

School of Government

PUBL 531 RESEARCH PAPER (30 Points)

Trimester 1 / 2015

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

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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 paper 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 essay 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. A good book on literature review is Diana Ridley, *Literature Review: A Step-by-Step Guide for Students* (2008 or 2012). Your supervisor may also assist you in locating readings which will be helpful to progress your research.

Assessment

A preliminary report (1,500 words) is due on Monday 30 March 2015 and is worth 10%.

A research essay (10,000 words) is due on Friday 26 June 2015 and is worth 90% of the course grade. Both course learning objectives will be assessed through the final report, and a letter grade will be awarded. The essay should be set out according to the specific guidance of your supervisor. It will include an analysis and synthesis of different views on a research question as expresses in the relevant literature, followed by your own conclusions.

Assessment Details: Preliminary Report, due Monday 30 March 2015

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

Your report, which should be approximately 1,500 words, should include the following:

1. A title: Titles should be short and descriptive. Journals are good sources of ideas for titles
2. A statement of your research problem and research question: Set out the purpose of your literature review in the context of a research question.
3. A brief plan for your literature review: Provide an overview of the work you intend to undertake, including literature search strategies and analysis approach. The purpose of this section are to allow the reader to assess the feasibility of the research and its academic merit at 500-level.
4. An indication, based on your work to date, of the themes you will analyse and the nature of your synthesis and critical analysis.
5. References

The preliminary report allows you, your supervisor and the course coordinator to confirm that your plan is feasible and likely to satisfy the expectations of the research essay, and to identify any issues or concerns that may need to be addressed. It should be concise, clear and fully referenced.

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
