TE WHARE WĀNANGA O TE ŪPOKO O TE IKA A MĀUI

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

School of Government

PUBL 417

APPROVED COURSE OF STUDY

(15 Points)

(Taught with EGOV 520

INTRODUCTION TO RESEARCH IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR)

Trimester 2 / 2015

COURSE OUTLINE

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator: **Associate Professor Karl Lofgren**
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School Office Hours: 8.30am to 5.00pm, Monday to Friday

Trimester Dates

Monday 6 July – Monday 2 November 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 17 July 2015**.

2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is **Friday 25 September 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 at www.victoria.ac.nz/vbs/studenthelp/publications/Application-for-late-withdrawal-2010.doc .

Class Times and Room Numbers

This course is delivered in a modular format.

Module One:	Friday 10 July 2015	9.00am – 5.00pm
Module Two:	Friday 28 August 2015	9.00am – 5.00pm
Module Three:	Friday 23 October 2015	9.00am – 5.00pm

Locations: Classes will be held on the Pipitea Campus of Victoria University in Wellington and you will be advised of your classroom one week prior to each module by email. The timetable is also available to view on the Victoria University website at www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/timetables .

Attendance is required at all teaching days

Course Delivery

This course is delivered in a modular format over three days (three 'modules') of 6 hours contact time each (18 hours total) between 9.00am and 5.00pm on the days indicated above, supplemented by 6 hours (online or face-to-face small group discussions and oral report backs) between module meetings, as detailed below. **Attendance is required at all teaching days**. **Participation in additional work sessions is mandatory.**

Expected Workload

The learning objectives set for each course are demanding and to achieve them, candidates must make a significant commitment in time and effort to reading, studying, thinking, and completion of assessment items outside of contact time. Courses vary in design but all require preparation and learning before the first day of the course and regular learning is also necessary (students who leave everything to the last moment rarely achieve at a high level).

Expressed in input terms, on average, the time commitment required usually translates to approximately 150 hours for a 15-point course. Some of that is set contact time. The rest is your study time and we recommend you study weekly for approximately 8-10 hours.

Prescription

An introduction to approaches, ethics and methods of doing research in the public sector.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Apply appropriate ways and ethics of collecting knowledge and doing research in the public sector, nationally and internationally;
2. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of several research methods and apply them in public sector research;
3. Formulate a research problem statement and develop an analytical framework for exploring it;
4. Select and apply a suitable research method to a public sector-related research problem;
5. Design and conduct an independent investigation related to ICT-enabled public sector reform theory and/or practice.

Readings

Three books are required for this course:

> * v. Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management*. Oxford: Routledge.
>
> Thomas, G. (2009). *How to do your research project*. London: Sage.
>
> Eller, W.S., Gerber, B.J., & Robinson, S.E. (2013). *Public administration research methods: Tools for evaluation and evidence-based practice*. New York: Routledge.

The first one is available as an e-book from the VUW library, whereas we expect you to acquire the second one (it can also be borrowed from the closed reserve desk). The final one is expensive to buy, but will be on closed reserve in the library.

Required readings indicated above with an asterisk are available from the Victoria University of Wellington library databases or e-book collections. As a VUW student, you have complete and free access to these materials. University copyright licenses allow you to download and print these materials, so long as you use them for educational purposes only. Please ask your course convenor or a VUW librarian if you require help to access material, or if you run into any other problems.

If the library does not have database or e-book access to required readings (those with no asterisk in this course outline), a URL will be provided, the readings will be available on Blackboard, or you will be advised to buy the readings. In some cases, you may need to go to the library to consult books, or to check them out. Some recommended reasons are also included; additions may be added as the course progresses.

Course Content

Module 1: Friday 10 July 2015

1. ***Introduction to the course, research as a social activity, the research problem***

In the first session of the module we discuss the practice of research in public management/policy from a number of different angles, and probe into the difficult issue of formulating the research problem. What is a research project? How do others do it? How do you go about?

Required reading:

* v. Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management* (pp. 1–42). Oxford: Routledge.

Thomas, G. (2009) *How to do your research project* (pp. 60–68). London: Sage.

* Pollitt, C. (2006). Academic advice to practitioners – What is its nature, place and value within academia? *Public Money & Management, 26*(4), 257–264.

* Brower, R. S., Abolafia, M. Y., & Carr, J. B. (2000). On improving qualitative methods in public administration research. *Administration and Society, 32*(4), 363–398.

* Pitts, D.W. & Fernandez, S. (2009). The state of public management research: Analysis of scope and methodology, *International Public Management Journal*, *12*(4), 399–420.

2. ***Theories and philosophy of social science***

Public management/policy research is based on the same philosophical premises as other social sciences. In this session we study different ways of viewing the world, and how these views affect the direction of your research project.

Required reading:

Thomas, G. (2009). *How to do your research project* (pp. 69–98). London: Sage.

* Cunningham, R., & Weschler, L. (2002). Theory and the public administration, student/practitioner. *Public Administration Review*, *62*(1), 104–111.

* d. Porta, D., & Keating, M. (2008). How many approaches in the social sciences? An epistemological introduction. In D. d. Porta & M. Keating (Eds.), *Approaches and methodologies in the social sciences: A pluralist perspective* (pp. 17–39). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

* Raadschelders, J. C. N. (2011). The future of the study of public administration: Embedding research object and methodology in epistemology and ontology. *Public Administration Review*, *71*(6), 916–924.

3. ***Desktop research/literature reviews***

All (good) research is based on previous bodies of knowledge, research is by definition cumulative. In this session we discuss how to find, record, and present other people's works. Also, we discuss how we can use secondary sources in general as the empirical evidence for our own projects.

Required reading:

* v. Thiel, S (2014). *Research Methods in Public Administration and Public Management* (pp. 102–117). Oxford: Routledge.

Thomas, G. (2009). *How to do your research project* (pp. 30–59). London: Sage.

Lawrence, A., Houghton, J., Thomas, J., & Weldon, P. (2014). *Where is the evidence: Realising the value of grey literature for public policy and practice.* Swinburne Institute for Social Research, Melbourne, Australia. http://apo.org.au/research/where-evidence-realising-value-grey-literature-public-policy-and-practice

Boote, D.N., & Beile, P. (2005), Scholars before researchers: On the centrality of the dissertation of literature review in research preparation. *Educational Researcher*, *34*(6), 3–15.

Recommended reading:

* Heeks, R.*,* *&* Bailur, S. *(*2007). Analyzing e-government research: Perspectives, philosophies, theories, methods, and practice. *Government Information Quarterly,* ***24****(2):* 243–265.

4. ***Case studies***

One important choice in the research project is whether to design the study as a comparative study or as a case study. While the differences previously have been exaggerated, there are some important discernible factors to take into account.

Required reading:

* v. Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management* (pp. 86–101). Oxford: Routledge.

* Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(2), 219–245.

Blatter, J., & Haverland, M. (2014). *Designing case studies: Explanatory approaches in small-N research* (pp. 1–32). London: Palgrave.

* Wilson, D. (2011). Comparative analysis in public management: Reflections on the experience of a major research programme. *Public Management Review*, *13*(2), 293–308.

Recommended reading:

* d. Porta, D. (2008). Comparative analysis: Case-oriented versus variable-oriented research. In D. d. Porta & M. Keating (Eds.), *Approaches and Methodologies in the Social Sciences: a Pluralist Perspective* (pp. 198–222). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Module 2: Friday 28 August 2015

1. ***Introduction to quantitative data and statistics (I)***
Quantitative data abound on just about every aspect of human life, the economy, and societal functioning. They can be extremely useful for policy analysis and decision-making. In this module we take an introductory look at quantitative analysis for the purpose of informing policy making. The first session provides an introduction to quantitative policy research with topics that cover statistical thinking, the framing of policy issues in terms of quantitatively researchable questions, and the descriptive analysis of quantitative data.

Required reading:

* v. Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management* (pp. 74–85, 118–138). Oxford: Routledge.

Eller, W.S., Gerber, B.J., & Robinson, S.E. (2013) *Public administration research methods: Tools for evaluation and evidence-based Practice* (pp. 96–114, 195–214). New York: Routledge.

2. ***Introduction to quantitative data and statistics (II)***
The second session introduces students to statistical inference and causal analysis. The first is relevant when data are available for only a subset (a sample) of the population of policy interest; understanding representativeness of samples, and the assumptions on which we base inference – from sample to population - is critical for quantitative policy research. The second topic, causal analysis, lies at the heart of understanding the multi-factorial nature of relationships that underpin issues of policy interest. In this section we provide an introduction to the statistical approach to causal analysis.

Required reading:

Eller, W.S., Gerber, B.J., & Robinson, S.E. (2013) *Public administration research methods: Tools for evaluation and evidence-based Practice* (pp. 115–131, 215–235). New York: Routledge.

3. ***Quantitative analysis of policy impact and evaluation***
The third session expands the previous introduction of causal analysis (of phenomena of policy interest) to quantitative and economic analysis of policy impact. Students are introduced to the modern treatment evaluation literature which includes experimental methods (randomized control trials), and non-experimental (observational) methods. Emphasis is placed on intuitive understanding and applicability of different study designs to different policy problems.

Required reading:

* v. Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management* (pp. 61–73). Oxford: Routledge.

Hernan, M., & Robins, J. (forthcoming). A definition of causal effect, Chapter 1, pp 3–7, in their book in preparation, *Causal Inference*
http://cdn1.sph.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/1268/2015/02/hernanrobins_v1.10.27.pdf

Recommended reading:

* Margetts, H. Z. 2011. Experiments for public management research. *Public Management Review, 13*(2), 189–208.

4. ***Selecting a quantitative method for research paper***
The final session of this module will apply the methods covered in the first three sessions to some concrete examples that illustrate the types of issues that need to be considered in choosing a particular research design. These examples will be used to work out appropriate quantitative methods for the students' research ideas.

Module 3: Friday 23 October 2015

1. ***The Survey***
One of the more common methods for undertaking research is to run a survey on a selected target-group. In this session we will look into the challenges of identifying sampling frames, designing the survey questions, and different modes of distributing the survey.

Required reading:

* v. Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management* (pp. 74–85). Oxford: Routledge.

* Fowler, F.J., Jr. (2009). *Survey research methods* (4th ed., pp. 18–48, 86–114). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

2. ***Qualitative research***
Much research in public management/policy is based on qualitative analysis. In this session we discuss both the theoretical underpinning foundation for qualitative research, as well as give examples of the practice of qualitative research.

Required reading:

Hall, R. (2009). Qualitative research methods. In G. Argyrous (Ed.), *Evidence for policy and decision-making: A practical guide* (pp. 218–239). Sydney: UNSW Press.

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed., pp. 37–73). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis. J., & Dillon, L. (2003). *Quality in qualitative evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence: A quality framework*. Cabinet Office & National Centre for Social Research (UK).
www.civilservice.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/a_quality_framework_tcm6-38740.pdf

Recommended reading:

* Huby, G., Harries, J., & Grant, S. (2011). Contributions of ethnography to the study of public services management: Past and present realities. *Public Management Review, 13*(2), 9–25.

3. ***Designing the project and reporting the results***

A key factor for a successful research project is to manage the time, and to deliver a final report/essay/dissertation or thesis of a certain quality.

Required reading:

* v. Thiel, S. (2014). *Research methods in public administration and public management* (pp. 153–168). Oxford: Routledge.

Thomas, G. (2009). *How to do your research project* (pp. 235–244). London: Sage.

Marshall, C., & Rossman, G.B. (1999). *Designing qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 21–54). London: Sage.

4. ***Accessing data, the field work and research ethics***

An important element of a successful research project is to get access to data and to undertake research in an ethical way. This session puts special emphasis on accessing vulnerable groups.

Thomas, G. (2009). *How to do your research project* (pp. 146–156). London: Sage.

Hudson, M., Milne, M., Reynolds, P., Russell, K., & Smith, B. (2012). *Te ara tika. Guidelines for Māori research ethics: A framework for researchers and ethics committee members.* Wellington: The Pūtaiora Writing Group.

Assessment

The Assessment Handbook will apply to all VUW courses: see www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf .

Assessment items	Length	%	CLOs
1. Research philosophy take-home test	1,500 words	30	1, 2
2. Research case study essay	1,500 words	30	1, 3, 4, 5
3. Research design task	4,000 words	40	2, 3, 4, 5

1. The first assignment (the research philosophy take-home test) is designed to assess the student's understanding of theories, models and concepts related to philosophy of social science and research methods in public policy/management. The take-home test contains three short essay questions regarding theories, models and concepts in public policy/management. The assignment is presented in detail during the first module (Friday 10 July 2015) and is due on **Friday 7 August 2015**.

2. The second assignment is linked to case study. Based on an actual and current example, the aim of this assignment is to assess the student's capacity of formulating an essay regarding research design for a case-study. This assignment is presented in detail during the second module (Friday 28 August 2015) and is due on **Friday 25 September 2015**.

3. The third assignment is linked to the EGOV 521 Research Project course. The aim of this assignment is to assess the student's capacity of formulating a research proposal which can guide the process of composing a research essay at a Master's level. Instructions for the assignment will be circulated during the second module (Friday 28 August 2015) and is due on **Monday 2 November 2015**.

All assignments should be submitted via Blackboard.

Students should keep a copy of all submitted work.

Penalties

The ability to plan for and meet deadlines is a core competency of both advanced study and public management. Failure to meet deadlines disrupts course planning and is unfair on students who do submit their work on time. It is expected therefore that you will complete and hand in assignments by the due date. Marks will be deducted at the rate of five per cent for every day by which the assignment is late and no assignments will be accepted after five working days beyond the date they are due. For example, if you get 65% for an assignment, but you handed it in on Monday when it was due the previous Friday, you will get a mark of 50%.

If ill-health, family bereavement or other personal circumstances beyond your control prevent you from meeting the deadline for submitting a piece of written work or from attending class to make a presentation, you can apply for and may be granted an extension to the due date. You should let your course coordinator know as soon as possible in advance of the deadline (if circumstances permit) if you are seeking an extension. Where an extension is sought, evidence, by way of a medical certificate or similar, may be required by the course coordinator.

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.

Computation of Grades

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

Pass/Fail	*Grade*	*Normal range*	*Indicative characterisation*
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
	C-	50% - 54%	Adequate evidence of learning
Fail	D	40% - 49%	Poor performance overall; some evidence of learning
	E	0 - 39%	Well below the standard required
	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	
Pass	P	Overall Pass (for a course classified as Pass/Fail)	
Fail	F	Fail (for a Pass/Fail course)	

Access to Blackboard

Blackboard is Victoria University's online environment that supports teaching and learning by making course information, materials and other learning activities available via the internet through the myVictoria student web portal. Ensure that you can access Blackboard before the course begins.

To access the Blackboard site for this course:

1. Open a web browser and go to www.myvictoria.ac.nz .
2. Log into myVictoria using your ITS Username (on your Confirmation of Study) and password (if you've never used the Victoria University computer facilities before, your initial password is your student ID number, on your Confirmation of Study, Fees Assessment or student ID card – you may be asked to change it when you log in for the first time).
3. Once you've logged into myVictoria, select Blackboard (from the options along the top of the page) to go to your Blackboard homepage.
4. The "My Courses" section displays the courses you have access to – select the appropriate link to access the course-specific Blackboard site. Please note that only courses that are actually using Blackboard and have been made available to students by their respective course coordinator will be displayed.

If you have any problems gaining access to Victoria University's computer facilities, such as myVictoria and Blackboard, you should contact the ITS Service Desk on (04) 463 5050 or its-service@vuw.ac.nz . See www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/ for more information.

Power-point slides and other lecture materials that are posted on Blackboard may differ from the presentations used in class, as the copyright rules for archived presentations differ somewhat from those for live presentation.

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 <u>all</u> 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

In addition to obtaining an overall course mark of 50 or better, students must submit or participate in all pieces of assessment required for this course.

Any student who is concerned that they have been (or might be) unable to meet any of the MCRs because of exceptional personal circumstances, should contact the course coordinator as soon as possible.

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 via Blackboard. It is essential, therefore, that you activate your @myvuw.ac.nz email account (the free email account created for you when you enrol and accessed via the myVictoria student web portal) before the start of the course. Once you have activated your @myvuw.ac.nz email account, if you want to receive these emails at your preferred email address (e.g. your home or work email address), you must modify the settings so all emails sent to it are automatically forwarded to your preferred email address. For more information, please go to www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services/FAQs.aspx#Email_Forward .

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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