

School of Information Management

INFO 403 RESEARCH METHODS IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Trimester One 2012

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator	Name	Professor Sid Huff		
	Room	RH425		
	Tel	463-5819	E-mail	Sid.huff@vuw.ac.nz
	Office hours	By appointment		
Course Lecturer	Name	Janet Toland		
	Room	RH523		
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	Office hours	By appointment		

Trimester Dates

Monday 5 March to Friday 8 June 2012

Withdrawal from Courses:

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday March 16th 2012.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday May 18, 2012. 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

Thursdays 10:30 AM – 1:20 PM in room RH-G03 (Rutherford House ground floor)

Course Content

This course provides an introduction to the research methods commonly used in information systems research. An initial exploration of the conceptual underpinnings of academic research will be followed by an examination of the more common methods used in empirical research in information systems (IS). Students are expected to participate fully in class discussions and exercises to expand their knowledge of such methods.

Wk	Class Date	Lead	Topic	Deliverable
1	8 March	Sid Janet	Introduction to the domain of research methods. Course admin. What is “research”?; what is “theory”?; the research process; the language of research; philosophy of research.	
2	15 March	Sid	Structuring of inquiry (1). Crafting a research question; creating a research project; research quality issues; rigor and relevance; conducting a literature review; research ethics.	
3	22 March	Sid	Structuring of inquiry (2). Introduction to experimentation; introduction to survey research.	
4	29 March	Sid	Structuring of inquiry (3). Survey research (continued): measurement; scale development; reliability and validity; sampling.	Checkpoint – proposal outline
5	5 April	Janet	Structuring of inquiry (4). Qualitative field research: approaches to qualitative research; qualitative data collection; non-empirical qualitative research.	
			Mid-trimester break	
6	26 April	Janet	Analysis of data (1). Qualitative data analysis: discovering patterns and relationships; validity and reliability in qualitative research hermeneutics and the hermeneutic cycle; thematic analysis; building theory; qualitative techniques (coding; memoing, etc). Software tools (nVivo; Leximancer)	
7	3 May	Janet	Analysis of data (2). Quantitative data analysis: data coding; descriptive statistics; graphical data displays; inferential statistics; basic bivariate analysis. Software tools (SPSS).	Assignment 1
8	10 May	Sid	Analysis of data (3). Quantitative data analysis continued: bivariate analysis (cont.); ANOVA; regression; multivariate analysis;	
9	17 May	Sid	Analysis of data (4). Quantitative data analysis continued: factor analysis; introduction to path models and SEM.	
10	24 May	Janet	Other topics. Design science; action research; grounded theory; critical research	Assignment 2
11	31 May	Janet	Reading, writing and critiquing research papers. Principles of writing up a research study; reading and critiquing articles; what constitutes a “good” research report?	
12	7 June	Sid Janet	Presentation of project proposal	Project proposal and presentations

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. To achieve such expertise, further study

will be required. However, this course does provide students with the background necessary to undertake the INFO 408 research project. Students completing INFO 403 successfully should be equipped with the necessary understanding of research methods to allow them to execute their Info 408 projects competently. For MCA or PhD students, this course should provide you with a strong foundation for undertaking your thesis research, although you will probably need to extend your knowledge further for the particular research method you employ in your research.

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 principal IS research methods and their conceptual underpinnings (LG2)
2. identify, describe and determine the applicability of a selection of qualitative and quantitative research methods applicable in the field of information systems (LG3)
3. design an appropriate research approach for a given situation (LG2)
4. conduct analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data at a basic level (LG2)
5. formulate a research proposal on a particular IS topic. (LG1, 2, 3)
6. write up the results of your research in a form appropriate for scholarly consumption. (LG4).

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 sometimes take place in pairs.

Course textbook

The required text for the course is Zina O’Leary: *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. London: Sage. Copies are available in the bookstore on the ground floor of Rutherford House. O’Leary is an academic staff member at the University of Western Sydney, in Australia. She has written a number of very readable books and articles on research methods and on the research process.

Readings

We will assign certain articles to accompany and augment the material in the text, for some classes. The list of prescribed readings for each class will be available on the Blackboard site. Students are expected to acquire their own copies of these readings from the site, unless otherwise informed, and to acquaint themselves with the content before each corresponding class.

Since it is often useful to read what other textbook authors have to say on certain topics, we have placed a few copies of a second book, by Keith Punch, (Punch, K. F. (2005). *Introduction to Social Research*. London: Sage) in the closed reserve section of the Library (in Railway). We have also made available to you in electronic form an “open” book on research methods written by well-known IS academic Anol Battacherjee; you can download a copy via Blackboard.

We will not assign any material from either book, but simply recommend them to you as alternatives to the O’Leary book, should you wish to see obtain a different author’s perspective on any particular topic.

Assessments

There will be five different assessments.

Assessment	Weight	Date
Checkpoint – Proposal outline	10%	29 March
Assignment 1 – Qualitative Research Exercise	20%	3 May
Assignment 2 – Quantitative Research Exercise	20%	24 May
Reading summaries	10%	- continuous -
Project proposal		7 June
• Submission	30%	
• Presentation	10%	

Checkpoint exercise (10%) – Proposal outline – 29 March

(Addresses objectives 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6)

- To be distributed in class and placed on the Blackboard site

Assignment 1 (20%) – Qualitative Research Exercise – 3 May

(Addresses objectives 2, 3, 4)

- To be distributed in class and placed on the Blackboard site

Assignment 2 (20%) – Quantitative Research Exercise - 24 May

(Addresses objectives 2, 3, 4)

- To be distributed in class and placed on the Blackboard site

Reading Summaries (10%)

(Addresses objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5)

Each week (except for weeks 1 and 12), each student is required to prepare a brief summary of each reading assigned for that week. Individual reading summary pages are to be between ½ and 1 page in length single-spaced (1 page *maximum*). Each such summary should note the most important points in the article *as you perceived them*. Don’t just recite what the author said; focus on *what you got out of* the article, and the implications for research methods *as you see them*.

Project proposal (40%) – 7 June

(Addresses objectives 1, 2, 3, 5, 6)

The purpose of this assignment is to provide an opportunity for the student to develop a research project proposal – a detailed plan for conducting a specific, real research project – and to present the plan to your fellow students and selected SIM staff members. For honours students, the project proposal will form the basis for the student’s Info 408 project in the second trimester. For MCA or PhD students, the proposal should be related to your intended thesis topic (although it does *not* need to comprise your *entire* PhD thesis proposal).

In the final class, each student will deliver a 10-minute presentation of the proposed project, and allow for a 5-minute question session afterwards – 15 minutes in total.

Detail concerning the specific requirements for this assignment will be distributed and discussed in class, and also placed on the course Blackboard site.

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.

Penalties

In fairness to other students, work submitted after the deadline will be subject to a penalty of 10% 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 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

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 using 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

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/>

Te Putahi Atawhai

Maori and Pacific Mentoring Programme

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/tpa/>