School of Information Management

INFO 510 RESEARCH PROJECT

Trimester 3, 2014

COURSE OUTLINE

Course Coordinator
Supervisor in the School of Information Management

Trimester Dates
Monday 17 November – Friday 6 March 2015

Withdrawal from Course
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 Wednesday 11 February 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 or online.

Course Delivery
This course is about developing your skills as a professional researcher. Successful research
requires a unique combination of skills: creativity, interpersonal, project-management and writing
skills, as well a critical approach to research methodology and the relevant academic literature.

In this course you will design and conduct a research project on a topic of your choice, using the
methods of your choice. It is essential that you find a topic that genuinely interests you, and that you
take ownership of the research process.

This course is a research project. There are no scheduled classes. You are required to identify an
appropriate supervisor within the School of Management, agree on a topic with the supervisor and
carry our research under the supervisor's direction.

If you are conducting research involving 'human subjects' you will require approval from the
School of Information Management Human Ethics Committee. Instructions can be found at the
following link http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sim/research/human-ethics-committee/hec-applications
All HEC applications must be approved by your supervisor who should submit your application to
Nicole Green nicole.green@vuw.ac.nz

Expected Workload
A total of 300 hours of work is expected of students on this course.

Prescription
Research paper on a selected topic in the discipline.

Course Learning Objectives
Students who pass this course will be able to:
1.   Plan and carry out a small supervised research project on a specific topic in their subject area
2.   Present the results of their research coherently and in an appropriate written format.

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-.

All of the following assessments address both course learning objectives.

Assessment Item	Title	% of Marks Available	Due Date
1.	Research Design	20	Friday 12 December, 4pm
2.	Presentation	10	TBA - week beginning 23 February 2015
3.	Journal Article	70	Friday 6 March 2015, 4pm
		100%	

1. Research Design
Due: Friday 12 December, 4pm   Marks: 20%
World limit: 2000 words (+/- 10%), excluding references

The purpose of this research design is to bring clarity to the project so you and your supervisor are clear that the planned research is realistic, achievable and well-grounded in an appropriate methodology.

Format
The research design should include:
A. Introduction – about 500 words
- **Proposed title**
- **Research question**
- **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?
- **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 based on your literature review. What is original about what you want to do?

B. Methodology – about 1500 words

- Which research strategies and philosophies of knowledge will you draw on? What kind of design 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 be done 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? What cultural or cross-cultural 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 500 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 like to improve?*
- **Resources:** What kind of resources, e.g., budget; 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?
- **References**

Assessment criteria

The research design essay 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 project
- 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.

2. Presentation

Due: Week beginning 23 February - specific time and location to be advised   Marks 10%
Length: 20 minute presentation followed by discussion
You will present your research to staff and postgraduate students in the School of Information Management.

Assessment criteria

The presentation will be assessed on:
- style and clarity of presentation
- management of presentation
- depth and relevance of presentation
- question handling

3. **Journal Article**

Due: Friday 6 March, 4pm   Marks: 70%
Length: 10,000 words (+/-10%), excluding references.

Your task is to produce a credible academic research article clearly showing how you have proceeded from research question to final conclusions and discussion. 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.

A suggested format is

- Title
- Abstract
- Introduction
- Literature review (an updated, re-focussed and shortened version of assignment 1)
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- Implications of your study for future research
- References

Assessment criteria

The research project journal article should:
- flow coherently from the research question to the final conclusions
- work effectively as a pilot project
- contribute to the academic literature
- demonstrate a good theoretical understanding of the research process
- be written to an appropriate professional standard

Penalties

In fairness to other students, work submitted after the deadline will be subject to a penalty of 5% of the total marks available per day of lateness. Assignments more than one week late will not be accepted. 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 their supervisor prior to the due date.

Length Guidelines

The ability to write in an economical style is a valuable skill and therefore word limits should be strictly adhered to. +/- 10% is acceptable, but assignments which are more than 10% over the word limit will need to be resubmitted. **The word limit is inclusive of tables, figures and appendices but exclusive of the list of references.**

Mandatory Course Requirements

In addition to obtaining an overall course mark of 50 or better, students must submit both pieces of written assessment, and give their presentation within the allowable timeframe.

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

Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed in an email to all enrolled students and supervisors.

Student feedback

This is a new course in 2014. 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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