

School of Accounting and Commercial Law

ACCY 410 ADVANCED TAXATION

Trimester 2, 2014

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details	Office	Phone
<i>Course Coordinator & Lecturer</i> John Creedy john.creedy@vuw.ac.nz	RH 610	463 7422
<i>Course Administrator</i> Lisa Lowe lisa.lowe@vuw.ac.nz Office hours: Monday-Friday, 8.30am-5pm (Note: Office closed 10.30am-10.45am and 3.30pm-3.45pm)	RH Level 7 Enquiries Counter	463 7465

Trimester Dates

From Monday 14th July – Friday 17th October

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 25 July 2014.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 26 September 2014. 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

Mondays 8.30 am – 11.20am
Railway West Wing RWW311
Pipitea Campus

Course Delivery

Discussions and feedback on 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.

Expected Workload

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

Prescription

Analysis of New Zealand income taxation laws with specific reference to business tax payers, financing of business enterprises and cross-border transactions, and the Goods and Services Tax.

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 which identify, discuss and critically evaluate tax policy issues.

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.

Readings

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

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-.

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

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.

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 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

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

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

Communication between students and facilitators will be 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.

Session Schedule – ACCY 410 - Trimester 2 2014

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.