

School of Marketing and International Business

IBUS 311 INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS RESEARCH PROJECT

Trimester Two 2013

COURSE OUTLINE

Name and Contact Details

Course Coordinator: Dr. Hongzhi Gao
Office: Rutherford House 1125
Office hours: by appointment
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Course Administrator: Asako Clear
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School Office Opening hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 – 16:30

Trimester Dates

Monday 15 July to 25 October 2013

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 26 July 2013.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 27 September. 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, 3:40 pm – 5:30 pm, RWW 413

Course Delivery

Eight special topic workshops will be organised throughout the trimester. Information about the workshops and assigned consultation hours is detailed in Table 1.

Individual or group consultation times outside the assigned hours in Table 1 will be agreed on after initial planning for each project.

Table 1 Course Schedule

Week	Workshop/Consultation	Description	Time	Venue	Date
1.	Workshop 1 Introduction to Applied Business Research	Learning objectives and outcomes; research process; Client brief; Defining research problem	TBC	TBC	TBC
2.	Workshop 2 Problem Identification/ Literature Review	Preliminary information gathering; Literature review; Developing research objectives	15:40- 17:30	RWW413	23 Jul.
3.	No workshop/ consultation		15:40- 17:30		30 Jul.
4.	Workshop 3 Conceptual Solutions	Synthesis of the literature, Integrating theory with practice; Suggesting tentative solutions (propositions; hypotheses) at the conceptual level	15:40- 17:30	RWW413	6 Aug.
5.	Workshop 4 Research Design	Sampling; Recruitment of informants; Data analysis methods	15:40- 17:30	RWW413	13 Aug.
6.	Workshop 5 Data Collection	Conducting surveys, interviews, or content analysis, case studies	15:40- 17:30	RWW413	20 Aug.
<i>Mid Trimester Break (26 August – 8 September)</i>					
7.	Consultation		15:40- 17:30	RWW413	10 Sept.
8.	Workshop 6 Analysis and Reporting	Report researching findings; Drawing managerial implications	15:40- 17:30	RWW413	17 Sept.
9.	Consultation		15:40- 17:30		24 Sept.
10.	Workshop 7 Oral Presentation and client feedback	Oral presentation preparation and ways of seeking feedback from the client	15:40- 17:30	RWW413	1 Oct.
11.	Consultation		15:40- 17:30	RWW413	8 Oct.
12.	Course review	Wrap up and reflection	15:40- 17:30	RWW413	15 Oct.

The course coordinator/academic supervisor meets with students regularly to discuss the progress of the project, and provides academic mentoring and support for the project.

Course Delivery

All IBUS 311 projects have to be applied, and involve some aspect of international business. The scope of possibilities is wide and could include elements of international marketing, market entry strategies, export management, e-commerce, entrepreneurship, cross-cultural management, supply chain management, environment or industry analysis, regulatory issues. For example:

- Developing a market entry strategy into a new market for an existing export product.
- Developing an international marketing plan for a new export venture.
- Design of a business plan for an international spin-off, start-up or expanding firm or planning and evaluation of such project.
- Developing a collaborative strategy for firms in a domestic cluster to compete internationally.
- Developing a competitive strategy for a selected firm or industry in the global market.
- Developing an e-commerce solution for an internationalising firm.
- Developing a solution for a firm to be better integrated in the global supply chain.
- Auditing the “International Business Readiness” of a small/medium sized business.
- Assessing the business outlook for New Zealand trade into a specified market.

It is expected that the IBUS 311 project will normally be carried out within a participating organisation for whom the student is working. There is provision however for students to work on a supervised project within a company or agency without specifically being employed. The key consideration in these circumstances is identifying a manager who is willing to take direct responsibility for working with the student on a project with mutually agreed objectives and outcomes. This includes being reasonably available to the student through the project period (8-10 hours over three and half months), and ensuring reasonable access to people and information likely to be required in adequately completing the project.

For participating organisations, the IBUS 311 Project aims to provide the following benefits:

- Receiving a full report on the research.
- An opportunity to gain external insight in addressing present or future issues relating to international business.
- Addressing problems or opportunities that have been ignored due to time and resource constraints.
- Establishing a relationship with IBUS staff and students at Victoria.
- Assessing the potential for future recruitment of IBUS students.

The School, for its part, works closely with the student in formulating an agreed topic and project outcomes, and supervising the work to ensure that academic requirements are met. While the School is happy to work with students in identifying possible project sites students are responsible for finding organisations to work with.

The potential students will be invited to submit a preliminary proposal by **4 July**, and then a full proposal (with inputs from the client) by **12 July**. Proposal forms and project agreement forms can be obtained from the course lecturer (also available on Blackboard). PLEASE NOTE that the proposal and project agreement have to be received and approved by the lecturer. If the student cannot find a client or gain an approval on the research proposal and project agreement by lecturer by 22 July, he or she will not be able to continue this course. In this situation, withdrawal from the course would be required. Please note the last date of withdrawal from the course with fees refunded is 26 July.

Special topics workshops and consultations are designed to give students guidance on the project and also address any issues emerging in the course. Students are required to attend all the special topics workshops and assigned consultation hours outlined in Table 1.

KEY DATES IN THE COURSE:

No.	Milestones	Due Date
1.	A preliminary proposal	8 Jul.
2.	Acceptance into the course	12 Jul.
3.	Client confirmation and finalising of the proposal and project agreement (signed off by the client and course lecturer)	22 Jul.
4.	Completion of the literature review and development of research questions/conceptual/tentative solutions	12 Aug.
5.	Completion of the research design	19 Aug.
6.	Completion of data collection and analysis and development of final solutions	23 Sept.
7.	Oral presentation and client feedback	14-18 October
8.	Submission of the research report	25 October

Course Learning Objectives

The primary purpose of the paper is to equip students with research and problem solving skills through dual support from a participating organisation in industry or government as well as an academic supervisor from Victoria University. Therefore, students work for credit on a supervised IBUS project while working with or for a participating company or agency.

The learning objectives of IBUS311 are to:

- Analyse an issue of interest in the context of international business (LO1).
- Formulate a business model for the global market (LO2).
- Apply frameworks, tools, and concepts to an international business issue (LO3).
- Demonstrate skills in research and analysis and present results and recommendations of research projects (LO4).

Course Content

The International Business Research Project (IBUS 311 Project) is a research course where students have the opportunity to investigate and experience the real-world of international business. This course involves the application and assessment of an approved topic relevant to international business. The research features supervised practical experience in an agency, firm or organisation involved in the development, planning and management of international business programmes, enterprise and/or policy formation.

Course Prescription

Application and assessment of an approved topic relevant to international business through supervised practical experience in an agency, firm or organisation involved in the development, planning and management of international business programmes, policy formulation and/or enterprise.

Expected Workload

Students' workload will vary depending on each project. Normally students can expect to work an average of 12 hours per week on meetings, readings, research and planning.

Readings

Two books are recommended as key references in this course:

Cavana, R. Y., Delahaye, B. L. & Sekaran, U. 2001. *Applied Business Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Milton, QLD, Australia: John Wiley & Sons.

Sekaran, U. & Bougie, R. 2013. *Research Methods for Business: A Skill Building Approach*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

These two books are stored in the closed reserve for IBUS 311 at the Commerce library. In addition, students can discuss reading recommendations with the course lecturer based upon the specifics of their project.

Materials and Equipment

Students are required to have access to personal computers and the Internet in order to conduct research. Students are required to be familiar with the process of employing academic databases accessible via the university library system.

Assessment

There is no final examination in this course. The research report is worth 80 marks; the other 20 marks will be made up by an oral presentation to the participating organisation.

The research questions, contents, length and depth as well as other aspect of the research project will be negotiated with the course lecturer and agreed on in writing before **20 August 2013**. The research report will be due by **10am 25 October 2013**. The report will be assessed by the course lecturer, in consultation with the participating organisation. In addition, each student is required to make a formal presentation to the participating organisation. The presentations are expected to take place in the week starting from **14 October** but the actual time will be negotiated with the participating organisations. Each presentation will be assessed by the course lecturer in consultation with the participating organisation.

Assessment	Learning Objectives Addressed	Weight	Due Date
Research report	LO 1,2,3	80%	25 October
Presentation	LO 4	20%	Week starting from 14 October

The research report will be assessed following the evaluation criteria specified in the book by Cavana, Delahaye and Sekaran (2001) on pp. 389-392. The structure of the report should follow the guidance given in the book by Sekaran and Bougie (2013), with references to Chapter 17 (pp.355-365) and Examples (of written report) in Appendix (pp. 369-377). All of the references in the report must follow the referencing format of the *Journal of International Business Studies*. Please consult JIBS' Instruction for Authors' and articles within the Journal for examples on correct referencing. There are no set word limits for the research report. The length of the report will be the result of the consultation and negotiation with the participating organisations and the course lecturer.

HEC Requirements

University policy requires all research projects involving human subjects to be approved by the Pipitea Human Ethics Committee. Approval for IBUS 311 projects has been granted. Students should ensure that their research project meets the conditions as outlined in the approval. A copy

of these conditions will be made available to students by the course lecturer (via Blackboard). As a key condition in the approval by the Pipitea HEC, students **MUST** gain the specific approval from the course coordinator on their research methods (including, for example, recruitment of informants, research instruments, and process of collecting, analysing and reporting the research data) before they conduct any primary research, in addition to gaining the approval from the course lecturer for their proposed research topic.

Examinations

There is no final examination for this course.

Mandatory Course Requirements

A written copy of research report must be submitted to the course lecturer by **10 am 25 October** unless an extension has been granted by the course lecturer prior to this submission deadline. A digital copy of research report must be sent to the course lecturer via email before the deadline for the written copy. To pass the course, the student must obtain a minimum of 50% of the total marks for the research report.

Penalties

20 marks will be automatically taken off the final marks of the work if the student submits their report later than the due time (**10 am 25 October 2013**) but before **10 am 29 October 2013**. The report will not be accepted for marking if it is handed in after **10 am 29 October 2013** unless prior approval has been given.

Communication of Additional Information

Blackboard and registered email addresses on Blackboard are the devices through which any additional information or changes regarding this course will be communicated. Students are required to check Blackboard and registered emails at least every two days during the course.

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course will 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. A copy of submitted materials will be retained 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.

Student feedback

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php

Link to general information

For general information about course-related matters, go to <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information>

Note to Students

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 academic audit. The findings may be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of VBS programmes. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.
