VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Government

EGOV 521
RESEARCH PROJECT
(15 Points)

Trimester K / 2014
(3/2014 + 1/2015)

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator:
Dr Amanda Wolf, Room RH 804, Level 8, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus
Email: amanda.wolf@vuw.ac.nz   Telephone: (04) 463 5712

Amanda is responsible for ensuring that you get general advice and support on academic matters up to the point at which you are underway with an approved supervisor. She is also responsible for other matters associated with the Part 3 research options, including trouble-shooting supervisory problems, and ensuring consistent and accurate assessment.

Amanda works closely with Professor Miriam Lips, MEGov Programme Director, on all aspects of this course.

For specific inquiries of an administrative nature, please contact:
Robyn McCallum, Senior Administrator
Email: robyn.mccallum@vuw.ac.nz   Telephone: (04) 463 6599

Darren Morgan, Administrator
Email: darren.morgan@vuw.ac.nz   Telephone: (04) 463 5458

Robyn and Darren look after your enrolment, including sending notices of deadlines.

For Human Ethics Committee matters, please contact:
Dr Valentina Dinica, HEC representative
Email: valentina.dinica@vuw.ac.nz   Telephone: (04) 463 5711

Valentina is delegated by the Head of School to ensure that HEC standards are met, and to check all applications to the HEC from School staff and students.

School Office Hours:
8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Trimester Dates

This research project is completed over two consecutive trimesters. Trimester K/2014 covers the period of trimester 3/2014 **AND** 1/2015 as follows:

From Monday 17 November 2014 to Friday 29 May 2015

Withdrawal from Course

Formal notice of withdrawal must be in writing on a Course Add/Drop form (available from either of the Faculty's Student Customer Service Desks or from the course administrator). Not paying your fees, ceasing to attend lectures or verbally advising a member of staff will NOT be accepted as a formal notice of withdrawal.

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before **Friday 28 November 2014**.

2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 24 April 2015**. 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.

Course Content

This course is an independent research course.

Course Learning Objectives

Students who pass this course should be able to:

- understand and apply appropriate ways and ethics of collecting knowledge and doing research in the public sector, nationally and internationally;
- apply e-Government and public management-related theory, concepts, perspectives, frameworks, strategies and practical knowledge to an ICT-enabled public sector initiative in a particular institutional context;
- select and apply a suitable research method to an e-Government-related research problem; and
- design and conduct an independent investigation related to ICT-enabled public sector reform theory and practice.

Prerequisite

EGOV 520 (Introduction to Research in the Public Sector) is a prerequisite for this course.

Course Delivery

No formal classes are associated with this course which is an independent research course.

Expected Workload

As this is an individual course of study, and courses vary between students, it is not possible to indicate the amount of time you can expect each part to take. However, as a rough overall guide, the University considers that a 120-point Master's thesis is a full-time, full-year course of study. Thus, your 15-point project is about 1/8 of a full-time year of study, or 150 hours.

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. This book can be borrowed from the VUW Library and a copy of the book can be purchased through VicBooks, the VUW bookshop, Rutherford House, Pipitea Campus (www.vicbooks.co.nz). 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 Requirements

From Trimester 1, 2014, a revised Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see 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-.

OVERVIEW

Your grade is based on a final project report. However, there are three additional requirements, which are summarised and explained in detail below:

Requirements	Due Dates
1. One-paragraph summary statement of the intended topic	Monday 24 November 2014 *
2. Draft proposal, approximately 1,000 words	Friday 9 January 2015 **
3. Final proposal, approximately 1,000 words	Friday 30 January 2015
4. Final project report, approximately 7,500 words	Friday 29 May 2015

* Note that the final date for withdrawal with refund from this course is **Friday 28 November 2014**. If you do not provide a satisfactory topic description, you will be advised to withdraw and re-enrol in a later trimester.

** A date before Christmas may suit you and your supervisor

YOU SHOULD AIM TO SUBMIT A PENULTIMATE DRAFT OF THE FINAL PROJECT REPORT TO YOUR SUPERVISOR BY **FRIDAY 1 MAY 2015** AT THE LATEST.

The assessment details are set out below: please take careful notice of the specific requirements for format and submission.

1. ASSESSMENT DETAILS: Summary statement of the intended topic, due Monday 24 November 2014

Set out in one paragraph the topic you intend to develop into your research project. The purposes of this paragraph are to ensure you make a timely start with proposal development and to assist the School to allocate supervisors for all research getting underway at the same time.

Your paragraph should be presented on *one page*, with the following information:

- Course code and name
- Assessment item descriptor (summary statement)
- Due date (and date submitted, if different)
- Name of candidate
- Student ID number
- Optional: Supervisor requests (including preferred supervisor/s and/or information relevant to the assignment of your supervisor). This information is in confidence to the course coordinator only and can also be submitted in a separate email.

Your paragraph should be a draft version of the "summary statement" (see the proposal details below for a description of the summary statement). Please email to amanda.wolf@vuw.ac.nz by **5.00pm on Monday 24 November 2014**.

In most cases, within about 2 weeks you will receive (a) initial comments on your summary statement and (b) the name and contact information for the supervisor you have been allocated.

2. + 3. ASSESSMENT DETAILS: Draft Proposal, due Friday 9 January 2015 and Final Proposal, due Friday 30 January 2015

Your *draft proposal* will be developed *with the advice of your supervisor*. You should provide your supervisor a complete draft by **Friday 9 January 2015** at the latest. Feedback from your supervisor on at least one draft of the proposal is almost always needed in order for the final proposal to be of an acceptable standard. When your supervisor advises you, or by **Friday 30 January 2015** at the latest, you can formally submit your final proposal.

The final proposal is a mandatory requirement. There are penalties for lateness and for proposals that are unacceptable (see the deadlines section in this outline).

When submitting your *final proposal*, 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 final proposal in a Microsoft Word attachment to amanda.wolf@vuw.ac.nz . DO NOT pdf the file.

Your final proposal will be reviewed by members of the academic staff, who will provide you with comments and suggestions. See further details below under the "proposal approval" heading.

Your proposal, which should be approximately 1,000 words, should include the following:

1. A title
2. A summary statement
3. A brief summary of the background, objectives and learning outcomes
4. The project approach, design and workplan
5. A statement of any particular conditions that apply
6. A HEC statement
7. References

The Proposal in Detail
1. The Title
   Titles should be short and descriptive. Journals are good sources of ideas for titles.

2. The Summary Statement
   The summary statement should first provide a 'narrative hook' that alerts the reader to your general field of interest, such as child health policy or interagency collaboration. Second, it should raise a feature for focused examination. Third, it should convey the purpose of the research. Finally, the summary statement should convey the nature of the answer you will provide. The summary statement should be about 4 to 6 sentences.

   The summary statement contains the overall research "in a nutshell". It is similar to an abstract for an article or report (except that it is written before the results of the research or the main messages are known).

3. Background, Objectives and Learning Outcomes
   The summary provides an overview of the background and objectives of the proposed project. It includes a statement of the learning outcomes for you in undertaking the proposed work. This section can vary from one paragraph to about three or four, or about 150 words.

4. Approach, Design and Workplan
   In this section, you will describe your overall approach, and what each section of your report will contain. As appropriate you will indicate the information you are going to draw on and how that information will be collected and interpreted.

5. Statement of Particular Conditions
   State any particular conditions that apply, such as the involvement of a third-party mentor (such as a workplace supervisor), the relationship of the research to your paid employment, or whether the research builds on a paper you submitted to another course in your current degree or previous study. If your research may suggest conflicts of interests or political sensitivities or similar, discuss how you plan to deal with these.

6. HEC Statement
   State either: "HEC approval is not required" OR "HEC approval is required"

   NOTE: If your research will involve getting information from people, you may find that working through the Human Ethics Committee application at the same time as you write your proposal will make both processes easier. Remember that HEC approval must be secured before you embark on research involving people.

7. References
   The last required part of the proposal is a reference section, which will probably contain at least 10 items. The references will show that you have undertaken sufficient preliminary investigation to have identified the key sources of facts, concepts, methodology, comparisons or whatever else is relevant for your study. References should be presented in the correct format. Check that you have listed here all references used in the text and that there is at least one reference for every claim in the text that calls for one.

A Note on HEC Process

(**Note that you should apply <u>after</u> your proposal has been approved or while you are developing your proposal if your supervisor agrees. You must develop your application with your supervisor).**

Pipitea Human Ethics Committee applications are to be submitted online at https://rme.vuw.ac.nz/RMENet/ . Your supervisor needs to have selected a Pipitea HEC rep (peer reviewer) on or before the first of any month (or nearest Monday).

This step-by-step guide will help you through completing the form. If you are unable to log onto the system, this form should be completed and sent to ethicsadmin@vuw.ac.nz .

Quick overview: When an application is submitted, if it is a student application, it goes firstly to your supervisor for approval. Your supervisor needs to select the School's Pipitea HEC rep to provide you with a preliminary review, following which he supervisor can release the application to go to the Head of School for approval. Once the Head of School has approved the application, it is forwarded to the committee. Applications might be returned for revisions, and in these cases comments on the screen will give details of changes which need to be made.

The University Research Ethics pages are here
https://www.victoria.ac.nz/research/support/research-office/ethics-approval/human-ethics

If you have any trouble completing the form online, please contact the ITS Service Desk on (04) 463 5050 or its-service@vuw.ac.nz .

Proposal Approval

Approval of research essay proposals is a collective responsibility of the School. Three decisions are possible:

1. Approved, with the student and supervisor invited to consider any refinements to the proposal;
2. Conditionally approved, with the student to address issues or make changes as indicated on the approval form, to the satisfaction of the supervisor before proceeding to undertake further work;
3. Not approved. This option requires the student to submit a new proposal for review, taking into account comments on the approval form, and incurs a penalty (see section on penalties below).

Comments, suggestions and conditions (if any) will be conveyed to you in writing. In unusual cases, there may be a supervision change at this stage. After receiving the review decision, YOU must contact your supervisor to arrange a meeting or phone call to discuss the decision and make plans for the remainder of the course.

4. ASSESSMENT DETAILS: Final Project Report, due Friday 29 May 2015

The final report, of approximately 7,500 words, is worth 100% of your final grade. It should be completed in accordance with your approved proposal and with the advice of your supervisor.

No *major* changes can be made to an approved proposal without speaking to the course coordinator, Dr Amanda Wolf. However, it is recognized that as information becomes available during the research process, the original proposal may need to be modified. Modest modifications can be approved by your supervisor.

Submission

See the *School of Government Research Guidelines 2014* for details on the format and presentation of the final report. Include a title page, with title, your FULL name, degree and date.

Submit one electronic copy to sog-assignments@vuw.ac.nz AND one clean hard copy (not bound or stapled) to the address below by **Friday 29 May 2015**:

> Post Experience Programmes,
> School of Government,
> Victoria University of Wellington,
> Level 8 Reception,
> Rutherford House,
> 23 Lambton Quay,
> P.O. Box 600,
> Wellington 6140.

Assessment

Assessment of postgraduate research is not a formulaic process. The professional judgement of the assessor plays a significant role. Your essay will be assessed by your supervisor, who will provide written comments on the strengths and limitations of the essay, indicate corrections that must be made, and provide a rationale for the assessed letter grade. In general, one may assume that a "passing" competence must be demonstrated on *each* of the points in the list below. It is also assumed in what follows that the student prepared and kept to an approved research design (which means that many assessment criteria for the research design carry through to the finished project). The main criteria are:

- Completion of intended objectives (as set out in the research proposal, or as modified with approval)
- Depth of understanding and analysis
- Adequate and proper use of resources
- Logical coherence
- Structure and expression
- Technical aspects of production
- Difficulty
- Adherence to acceptable research methods.

Students should keep a copy of all submitted work.

Penalties

Late or unacceptable proposal: One letter grade will be deducted from the final grade for late submission of the final proposal, or if a final proposal submitted by the due date is not of an approvable standard. The penalty can be waived in the lateness is due to circumstances beyond your control or ability to predict (work pressures are not usually considered to meet this criterion).

Late final report: One letter grade will be deducted for each week the project is late, up to a maximum period of 4 weeks, after which the student will be awarded an E, and will need to re-enrol in the course to complete.

NOTE: Requests for exemptions from penalties MUST be made to the Course Coordinator.

Mandatory Course Requirements

A formally approved proposal is required.

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

Communication of Additional Information

Information will be communicated by email, using the email on your student record.

School of Government Service Standards

Good learning and teaching outcomes for students in School of Government courses depend on many factors, including open, transparent and accountable relationships between teaching and support staff, and students in their various activities. The following service standards indicate some of the key expectations that teaching staff and students can have of each other. In all cases, they represent what the School believes should be 'normal' practice; exceptional circumstances can and will be negotiated as required.

Please note that there are University-wide policies relating to assessment – including rights of review and appeal. Details may be found in the Assessment Handbook (which is reviewed and updated from time to time – www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/dvc-academic/publications).

In general terms, any concerns that a student or students may have should be raised with the course coordinator in the first instance. If that course of action is not appropriate, the School's programme support staff will direct you to the relevant Programme Director/Coordinator.

Standards relating to staff timeliness of responses to email and phone queries:

- Email or phone queries from students will be responded to in 48 hours

Standards relating to availability of course materials:

- Students on modular or intensive courses will usually have course materials at least 4 weeks before the course starts
- Students on weekly courses will usually have course materials available on the first day of the course

Standards relating to attendance:

- It is expected that students will attend all contact teaching sessions for a course. If a student is aware that they will be unable to attend part of a course prior to it commencing, they are required to advice the course coordinator. In such a situation, the student may be declined entry into the course.
- Where a course coordinator approves some non-attendance before the class commences, the course coordinator may set additional item(s) of assessment of learning and teaching objectives for the course for students unable to attend. Advice relating to the submission and assessment of any such additional assessment will be provided by the course coordinator.

Variations to the assessment details provided in the course outline:

- Any variation to the assessment details in the course outline will be formally agreed between the course coordinator and students at the earliest possible time, preferably at the beginning of the course.

Standards relating to assignments – turnaround and feedback:

- Unless otherwise agreed between students and the course coordinator, items of assessment will be marked within 15 working days of submission.
- Comments on pieces of assessment will allow students to understand the reasons for the mark awarded, relative to the teaching and learning objectives specified in the course outline, and will usually include advice on how the student can improve their grades in future assignments.

Academic Integrity, Plagiarism, and the use of Turnitin

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must still acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- material from books, journals or any other printed source
- the work of other students or staff
- information from the Internet
- software programs and other electronic material
- designs and ideas
- the organisation or structuring of any such material.

Acknowledgement is required for *all* material in any work submitted for assessment unless it is a 'fact' that is well-known in the context (such as "Wellington is the capital of New Zealand") or your own ideas in your own words. Everything else that derives from one of the sources above and ends up in your work – whether it is directly quoted, paraphrased, or put into a table or figure, needs to be acknowledged with a reference that is sufficient for your reader to locate the original source.

Plagiarism undermines academic integrity simply because it is a form of lying, stealing and mistreating others. Plagiarism involves stealing other people's intellectual property and lying about whose work it is. This is why plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria.

If you are found guilty of plagiarism, you may be penalised under the Statute on Student Conduct. You should be aware of your obligations under the Statute, which can be downloaded from the policy website (www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy/students.aspx). You could fail your course or even be suspended from the University.

Plagiarism is easy to detect. The University has systems in place to identify it.

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine 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 subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted materials 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.

There is guidance available to students on how to avoid plagiarism by way of sound study skills and the proper and consistent use of a recognised referencing system. This guidance may be found at the following website www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx .

If in doubt, seek the advice of your course coordinator.

Plagiarism is simply not worth the risk.

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
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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