INFS4795
Thesis PART A

Course Outline
Semester 1, 2015

Part A: Course-Specific Information

Please consult Part B for key information on Business School policies (including those on plagiarism and special consideration), student responsibilities and student support services.
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PART A: COURSE-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

1 STAFF CONTACT DETAILS

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer-in-charge</td>
<td>Dr Farhad Daneshgar</td>
<td><a href="mailto:f.daneshgar@unsw.edu.au">f.daneshgar@unsw.edu.au</a></td>
<td>QUAD 2106</td>
<td>93854241</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The best way to contact Farhad is via email. Please note that only your UNSW email account will be used for formal notices and correspondence regarding the course. If you need to contact the School urgently you can contact the School Office on 93855320.

2 COURSE DETAILS

2.1 Teaching Times and Locations
Thesis ‘A’ students must attend scheduled meetings; meeting times and locations are specified in Section 6.

2.2 Units of Credit
INFS3795 is worth 6 units of credit.

2.3 Summary of Course
INFS4795 Thesis Part A initiates your Honours thesis. The course represents the research literature section of the thesis, as well as the research design/plan for the honours research.

The major role of the Honours Director is to ensure you meet the major deadlines to deliver your research proposal at the end of the semester. To achieve this, you are to work under the direction of your supervisor(s). The INFS4975 course website is already activated and soon I will upload the Course Outline. Other materials will gradually be added and you will be notified of these updates through email.

2.4 Course Aims and Relationship to Other Courses
INFS4795 Thesis Part A if successfully completed will be followed by INFS4796 Thesis Part B in the proceeding semester. The aim of the INFS4795 Thesis Part A is to investigate a research topic and develop a research project plan. Thesis A will allow you to develop the skills and gain the confidence you need to work on an independently conducted research project (in INFS4796 Thesis Part B) and the documentation and communication of this project through thesis writing (in Thesis Part B). Thesis Part B is worth 18 units of credit and therefore constitutes the major proportion of the Honours research project effort.

Every piece of substantial research should be based on a thorough review of the existing literature in the relevant field(s). The review should identify the relevant disciplines and the dominant paradigms on which previous research has been based. It should plot the course of relevant debates to the present day, in order to identify spaces or gaps that need further research. From this basis, you can justify your own research project – what new material you will evaluate and/or how you will combine
existing concepts in new ways and/or how existing contradictions or explanatory gaps will be addressed by your inquiries.

In your thesis proposal, you will go through this same process. Looking at an area that interests you, you will identify key debates, disagreements between scholars and areas ripe for new research. In addition, you will present a plan on how you will design and execute your research.

2.5 Student Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, you should be able to achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. Identify a topic area of interest for investigation.
2. Search for articles relating to the topic.
3. Read and critique all the existing literature related to the topic area.
4. Identify appropriate research question(s).
5. Use EndNote to record all your references.
6. Prepare an ethical and socially responsible Thesis A document, and perform an academic presentation to peers and staff.

The Course Learning Outcomes are what you should be able to DO by the end of this course if you participate fully in learning activities and successfully complete the assessment items.

The Learning Outcomes in this course also help you to achieve some of the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes for all undergraduate students in the Business School. Program Learning Goals are what we want you to BE or HAVE by the time you successfully complete your degree (e.g. 'be an effective team player'). You demonstrate this by achieving specific Program Learning Outcomes – what you are able to DO by the end of your degree (e.g. 'participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams').

For more information on the Undergraduate Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, see Part B of the course outline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business Undergraduate Program Learning Goals and Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Knowledge:</strong> Our graduates will have in-depth disciplinary knowledge applicable in local and global contexts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should be able to select and apply disciplinary knowledge to business situations in a local and global environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Critical thinking and problem solving:</strong> Our graduates will be critical thinkers and effective problem solvers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should be able to identify and research issues in business situations, analyse the issues, and propose appropriate and well-justified solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Communication:</strong> Our graduates will be effective professional communicators.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You should be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Prepare written documents that are clear and concise, using appropriate style and presentation for the intended audience, purpose and context, and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Prepare and deliver oral presentations that are clear, focused, well-structured, and delivered in a professional manner.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Teamwork: Our graduates will be effective team participants.
You should be able to participate collaboratively and responsibly in teams, and reflect on your own teamwork, and on the team’s processes and ability to achieve outcomes.

5. Ethical, social and environmental responsibility: Our graduates will have a sound awareness of the ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business practice.
You should be able to:
   a. Identify and assess ethical, environmental and/or sustainability considerations in business decision-making and practice, and
   b. Identify social and cultural implications of business situations.

The following table shows how your Course Learning Outcomes relate to the overall Program Learning Goals and Outcomes, and indicates where these are assessed (they may also be developed in tutorials and other activities):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Learning Goals and Outcomes</th>
<th>Course Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Course Assessment Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This course helps you to achieve the following learning goals for all Business undergraduate students:</td>
<td>On successful completion of the course, you should be able to:</td>
<td>This learning outcome will be assessed in the following items:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Knowledge</td>
<td>2 Search for articles relating to the topic.</td>
<td>Thesis A Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3 Read and critique all the existing literature related to the topic area.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Critical thinking and problem solving</td>
<td>3 Read and critique all the existing literature related to the topic area.</td>
<td>Thesis A Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4 Identify appropriate research question(s).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3a Written communication</td>
<td>5 EndNote to record all your references.</td>
<td>Thesis A Report</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6 Prepare an ethical and socially responsible Thesis A document, and perform an academic presentation to peers and staff.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3b Oral communication</td>
<td>6 Prepare an ethical and socially responsible Thesis A document, and perform an academic presentation to peers and staff.</td>
<td>Thesis A Presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5a Ethical, social and environmental responsibility</td>
<td>6 Prepare an ethical and socially responsible Thesis A document, and perform an academic presentation to peers and staff.</td>
<td>Thesis A Report Ethics Approval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5b Social and cultural awareness</td>
<td>6 Prepare an ethical and socially responsible Thesis A document, and perform an academic presentation to peers and staff.</td>
<td>Thesis A Report</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3 LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES

3.1 Approach to Learning and Teaching in the Course
You are expected to apply the knowledge and skills taught in INFS4886 and 4887 (Research Topics in Information Systems 1 and 2, respectively). These form the foundation of your research skills. In addition, your supervisor(s) will critically direct you in all aspects of this process.

3.2 Learning Activities and Teaching Strategies
A number of meetings will be set up with the Honours Coordinator (See Course Schedule for meeting/seminar times). Essential information and reminders will be provided during these sessions. Please mark these in your diary.

3.3 Ethics Approval
A key deadline honours students must meet is the submission of ethics application to Patricia Blunt at p.blunt@unsw.edu.au. Your supervisor(s) should be able to advise you when to get ethics clearance for your research. Please be reminded that you are not permitted to collect data without Ethics Approval.

Ethics submissions for honours students will be considered at any time. Honours students will NOT have to wait until the scheduled meetings.

1. Members of the panel will "meet electronically" to consider these applications.
2. Decisions regarding these submissions will be made within 1 week.
3. If the panel approves the submission, it will then be sent to UNSW ethics (this is now a requirement). However the turn around here is usually within a couple of days.

To minimize delays, Honors supervisors MUST CHECK AND THOROUGHLY READ the student's application before it is submitted. This form will then be checked and signed by the Ethics representative of the school (Professor Pradeep Ray p.ray@unsw.edu.au). If there are any issues / errors / omissions with the application, it will be returned to be corrected.

4 ASSESSMENT

4.1 Formal Requirements
To receive a satisfactory grade in this course, you must meet ALL of the following criteria:
   • Satisfactory proposal presentation and defence to staff and peers at the end of the semester.
   • Satisfactory quality of a Word document representing your Honours research proposal.

4.2 Assessment Details
Assessment in this course is based on the formal requirements as described in Section 4.1. Please note that assessment rubrics for these assessment components will be circulated later this semester.
4.3 Research Proposal Format Requirements

The research proposal will be no longer than 30 pages (double space, 12 pt font) or max 10,000 words excluding the Table of Content, abstract, bibliography and appendices.

The recommended structure of your proposal is presented below:

Title page: • thesis title, your name, student ID and degree candidacy

Abstract: 200-300 words summary of the main aim/s and elements of proposal

Introduction: This includes a clear description of the research problem and its background or context, motivations for the proposed research, how the research fits into current knowledge or debates, proposed approach and expected contribution (what will be distinctive about your work).

Literature Review & Conceptual Framework: You need to present a critical view of literature relevant for your research problem and determine the key developments (streams of research) in your problem domain, identifying research paradigms and methods adopted, relevant knowledge and contributions made; You need then to identify problems in the literature such as contradictions or unexplained findings and explanatory gaps that motivate your research. Drawing from your literature review and identified gaps you articulate your research questions. You may also integrate previous research into a conceptual framework that will guide your empirical research.

Research Methodology: Starting from your research questions, you should propose a research approach and methodology to answer them. You should describe the theoretical foundation (if you have one), the research design and strategy you will adopt to investigate your research problem and answer your research questions. Emphasise the arguments for your selection of particular method(s) and the way you will apply them. Highlight the advantages and potential risks of each of the methods. In summary this section describes the methodology that is most appropriate to your research project and justify your decision(s).

Research Plan: Plan how you will execute your research project, and check with your supervisor that your plan is realistic. Document this plan and consider any time constraints that may impact on it.

Bibliography: You are to submit an EndNote library (*.enl file) by email to both your supervisor(s) and the Honours Director.

The above structure could vary, in consultation with your thesis supervisor. If you are not using EndNote, please inform your supervisor(s) and the Honours Director of the alternative tool you will be using.

4.4 Thesis A Submission Procedure

Your thesis A submissions consist of: 1 A softcopy of the EndNote library (*.enl) and the Word copy of the proposal to supervisor(s) and Honours Director, by email. 2 Two hardcopies of the entire proposal to: ISTM School Office istm@unsw.edu.au.

DEADLINE: will be announced early in the semester
4.5 Late Submission
Late submissions will only be accepted after prior approval with the Honours Director as well as with supervisors. You will be required to substantiate your application with appropriate documentary evidence such as medical certificates, accident reports etc. Please note that work commitments and computer failures are usually considered insufficient grounds for an extension.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Assurance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Business School is actively monitoring student learning and quality of the student experience in all its programs. A random selection of completed assessment tasks may be used for quality assurance, such as to determine the extent to which program learning goals are being achieved. The information is required for accreditation purposes, and aggregated findings will be used to inform changes aimed at improving the quality of Business School programs. All material used for such processes will be treated as confidential.</td>
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5 COURSE RESOURCES
Resources available to students such as:
- The course website and some useful links on the website;
- Additional resources provided by the invited speakers during the meetings mentioned in 3.2 above (e.g. library search resources; EndNote site, etc.).

The website for this course is on Moodle at: http://moodle.telt.unsw.edu.au

There is no recommended textbook for this course.
6 COURSE SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to changes and will be updated in week 1 after confirmations are received from various guest speakers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1, 2 March</td>
<td>General Introduction about Thesis A</td>
<td>QUAD 2093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 2, 9 March</td>
<td>Introduction: Endnotes; Honours’ rubric; your questions</td>
<td>QUAD 2093</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 3, 16 March</td>
<td>Writing and Presenting Thesis A Proposal By Louise Fitzgerald (EDU)</td>
<td>QUAD 2093</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 4, 23 March</td>
<td>Ethics Lecture Professor Gary Monroe</td>
<td>QUAD 2093</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 5, 30 March</td>
<td>Data Analysis using PLSgraph – please bring your laptop. Reminder: Human Research Ethics Clearance Form lodgement recommended around this time (if not earlier).</td>
<td>QUAD 2093</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Mid-semester break: Good Friday 3rd April - Sunday 12th April

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 6, 13 April</td>
<td>No formal meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 7, 20 April</td>
<td>No formal meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 8, 27 April</td>
<td>No formal meetings</td>
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<td>Week 9, 4 May</td>
<td>No formal meetings</td>
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<td>Week 10, 11 May</td>
<td>No formal meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 11, 18 May</td>
<td>No formal meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 12, 25 May</td>
<td>Thesis A Student Proposal Presentations to Academic Staff</td>
<td>TBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Week 13, 1 June</td>
<td>Thesis A Proposal Submission</td>
<td>Full-day event; TBA</td>
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</tbody>
</table>