

School of Marketing and International Business

IBUS 530 RESEARCH PROJECT

Trimester 1, 2016

COURSE OUTLINE

Prescription

Research Project 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.

Course Content

This course builds on the research experiences that students may have acquired at the 400-level, and develops their empirical research skills as a professional researcher. Successful research requires a unique combination of skills: creativity, interpersonal, project-management and writing skills, as well as a critical approach to research methodology and the relevant academic literature.

In this course students will design and conduct a research project on a topic of their choice, using the methods of their choice. Students are required to identify an appropriate supervisor within the School of Marketing and International Business, agree on a topic with the supervisor and carry out research under the supervisor's direction.

Trimester Dates

From Monday 29th February to Wednesday 29th June.

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 11th March 2016.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 13th May 2016. 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](#).

Names and Contact Details

Course Coordinator: Dr Hongzhi Gao
Office: Room 1125, Level 11, Rutherford House
Phone: (04) 463 6914
Email: hongzhi.gao@vuw.ac.nz
Website: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/smib/staff/hongzhi-gao.aspx>
Office Hours: by appointment

Course Delivery

There are no scheduled classes for this course. You are required to identify an appropriate supervisor within the School of Marketing and International Business, agree on a topic with the supervisor before the commencement of the course. You may get some guidance from the agreed supervisor when you develop your preliminary research proposal before the start of the course (this is not the must but it would be very helpful if you can). Once you are admitted into the course, you will carry your research under the supervisor's direction. It is essential that you find a topic that genuinely interests you, and that you take ownership of the process of conducting the literature review.

If you are conducting research involving 'human subjects' you will require approval from the Pipitea Human Ethics Committee. Pipitea Human Ethics Committee applications are submitted online at <https://rme.vuw.ac.nz/RMENet/>. Applications are due with the School of Marketing and International Business's representative on the committee on or before the first working day of each month (i.e. 1st April). You should discuss the requirements with your supervisor in advance of this deadline. Given the tight time schedule of the course (less than 4 months), it is expected that you submit your HEC application online (after getting checked and approved by the supervisor) by 1st April in order to complete the research on time.

Mandatory Course Requirements

In addition to obtaining an overall course mark of 50% or better, students must submit both pieces of assessment, 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

Expected Workload

A total of 300 hours of work is expected of students on this course. It is expected that students work around 25 to 30 hours a week.

Assessment

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

Each of the following Assessments address both Course Learning Objectives.

Assignment	Title	% of Marks Available	Due Date
1	Research Design	20%	2pm, 1 st April 2016
2	Journal Article	80%	2pm, 29 th June 2016
	TOTAL	100%	

1. Research Design

Due: 2pm, 1st April 2016

Marks: 20%

World limit: 2500 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. Journal Article

Due: 2pm, 29th June 2016

Marks: 80%

Length: 10,000 words (+/-10%), excluding references.

Your task is to produce a credible academic research article clearly showing how you have proceeded from the research question to discussion and final conclusions. You should find an International Business related academic journal from the ABDC list (e.g. Journal of World Business; Journal of International Management) 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 (e.g. Long Range Planning; Business Horizons) 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
- Conclusions
- 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

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.**

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.

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine <http://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 submitted to Turnitin. A copy of submitted materials will be retained 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.

Materials and Equipment

Students are required to have access to personal computers and the Internet in order to prepare material for assignments, presentations, and class participation.

Communication of Additional Information

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

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.
