



**FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES**

**MASTER OF ARTS**

**LALS 540 EVALUATING RESEARCH IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

**15 POINTS**

**TRIMESTER 1 2016**

**Key dates**

**Trimester dates:** 29 February to 29 June 2016

**Teaching dates:** 7 March to 23 May 2016

**Easter break:** 24–30 March 2016

**Mid-trimester break:** 25 April to 1 May 2016

**Last assessment item due:** 17 June 2016

**Withdrawal dates:** Refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/withdrawals-refunds).

If you cannot complete an assignment or sit a test in the last three weeks of teaching, or an examination, it may instead be possible to apply for an aegrotat (refer to [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/aegrotats)).

**Class times and locations**

Monday 4:10-6:00 pm, 24 Kelburn Parade, Room 101

**Names and contact details**

**Course coordinator**

Dr. Corinne Seals	Office:	von Zedlitz Building, Room VZ 405
	Office hours:	By appointment
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## Course administrator

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Post:             As above

## Communication of additional information

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

## Prescription

A survey of published research in Applied Linguistics for the purpose of evaluating the quality of the research and considering its implications for practice.

## Course content

Week	Class Date	Topic	Methodology focused reading	Other reading	Assessment Due
1	7/3	Overview of Qualitative and Quantitative Research Methods & Characteristics of Good Research	Paltridge & Phakiti Ch. 4 & 8 (Phakiti 2010, Holliday 2010) McDonough & McDonough Ch. 4 (1997)	Litosseliti Ch. 1 (Sunderland 2010)	
2	14/3	Ethnography and Case Studies	Paltridge & Phakiti Ch. 5 (Starfield 2010) Mackey & Gass Ch. 6 (Duff 2012 )	Kang (2013)	
3	21/3	Narratives & Diary studies	Pomerantz (2012)	Stakhnevich (2009)	
4	4/4	Linguistic interviews & Verbal reports	Talmy (2010)	Tembe & Norton (2008)	
5	11/4	Survey research	Mackey & Gass Ch. 5 (Dornyei & Csizer 2012)	De Houwer (2007)	Task 1
6	18/4	Corpora based research	Mackey & Gass Ch. 2 (Granger 2012)	Stapleton (2013)	
<b>Mid-trimester break</b>					

8	9/5	Formal theoretical research	Mackey & Gass Ch. 3 (Ionin 2012)	Tokowicz & MacWhinney (2005)	Task 2
9	16/5	Experimental psycholinguistic research	Mackey & Gass Ch. 7 (McDonough & Trofimovich 2012)	Karimi (2013)	
10	23/5	Practice and preparation for final assignment	Mackey & Gass Ch. 14 (Plonsky & Oswald 2012)		
11	30/5	<b>No Class – Work Week for Final Assignment</b>			
<b>Study Period</b>					
17/6	<b>Final Assignment Due</b>				

## Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course should be able to:

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

## Teaching format

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus and by distance. On campus classes are run as lectures plus 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 regularly and thoughtfully in activities and discussions. Further information about Blackboard is available at <http://www.victoria.ac.nz/lals/study/faq>.

When you enrol you will automatically be given a computer user account, which will be on your *Confirmation of Study* form. Usually, it is the first six letters of your family name and four letters of your first name. So if your name is Robert Cameron, your user name might be *camerorobe*. Your password will be your student ID number. You need to use this computer user account when you access journals from off-campus. For help with this or other student computing services contact [scs-help@vuw.ac.nz](mailto:scs-help@vuw.ac.nz) or phone (04) 463 5050. A useful website is [www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services). If you are an international student the following site could be useful for you: [www.victoria-international.ac.nz](http://www.victoria-international.ac.nz).

## Workload

It is anticipated that you will need to devote approximately 15 hours per week to this course over all 10 weeks, for a total of 150 hours (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, and you should budget time accordingly. The table below has a general idea of how you should be spending your time for this course:

Weekly tasks	Suggested hours
Attendance at lectures	Two hours per week
Discussion board postings, and preparation for assignments, presentations, article responses, and tasks	Three hours per week over the course of the trimester
Assigned class readings	Ten hours per week

## Assessment

Your achievement of the course objectives will be assessed by means of a minimum of three weekly article responses, one assignment, one article presentation, and your choice of one of two tasks:

Assessment items and workload per item		%	CLO(s)	Due date
1	Three article responses (400 words) chosen from any three classes, due weekly by the start of the corresponding class	15% (5% each)	1, 2, 4	Varies
2	Task 1(1000-1500 words) <b>OR</b> Task 2 (1000-1500 words)	35%	1, 2, 3, 4	11/4/16 (Task 1) <b>OR</b> 9/5/16 (Task 2)
3	Final Assignment (1800-2000 words), due by 11.59pm to Turnitin on Blackboard	40%	1, 2, 3, 4	17/6/16
4	Article presentation (10-15 minutes), due at the beginning of assigned class	10%	1, 2, 3, 4	TBD in class

### The criteria for marking are:

- Coherence and clarity of the argumentation
- Linkage with relevant research literature
- Robust description of the literature presented
- Thorough and original analysis through application of course techniques

### 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 listed under “other readings”. You will need to write a short (400 word) critique. You need to bring these responses with you to class each week, for a minimum of three weeks. You may choose the weeks that you submit article responses, but the chosen responses must be turned in on the day that corresponds to each reading in the course outline. I will not accept late responses.

Note: all students must read all required readings, whether or not you have chosen to write a response that week. Your attention to the readings 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. The article responses meet the first, second, and fourth learning objectives.

Distance students will also submit article responses, but will do so online. Your responses will be submitted on Blackboard to the discussion board by the start time of the corresponding classes. By the day of each lecture (Mondays weekly) you will be required to read the assigned readings and write a response. All students are required to read all assigned readings, but you need only submit responses during three weeks of your choosing. These responses should be similar to those of the on-campus students, described above. All students should also read the responses by other students and comment on them in separate entries or by using the comments option.

### **Task 1: Reviewing topic-specific methods**

Choose a topic in applied linguistics research (e.g. ethnography, case studies, corpora research, etc.), and write a literature review that includes descriptions and evaluations of between 5 and 15 studies. The majority of studies that you include should have been published within the last 10 years to decrease the likelihood that the results are out of date. Keeping in mind what makes good research in applied linguistics, describe the method(s) used in each study and the results obtained. Also be sure to include such relevant details as the participants (if relevant), research location(s), language(s) involved in each study, etc. Evaluate the studies, and decide if each study is methodologically sound or not. If the methods of studies should be improved upon, tell how. Feel free to compare and contrast the studies against each other if it helps further support your argument for what makes good research in applied linguistics. Task 1 meets the first, third, and fourth course objectives.

### **Task 2: Research methods in the workplace**

Consider the research methods learned in class thus far and decide which method(s) would be most useful in your given profession. Describe a particular scenario that might occur in your profession, and describe how one or more of these methods could be applied. You should use the core text, as well as additional outside literature to support your choice. Remember to focus on methodology, and be sure to consider the following questions when completing this task. Task 2 relates to all four learning objectives.

1. What method(s) would be most useful and why?
2. What would you have to pay particular attention to when utilizing the chosen method(s)?
3. What have you learned from the readings thus far about how to conduct good research using the chosen method(s), and how would you apply this to your own scenario?
4. Are there any downsides to using the chosen method(s) in your scenario?

### **Final Assignment: Contrasting two research articles**

Compare the two research studies by Malone (2013) and by Pham & Hamid (2013), which are available on Blackboard. After providing a suitable introduction, write an in-depth 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. Assignment 1 relates to all four learning objectives.

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.

## Article Presentation

During the first week of class, a sign-up sheet will be passed around, during which point you will choose a topic on which you will find a published academic article to give a brief in-class presentation (10 to 15 minutes in length). An online sign-up sheet will be posted to blackboard for distance learning students. The topic that you choose will correspond to a particular class day, and your presentation will be given that day at the beginning of class. You may choose to give a media presentation (e.g. PowerPoint), use handouts, or present speech style. Distance learning students must create either a written handout or a media presentation and upload it to blackboard on the day you are assigned. The article chosen must not be one already assigned for class, and should be found from an appropriate disciplinary publication (e.g. Journal of Applied Linguistics, TESOL, Academic Exchange Quarterly, etc.). A list of sample sources will be discussed in class and posted to Blackboard.

Your presentation should include the name of the chosen article and its citation information. You should then summarize the article, focusing largely on the methods used by the author(s) in conducting the study. You should also include a brief evaluation of the study's methodology, as well as any possible suggestions for methodological improvement you may have, though this is not required if you feel that the study was methodologically sound (in which case, you should state this clearly). You should also include a discussion question at the end of your presentation, which will be incorporated into the larger class discussion. Please feel free to relate the article to your own professional background, if relevant. All on-campus students and distance learning students must also upload their presentation to Blackboard on your assigned presentation day. All students should comment regularly on the uploaded presentations. The article presentation relates to all four learning objectives.

## Submission and return of work

For the article summaries and chosen Task, on-campus and distance students must submit electronically through Blackboard. All submissions must be made before the beginning of class on the day assigned. Every effort will be made to return work during the following week's class.

For the article presentations, each on-campus student must bring your presentation to give at the beginning of class on the day assigned. Distance learning students and on-campus students must also upload the presentations to Blackboard on your assigned day. Each student will receive written feedback during the week following delivery of your presentation.

For the Final Assignment, on-campus students and distance learning students must submit an electronic copy via Turnitin on Blackboard. This must be submitted electronically by 11:59pm (New Zealand time) on 17 June, but you are also welcome to submit before that time. All submissions must be made in PDF or Word format (.doc or .docx). If you do not receive a confirmation email from Turnitin, please email me within 24 hours to receive confirmation of receipt.

### 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 or title page)
- Follow APA citation guidelines.

### Hard copy submissions

- Put a LALS cover-sheet (attached) on the assignment, and complete the requested information
- 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.

## **Extensions and penalties**

### **Extensions**

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.

### **Penalties**

For assignments handed in late without an extension, the maximum grade possible is B+, and no personal comment will be provided. For late assignments, grades will drop an additional 5% every day that it is late (from the highest possible grade of B+).

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

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

### **Set texts**

Mackey, A. & Gass, S.M. (2012). *Research Methods in Second Language Acquisition: A Practical Guide*. Wiley Blackwell. Available from [vicbooks](#) at \$61.99.

Additionally, a set of required readings is available as downloadable files from the LALS 540 Blackboard site.

Postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from Vicbooks' store, Ground Floor, Easterfield Building, Kelburn Parade or online at [www.vicbooks.co.nz](http://www.vicbooks.co.nz)

### **Recommended reading**

Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Oxford.

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

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

Paltridge, B. & Phakiti, A. (2010). *Continuum Companion to Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. Continuum.

Ross, S.J., Richards, K.J. & Seedhouse, P. (2011). *Research Methods for Applied Language Studies*. Routledge.

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

## Class representative

The class representative provides a useful way to communicate feedback to the teaching staff during the course. There is one class representative for the MA programme. His or her contact details will be available on Blackboard.

## Student feedback

Based on previous student feedback received, this course now has dedicated time to practice and prepare for the final assignment. Students also now choose between Task 1 and Task 2 instead of doing both so that they may better develop the chosen Task.

Student feedback on University courses may be found at [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback\\_display.php](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/feedback/feedback_display.php).

## Other important information

The information above is specific to this course. There is other important information that students must familiarise themselves with, including:

- Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/exams/integrity-plagiarism)
- Academic Progress: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progress) (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates)
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: [www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin)
- Grades: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/grades)
- Special passes: refer to the *Assessment Handbook*, at [www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/documents/policy/staff-policy/assessment-handbook.pdf)
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy)
- Student support: [www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support)
- Students with disabilities: [www.victoria.ac.nz/st\\_services/disability](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability)
- Student Charter: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/student-charter)
- Subject Librarians: <http://library.victoria.ac.nz/library-v2/find-your-subject-librarian>
- Terms and conditions: [www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/study/apply-enrol/terms-conditions/student-contract)
- Turnitin: [www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin](http://www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin)
- University structure: [www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure)
- Victoria graduate profile: [www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile](http://www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile)
- VUWSA: [www.vuwsa.org.nz](http://www.vuwsa.org.nz)