

School of Management

MGMT 404 RESEARCH METHODS

Trimester 1, 2015

COURSE OUTLINE

Course coordinators* and lecturers:

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Dr Kala Retna*

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Dr Sarah Proctor-Thomson

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Course administrator: Misa Ito

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Office hours will vary for each lecturer, so please email for an appointment.

Trimester Dates:

Teaching Period: Monday 2nd March – Friday 5th June

Study Period: Monday 8th June – Thursday 11th June

Examination Period: Friday 12th June – Wednesday 1st July (inclusive)

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before **Friday 13th March 2015**.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 15th 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 or [online](#).

Class Times and Room Numbers

Lectures: Wednesday

Time: 9.30am-12.20pm

Venue: Railway West Wing, RWW 129

Prescription

An examination and evaluation of the role of methodology in management research. This course involves the methodological examination of theoretical and empirical research and provides the chance to develop and apply quantitative and qualitative data methods.

Course Content

Organisational and management research can be described as a systematic and organised effort to extend our understanding of how, why, and in what ways, organisations and the workers within, operate. Research in this field can add new insights to an existing body of knowledge in an area of interest, and/or gather information that can guide decision-making within the workplace.

The course invites students to consider the purposes and objectives of organisational and management research and provides an overview of the research process. It introduces students to a range of research methods and provides some hands on experience with these. The course also requires students to explore the ethical and moral considerations related to carrying out organisational and management research in New Zealand.

The course provides the foundation on which students will develop their own research project in MGMT 430 in Trimester 2.

Course Learning Objectives

On successful completion of the course, students should be able to:

1. Explain and differentiate conceptual and philosophical issues as they relate to the research process including research paradigms and related methodologies (Assignment 1).
2. Identify gaps and potential areas of contribution for management and organisational research through analysis of existing research literature (Assignment 1).
3. Evaluate a range of practical and ethical issues related to the research process in local, national and international contexts (Assignment 2 & 3).
4. Apply both qualitative and quantitative approaches to collect and analyse data relating to a chosen management or organisational topic (Assignment 2 & 3).

Course Delivery

Students are required to attend a one three-hour class session each week. The weekly sessions are based on discussion of the reading material and the collaborative working through student's personal assignments and class research exercises. It is therefore essential that students are thoroughly prepared for each session. Student achievement is individually assessed.

Expected Workload

Students can expect the workload to be 150 hours over the whole course, including both scheduled contact time and work outside class.

Group Work

Students will be expected to work in groups or pairs on class exercises.

MGMT 404 Research Methods Course Schedule – 2015

Week	Date	Topics	Readings
1 <i>SR</i>	Mar 4	Introduction - Overview of the course; The objectives and processes of organisational and management research; The research process.	Read: O’Leary, Ch.1. Follow-up reading: Easterby-Smith Ch. 1
2 <i>SR</i>	Mar 11	Philosophies of Research - What is a paradigm and does it matter?; Founding concepts; An overview of some philosophical approaches in management and organizational research; Widening the debate - culture and knowledge; Relevance of theoretical foundations to the research process.	Read : Easterby-Smith et al. Ch. 4 Follow-up reading: Henry and Pene, (2001)
3 <i>SR</i>	Mar 18	Reviewing the Literature - Search, access to, and collation of information; Narrowing down and honing a specific topic; Organizing sources and ideas to build an argument (or ‘thesis’); Writing and presenting; establishing the relevance of your topic by constructing a space for your contribution.	Read: O’Leary Ch. 6 Follow-up reading: Locke & Golden-Biddle (1997)
4 <i>SR</i>	Mar 25	Developing the Research Question and Design - Research questions; Exploring the variety in research designs; Contributing to theory; Broad implications for method.	Read: O’Leary Ch. 4
5 <i>SPT</i>	Apr 1	Quantitative Organisational Research - What is quantitative research? Review of quantitative research article; Quantitative research methods, Rigour in quantitative research; Survey method.	Read: O’Leary, Ch. 8 esp. p. 120-130 Bring: Your <u>research question</u> from Assignment 1 and your <u>review notes</u> on research article: Mencl & Lester (2014)
	Apr 2	Assignment 1 due by 3pm	
<i>Mid - Trimester Break</i>			
6 <i>SPT</i>	Apr 22	Capturing data: Theorising and measuring qualitative and quantitative data in surveys - Conceptual & theoretical framework development; Operationalisation and measurement of variables; Types of data, types of questions, types of answers.	Read: O’Leary, Ch.11, p. 201-215 Cavana et al. (2001), Ch. 8. Bring: Your <u>survey topic</u> , <u>your revised research question</u> , and a <u>list of key variables</u> you plan to measure.

Week	Date	Topics	Readings
7 <i>SPT</i>	Apr 29	Survey Design and Instrument Testing - Populations & sampling; Question testing; Questionnaire appearance; Reducing non-response. <Pilot questionnaire sometime this week after our Wednesday class>	Read: O'Leary, Ch. 10 esp. pp.181-190. Bring: 3 copies of your full <u>draft</u> survey.
8 <i>SPT</i>	May 6	Quantitative Data Analysis and Interpretation - Going over piloting of questionnaire; preparing data, describing data; Working with SPSS in the lab. MEET IN COMPUTER SUITE: Room TBC	Read: Bryman & Bell (2011) Ch. 14 Bring: Completed questionnaires from pilot. Follow-up reading: O'Leary, Ch. 13 & 15
9 <i>KR</i>	May 13	Qualitative Organisational Research: Overview and Methods What is qualitative research? Review of qualitative research rigour Observational studies	Read: Read Cavana et al. (2001) p. 134-138; O'Leary Ch 11, pp.229-239 Follow up readings: Jackson et al. (2007) Morse (2014)
	May 14	Assignment 2 due by 3 pm	
10 <i>KR</i>	May 20	Qualitative Research Methods Observational studies (cont.) and qualitative data analysis	Read: Tolich & Davidson (1999), Ch. 7 O'Leary, Ch.14 Follow up reading: Baille (2013)
11 <i>KR</i>	May 27	Qualitative Research Methods (cont.) Types of interviews, and qualitative data analysis	Read O'Leary, Ch. 11, pp. 217-229 Follow up reading: Kingsley et al. (2010)
12 <i>KR</i>	Jun 3	Qualitative Data Analysis and Interpretation Document analysis	Read: O'Leary, Ch. 12 , pp.243-251
	June 4	Assignment 3 due by 3 pm	

Lecturers: SR= Sally Riad, KR=Kala Retna, SPT = Sarah Proctor-Thomson

Readings

The *required* textbook is:

O’Leary, Zina (2014). *The essential guide to doing your research project*. London: Sage.

Materials and Equipment

- Other research methods textbooks are available through the VBS library on the 2nd floor of the Railway Building.
- Additional readings, articles, chapters, and workshop exercises will be posted on Blackboard and/or distributed in class.

Assessment

A revised Assessment Handbook applies to all VUW courses: see

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf>.

In this grade scheme the A+ range is 90-100% and 50-54% is a C-.

Assignment	Title	% of marks available	Due Date
1	Exploring potential contribution to management knowledge	30 %	3pm, Thursday 2 April
2	Survey planning and design	35 %	3pm, Thursday 14 May
3	Observation and analysis	35 %	3pm, Thursday 4 June
	TOTAL	100 %	

Assignment 1- Exploring potential contribution to management knowledge

Due: 3pm, Thursday 2 April

Marks: 30%

Word limit: 2,000 words (excl. references)

In this assignment, students are required to choose a topic of interest to them and discuss how they can potentially develop it into a research project that contributes to knowledge on that topic. In its first part, the assignment requires the student to select five journal articles on the topic and examine their theoretical approach, central questions and contribution. In the assignment’s second part, students will pose a relevant research question, ground it in a philosophical position and discuss implications for research design.

Full details of Assignment 1 will be handed out in the Week 1 class and posted on Blackboard under the ‘Assessment’ section.

Assignment 2 - Survey planning and design

Due: 3pm, Thursday 14 May

Marks: 35%

Word limit: No word limit for questionnaire or coding instructions.
2,500 words for report (including references).

This assignment builds on the ideas covered in the first section of the course and the work undertaken in the survey methods section of the course. In this assignment you will develop a

short survey on an organisational or management topic of your choice. You will need to move through each of the main steps of planning and developing some survey research including piloting a questionnaire. However, you will NOT be required to execute the survey. You may propose to use existing survey questions and/or scales in your questionnaire, but you must justify your choices and generate some original questionnaire items (to be discussed with Dr Proctor-Thomson).

Full details of Assignment 2 will be handed out in Week 5 and posted on Blackboard in the 'Assessment' section.

Assignment 3 – Observation and analysis

Due: 3pm, Thursday 4 June

Marks: 35%

Word limit: 2,500 words (including references, observation guide/ and sample of field notes)

This assignment builds on earlier skills in developing a research question, and provides experience of a second research method. A framework will be provided for carrying out qualitative observations of human behaviour, guided by a preliminary research question. You will choose an appropriate *public* location in which you can observe organisational processes and/or practices (e.g., train station, airport, library, taxi rank, bus-stop, Parliament, sports event, community event, etc.) You will develop an observation guide, carry out observations for about 45 minutes, make field notes, analyse these notes, and write up a report. Preparation will include discussion of ethical aspects of observation research.

Full details of Assignment 3 will be handed out in Week 9 and posted on Blackboard in the 'Assessment' section.

Format for assignments

- Assignments should have the following format:
- Word-processed, 12 point font, 1.5 spacing
- A cover sheet stating: Student name, project title and word count.
- Page numbers on each page.
- APA reference style used including in-text referencing and a list of references at the end.

Handing in assignments

- Assignments must be placed, in hard copy form, in the **MGMT 404 box no. 23** on the mezzanine floor of Rutherford House by the due time on the due date.
- Late hardcopy assignments must handed to Misa Ito in RH 1022.
- Students must also keep an electronic copy of their work archived. Failure to do so will jeopardise any claim that the work was submitted in the rare cases where it goes astray.

Quality Assurance Note

Your assessed work may be used for quality assurance purposes, such as to assess the level of achievement of learning objectives as required for accreditation, academic audit and programme development processes. All material used for such purposes will be treated as confidential, and the outcome will not affect your grade for the course.

Penalties

- i) In fairness to other students, work submitted after any deadline without prior arrangement of an extension will incur a penalty for lateness. The penalty is 5% of the marks available for an assignment submitted after the due time on the due date for each part day or day late. Saturdays, Sundays and public holidays will be included when counting the number of days late.

Assignments received more than 7 days after the due date may not be accepted and the student may fail the Mandatory Requirements.

- (ii) Extensions to submission deadlines for any assigned work will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.
- (iii) Students who are unable to comply with any of the mandatory requirements should make a written application for an extension to the due date for submission of assigned work or for waiver of a penalty, in advance, to the Coordinator, providing documentary evidence of the reasons of their circumstances (e.g. a medical certificate, or counsellor's report that indicates the degree of impairment, and for how long the student has been impaired).
- (iv) In the event of unusual or unforeseeable circumstances (e.g. serious illness, family bereavement), that precludes an application in advance, students should make contact with the Coordinator as soon as possible, and make application for waiver of a penalty as soon as practicable.
- (v) Word limits should be adhered to. This is to reinforce the importance of accurate, concise and clear communication in management studies and organisational practice.

Mandatory Course Requirements

In order to pass this course, you must satisfy the mandatory course requirements (below) and obtain at least 50% of the overall marks available (maximum of 100).

To meet mandatory course requirements, unless you have received the approval of the course coordinator, you must:

1. attend a minimum of eight of the 12 scheduled sessions, and
2. submit all assignments within the allowable timeframe (see Penalties section).

Students who fail to satisfy the mandatory requirements for this course but who obtain 50% or more overall, will be awarded a "K" fail grade.

Standard fail grades (D or E) will be awarded when the student's overall course mark falls below the minimum pass mark, whether or not the mandatory course requirements have been satisfied. Notice of Failure to meet Mandatory Course Requirements will be posted on Blackboard.

Class Representative

Students will select a representative for the postgraduate programme at the start of the trimester.

Communication of Additional Information

The course lecturers will convey any additional information to students in class or via blackboard. Please ensure that student VUW email accounts are checked regularly.

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 including academic integrity and plagiarism, university policies and statutes, and student support programmes such as Te Putahi Atawhai (Maori and Pacific Mentoring Programme), please go to: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information>
