

School of Management

MGMT 430/ MMMS 530 RESEARCH PAPER ON A SELECTED ASPECT OF MANAGEMENT

Trimester 2 2013

COURSE OUTLINE

CONTACT DETAILS

Coordinator: Deborah Jones
Room: RH 930, Rutherford House
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Email: deborah.jones@vuw.ac.nz
Office Hours: Office hours: 1-3 pm Thursdays
during term time.
Supervision times: by appointment during
these hours.

Lecturer and Supervisor: Todd Bridgman
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Class Times and Room Numbers

Tuesday 2.40 pm– 5.30 pm RWWW 126

Trimester Dates

Teaching Period: Monday 15 July – Thursday 24 October

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.

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE REVISED 2 September 2013

WEEK	DATE	STAFF	WORKSHOP TOPIC	READINGS	BRING TO CLASS	ASSIGNMENTS DUE
1	16/7	DJ	Workshop: Eight questions exercise and literature reviews	Bryman & Bell, Ch. 1 and 4	For class: Bring copy of 8 questions exercise to hand in (on Blackboard)	
2	23/7		CLASS POSTPONED			
3	30/7	DJ	Workshop: Research design	O'Leary, Ch. 7 Bryman & Bell, Ch. 3	For class: Bring 1. completed 'Project details' form - 2 copies; 2. Details of the journal you plan to address your article to, including objectives and audiences.	
4	6/8	TB	Workshop: Data collection	O'Leary Ch. 10, 11, 12	For class: Bring draft interview outlines, survey forms and/or observation sheets - 4 copies.	ASSIGNMENT 1: Literature Review NOW DUE 3 pm Friday 9 August
5	13/8	DJ	Workshop: Human Ethics application	Bryman & Bell, Ch. 5	For class: Bring draft HEC Application including forms etc. - 2 copies. Blank HEC application with instructions is on Blackboard.	
6	20/8		Supervision			
MID-TRIMESTER BREAK 27 August - 7 September						ASSIGNMENT 2: Research Design proposal and HEC form NOW DUE 3 pm Friday 30 August
7	10/9		Supervision			
8	17/9		Supervision			
9	24/9		Supervision			Data collection should be complete by 27 September at <i>the latest</i> .
10	1/10	TB	Workshop: Analysing your data	Bryman & Bell Ch. 22	For class: Bring a draft outline of key issues in analysing your data (to go into your methods section) - 4 copies.	
11	8/10	TB	Workshop: Writing your journal article	Bryman & Bell Ch. 27	For class: Bring: a draft of your introduction section - 500 words or over - 4 copies.	
12	15/10		Supervision			ASSIGNMENT 3 NOW DUE 3 pm Thurs 31 October

COMMUNICATION

We will email the class to confirm any important messages you need to have about the course. We will also post announcements and hand-outs on Blackboard. We will send all class messages to VUW SCS email account, so you should check these regularly. To contact staff by email: Include the **COURSE CODE** in the subject area of the email.

INTRODUCTION

In this course you will begin to develop the role of a professional researcher. The key objective is to design and pilot a research project on a topic of your choice, using the methods of your choice. The final output is a journal article. Assignments are designed so that they cumulatively lead to the final report in journal article format. This final write-up will include, in a revised and edited version, most of the material already handed in during the course.

For those going on to further research, the pilot will help you develop your thesis research design. Students may also wish to use the project to explore an aspect of professional practice that interests you for the future. The final article may be submitted to the School of Management Working Paper series for review and potential publication online.

Your topic

It is essential that you find a topic that genuinely interests you, and that you take ownership of the research process. You will be required to go beyond a 'recipe' approach to research: instead, you will creatively design your own unique project, and be able to effectively explain your research design choices in your own words. You can consider a wide range of topics, as long as they have a link to management, organization and/or work.

Skills development

Successful research requires a unique combination of skills: creativity, a critical approach to research methodology and to the relevant academic material on your topic, interpersonal, project-management and writing skills. The first part of the course is based around class workshop sessions where you will work on successive parts of the project, cumulatively building up to data collection and analysis in the second half under supervision. In this course we combine readings and discussion of general research principles with workshops and individual supervision. We also encourage you to approach other staff in the School of Management where they have expertise that is relevant to your project.

Course Delivery

This course is taught by a combination of class workshops and individual supervision. There is a strong emphasis in this paper on a self-directed programme of research carried out under supervision from staff. Students are also required to prepare and hand in material for each workshop session.

REQUIRED TEXT

Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2011). *Business research methods* (3rd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

This text gives detailed in-depth guidelines for specific methodologies and methods. For wider overviews, we will also refer to O'Leary, the textbook from MGMT 404/ MMMS 505, *Research Methods*:

O'Leary, Zina (2010). 2nd ed. *The essential guide to doing research*. London: Sage.

Reading

You will be expected to show that you have read widely on issues of research methodology for Assignments 2 and 3. We expect you to be able to demonstrate that you have a good overall knowledge of the research approach you have taken, and more detailed knowledge of specific methods you are using. You must be able to convincingly use your own words to explain what you are doing and why. For research methods the best resources are usually **books** rather than journal articles. Other research methods textbooks are available in the Commerce library on the 2nd floor of the Railway Building.

Class Representative

The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students. Your class representative was elected in the first term, and that person's name and contact details are available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class.

Human Ethics

Everyone will fill in an individual human ethics application form (posted on Blackboard), to be worked on in Workshop 4 and handed in as part of the research proposal assignment (Asst. 2) and this must be approved before you can start data collection.

Please note –

- You may not formally agree to carry out research with any individuals or organisations before getting human ethics approval from a lecturer in the paper, based on Assignment 2.
- You should keep all signed research agreements until after the final course grade is received or until the date on your Human Ethics application forms.

Course-related Student Learning Objectives

On successful completion of the course, students will have improved their ability to:

1. Develop an effective research question to guide their research
2. Present a research design grounded in a review of a body of literature in a field of management studies
3. Articulate orally and in writing their research rationale
4. Give constructive feedback on research designs presented by others
5. Respond effectively to constructive feedback on versions of the research design
6. Carry out a pilot research exercise, analyse results and draw conclusions in relation to the research question
7. Show how the results of the research contribute to the existing body of work in the field
8. If relevant, show how the results of the research contribute to practitioners
9. Use professional research skills in creating effective and ethical research relationships and planning and carrying out a research design
10. Write a journal article based on original research.

Expected Participation and workload

Students are expected to be prepared for all class exercises, including bringing copies of specific preparation exercises as noted on the Schedule. You are expected to participate in class sessions, presenting your own work and providing feedback to others. You will be expected to attend all workshop sessions and should let the coordinator know in advance if you can't make it for any reason.

Students can expect the workload to be about 10-15 hrs. per week on average, including both scheduled contact time (class sessions) and work outside class. Careful project management ensuring regular progress on key aspects is essential so that a large portion of the workload does not fall in the second half of the trimester.

Project management and supervision

It is important that you design a pilot project that can realistically be carried out during the course, working consistently. This will mean careful project management; including having a Plan B if you are unable to access the people or data you want in a timely way. We encourage you to keep a **research journal** during the course, and we will do class work that contributes to these. See the handout '*Writing a research journal*' on Blackboard.

Supervision will be allocated between lecturers in week two, depending on project topics and approaches. We encourage you to approach other staff in the School of Management for specific advice where they have expertise that is relevant to your project – but make sure that you do this early in your planning process.

Materials and Equipment

Students carrying out interviews will need to source recording equipment. If you do not have access to a digital recorder, please contact the Course co-ordinator.

ASSESSMENT

All assessment is the same for MGMT 430 and MMMS 530. All assessment will be internal, and all assignments will be individual.

Assignments

Assignments build up to a final pilot research project, written up as a journal article. Your project:

- must involve research with people ('human subjects'),
- could also include use of Secondary data: statistics, documents, media texts, documents, etc.,
- should be related to management, organisations or business in some way (interdisciplinary research is fine), and
- can be qualitative, quantitative, or a combination.

The scope of the pilot project (to be individually negotiated with your supervisor) will depend on the method (or combination of methods) you use. A rough guide is:

- in-depth interviews (say 1 hour plus) – up to 5 OR
- short interviews (say 30 mins) – up to 15 (or more depending length) OR
- questionnaires – 30 or more OR
- observation – about 4 hours.

SUMMARY OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. Literature review	10% of total	2000 + / - 200 words	DUE 3 PM FRIDAY 9 AUGUST
2. Research design proposal and HEC form	30% of total	2500 + / - 250 words plus completed Human Ethics form	DUE 3 PM FRIDAY 30 AUGUST
3. Journal article	60% of total	5000 + / - 500 words (length partly depends on the type of research you do).	DUE 3 PM THURS 31 OCTOBER

Relationships between the assessments and the course learning objectives are as follows:

Learning Objective	Literature review	Research design essay and HEC form	Journal article
1	X	X	X
2	X	X	X
3	X	X	X
4		X	X
5		X	X
6			X
7			X
8			X
9		X	X
10			X

Format for assignments

Assignments should have the following format:

- Word-processed, 11 or 12 point font.
- A cover sheet stating: Student name, project title, due date, course code and name, word count.
- Page numbers on each page.
- APA referencing and include 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 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.

Handing in assignments

Hardcopy: A hardcopy of assignments should be submitted by the due date and time to Assignment Box 27 Mezzanine Floor, Rutherford House. Late hardcopy assignments must handed to Misa Ito or another staff member in RH 1022. Never leave assignments in staff offices, under doors, etc.

Electronic copy: An electronic copy of all assignments should be emailed to deborah.jones@vuw.ac.nz by 3.00pm on the due date with subject line as follows: MGMT 430 or MMMS 530, 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.

Referencing

Accurate and correct referencing is essential to scholarly research skills. A quick introduction to APA as required in this course will be posted on Blackboard. There are many different styles of referencing and the Faculty of Commerce at VUW has decided to make APA (American Psychological Association) referencing style the common standard across the Faculty. The Commerce and Central Libraries hold the APA Style Guide.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

10% of total 2000 + / - 200 words (excluding references)

The purpose of this review is to research and develop your core topic. You will connect your research project to the current academic literature, and to the academic and practitioner communities you will address in your final article. The review shows what you have learned from what others have already done, what you think of it, and how your work can contribute in a credible way. It will eventually be part of your final article in a revised form.

The literature review should take the form of an academic essay and include an appropriate structure. It is not a business report and you should therefore avoid the use of lists and bullet points. You should construct an argument, rather than merely providing a description of the relevant literature. You should argue the need for, and relevance of, your research project by setting it within the context of past research. This requires that you critically evaluate and synthesise the relevant literature to demonstrate the significance and value of your study. **Note:** this review does not include methodological issues which will be covered in assignment 2.

You must be able to summarise key aspects of the literature in your own words. Direct quotations can be useful (e.g. key terms and concepts), but should be used sparingly and should not act as a substitute for your own writing. It is essential to this assignment that the literature should be referenced appropriately. Full details on how to do this are included in the course outline: see 'Referencing strategies'.

FORMAT

Introduction: This should include a research question to guide your review. You should use one overall research question and then 2-3 sub-questions if you wish. (Your research question may change during your project, but this is a starting point).

Conclusion: This should summarise the key issues and concepts that you will draw on from the literature to explore your research question. You should also summarise how your proposed study would contribute to the existing literature on the topic.

Sources: You are free to use any relevant literature, including material that you may have covered in other honours courses. Each research project will vary according to the mix of theoretical and applied issues being explored. Depending on your topic, the review will include a mix of two types of published material, and these should be presented in separate sections of the review:

1. Academic articles and books

These provide a theoretical framework for your topic. It is possible that there is no existing research on your exact topic. You will be mixing and matching to make your own original contribution. You may be relating a theoretical framework to a topic or problem in a new way, or developing ways that your topic has already been studied. You may be combining theories to develop an innovative perspective.

2. Non-academic background material

For some topics there may be non-academic material such as statistical or policy reports, articles in practitioner journals or other media, news reports, websites or organisational documents which give background to your topic and the issues involved in it. You should use this material in the review only to indicate the relevance of your topic and the issues involved. **This section should make up no more than 1/3 of the review at most.**

Assessment criteria

The literature review should:

- take the form of an academic essay and include an appropriate structure
- present the construction of an argument to demonstrate the relevance of your topic
- include a mix of academic and non-academic material appropriate to your topic
- involve a critical evaluation and synthesis of the relevant literature
- be referenced appropriately
- be well-written and interesting.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN PROPOSAL AND HEC FORM

30% of total 3000 + / - 250 words (excluding references) plus completed Human Ethics form

This proposal: 1. helps clarify the project so that both student and supervisor(s) are clear about what is proposed and can commit to it; and 2. demonstrates your understandings of the research methodology principles that make your design credible.

FORMAT OF PROPOSAL: The proposal should be written in essay format and should include:

A. Introduction – about 750 words

- **Proposed title**
- **Research question (with any sub-questions)**
- **Set the scene:** What is the research about? Why does it interest you? Why is it academically important or interesting? Is it also important or interesting to practitioners? Which journal do you plan to address and how is your research relevant to its objectives and audiences? (include a link to the journal title page in your references).
- **Background:** What knowledge, if any, do you already have about the empirical situation you are addressing, if you are doing empirical research?
- **Literature Review:** Briefly summarise key ideas and key concepts based on your literature review. What is original about what you want to do?

B. Methodology – about 1500 words

- **Overall methodology:** Which overall methodologies will you draw on and why? What kind of strategy will be used and why?
- **Methods:** What exactly will you be doing? What are the data collection methods to be used? What types of data should be collected? How will this be done? What could be the problems of collecting these types of data? How will access be gained to participants and organisations? How many studies (interviews, surveys, observations, etc.) will be conducted and why? In which ways will the methods and design answer your research questions?
- **Analysis:** What, in general terms, will you do with the data you collect? What kinds of analytical techniques is it likely you will use? What are their limitations? How will these analyses address and answer the research questions? How are you going to construct your argument, i.e., how are you going to draw together theory and data in a way that allows readers to follow you and be able to judge for themselves the judgements or conclusions you have reached?
- **Ethical considerations:** Are there potential conflicts of interest, or areas of ethical sensitivity which may occur before, during or after the research? Which cultural or power difference issues are relevant?
- **Credibility:** What are the truth values in your project? How do you address the issues of reliability and validity that are relevant to your methodology?

C. Planning – about 750 words

- **Research skills:** Which professional experience or research training do you already have that will be relevant to this project? Which aspects of your research skills would you need to learn or develop?
- **Resources:** What kind of resources, e.g., equipment, etc. will you need to complete this project?
- **Timetable:** Give a timetable with dates for each milestone. Include a Plan B – what will you do if you cannot get the data you are planning for by the dates you have in mind? What alternative sources or types of data will you use? [Note: it is not acceptable to simply collect less data because of practical problems].

References: (not included in word count). Use demonstrate your knowledge of research issues and methods.

HEC FORM: The Human Ethics application is included in this assessment. It should reflect the ethical considerations covered in your proposal, exemplify your understandings of ethical issues in research, and the form and related research documents should be clear and correct, and completed to a professional academic standard. The Human Ethics application will also have to be approved before your research goes ahead.

Assessment criteria

The research design proposal should demonstrate:

- understandings of the theoretical aspects of research design, especially methodology
- ability to design a viable and realistic project
- ability to argue convincingly for the academic credibility of the proposed research design
- understandings of ethical issues in research
- ability to explain the relevance of all these issues to your project in your own words
- ability to produce research documents to a professional academic standard.

3. JOURNAL ARTICLE

60% of total About 5000 + / - 500 words (excluding references) Length partly depends on the type of research you do. A set word length does not apply to this assignment. (If in doubt discuss with your supervisor.

This final write-up will include in a revised and edited version most of the material already handed in during the course. Your output will be a self-contained and credible academic research article clearly showing how you have proceeded from research question to final conclusions and discussion. You will show what you have learned from the pilot process, and the implications for future research .

This assignment will be written in the format of an academic journal article. You should find an academic journal that you would aim to publish your paper in, and use the guidelines on their website regarding audience and writing style (if this is mentioned). Some academic journals also aim to reach certain groups of practitioners, and one of these may be suitable if you are also aiming for this audience.

Your finalised and approved HEC Application and all related documents should also be attached for our information.

FORMAT

1. Preface

- Name of journal you are 'submitting' the article to, plus brief outline of journal audience and style, and how your essay addresses these. (include a link to the journal title page in your references).

2. Essay

You will use an essay style (models, diagrams and tables, etc. may be included if relevant), and will include (not necessarily in this order) :

- Introduction
- Literature review (an updated, re-focussed and shortened version of assignment 1)
- Methodology (based on Assignment 2 and updated as necessary)
- Findings and discussion (may be two separate sections)
- What you learned from the pilot for future research
 - What you learned about any aspects of the research process (this should be very specific)
 - What you learned about the research topic and how you would change your research design for future research and/or what you would recommend to other researchers
- Conclusions
- References using APA style

3. Attached – HEC Materials

Your finalised and approved HEC Application and all related documents. This does not include the actual consent forms which you should store securely until your final grade is available, then destroyed. The HEC materials are not assessed for this final assignment, but are used for our information and records.

Assessment criteria

The assignment should:

- flow coherently from the research question to the final conclusions
- work effectively as a pilot project
- contribute to the academic literature
- contribute to practitioners (this is not necessarily relevant to all projects)
- demonstrate a good theoretical understanding of the research process
- be written to an appropriate professional standard for the specified audience
- be referenced to journal standards using the strategies provided in the course outline.

GRADING GUIDELINES

The following broad indicative characterisations of grade will apply in grading assignments:

A+	excellent performance in all respects at this level
A	excellent performance in almost all respects at this level
A-	excellent performance in many respects at this level
B+	very good, some aspects excellent
B, B-	good but not excellent performance at this level
C+, C	work satisfactory overall but inadequate in some respects
D	poor performance overall, some aspects adequate
E	well below the required standard
K	failure to achieve mandatory course requirements and have achieved at least an average "C" over all the assessment. Note this is a failing grade.

Mandatory course requirements

To (pass this course) fulfil mandatory course requirements, students must:

- Hand in all assignments
- Attend at least 5 out of 6 workshop sessions (except for illness or by permission of the coordinator)
- Obtain at least 50 per cent of the marks available for the final assignment, i.e., at least a grade of C on the final assignment.

Students who fail to satisfy the mandatory requirements for this course but who obtain 50% or more overall, will be awarded a "K" 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 notified by email.

If you cannot complete an assignment, refer to www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/exams-and-assessments/aegrotat

Penalties- for Lateness & Excessive Length of Assignments

- I. In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline 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** will not be accepted and the student will **automatically fail the Mandatory Requirements**.
- II. Course Outlines provide a signal to student of forthcoming workload, dates of submission etc., and thus student study plans should take account of course requirements across all courses. Consequently, workload issues related to other courses and employment will not be accepted as reason for dispensation from mandatory requirements or waiver of penalties. **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 lecturer, providing documentary evidence of the reasons of their circumstances.

- IV. All such applications must be made **before** the deadline and be accompanied by documentary evidence, e.g. a medical certificate, or counsellor's report that indicates the degree of impairment, and for how long the student has been impaired. Please be sure to ask at the time of consultation for the degree of impairment to be stated in any certificate you provide to support your case.
- V. 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 lecturer as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.
- VI. Word limits should be adhered to, especially so when they provide a guide to limiting the student's coverage of a topic. Extra credit will not be given for extra material in an assignment over the limit.

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>