRA 527. Three decisions are possible:

1. Approved, with the student and supervisor invited to consider any refinements to the proposal;
2. Conditionally approved, with the student to address issues or make changes as indicated on the approval form, to the satisfaction of the supervisor before proceeding to undertake further work;
3. Not approved. This option requires the student to submit a new proposal for review, taking into account comments on the approval form, and incurs a penalty (see section on penalties below).

Comments, suggestions and conditions (if any) will be conveyed to you in writing. After receiving the review decision, YOU need to contact your supervisor to arrange a meeting or phone call to discuss the decision and make plans for the remainder of the course.

A Note on HEC Process

(Note that you may only submit an HEC application AFTER your proposal has been formally approved. Your supervisor helps you with the application and submits it for you).

Pipitea HEC guidelines and application form are **only** available at
www.victoria.ac.nz/fca/research-services/ServicesProvided.aspx#HEC

Full HEC requirements are at
www.victoria.ac.nz/postgradlife/pages/pages_current_pg/ethics.html (this link is to be used **only** to refer to the Victoria University Policy - **NOT** to download the application form)

If approval is needed, you will need to draft an application, with advice from your supervisor. Forward your draft applications electronically to Dr Valentina Dinica (valentina.dinica@vuw.ac.nz). Please use a subject heading in the format: HEC SoG Application your name. Dr Dinica, with authority delegated by the Head of School, checks the application and, if amendments are required, notifies the applicant and supervisor.

Corrected applications are forwarded electronically by Dr Dinica in one rtf file to the FCA HEC secretary, Maggie Teleki-Rainey. When HEC notice of approval is received, you must forward a signed hard copy to the FCA HEC secretary. Student research requires three signatures, the student's, the supervisor's, and the Head of School's, (or delegate, Dr Dinica). When an approved signed copy is sent in, the approved research may begin.

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3. ASSESSMENT DETAILS: Review of Base Documents/Literature, due Wednesday 15 June 2011

In this piece of writing of about 2,500-3,000 words, you will be conducting a close examination of the documents which form the basis for your research project: e.g. the New Zealand Defence White Paper 2010 and other supporting documentation released. In this review, you will be identifying the parts of this documentation which are central to the question you are asking. You will be looking for potential gaps and follow-on questions which this examination may raise. You may like to take the opportunity of commenting on whether the documentation achieves the objective set for it and whether it offers enough supporting detail or is somewhat vague on important questions relevant to

your research. Your review should conclude with some observations about what comes next in your research.

You should write this review in a form which does not presume that the reader has a close knowledge of the documentation you are examining. Your review should not be organised in document by document order (where there are more than one base document) or in chronological chapter by chapter order where there is only one document, but theme by theme. These themes need to be in a coherent order which is easy to follow for the reader.

4. ASSESSMENT DETAILS: Presentation to Centre for Strategic Studies: August/September 2011

This will be an opportunity for you to present the initial overall findings of your research to staff and associates of the Centre for Strategic Studies. This will normally take place in a roundtable format. You will be asked to speak for 10-15 minutes and then take questions and comments designed to help you develop your project further as you head towards submission. In cases where the student is unavailable to present in person, a written report of two pages is required which will then be distributed to selected staff and associates of the Centre for comment. Please make contact with your supervisor by the beginning of August 2011 to arrange a time for this presentation.

5. ASSESSMENT DETAILS: Final Project, due Wednesday 19 October 2011

The project, of 10,000-15,000 words is worth 100% of your final grade. It should be completed in accordance with your approved proposal and with the advice of your supervisor.

No *major* changes can be made to an approved proposal without seeking approval from the course coordinator. However, it is recognized that as information becomes available during the research process, the original proposal often needs to be modified. Modest modifications can be approved by your supervisor.

Submission

The *School of Government Research & Internship Guidelines MPM/MPP/MSS 2011* contains details on format and presentation which are also generally suitable for the format and presentation of the final project. Include a title page, with title, your FULL name, degree and date. **Submit one clean hard copy (not bound or stapled) and one electronic copy to Bun Wong by Wednesday 19 October 2011**. After the paper has been assessed, you will need to supply a corrected copy for the Library.

Assessment

Assessment of postgraduate research is not a formulaic process. The professional judgement of the assessor plays a significant role. Your project will be assessed by your supervisor, who will provide written comments on the strengths and limitations of the project, indicate corrections that must be made, and provide a rationale for the assessed letter grade. In general, one may assume that a "passing" competence must be demonstrated on *each* of the points in the list below. It is also assumed in what follows that the student prepared and kept to an approved research design. The main criteria are:

- Completion of intended objectives (as set out in the research proposal, or as modified with approval)
- Adequacy of understanding of relevance and importance of topic area
- Depth of understanding and analysis
- Adequate and proper use of resources
- Logical coherence of arguments
- Structure and expression
- Technical aspects of production
- Difficulty and originality (note originality is not expected, but as with "difficulty" is a factor that can be weighed in the overall assessment)
- Recommendations and conclusions follow from the earlier sections
- Adherence to acceptable research methods and academic standards
- Adherence to the principles of research ethics

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.

Students should keep a copy of all submitted work.

Penalties

Late or unacceptable proposal: Five percentage points are likely to be deducted from the final grade for late submission of the final proposal, or if a final proposal submitted by the due date is not of an approvable standard. The penalty can be waived if the lateness is due to circumstances beyond your control or ability to predict (work pressures are not usually considered to meet this criterion).

Late final report: Ten percentage points will be deducted for each week the project is late, up to a maximum period of 4 weeks, after which the student will be awarded an E, and will need to re-enrol in the course to complete.

NOTE: Requests for exemptions from penalties MUST be made to the Course Coordinator.

Mandatory Course Requirements

An approved proposal is required.

Communication of Additional Information

Any additional information will be communicated by email.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and the Use of Turnitin

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must still acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- material from books, journals or any other printed source
- the work of other students or staff
- information from the Internet
- software programs and other electronic material
- designs and ideas
- the organisation or structuring of any such material.

Acknowledgement is required for all material in any work submitted for assessment unless it is a 'fact' that is well-known in the context (such as "Wellington is the capital of New Zealand") or your own ideas in your own words. Everything else that derives from one of the sources above and ends up in your work – whether it is directly quoted, paraphrased, or put into a table or figure, needs to be acknowledged with a reference that is sufficient for your reader to locate the original source.

Plagiarism undermines academic integrity simply because it is a form of lying, stealing and mistreating others. Plagiarism involves stealing other people's intellectual property and lying about whose work it is. This is why plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria.

If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you may be penalised under the Statute on Student Conduct. You should be aware of your obligations under the Statute, which can be downloaded from the policy website (www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx). You could fail your course or even be suspended from the University.

Plagiarism is easy to detect. The University has systems in place to identify it.

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine 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.

There is guidance available to students on how to avoid plagiarism by way of sound study skills and the proper and consistent use of a recognised referencing system. This guidance may be found at the following website: www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx .

If in doubt, seek the advice of your course coordinator.

Plagiarism is simply not worth the risk.

For the following important information, follow the links provided

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism
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
  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
  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
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic/Publications.aspx

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

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