TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI
VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Information Management

INFO 403 RESEARCH METHODS IN INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Trimester 1, 2014

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator	Name	Dr Janet Toland		
	Room	RH523		
	Tel	463-6861	E-mail	Janet.toland@vuw.ac.nz
	Office hours	By appointment		
Course Lecturer	Name	Dr Jean-Gregoire Bernard		
	Room	RH409		
	Tel	463-9742	E-mail	Jean.gregoire.bernard@vuw.ac.nz
	Office hours	By appointment		

Trimester Dates

Monday 3rd March – Friday 6th June

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 14th March 2014.

2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 16th 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

Monday 9.30am – 12.20 pm in RWW 221

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.

Group Work

There will be no formal group assignments. However, class discussion will sometimes take place in pairs or small groups.

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.

Prescription

A critical examination of methodologies used in theoretical and empirical research in information systems. Survey research, experimentation, case research, action research, grounded theory, ethnographic research, hermeneutic research, meta-research and other methodologies will be examined. Published research papers in which the various methodologies have been employed will be studied.

Readings

The required text for the course is Zina O'Leary: *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project (2nd Edition)*. 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.

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, in the 3 day reserve section of the Library (in Railway):

Punch, K.F. (2005). *Introduction to Social Research*. London: Sage.

We will not assign any material from this book, but simply recommend it to you as an alternative to the O'Leary book, should you wish to see obtain a different author's perspective on any particular topic.

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

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.

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.

This schedule is subject to change but students will be informed as far in advance as possible of any changes.

Wk	Class Date	Lead	Topic	Deliverable
1	3 March	JG/ 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	10 March	Janet	**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	17 March	JG	**Structuring of inquiry (2)**. Introduction to experimentation; introduction to survey research.	
4	24 March	JG	**Structuring of inquiry (3)**. Survey research (continued): measurement; scale development; reliability and validity; sampling.	Checkpoint – proposal outline
5	31 March	Janet	**Structuring of inquiry (4)**. Qualitative field research: approaches to qualitative research; qualitative data collection; non-empirical qualitative research.	
6	7 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	14April	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
Mid Trimester Break				
8	5 May	JG	**Analysis of data (3)**. Quantitative data analysis continued: bivariate analysis (cont.); ANOVA; regression; multivariate analysis;	
9	12 May	JG	**Analysis of data (4)**. Quantitative data analysis continued: factor analysis; introduction to path models.	
10	19 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?	Assignment 2
11	26 May	JG/ Janet	**Presentation of project proposal**	Project proposal presentations
12	2 June		**No Lecture – Queens Birthday Public Holiday**	Project proposal

Assessment

From Trimester 1, 2014, a revised Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf.

In particular, there will be a new grade scheme, in which the A+ range will be 90-100% and 50-54% will be a C-.

There will be five different assessments.

Assessment	Weight	Date
Checkpoint – Proposal outline	10%	24 March (9.30am)
Assignment 1 – Qualitative Research Exercise	20%	14 April (9.30am)
Assignment 2 – Quantitative Research Exercise	20%	19 May (9.30am)
Reading summaries	10%	- continuous -
Project proposal • Submission • Presentation	 30% 10%	 6 June (5.00pm) 26 May (9.30am)

Checkpoint exercise (10%) – Proposal outline – 24 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 – 14 April
(Addresses objectives 2, 3, 4)

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

Assignment 2 (20%) – Quantitative Research Exercise - 19 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%) – 6 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 (Monday 26 May), each student will deliver a 15-minute presentation of the proposed project, and allow for a 5-minute question session afterwards – 20 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.

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.

Use of Turnitin
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 submitted to Turnitin. 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.

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).

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

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.

Student feedback
Student feedback on last year's course was very positive. However we are always looking to improve teaching and learning so any suggestions you may have are most welcome. There is no need to wait until the end of the course to give us your feedback, the sooner we get your ideas the sooner we can implement changes.

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.

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