FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

SCHOOL OF LINGUISTICS AND APPLIED LANGUAGE STUDIES

MASTER OF ARTS
LALS 541 THE RESEARCH PROCESS
15 POINTS

TRIMESTER 2 2016

Key dates

Trimester dates: 11 July to 13 November 2016
Teaching dates: 11 July to 16 October 2016
Mid-trimester break: 22 August to 4 September 2016
Last assessment item due: 17 October 2016

Withdrawal dates: Refer to 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).

Class times and locations

Thursdays, 4.10pm to 6.00pm, in 24KP, Room 101.

Names and contact details

Course coordinator

Associate Professor Frank Boers
Office: von Zedlitz Building, Room 409
Office hours: by appointment
Phone: 463 6014
Email: frank.boers@vuw.ac.nz

Course administrator

Janet Attrill
Office: von Zedlitz Building, Room 210
Phone: 463 5894 or 463 5600
Email: janet.attrill@vuw.ac.nz
Post: School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, Victoria University of Wellington,
PO Box 600, Wellington 6140, New Zealand

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.

Prescription

A study of the design and implementation of research studies in Applied Linguistics.

Course content

This course explores methodological issues in conducting applied linguistics research, especially research in the area of (instructed) second language acquisition. During the course, we will follow the research process from the formulation of a research question to the research report. Different types of research designs and data analysis will be exemplified and discussed, with an emphasis throughout on the validity and reliability of research methods, and the need for caution in interpreting findings. Students will set up their own small-scale research project, report on its development and give constructive feedback to their peers.

Course learning objectives (CLOs)

Students who pass this course will be able to:

1. synthesize research publications addressing a topic of their interest in the domain of applied linguistics;

2. formulate answerable research questions in response to an unresolved issue;

3. make a justified choice of research methodology to address a specific question;

4. choose/adapt/develop research instruments that suit the purpose of the study;

5. anticipate ways of analyzing the results, and anticipate possible implications of the findings;

6. describe research in a way that accords with EAP customs in our research community.

Teaching format

The course is delivered in two modes: on campus and by distance.
On campus classes are run as seminars and workshops.
For distance students, the course is delivered on-line through http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz.
In both modes, students are expected to take an active role in discussions.

Workload

It is anticipated that students will invest 150 hours in this course, which includes attending classes / contributing to the discussion board on Blackboard, reading the essential and recommended texts, and preparing the assessment items. Probably around 90 hours should be allocated to assessment on the course. Of this, around 30 hours may be required for assignment 1 and around 60 hours for assignment 2.

Assessment

The following table outlines the assessment components for LALS 541:

	Component	Value	Word count	Due date	CLOs
1	Writing a draft literature review and research question(s)	30%	1500	Monday 5 September	1, 2, 6
2	Writing the full research report, including revised literature review and research question(s)	70%	5000	Friday 15 October	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

The criteria for marking correspond to those commonly used in evaluations of research papers (*cf*. LALS 540), most notably: the coherence and clarity of argumentation, the pertinence and answerability of the research questions, the connections with the research literature on the chosen topic, the suitability of the research method and instruments chosen/developed to answer a research question, the appropriateness of the anticipated data analysis, and the logic of the conclusions and implications drawn from findings.

Submission and return of work

All assignments will be submitted through Blackboard (Turnitin), both by distance and face-to-face students. Both assignments should be submitted by midnight (NZ time) on the due date. Feedback on assignments will be sent via email within two weeks after the due date.

Extensions and penalties

No penalty will be imposed if you obtain permission (requested via e-mail) to submit the assignment after the due date. Late work will not be accepted, however, unless prior arrangements have been made with the course coordinator. Also consult the course coordinator (via e-mail) in case your text exceeds the word limit, to be advised whether/what cuts need to be made.

Set texts

Articles to exemplify diverse types of research methods in applied linguistics will be made available on the LALS 541 Blackboard site.

Recommended reading

There are many good manuals for applied linguistics research. One example is: Mackey, A. & Gass, S. (Eds.) (2012). *Research methods in second language acquisition: A practical guide* (Wiley-Blackwell), which contains chapters with guidelines for diverse types of studies.

Further recommended reading will be made available on Blackboard to cater to individual students' needs and interests.

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. Details will be available on Blackboard.

Student feedback

Students have found the course particularly useful as preparation for a research project (e.g., LALS 580--583).

Informal student feedback is welcome at all times and will be solicited formally (and anonymously) at the end of the course.

Previous student feedback on courses may be found at 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
- Academic Progress: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/progress/academic-progess (including restrictions and non-engagement)
- Dates and deadlines: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/study/dates
- FHSS Student and Academic Services Office: www.victoria.ac.nz/fhss/student-admin
- Grades: 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
- Statutes and policies including the Student Conduct Statute: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/strategy
- Student support: www.victoria.ac.nz/students/support
- Students with disabilities: www.victoria.ac.nz/st_services/disability
- Student Charter: 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
- Turnitin: www.cad.vuw.ac.nz/wiki/index.php/Turnitin
- University structure: www.victoria.ac.nz/about/governance/structure
- Victoria graduate profile: www.victoria.ac.nz/learning-teaching/learning-partnerships/graduate-profile
- VUWSA: www.vuwsa.org.nz s