

School of Accounting and Commercial Law

## **ACCY 410 ADVANCED TAXATION**

Trimester 2 2012

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

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

<i>Professor:</i>	John Creedy	RH 610	463-7422
	<a href="mailto:John.Creedy@vuw.ac.nz">John.Creedy@vuw.ac.nz</a>		
	Office Hours	TBC	
<i>Course Administrator:</i>	Rebekah Sage	RH708	463-7465
	<a href="mailto:Rebekah.Sage@vuw.ac.nz">Rebekah.Sage@vuw.ac.nz</a>		
	Office hours:	Monday-Friday 8.30am-5pm	
	Office is closed:	10.30-10.45am and 3.30-3.45pm	

#### **Trimester Dates**

From Monday 16 July to Friday 9 November

#### **Withdrawal from Course**

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 27 July 2012.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 5 October. 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**

Wednesday 14.40-17.30 in Railway West Wing (RWW) 128

#### **Course Content**

Students who take this course will examine a number of tax policy issues in New Zealand and tax policy concepts. They will research three current tax policy issues of their choice. The topics will be chosen after discussion with Professor Creedy. A list of some of the possible topics is contained at the end of this Course Outline.

## **Course Learning Objectives**

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

1. Understand and explain some of the major issues currently facing the New Zealand tax system;
2. Understand and critically evaluate the key concepts in tax policy;
3. Apply tax policy criteria in evaluating the arguments for and against a current tax policy proposal;
4. Understand the links between tax policy and wider economic and social policy;
5. Undertake independent research on tax policy topics of their choice and write three concise papers that identify, discuss and critically evaluates tax policy issues.

## **Course Delivery**

Discussions and feedback on assignments.

## **Expected Workload**

It is expected that students on average will spend about 10 hours per week reading, studying, preparing and writing their assignments.

## **Group Work**

While students are welcome to discuss course issues between themselves, there is NO group assessment of any kind. Any material subjected for assessment **MUST BE** the student's own work.

## **Course Material**

Recent reviews of the tax systems in New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom provide extensive materials for researchers. The preparatory materials and reports are all available online:

- The New Zealand tax system – <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sacl/cagtr/twg/>
- The Australian tax system – <http://taxreview.treasury.gov.au/>
- The United Kingdom tax system - <http://www.ifs.org.uk/mirrleesReview>

In addition, material will be made available during the semester.

## **Materials and Equipment**

There is no special equipment or other materials required to study in this course. Students are expected to have access to computing facilities so that all work submitted for assessment is typed.

## **Assessment Requirements**

The course assessment is based entirely on three written assignments of equal weight. The submission dates are to be determined after discussion with students.

*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 FCom programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.*

### Quality Assurance 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 FCom 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 is no final exam in this course.

### **Penalties**

It is expected that students will meet the deadlines set in this course. A penalty of one percentage point per day for lateness will be deducted if the assignment is up to one week late. After that, no mark will be attached to that work.

### **Mandatory Course Requirements**

All three assignments are to be submitted by the required dates.

### **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**

Communication between students and facilitators will be by email.

### **Use of Turnitin (if applicable)**

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 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](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 Office**

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp>

**Te Putahi Atawhai**

**Maori and Pacific Mentoring Programme**

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

## Session Schedule – ACCY 410 - Trimester 2 2012

### Some possible tax policy research topics

1. New Zealand is often praised by public finance economists for having a broad-based GST which includes food. Yet some people continue to support the exemption of food on distributional grounds. Examine the arguments on both sides of this debate.
2. New Zealand has recently seen an increase in the GST rate, accompanied by a reduction in income tax rates. What arguments are used to justify this change in the tax mix?
3. New Zealand is unusual in a negligible capital gains tax. Examine the arguments in favour of such a tax and consider implementation problems which might arise.
4. There is no tax-free threshold in New Zealand. This contrasts with many countries which have either a tax-free threshold or an equivalent system of personal allowances. Can a case be made for the introduction of a tax-free threshold?
5. New Zealand, like many countries with extensive social transfers, relies on means testing, rather than providing a fixed level of transfer payments for various contingencies. Means testing is said to provide high target efficiency compared with universal benefits, while at the same time creating high effective marginal tax rates for benefit recipients. Examine the arguments for and against means testing.
6. Since 1 July 2010, New Zealand has had an emissions trading scheme. From 1 July 2012, the Australian Government proposes that a carbon tax will operate in Australia. Examine the arguments for and against such environmental taxes.
7. Is the New Zealand tax policy and tax lawmaking process delivering the best possible policy outcomes? How is the 'generic tax policy process' (GTPP), first developed in 1995, currently working? To what extent is there a need for independent tax policy analysis, such as that provided by the New Zealand Tax Working Group, Australian Henry Review and the UK Mirrlees Review?
8. Should New Zealand eliminate excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco, and petrol and increase GST to raise the equivalent amount of revenue? Examine the arguments for and against this tax switch away from excise taxes.
9. Should New Zealand tax gambling winnings? Examine the arguments for and against this tax proposal.
10. Should New Zealand tax owner-occupied housing in addition to local bodies charging rates on such housing? Examine the arguments on both sides of this debate.
11. Should New Zealand raise the age of entitlement for New Zealand Superannuation from 65 to 67 years old? Examine the arguments for and against this proposal.
12. Should New Zealand assess income tax on family or individual units? Examine the arguments on both sides of this debate.
13. Other topics of your choice approved by the facilitators.