

	ANU College of Business and Economics	Research School of Accounting
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BUSN4013

Seminar in Research Methods in Commerce

This course introduces students to the planning, design and conduct of research in business-related disciplines. Students gain an understanding of how scientific research is undertaken and are introduced to different research approaches. By the end of the course, students should be able to critically evaluate research (their own and that of others) regardless of the research approach. The overall aim is enable students to develop the skills needed to design and undertake research that is ethical, meaningful, rigorous and relevant.

Course URL	https://programsandcourses.anu.edu.au/2017/course/BUSN8013
Mode of Delivery	On campus
Prerequisites	Knowledge of basic statistical methods in business research. Students are expected to have a strong interest in research.
Incompatible Courses	Incompatible with BUSN8013 Seminar in Research Methods in Commerce
Co-taught Courses	BUSN8013 Seminar in Research Methods in Commerce. Graduate students and undergraduate honours students attend joint classes and are assessed jointly.
Course Convenor	Professor Neil Fargher
Phone	+61 2 6125 0541
Email	neil.fargher@anu.edu
Office	PAP Moran, Room 2040 (any changes will be announced on the course Wattle site)

Office hours for student consultation	Refer to Wattle course site
Research Interests	Auditing and assurance, accounting, risk
Student Administration	Room 2037 Hanna Neumann Building 21 enquiries.rsa@anu.edu.au 6125 0025 or 6125 7968 Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9-5 pm

SEMESTER 2

2017

COURSE OVERVIEW

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of the course students will be able to:

1. Describe the research process.
2. Explain the nature of theory, theory building and theory testing in research.
3. Critically discuss different research approaches.
4. Engage in meaningful research that adheres to accepted academic practices and ethical standards.
5. Analyse a research topic and formulate research questions for a research project that is both sufficient and feasible for a Masters or PhD program.
6. Design a research project that uses appropriate methods to address specific research questions, while taking account of issues of validity, reliability and measurement.
7. Effectively present the results of a research project in a research article or thesis.
8. Develop and present an original research proposal that addresses a selected research topic.

Assessment Summary

Assessment Task	Value (%)	Due Date	Date for Return of Assessment	Linked Learning Outcomes
1. Participation (Scheduled classes <u>and</u> School Research Seminars)	10	Continuous	Before exam period	2-6,8
2. Research Seminar Paper Critiques (minimum of 3)	15	Various (Mondays)	2 weeks after submission date	3,4
3. Class Assignment 1a Identifying important topics for research and developing research questions	0	Week 2 Start of Class	Monday week 3	1-4
4. Class Assignment 1b Identifying important topics for research and developing research questions	5	Week 4 Monday 5:00pm	Monday Week 6	1-4
5. Class Assignment 2 Identifying and evaluating the appropriate available data for a proposed project	5	Week 6 Monday 5:00pm	Monday Week 8	4-6,8
6. Preliminary Research Proposal	15	Week 8 Monday 5:00pm	Friday Week 11	1-6,8
7. Class Assignment 3 Identifying and addressing expected measurement issues for a proposed project	10	Week 10 Monday 5:00pm	2 weeks after submission date	6,8
8. Final Research Proposal	40	Friday 10 November 12:00 noon	-	1-6,7,8

Research-Led Teaching

This course is concerned exclusively with research, as detailed in the course description and learning outcomes.

Feedback

Staff Feedback

Students will be given feedback in the following forms in this course:

- Written individual comments in relation to submitted assignments will be provided on Wattle.
- Verbal generalised comments on assignments may be provided in class.

Student Feedback

ANU is committed to the demonstration of educational excellence and regularly seeks feedback from students. One of the key formal ways students have to provide feedback is through Student Experience of Learning Support (SELS) surveys. The feedback given in these surveys is anonymous and provides the Colleges, University Education Committee and Academic Board with opportunities to recognise excellent teaching, and opportunities for improvement.

For more information on student surveys at ANU and reports on the feedback provided on ANU courses, go to:

<http://unistats.anu.edu.au/surveys/self/students/> and
<http://unistats.anu.edu.au/surveys/self/results/learning/>

Policies

ANU has educational policies, procedures and guidelines, which are designed to ensure that staff and students are aware of the University's academic standards, and implement them. You can find the University's education policies and an explanatory glossary at: <http://policies.anu.edu.au/>

Students are expected to have read the [Academic Misconduct Rule](#) before the commencement of their course.

Other key policies include:

- Student Assessment (Coursework) Policy
(https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_004603)
- Student Assessment (Coursework) Procedure
(https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_004604)
- Student Surveys and Evaluations
(https://policies.anu.edu.au/ppl/document/ANUP_004601)
- Copyright (<http://copyright.anu.edu.au/>)

Examination material or equipment

Any written or printed materials, other than ANU Library books, and non-programmable calculators may be brought into the exam room. Electronic dictionaries and other electronic devices are not permitted.

READING LISTS

Recommended reading:

Neuman, W.L. (2014). *Social Research Methods Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches* (7th edition), Pearson. Available as an eBook

Other readings: Further readings will be provided on Wattle course site for each class session.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Summary of Activities	Assessment
1	The research process and types of research Identifying research topics: Identifying business issues, identifying research questions Approach supervisors	
2	Research design: Understanding the research literature Research questions – what do we know already? then refine the research question, extending prior research Student presentations for Class Assignment 1 Part A: Identifying important issues for research (Private study - Research paradigms)	Class Assignment 1a
3	Research design: The nature of theory and its place in research Student presentations for Class Assignment 1 Part B: Contextualising a research question and identifying contributions	
4	Research design: Developing Hypotheses Refining research questions, using the literature, and developing hypotheses	Class Assignment 1b
5	Research design: Testing hypotheses – developing models	
6	Archival research Student presentations for Class Assignment 2: Identifying and evaluating the appropriate available data	Class Assignment 2
	Mid-semester break	

Week	Summary of Activities	Assessment
7	Issues in modelling and analysis Student presentations for Class Assignment 3: Expected measurement issues for a proposed project	
8	Surveys (interviews and questionnaires).	Preliminary Research Proposal
9	Experiments and behavioural research	
10	Completing a research project and communicating results	Class Assignment 3
11	Completing and communicating <i>your</i> research proposal	
12	➤ Student presentations of research proposals	

ASSESSMENT REQUIREMENTS

The ANU is using Turnitin to enhance student citation and referencing techniques, and to assess assignment submissions as a component of the University's approach to managing Academic Integrity. For additional information regarding Turnitin please visit the [ANU Online](#) website.

Students may choose not to submit assessment items through Turnitin. In this instance you will be required to submit, alongside the assessment item itself, copies of all references included in the assessment item.

Any student identified, either during the current semester or in retrospect, as having used ghost writing services will be investigated under the University's Academic Misconduct Rule. As a further academic control, students may be selected for a 15 minute individual oral examination of their written assessment submissions.

Assessment Tasks

Assessment Task 1: Participation in scheduled classes and School Research Seminars [10%]

Instructions for class activities are provided on Wattle. You are expected to adequately prepare all activities prior to the relevant class and participate in class discussion every week. Your participation marks will take account of three forms of participation:

- Your preparedness in speaking to the class each week in relation to scheduled class topic, including being able to explain a relevant aspect of your proposed research topic.
- Your engagement in discussion of other students' proposals and issues, and discussing general research issues.
- Your participation in (not mere attendance at) the Research School of Accounting Research Seminars. The Research School of Accounting holds a seminar series on most Fridays during teaching weeks. Your university email address will be used by the School's Seminar Convenor to send notices of seminars and copies of papers. These seminars are part of the research learning process for this course. You are expected to attend all scheduled seminars **and ask questions**. (Students from other schools can substitute their school research seminar and advice will be sought from that School's Seminar Convenor as to participation.)

Assessment Task 2: Research Seminar Paper Critiques [15%]

You are required to submit a minimum of three critiques of research papers presented in the Research School of Accounting Research Seminar Program. Each critique is approximately 2 x A4 pages using the prescribed format provided on Wattle. At least one of your critiques must be submitted for a seminar presented in Weeks 2-6.

Each critique is due on Monday in the week following the presentation of the paper you choose. Late critiques cannot be accepted. There may be unforeseen circumstances that prevent you from critiquing particular papers listed in the seminar program (e.g., last minute cancellations by presenters) and not all papers are necessarily suitable for this critiquing assignment (you will be advised when this is the case); therefore, you should not wait until the later weeks of the seminar series to complete this assessment component.

The objective of the critique is to review the work with respect to both: (a) research method; and (b) its contribution to the literature. You will be graded based on your critical analysis and you will not be rewarded for summarising the seminar paper or for discussing your personal opinions of a topic or literary style. In addition to asking your own questions in seminars, you should take careful note of other people's comments and questions, as these may help inform your critique.

Other CBE seminar papers: Where a research paper that is particularly relevant to your research interests is offered in the seminar program of another School, you can seek the permission of the Course Convenor to critique that paper instead of an RSA paper. You are not assured of receiving permission. Where permission is given, you must email a copy of the seminar paper to the Convenor.

Assessment Tasks 3, 4 and 6: Class Assignments [20%]

Details of each of the three Class Assignments (listed in the Assessment Summary) will be provided on Wattle. These assignments and your Research Seminar Paper Critiques are designed help you develop your Research Proposal.

Assessment Task 5: Preliminary Research Proposal [15%]

Your submitted Preliminary Research Proposal must not exceed 12 x A4 pages (including all equations, figures and tables but excluding references). Details of the required format are provided on Wattle.

You are strongly encouraged to select a topic in an area in which you have strong intellectual interest. The proposed research must be realistic in relation to the academic resources available to you as a research student. If you are preparing for an honours thesis, masters thesis or sub-thesis, or PhD thesis, you are expected to use this assignment to develop your thesis proposal.

You are expected to consult regularly with your thesis supervisor throughout the semester in developing your research topic and proposal.

Assessment Task 7: Final Research Proposal [40%]

Your submitted Final Research Proposal must not exceed 22 x A4 pages (including all equations, figures and tables but excluding references or an appendix). Details of the required format are provided on Wattle.

All students must formally present their research proposals in class in week 12. An additional class will be scheduled in Week 12 if it is needed to accommodate the number of presentations. All students are required to attend all presentations by other students. The timetabling for each presentation will be arranged in Week 10. Some academic staff and other research students usually attend these

presentations. Your presentation and the in-class feedback will assist you in improving your proposal prior to submission.

You are expected to consult regularly with your thesis supervisor throughout the semester in developing your research topic and proposal

You are expected to take advantage of feedback on your earlier work in this course in finalising your proposal. However, in consultation with your supervisor, you may choose to substantially change or replace your preliminary proposal as your research develops during the semester.

Assignment submission

Online Submission: Assignments are submitted using Turnitin in the course Wattle site. You will be required to electronically sign a declaration as part of the submission of your assignment. Please keep a copy of the assignment for your records.

Extensions and penalties

Extensions and late submission of assessment pieces are covered by the [Student Assessment \(Coursework\) Policy and Procedure](#).

The Course Convenor may grant extensions for assessment pieces that are not examinations or take-home examinations. If you need an extension, you must request in writing on or before the due date. If you have documented and appropriate medical evidence that demonstrates you were not able to request an extension on or before the due date, you may be able to request it after the due date.

No submission of an assessment task without an extension after the due date will be permitted. If an assessment task is not submitted by the due date, a mark of 0 will be awarded.

Returning assignments

Student work is submitted, held and graded electronically. Copies are not returned. Individual feedback will be provided as comments on Wattle.

RESUBMISSION OF ASSIGNMENTS

Assignments cannot be resubmitted.

REFERENCING REQUIREMENTS

For referencing in all submitted work, please use the *The Chicago Manual of Style* author-date system (http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html) or similar.

EXAMINATIONS

This course does not have examinations.

Scaling

Your final mark for the course will be based on the **raw** marks allocated for each of your assessment items. However, your final mark may not be the same number as produced by that formula, as marks may be **scaled**. Any scaling applied will preserve the rank order of raw marks (i.e. if your raw mark

exceeds that of another student, then your scaled mark will exceed the scaled mark of that student), and may be either up or down.

Privacy Notice

The ANU has made a number of third party, online, databases available for students to use. Use of each online database is conditional on student end users first agreeing to the database licensor's terms of service and/or privacy policy. Students should read these carefully.

In some cases student end users will be required to register an account with the database licensor and submit personal information, including their: first name; last name; ANU email address; and other information.

In cases where student end users are asked to submit 'content' to a database, such as an assignment or short answers, the database licensor may only use the student's 'content' in accordance with the terms of service – including any (copyright) licence the student grants to the database licensor.

Any personal information or content a student submits may be stored by the licensor, potentially offshore, and will be used to process the database service in accordance with the licensors terms of service and/or privacy policy.

If any student chooses not to agree to the database licensor's terms of service or privacy policy, the student will not be able to access and use the database. In these circumstances students should contact their lecturer to enquire about alternative arrangements that are available.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS

The University offers a number of support services for students. Information on these is available online from <http://www.anu.edu.au/students/communities-events>