



**School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
Course Outline**

**LALS 540 Evaluating Research in Applied Linguistics
TRIMESTER 1 2011
28 February to 2 July 2011**

Trimester dates

Teaching dates: 28 February to 3 June 2011

Mid-trimester break: 18 April to 1 May 2011

Study week: 6–10 June 2011

Examination/Assessment period: 10 June to 2 July 2011

Withdrawal dates

Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at

<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawalsrefunds.aspx>

1. Course Coordinator: Stuart Webb

2. Staff: Lecturer: Dr. Stuart Webb

(Lecturer)

VZ 412

(04)463-9779

Fax (LALS) 463-5604

Office hours: by appointment

Email: stuart.webb@vuw.ac.nz

3. Class times and rooms:

Mondays 4:10-6:00

24 KP 201

4. LALS main office: VZ210, 2nd floor Von Zedlitz Building, Kelburn Parade

5. Course Administrator:

Kirsten Sims, Postgraduate administration

Tel: 463-5600

Web contact: www.blackboard.vuw.ac.nz

6. Course delivery

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus and by distance. On campus classes are run as workshops. For distance students, the course is available at <http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz>. Blackboard is Victoria's online teaching and learning system. In both modes, students are expected to participate actively in activities and discussions. Further information about Blackboard is available under Frequently Asked Questions: <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/study/faq.aspx>

Communication of additional information

Additional information about this course and information about any changes will be announced in on campus classes and posted on the course website in Blackboard.

7. Aims:

The aim of this course is to give an overview of different types of research in language teaching and applied linguistics, so you can evaluate published research and consider its implications for professional practice.

8. Objectives:

By the end of the course, you should have achieved these objectives:

1. To understand the nature and scope of research in applied linguistics.
2. To be able to discuss the relevance of research in your own professional situation.
3. To be knowledgeable about research issues, particularly concerning the criteria for good quality research.
4. To be able to evaluate published research studies, by considering the strengths and weaknesses of the design and the wider applicability of the findings.

9. Texts:

Required:

o McDonough & McDonough (1997). *Research Methods for English Language Teachers*. London: Arnold.

A set of required readings is available as downloadable files from the LALS40 Blackboard site.

Recommended:

I strongly recommend purchasing a copy of

Mackey, A. & Gass, S.M. (2005). *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

It is a useful complement to the McDonough & McDonough text and has been the required text for LALS541 in the last few years.

Information on other readings of interest is available on the course blackboard site.

All undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from the Memorial Theatre foyer from 7 February to 11 March 2011, while postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from the top floor of vicbooks in the Student Union Building, Kelburn Campus. After week two of the trimester all undergraduate textbooks and student notes will be sold from vicbooks on Level 3 of the Student Union Building.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from the shop. Customers will be contacted when they are available. Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

10. Trimester dates

	Week	Topic	Reading from McDonough & McDonough	Other reading
1	28/2	Teachers and research	Chapters 1&2	Tsui (1996)
2	7/3	Characteristics of good research	Chapters 3 & 4	Fathman and Whalley (1990)
3	14/3	Classroom observation	Chapter 7	Block (1994)
4	21/3	Diary studies	Chapter 8	Krishnan & Lee (2002)
5	28/3	Experiments 1	Chapter 9	Peñate Cabrera & Bazo Martinez (2001)
6	4/4	Experiments 2	Chapter 10	Horst, Cobb, & Meara (1998)
7	11/4	Survey research	Chapter 11	Yamashita (2004)
2 week mid-term break				
8	2/5	Introspection/ verbal reports	Chapter 12	Mackey, Gass, & McDonough (2000)
9	9/5	Case studies	Chapter 13	Harklau (2000)
10	16/5	Review of criteria for evaluating quantitative and qualitative research	None	Chapelle & Duff (2003)

11. Assessment:

Your achievement of the course objectives will be assessed by means of weekly article responses, one assignment, and two tasks:

- Article responses (300-400 words), due weekly and worth 10%
- Task 1(800-1000 words), due Monday 29 March and worth 25%
- Task 2 (800-1000 words), due Monday 3 May and worth 25%
- Assignment 1 (1800-2000 words), due Monday 31 May and worth 40%

Article Responses

The article responses require preparation through reading before class, and attendance at lectures (for on-campus students) or timely participation on blackboard (for distance students). The article responses should involve critiquing the research studies we read each week, not

the McDonough and McDonough book. You will need to write a short (300-400 word) critique. You need to bring these responses with you to class each week. I will not accept late responses. These questions and your responses will form part of our class discussions. The focus of the responses should be the design of the research (how it was carried out) rather than the findings of the research.

Distance students will also submit article responses, but will do so online. Your responses will be submitted on Blackboard in the discussion board.

By the day of each lecture (Mondays weekly) you will be required to read the assigned readings and write a response. These should be similar to those of the on-campus students, described above. You should read the responses by other students and comment on them in separate entries or by using the comments option.

Task 1: Replication

Carefully read the Littlewood (2000) article posted under the class readings tab on Blackboard. For your task, you should consider how you would conduct a new study designed to answer the same research question that Littlewood asked. Your task should include a discussion of the strengths of the article as well as the weaknesses, as well as discussion of how your study would overcome the most important weaknesses. You should also consider any new problems that might arise in your replication study. You should support your discussion with reference to the core text and other studies.

Task 2: Research methods

Choose one of the general research questions below, and decide which primary research method you would use to investigate the question. Explain how, where, and among which participants you would carry out the study. You should use the core text and other literature to support your choice, and should consider how your selection of a research method might impact on your findings. When you are writing your papers remember that this course is about methodology not about the different topics which the questions focus on.

Research Questions:

- Do students attend to grammar when engaged in second language writing?
- What motivates students most in the language classroom?
- Does working in an English medium environment help students to learn English?

Assignment 1: Contrasting two research articles

Compare the two research studies by Barkhuizen (1998) and by Garrett & Shortall (2002), which are available on Blackboard. After providing a suitable introduction, write an evaluation of the two studies. Identify the key features of the research design in each case and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the two pieces of research, paying particular attention to the validity of the results. You should also consider the appropriateness of the research methods/measurements for investigating the issues at hand, and other methods of research that may have been equally/more valid. You must explicitly compare/contrast the two studies, either as an integral part of the main discussion or in a separate section towards the end of the assignment.

You may also wish to comment on how well the articles are written and whether any significant information is not given; however, the main focus should be on the quality of the research being reported. While this is partly a comparison, and will involve some summary, it is important to remember that this assignment is mainly an evaluation, and should be centred on an informed critique.

Submitting assignments and tasks

On-campus students must submit a hardcopy to the School office and or submit electronically through BB. Distance students must submit through Blackboard.

If you have a problem submitting through BB you can submit by email to LALS-MA@vuw.ac.nz. However, please note that I will not be looking for submissions in that mailbox so if you were to submit there you will need to let me know.

All assignments will automatically be submitted to turnitin to check for plagiarism.

General guidelines

When submitting typed or word-processed assignments:

- Set margins to at least 2.5 cm
- Set line spacing to 1.5
- Set font size of 12 point
- Include page numbers
- Include a title page which shows the course number and name, your name, the course lecturer, the title of the assignment, and the date the assignment is due
- Provide a word count at the end of the assignment (not including the Reference section)
- Follow APA citation guidelines.

Hard copy submissions

- Put a LALS cover-sheet on the assignment, and complete the information requested there
- Type on one side of A4 paper
- Staple pages together
- Avoid presenting assignments in bulky folders or sleeves unless necessary
- Avoid inserting individual pages in clearfile sleeves

12. Penalties:

Penalties:

No specific penalty will be imposed if you obtain permission to submit the assignment after the deadline. If you find that you need an extension, you **must** get explicit permission from the course coordinator before the due date. Extensions will only be granted when the assignment is not completed due to unforeseeable circumstances such as illness or family emergencies.

For assignments handed in late without an extension the maximum grade possible is B+ and no personal comment will be provided

Be careful to keep within the word limits. Assignments that are slightly excessive in length (more than 10% over the limit) will be marked down one grade ie. from a B+ to a B, or from a B to a B-. Assignments that are far over the word limit (more than 25% over the limit) will be marked down one full grade ie. from B+ to C+, or A- to B-.

Plagiarism will result in failure in the course. See also Academic Integrity and Plagiarism below, and page 17 of the MA Handbook.

13. Relationship between assessment and course objectives:

Assignment 1 will help you fulfil objectives 1 and 4. Assignment 2 will help you fulfil objectives 3 and 4.

14. Workload:

It is anticipated that you will need to devote approximately 15 hours per week to this course (including readings, class attendance or discussion board postings, outside readings, working

on assignments, etc.). Please remember that this is considered a minimum time requirement. You may find that you require more.

15. Mandatory Course Requirements (Terms):

To receive a final grade for this course, you need to meet the following requirements:

- Submit all assessments
- (Distance) Post weekly to the Blackboard site as explained above.
- (On campus) Attend all class meetings, unless prevented by ill-health, bereavement or some other important reason.

16. Attendance:

Distance students are required to contribute to Blackboard weekly and in a timely manner. On campus students should attend all classes. If a conflict necessitates missing a class, you should arrange to make up the work with the instructor. Absences should be the result of unforeseeable conditions only.

17. Statement on the 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 online plagiarism prevention tool which identifies material that may have been copied from other sources including the Internet, books, journals, periodicals or the work of other students. Turnitin is used to assist academic staff in detecting misreferencing, misquotation, and the inclusion of unattributed material, which may be forms of cheating or plagiarism. At the discretion of the head of School, handwritten work may be copy typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. You are strongly advised to check with your tutor or the course coordinator if you are uncertain about how to use and cite material from other sources. 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.

Class Representative

One class representative will be selected in the first week of classes in T1 for the MA programme. That person's name and contact details will be available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator, and the class. The class representative provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as 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 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

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website:
<http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism.aspx>

WHERE TO FIND MORE DETAILED INFORMATION

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the Calendar webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar.aspx (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the website of the Assistant Vice-Chancellor (Academic), at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about_victoria/avcacademic.

Victoria University of Wellington
School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies

COVER SHEET

**COURSE NAME &
CODE**
e.g. LING 211

SURNAME : _____

GIVE NAME : _____

ID NUMBER : _____

TUTOR / LECTURER : _____

ASSIGNMENT TITLE / : _____
NO

NUMBER OF WORDS : _____

DUE DATE : _____

Please complete the following checklist:

tick box

I have checked my work carefully before submitting

I have included a list of references, properly formatted

I have numbered the pages of this work

I have retained a copy of this work

There is no plagiarism in this work

I value your feedback and will collect my work promptly

OR

I do not require any feedback on this work

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE : _____

DATE : _____