

School of Information Management

INFO 510 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.

Trimester Dates

Monday 29th February – Friday 17th June.

Withdrawal from Course

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

Course Coordinator

Course Coordinator: Dr Jean-Grégoire Bernard (Program Director)
Room: RH 518, Rutherford House
Phone: 463 9742
Email: jean-gregoire.bernard@vuw.ac.nz

Course Delivery

This course is about developing your skills as a professional researcher. Successful research requires a unique combination of skills: creativity, interpersonal, project-management and writing skills, as well a critical approach to research methodology and the relevant academic literature.

In this course you will design and conduct an empirical research project on a topic of your choice, using the methods of your choice. It is essential that you find a topic that genuinely interests you, and that you take ownership of the research process.

This course does not have regular classes. Each student will be supervised by a suitably qualified member of SIM's teaching staff. ***Regular progress meetings of about one hour will be set up by mutual agreement between the student and the supervisor. These should occur not less than every two weeks.*** Students are expected to provide tangible written evidence of progress according to the timeframe agreed with their supervisor. Specific guidelines for supervisors and students are available as a separate document which will be distributed at the first scheduled workshop.

If you are conducting research involving 'human subjects' you will require approval from the School of Information Management Human Ethics Committee. Instructions can be found at the following link <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/sim/research/human-ethics-committee/hec-applications> All HEC applications must be approved by your supervisor who should submit your application to the SIM HEC committee.

Mandatory Course Requirements

In addition to obtaining an overall course mark of 50 or better, students must submit both pieces of written assessment, and give their presentation 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

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

Expected Workload

A total of 300 hours of work is expected of students on this course.

Assessment

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

All of the following assessments address both course learning objectives.

| Assessment Item | Title | % of Marks Available | Due Date |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. | Research design checkpoint | 10 | Friday 2 April 2016, 5pm |
| 2. | Presentation | 10 | Wednesday 1 June 2016 |
| 3. | Written report | 80 | Friday 17 June 2016, 5pm |
| | | 100% | |

1. Research Design Checkpoint

Marks: 10%

World limit: 2000 words, excluding references

The purpose of this research design checkpoint 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 1000 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 and validity:** How do you address the issues of reliability and validity (or credibility if interpretive research) 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 checkpoint 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. Presentation

Marks 10%

Length: 15 minute presentation followed by discussion

You will present your research to staff and postgraduate students in the School of Information Management.

Assessment criteria

The presentation will be assessed on:

- style and clarity of presentation
- management of presentation
- depth and relevance of presentation
- question handling

3. Written report (in the style of a journal article)

Marks: 80%

Length: 10,000 words, excluding references.

Your task is to produce a credible academic research article clearly showing how you have proceeded from research question to final conclusions and discussion. You should find an academic journal 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 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 INFO511 final literature review, do not simply cut & paste)
- Methodology
- Findings
- Discussion
- Conclusion
- 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 research project

- contribute to the academic literature
- demonstrate a good theoretical understanding of the research process
- be written to an appropriate professional standard

The recommended mark should be informed by the criteria above and the markers's (i.e. supervisor and one examiner) holistic judgment about ambitiousness, difficulty, quality and impact.

Length Guidelines

Length indications are a limit, not a target. The ability to write in an economical style is a valuable skill and therefore word limits should be strictly adhered to. Assignments which are more than 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 10% of the total marks available per day of lateness. Assignments more than five calendar days 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 the course coordinator 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.

Student feedback

Student feedback on University courses may be found at www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php

Communication of Additional Information

Additional information or information on changes will be conveyed in an email to all enrolled students 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.
