

School of Information Management

INFO 511 RESEARCH PAPER

Trimester 2, 2016

COURSE OUTLINE

Prescription

Research paper 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 is about developing your skills as a professional researcher. Working with literature is a key part of research and in this course you will prepare a literature review. The purpose of a literature review is to research and develop your topic and to connect a research question to the academic literature, as well as to any relevant practitioner literature. The review shows what you have learned from what others have already done, can integrate and synthesise it, can articulate what you think of it, and demonstrate how the research question you identify can contribute to a knowledge base in a credible way.

Trimester Dates

From Monday 11th July to Friday 24th October 2016

Withdrawal from Course

1. Your fees will be refunded if you withdraw from this course on or before Friday 22nd July 2016.
2. The standard last date for withdrawal from this course is Friday 23rd September 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 Jean-Grégoire Bernard (Programme Director)
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Course Delivery

There are no scheduled classes for this course. You are required to identify an appropriate supervisor within the School of Information Management, agree on a topic with the supervisor and carry out 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.

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 as a critical approach to research methodology and the relevant academic literature.

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.

Readings

The literature review guidelines you have read in previous courses at Victoria University, such as INFO401 and INFO403, should inform your essay. You are also encouraged to rely upon the following literature review guidelines.

Webster, J., Watson, R.T. (2002). Analyzing the Past to Prepare for the Future: Writing a Literature Review. *MIS Quarterly*, 26(2), xiii-xxiii.

Torraco, R.J. (2005). Writing Integrative Literature Reviews: Guidelines and Examples. *Human Resource Development Review*, 4(3), 356-367.

Cropanzano, R. (2009). Writing Nonempirical Articles for Journal of Management: General Thoughts and Suggestions. *Journal of Management*, 35(6), 1304-1311.

Fulmer, I.S. (2012). Editor's Comments: The Craft of Writing Theory Articles – Variety and Similarity in AMR. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(3), 327-331.

Ragins, B.R. (2012). Editor's Comments: Reflections on the Craft of Clear Writing. *Academy of Management Review*, 37(4), 493-501.

Starbuck, W.H. (1999). *Fussy Professor Starbuck's Cookbook of Handy-Dandy Prescriptions for Ambitious Academic Authors*. URL: <http://people.stern.nyu.edu/wstarbuc/Writing/Fussy.htm>

The following books can be borrowed from the library:

Becker, H.S. (2007). *Writing for social scientists: How to start and finish your thesis, book, or article*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press. URL: <http://victoria.lconz.ac.nz/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=1086430>

Becker, H.S. (1998). *Tricks of the trade: How to think about your research while you're doing it*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago
URL: <http://victoria.lconz.ac.nz/vwebv/holdingsInfo?bibId=334151>

Expected Workload

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

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

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.

Assessment

Each of the following Assessments addresses both Course Learning Objectives.

Assignment	Title	% of marks available	Due Date
1.	Preliminary Review	15	Monday 8 August 2016, 5pm
2.	Research Essay	85	Monday 24 October 2016, 5pm
		100	

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

1. Preliminary Review

Marks: 15%

Word limit: 2000 words, excluding references

The purpose of this preliminary review is to bring clarity to the project so that you, your supervisor and course coordinator are clear that the planned review of the literature is well considered and feasible.

Your task is to construct a preliminary review of at least 5 journal articles related to a topic of interest to you. You should identify the theoretical approaches taken in the articles, methodologies used (if appropriate), the key contributions of the articles and an assessment of their strengths and limitations. Finally, you should use the literature you have reviewed to identify a research question that you would be interested in pursuing. You should argue the need for, and relevance of, your research question by setting it within the context of past research.

The literature review should take the form of an academic essay and include an appropriate structure. It is not a business report and you should therefore avoid the use of lists and bullet points. You must be able to summarise key aspects of the literature in your own words. Direct quotations can be useful (e.g. key terms and concepts), but should be used sparingly and should not act as a substitute for your own writing. It is essential that the literature is referenced appropriately.

Assessment criteria

The preliminary review should:

- take the form of an academic essay and include an appropriate structure
- involve a critical evaluation and synthesis of 5 journal articles from the relevant literature
- be referenced appropriately
- present the construction of an argument to demonstrate the relevance of your research question
- be well-written and interesting.

2. *Research essay*

Marks: 85%

Length limit: 8,000 words, excluding references.

Your task in this assessment is to expand on your preliminary review to develop a full literature review. Your literature review will lay the conceptual groundwork for a potential contribution to that topic, by developing a relevant research question.

As with the preliminary review, you should construct an argument, rather than merely providing a description of the relevant literature. You should argue the need for, and relevance of, your research question by setting it within the context of past research. This requires that you critically evaluate and synthesise the relevant literature to demonstrate the significance and value of your study.

Assessment criteria

The literature review should:

- take the form of an academic essay and include an appropriate structure
- involve a critical evaluation of the relevant literature
- be referenced appropriately
- present the construction of an argument to demonstrate the relevance of your research question
- be well-written and interesting.

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

Communication of Additional Information

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

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

<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.
