

School of Government

PUBL 531
RESEARCH PAPER

Trimester 1, 2014

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

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Trimester Dates

Monday 3rd March to Friday 27th 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

This is a research course, with no class meetings.

Expected Workload

The expected total workload in the course is 300 hours, which can be evenly spread throughout the trimester.

Prescription

Research paper on a selected topic in public policy intended to answer a question related to the subject being studied

Course Learning Objectives

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Plan and carry out a small supervised research essay on a specific topic in public policy
2. Present the results of their research coherently and in an appropriate written format.

Course Delivery

No formal classes are associated with this course which is an independent research course. You can expect regular contact with the course coordinator and your supervisor (once assigned).

You will agree on a topic with a supervisor and prepare a literature review under the direction of the supervisor.

Readings

There are no specified readings. There are several guides to research which can be borrowed from the library. A book which is useful for post-experience students is Zina O'Leary, *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*, Sage, 2010. A good book on literature review is Diana Ridley, *Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students* (2008 or 2012). Your supervisor may also assist you in locating readings which will be helpful to progress your research.

Please refer to a separate booklet, *School of Government Research Guidelines 2014*, available from the Administrator, which supplements this course outline.

Assessment

A research essay (10,000 words) is due on 27 June and is worth 90% of the course grade. Both course learning objectives will be assessed through the final report, and a letter grade will be awarded. The essay should be set out according to the specific guidance of your supervisor. It will include an analysis and synthesis of different views on a research question as expressed in the relevant literature, followed by your own conclusions.

A preliminary report (1,500 words) is due on 31 March and is worth 10%.

Assessment Detail

Preliminary report, due Monday 31 March 2014

When submitting your *preliminary report*, include a front page with the following details:

- Course code and name
- Assessment item descriptor (final proposal)
- Due date (and date submitted, if different)
- Name of candidate
- Student ID number

Please email your preliminary report in a Microsoft Word attachment to amanda.wolf@vuw.ac.nz. DO NOT pdf the file.

Your report, which should be approximately 1,500 words, should include the following:

1. A title: Titles should be short and descriptive. Journals are good sources of ideas for titles
2. A statement of your research problem and research question: Set out the purpose of your literature review in the context of a research question.
3. A brief plan for your literature review: Provide an overview of the work you intend to undertake, including literature search strategies and analysis approach. The purpose of this section are to allow the reader to assess the feasibility of the research and its academic merit at 500-level.
4. An indication, based on your work to date, of the themes you will analyse and the nature of your synthesis and critical analysis.
5. References

The preliminary report allows you, your supervisor and the course coordinator to confirm that your plan is feasible and likely to satisfy the expectations of the research essay, and to identify any issues or concerns that may need to be addressed. It should be concise, clear and fully referenced.

Penalties

The grade on the final report may be penalised if the proposal is late, or is inadequate. Such penalties will be assessed on a case-by-case basis. A maximum penalty of 20 marks will apply to a proposal that is adequate only after 10 additional days have elapsed from the due date. If 10 days are insufficient, the mandatory course requirements will not have been met, and the student will be required to re-enrol.

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

Submission of research proposal.

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 (Not applicable, as this is a research course)

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 conveyed to students by email.

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.