

School of Management

## **MGMT 404/MMMS 505 RESEARCH METHODS**

Trimester One 2012

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

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#### **Names and Contact Details**

Course coordinator: Dr Sarah Proctor-Thomson  
RH 909  
Ph: 463 9982, [sarah.proctor-thomson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sarah.proctor-thomson@vuw.ac.nz)  
Office hours: Thurs 1.30-2.30pm or by appointment

Course lecturer: Dr Sally Riad  
RH 910, Rutherford House  
Ph: 463 5079, [sally.riad@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:sally.riad@vuw.ac.nz)  
Office hours: Wed 12.30-1.30pm or by appointment (First four weeks of term)

Course administrator: Luisa Acheson  
RH 1022,  
Ph: 463 5381, [luisa.acheson@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:luisa.acheson@vuw.ac.nz)

#### **Trimester Dates**

Teaching Period: Monday 5th March to Monday 11<sup>th</sup> June (Last class is Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> June).

#### **Withdrawal from Course**

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

Tuesday 9.30am-12.20pm  
GB 117

## **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 students are required to attend a one three-hour class session each week. The weekly sessions are based on discussion of the reading material and the collaborative working through of student's personal research projects. It is therefore essential that students are thoroughly prepared for each session. Student achievement is individually assessed but Assignment 3 requires students to work together in groups to develop a qualitative research pilot.

## **Expected Workload**

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

## **Group Work**

Students 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. It is expected that in the last four weeks of the course, Focus group research teams will meet for up to two hours per week outside of class to work collaboratively on their pilot project. Team meeting time is considered to be part of the expected individual workload of 10-15 hours per week. If any student believes they will be unable to participate in teamwork outside of class time please indicate this to the coordinator in the first two weeks of the course.

**MGMT 404/ MMMS 505 Course Schedule**

Wk	Date		Topics	Class Preparation
1	Mar 6	SR & SPT	<b>Introduction</b> Overview of the course; The objectives and processes of organisational and management research; The research process.	<b>Read:</b> O'Leary, Ch.1. Easterby- Smith Ch 1 (supplied in class)
2	Mar 13	SR	<b>Philosophies of Research</b> 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	<b>Read :</b> Easterby-Smith et al. Ch 4 Henry and Pene, (2001) (both supplied)
3	Mar 20	SR	<b>Reviewing the Literature</b> 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	<b>Read:</b> O'Leary Ch. 6 Locke & Golden-Biddle (1997) (supplied)
4	Mar 27	SR	<b>Designing Research</b> Research questions; Exploring the variety in research designs; Contributing to theory; Implications for method.	<b>Read:</b> O'Leary Ch.4
5	April 3	SPT	<b>Introduction to Methods: Quantitative Organisational Research</b> What is quantitative research? Review of quantitative research article; Inductive/deductive reasoning; Quantitative research methods, Rigour in quantitative research; Survey method.	<b>Read:</b> O'Leary, Ch. 8 <b>Bring:</b> Your <u>research question</u> from Assignment 1 and your <u>review notes</u> on research article: Shelton et al. (2010) (supplied)
<b>Mid-Trimester Break April 6th-22<sup>nd</sup></b>				
6	April 24	SPT	<b>Capturing data: Theorising and measuring qualitative and quantitative data in surveys</b> Conceptual & theoretical framework dev; Operationalisation and measurement of variables; Types of data, types of questions, types of answers.	<b>Read:</b> O'Leary, Ch.11, p. 180-193 Cavanna et al. (2001), Ch 8. (supplied) <b>Bring:</b> Your <u>survey topic</u> , <u>your revised research question</u> , and a <u>list of key variables</u> you want to measure.
7	May 1	SPT	<b>Survey design and instrument testing</b> Populations & sampling; Question testing; Questionnaire appearance; Reducing non-response. <i>&lt;Pilot questionnaire sometime this week after our Tuesday class&gt;</i>	<b>Read:</b> O'Leary, Ch. 10 esp. p.160-169. <b>Bring:</b> Your <u>draft survey</u> (containing at least 10 of your own questions).
8	May 8	SPT	<b>Quantitative Data Analysis and Interpretation</b> <b>MEET IN COMPUTER SUITE RHMZ01</b> Going over piloting of questionnaire; preparing data, describing data; Working with SPSS in the lab.	<b>Read:</b> O'Leary, Ch. 13 <b>Bring:</b> Completed questionnaires from pilot.
9	May 15	SPT	<b>Qualitative Research Methods</b> What is qualitative research? Review of qualitative research article. Rigour in Qualitative Research; Qualitative Research Methods: Observations, Interviews, Focus groups.	<b>Revise:</b> O'Leary Ch.8 <b>Bring:</b> your <u>review notes</u> on qualitative research article: Cassel et al (2009) (supplied).
10	May 22	SPT	<b>Qualitative Focus Group Research I</b> Developing focus group schedule, conducting a focus group in organisational research, ethical considerations in international contexts.	<b>Read:</b> Kitzinger & Barbour (1999), p. 4-20 (supplied). <b>Bring:</b> Your <u>group's research topic</u> and <u>research question</u> .
11	May 29	SPT	<b>Qualitative Focus Group Research II</b> Testing focus group interview schedule; Observation skills; Transcribing, abstracting and coding qualitative data <i>&lt;run focus group this week sometime after our Tuesday class&gt;</i>	<b>Read:</b> O'Leary, Ch. 14 <b>Bring:</b> Focus group draft <u>interview schedule</u> , and <u>information and consent forms</u>
12	June 5	SPT	<b>Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation</b> Group analysis; Formal reflection on focus group; Writing as qualitative analysis Course admin & evaluation. What's next?	<b>Read:</b> King (2004) (supplied) <b>Bring:</b> 2 page excerpt of focus group transcript and reflective notes.

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

## 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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* (3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 %	4pm, Monday 2 April
2	Survey planning and design	35 %	4pm, Monday 14 May
3	Focus group pilot and analysis	35 %	4pm, Monday 11 June
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100 %</b>	

**NB: There is no examination for this course.**

### **Assignment 1. Exploring potential contribution to management knowledge**

Due: 4pm, Monday 2 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 the Week 1 class and posted on Blackboard in the ‘Assessment’ section.**

### **Assignment 2. Survey planning and design**

Due: 4pm, Monday 14 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 some survey research including piloting a questionnaire. However, you will NOT be required to execute the survey. 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 (to be negotiated with your course coordinator).

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

### **Assignment 3. Focus group pilot and analysis**

Due: *4pm, Monday 11 June*

Marks: 35%

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

This assignment builds on earlier work in the course and gives you an opportunity to engage in qualitative data collection and analysis via a focus group research pilot. In this assignment you will be working with a group of peers to develop and run a focus group on a relevant management topic. You will then individually analyse an excerpt of your data.

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

### **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.

### **Quality Assurance Note**

**For reasons of quality assurance all assessed work must be submitted in both hardcopy and electronic form by the due date.** 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, academic audit and programme development processes. All material used for such purposes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

### **Handing in assignments**

**Hardcopy:** A hardcopy of assignments should be submitted by the due date and time to **Assignment Box: 17, 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](mailto:sarah.proctor-thomson@vuw.ac.nz) by 5.00pm on the 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 and 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.

## **Penalties**

- 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**

Students will select a representative for the postgraduate programme at the start of the trimester

## **Communication of Additional Information**

The course lecturers will convey any additional information to students in class or via blackboard and 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](http://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](http://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](http://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](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/>