

School of Government

PUBL 530

RESEARCH PROJECT

(30 Points)

Trimester 1 / 2015

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

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

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

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

Trimester Dates

Monday 2 March to Friday 26 June 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 13 March 2015**.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 15 May 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.

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 project on a selected topic in the discipline.

Course Learning Objectives

Students who pass this course should be able to:

1. Plan and carry out a small supervised research project 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 postgraduate students is Zina O'Leary, *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*, Sage, 2010. Your supervisor may also assist you in locating readings which will be helpful to progress your research.

Assessment

A research proposal (2,000 words) is due on Monday 30 March 2015 and is worth 20%.

A research report (10,000–15,000 words) is due on Friday 26 June 2015 and is worth 80% of the course grade. Both course learning objectives will be assessed through the final report, and a letter grade will be awarded. The report should be set out according to the specific guidance of your supervisor.

Assessment Details: Research Proposal, due Monday 30 March 2015

The research proposal, which is worth 20% of your final grade, allows you, your supervisor and the course coordinator to confirm that your plan is feasible and likely to satisfy the expectations of the research project, and to identify any issues or concerns that may need to be addressed. It should be concise, clear and fully referenced.

When submitting your research proposal, include a front page with the following details:

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

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

Your research proposal, which should be approximately 2,000 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. (See box.)

A Note on HEC Process

(Note that you should apply after 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 (www.victoria.ac.nz/research/support/research-office/ethics-approval/human-ethics/Using-the-Online-Ethics-Form-Guide-for-Applicants.pdf) will help you through completing the form. If you are unable to log onto the system, this form (www.victoria.ac.nz/research/support/research-office/ethics-approval/human-ethics/Access-to-Online-Ethics-Applications-form.docx) 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 .

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.

Assessment Details: Final Project Report, due Friday 26 June 2015

The final report, of approximately of between 10,000 and 15,000 words, is worth 80% 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

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 26 June 2015**:

MCom Programme,
School of Government,
Victoria University of Wellington,
Level 8 Reception,
Rutherford House,
23 Lambton Quay,
P.O. Box 600,
Wellington 6140.

Note on Quality Assurance

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.

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.

Computation of Grades

The translation from numerical marks to letter grades is set by the following grade ranges.

<i>Pass/Fail</i>	<i>Grade</i>	<i>Normal range</i>	<i>Indicative characterisation</i>
Pass	A+	90% - 100%	Outstanding performance
	A	85% - 89%	Excellent performance
	A-	80% - 84%	Excellent performance in most respects
	B+	75% - 79%	Very good performance
	B	70% - 74%	Good performance
	B-	65% - 69%	Good performance overall, but some weaknesses
	C+	60% - 64%	Satisfactory to good performance
	C	55% - 59%	Satisfactory performance
Fail	C-	50% - 54%	Adequate evidence of learning
	D	40% - 49%	Poor performance overall; some evidence of learning
	E	0 - 39%	Well below the standard required
Fail	K	Fail due to not satisfying mandatory course requirements, even though the student's numerical course mark reached the level specified for a pass, usually 50%. A student whose course mark is below 50 should be given a D (40-49) or E (0-39), regardless of whether they met the mandatory course requirements	
	P	Overall Pass (for a course classified as Pass/Fail)	
Fail	F	Fail (for a Pass/Fail course)	

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.**

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 advise 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.

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

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 www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/general-course-information
