MGMT3708
Research Methods in Employment and Management

Course Outline
Semester 2, 2013

Part A: Course-Specific Information
Part B: Key Policies, Student Responsibilities and Support

Seminar:
Mondays 1-4pm: QUAD G048

Lecturer in Charge and course coordinator:
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Room 505, Level 5, Australian School of Business
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Fax: 9662 8531
Email: s.gregson@unsw.edu.au

Consultation time:
Times are flexible, but prior appointments are essential – just call or email to arrange a mutually agreeable time.
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Part A: Course Specific Information

COURSE OVERVIEW, PURPOSE AND AIMS
Research skills are invaluable for study and, indeed, for life. That said, learning how to produce a credible and persuasive written answer to an unanswered question is not an easy task. This course introduces you to a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods commonly used in the social sciences. The knowledge and understanding acquired will begin to equip you with the necessary tools to do research – perhaps to write an Honours thesis or do a major report for work. Although these are generic skills across disciplines, we pay particular regard to existing research in the fields of international business, human resource management, organisational behaviour and industrial relations.

This course is required for students undertaking the fourth year Honours program in the areas of IB, HRM, Management and Industrial Relations and as a List B elective.

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESSFUL LEARNING OUTCOMES
Learning and teaching in this course is based upon interactive lecture delivery, completion of suggested reading material, practical exercises, and small-group and seminar discussion. For the first hour, we go through lecture material that critically evaluates the core concepts and theories required to understand qualitative and quantitative research methods. For the rest of the class, we engage in group-based activities and discussions. The course design is based on a learning philosophy that sees discussion and debate as vital precursors to greater understanding. Getting away from ‘passive’ learning techniques, small-group discussions encourage you to play with the ideas raised in your readings, test out your understanding on your classmates and listen to their points of view in a relatively informal environment. We will also do a number of practical exercises in order to apply some of the ideas that you have learned.

With the co-operation of all subject participants, we focus on:

1) developing our understanding of theoretical paradigms that inform different research designs and practices
2) cultivating the knowledge, skills and abilities needed to design and carry out research
3) assessing various techniques for producing, analysing and validating data
4) analysing specific issues, questions and problems that may arise while carrying out independent investigations and working out how to deal effectively with them
5) learning the ethical standards that guide both doing research and the standard of the research itself
6) considering effective strategies for presenting your findings clearly and convincingly

In short, completion of this course should provide participants with a thorough understanding of the various stages of research work. You can match these Course Learning Outcomes to Australian School of Business Learning Goals and Outcomes in Part B; they are indications of the knowledge, skills and personal/professional qualities MGMT3708 will help you to develop.
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Lecture Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>29 July</td>
<td>Course information/intro lecture/film</td>
</tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>5 August</td>
<td>Approaches to research</td>
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<td>3</td>
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<td>Designing and critiquing research projects</td>
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<td>Literature reviews – why and how?</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>Ethics and research</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2 September</td>
<td>Sources for courses</td>
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<td>Why case studies?</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>16 September</td>
<td>Doing interviews and focus groups</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>23 September</td>
<td>Doing questionnaire surveys</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Semester break</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>14 October</td>
<td>Analysing data and writing up findings</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>All week</td>
<td>Consultation re your presentation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>28 October</td>
<td>Presentations and research round table</td>
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*What should you bring to class?*

- [✓] Your open mind
- [✓] Your enthusiasm for debate
- [✓] Your sense of humour
- [✓] Your willingness to work hard
STUDENT REQUIREMENT FOR SUCCESSFUL COURSE COMPLETION

SEMINAR PARTICIPATION

The seminars are a crucial element of the learning process in this course. They will provide you with the conceptual orientation necessary to understand the themes and issues dealt with in each weekly topic. Marks are not awarded for attendance alone, but non-attendance quickly begins to have a negative effect on your final mark. The course will only be a success if all students are active participants – the seminars are a forum for the exchange of ideas, argument and opinion on the themes canvassed by the course and they are not recorded. You are expected to attend at least eighty per cent of the scheduled seminars. University regulations indicate that if students attend less than eighty per cent of scheduled classes, they may be refused a final assessment.

EXPECTED WORKLOAD

This is not a ‘distance learning’ class and it is ultimately your responsibility to assess whether you have time to do the course or not.

Before enrollment, make sure that your schedule will permit you to attend tutorials and lectures regularly. It is estimated that successful completion of this course will involve the expenditure of approximately 9-10 hours per week to attend classes, complete the required readings and prepare written assignments. In the lead-up to assessment completion, this expenditure may even increase. While I understand that occasional work/family obligations may clash with classes, other commitments should not create permanent barriers to attendance.

Students are often tempted to over-commit themselves at the beginning of session and we know that over-commitment has been a cause of failure for many students. Despite your best intentions, you are not ‘Superstudent’ – please make realistic assessments when arranging your timetable for work, study and, importantly, recreation.

OBLIGATION TO ‘KEEP INFORMED’

You will need to keep in touch with what’s happening in the course and be aware of any notices or materials provided. Every enrolled student has a UNSW e-mail address (zStudentID@unsw.edu.au) and, from time to time, I may contact you via this email address. If you use another email account, make sure your student emails go there – see the UNSW IT website to learn how to perform this function. Lecture notes and other important information will be posted on Blackboard. Please access this information regularly – if information has been disseminated by any of the aforementioned means, you are deemed to have received it. It is also your responsibility to keep the University informed of all changes to your contact details. If you have any questions about the course, please consult me. Failure to resolve issues in a timely manner may impair your progress. Whilst I welcome phone and e-mail inquiries about specific issues, for detailed advice, you should phone or visit in person, rather than use e-mail.

Local and international research indicates that students who engage early and often with their course website are more likely to pass their course. Information for staff and students on expected workload can be found at: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/UnitsOfCredit.html
**ASSESSMENT**

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<th>Assessment components</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) 1st paper</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>2 September</td>
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<td>b) 2nd paper</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>23 September</td>
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<td>c) Oral presentation</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>28 October</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Class prep and participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>All session</td>
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**a) 1st paper – 30% (approx. 1,500 words)**

A literature review can literally make or break an examiners’ view of your research thesis. What will they expect to see in a good literature review and why are these factors important? Ideally, what relationships does your literature review form with other parts of your study?

**b) 2nd paper – 40% (approx. 2,500 words)**

Discuss three significant issues that researchers must consider while trying to increase the strengths and minimise the weaknesses of data collection through:

- Interviews  
- Case studies  
- Questionnaire surveys

Illustrate your case with at least four related studies in your discipline that employ the method you have chosen.

**c) Oral presentation of a research proposal – 20% (10 mins – to be confirmed)**

During the course, you are invited to conceptualise and design a research project using the knowledge gained in class to inform your research choices – one that is interesting to others, original and feasible.

In Week 13, all students in the class will present a research proposal to their peers and to members of the School’s staff for feedback. You will be assessed on the quality of your material, particularly your review of the literature, the development of your research question, the appropriateness of epistemological and methodological issues raised and the persuasiveness, structure and delivery of your argument. While it is not necessary to write up your proposal in full, you should present all aspects of your proposal on Powerpoint slides and hand in a copy of your presentation during the class. Again, your work MUST be referenced and a bibliography should be presented on the final slide.

**Once in a lifetime offer!** You are strongly encouraged, but not required, to email your presentation to me in draft form in Week 12. I will have a look at your slides and make suggestions for improvements where I think they can help. We can also arrange to meet for face-to-face consultation if you would like to do this.

In order to give adequate time for each presentation, discussion and feedback in the final seminar, a presentation timetable will be drawn up in Weeks 8-9 – please try to keep
the whole class time on 28th October free, so that you can attend the whole program. In the past, students have commented that this session was extremely valuable to them – even when the papers were well outside their own research area. It helps each student to gain a broad perspective on the world of research and provides inspiration regarding the possibilities of their own project.

d) Class preparation and participation – 10%
The major factor underpinning the success of our seminars will be your preparation and participation. You are expected to read for class and come prepared for discussion, questions and learning. **Note to self!** Do not leave assignments until last minute – be making notes and locating relevant readings throughout the course. Those who do this give themselves a much better chance of doing well. It is also good practice for your Honours year to prepare thoroughly each week – you must not expect to write your Honours thesis the night before it is due... 😊

**SUBMITTING YOUR PAPERS:**
- Hard copies of all written assignments are to be submitted to me during seminars and, in addition, you must submit an electronic copy to Turnitin (not the research proposal).
- All hard copy written assignments **must** have a School essay cover sheet attached – these can be obtained from the School office or downloaded from **Blackboard**.
- You can also submit your hard copy essay is to put it in the School’s essay box if the office is closed. Make sure not to put it in the nearby garbage bin – they appear similar.
- Do not submit essays in plastic covers – a simple staple will do.
- **No late submissions will be accepted** after assignments have been marked/returned.
- If you are having trouble with your written assignments, please don’t leave it until the last minute to seek help – I’m happy to discuss problems at any stage.

**COURSE READING INFORMATION**

The **prescribed textbook** for this course is:


There are no penalties for not buying it, but you must find other ways to access the same information so that your progress is not impaired.

There are many, many research methods textbooks available but I chose this book because it is a nice mixture of material to get you thinking AND ‘how to’ advice that is well suited for the beginning scholar of research methods. However, you are encouraged to read widely and should not feel that reading the textbook is sufficient to gain a full appreciation of the material we cover. **Some articles for each seminar** will be placed on **Blackboard** – please read as many as you can, because they been selected to illuminate important themes and debates discussed in the course.
SEMINAR READINGS AND CLASS ACTIVITIES

Week One (29 July)  Intro lecture
Film – Kinsey – Hollywood does research methods!

To start off on an entertaining note, we will watch the movie, Kinsey, starring Liam Neeson and Laura Linney, in order to analyse the methodological issues it highlights. Please be warned that the movie has some very sexually explicit content which is necessary for the story – please feel free to leave the room if you do not want to watch it. While the film raises some extremely interesting questions for us to debate, you will not be disadvantaged if you choose not to watch this film.

As you are watching, think about these questions:

- What sparked Kinsey’s research? What do you think were the main influences on his decision to embark on this massive and daunting project?
- What sort of theoretical paradigms affected his research choices?
- How would you describe his research methodology?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of his approach?
- What do you think of his team’s role in the research?
- What ethical concerns are raised by his research?

You might also like to consider this small piece on some factors relating to doing Honours theses.


Week Two (5 August)  Approaches to research

Group readings: how have these authors approached their research?

Other readings:

Week Three (12 August) Planning/designing research projects
A carefully planned and designed research project is the essential foundation upon which valuable results are built. Preparation and forethought in the beginning can save you considerable time and angst in the future. In this class, we think about how to turn a research question into a viable and successful research project.

Group readings: Think about how these projects are carried out. Your critique?

Other Readings:

**Textbook** – Chapter 5.

**Week Four (19 August)  Literature Review – why and how?**

Identify the following in the class reading below:

- What are the key references that the writer uses as a starting point?
- What was the disciplinary basis? What theoretical perspectives were discussed?
- How were the references organised? How was the chapter organised?
- What position did the author take up in relation to the existing literature?
- What role did the review play in the development of Collins’ overall argument?

**Class reading:**


**Other readings:**


**Textbook** – Chapter 2.

**Week Five (26 August)  Ethics and Research**

**Class reading:**


**Other readings:**

Week Six (2 September)  
Sources for courses

In this class we will look at a range of ways that you can garner source material for your projects, from already existing data to the built environment, from photographs to corporate monographs. We will also discuss the use of research diaries, as both reflective tool and source material.


Group readings: what did these authors use as sources?


Other readings:


**Week Seven (9 September) Why case studies?**

**Group readings:** think about the way these case studies have been carried out. Your critique?


**Other readings:**

Week Eight (16 September)  
Doing interviews and focus groups

Group readings:

Other readings:
L. Shopes, ‘When women interview women – And then publish it: Reflections on oral history, women’s history, and public history’, *Journal of Women’s History*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1994.


**Week Nine (23 September)**

**Doing questionnaire surveys**

A few years ago, an international debate took place about quantitative research methods in relation to the war in Iraq in which academics, world leaders and a range of community groups were involved. We examine that debate to gain insights about collecting statistics and how common perceptions of quantitative research as more ‘rational’ and ‘objective’ than qualitative research are open to question. We also look at the validity and reliability of collection methods. While reading the material, ask yourself ‘Is the statistical political?’


**Group readings:**


**Other readings:**


**Week Ten**

**Session break (no class)**
Week Eleven (14 October)  Analysing data and writing up findings

This class will have a strong ‘how to’, practical aspect. I will bring copies of Honours theses from the School’s collection to give you a good idea of what is expected. There are usually lots of questions to answer in this class, so bring yours!

Class discussion articles:


Background Readings:

General quantitative readings:

General qualitative readings:

Textbook – Chapters 7-8.

**Week Twelve (21 October)**
Presentation preparations and consultations
See page 6 for details
No class

**Week Thirteen (28 October)**
Presentations seminar
Part B: Key Policies, Student Responsibilities and Support

PROGRAM LEARNING GOALS AND OUTCOMES
The Australian School of Business Program Learning Goals reflect what we want all students to BE or HAVE by the time they successfully complete their degree, regardless of their individual majors or specialisations. For example, we want all our graduates to HAVE a high level of business knowledge, and a sound awareness of ethical, social, cultural and environmental implications of business. As well, we want all our graduates to BE effective problem-solvers, communicators and team participants. These are our overall learning goals for you.

You can demonstrate your achievement of these goals by the specific outcomes you achieve by the end of your degree (e.g. be able to analyse and research business problems and propose well-justified solutions). Each course contributes to your development of two or more program learning goals/outcomes by providing opportunities for you to practise these skills and to be assessed and receive feedback.

ASB Undergraduate Program Learning Goals and Outcomes

1. Knowledge: Our graduates will have in-depth disciplinary knowledge applicable in local and global contexts.
   You should be able to select and apply disciplinary knowledge to business situations in a local and global environment.

2. Critical thinking and problem solving: Our graduates will be critical thinkers and effective problem solvers.
   You should be able to identify and research issues in business situations, analyse the issues, and propose an appropriate and well-justified solutions.

3. Communication: Our graduates will be effective professional communicators.
   You should be able to:
   a. Prepare written documents that are clear and concise, using appropriate style and presentation for the intended audience, purpose and context, and
   b. Prepare and deliver oral presentations that are clear, focused, well-structured, and delivered in a professional manner.

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.

Program Learning Goals for students in this course cover key areas (application of business knowledge, critical thinking, communication and teamwork, ethical, social and
environmental responsibility), which are key goals for all ASB students and essential for success in a globalised world. However, the specific outcomes reflect different expectations for these levels of study.

We strongly advise you to choose a range of courses which assist your development of these skills, e.g., courses assessing written and oral communication skills, and to keep a record of your achievements against the Program Learning Goals as part of your portfolio.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND PLAGIARISM

You must write your assignments **IN YOUR OWN WORDS**. All students should be aware that **PLAGIARISM** (such as the verbatim and unacknowledged use of someone else’s published ideas and argument) is regarded as an act of serious academic misconduct and will be treated accordingly. The systematic **PARAPHRASING** of recommended or other texts is also regarded as a major misdemeanour, even where the texts (mis)used are actually acknowledged in references. Finally, any student suspected of colluding with other students or submitting ‘**GHOST-WRITTEN’ WORK** (i.e. text written by a person other than the student) may be required to participate in a viva (i.e. a formal presentation and interview on essay content).

The University regards plagiarism as a form of academic misconduct, and has very strict rules regarding plagiarism.

- **In the first instance, ALL UNREFERENCED, PLAGIARISED OR OTHERWISE ‘UNORIGINAL’ PAPERS WILL EARN ZERO MARKS.** Depending on the seriousness of the misconduct, other penalties may also be applied.

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<th>There is useful information on plagiarism (with examples to illustrate) in the Essay and Assignment Guide you can find on Blackboard. For the ASB Harvard Referencing Guide, see the ASB Referencing and Plagiarism webpage (ASB &gt;Learning and Teaching&gt;Student services&gt; Referencing and plagiarism)</th>
<th>For UNSW policies, penalties and information to help avoid plagiarism see: <a href="http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html">http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/index.html</a> as well as the guidelines in the online ELISE and ELISE Plus tutorials for all new UNSW students: <a href="http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/skills/tutorials/InfoSkills/index.htm">http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/skills/tutorials/InfoSkills/index.htm</a>.</th>
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<tr>
<td>To see if you understand plagiarism, do this short quiz: <a href="http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/plagquiz.html">http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/plagiarism/plagquiz.html</a></td>
<td>For information on how to acknowledge your sources and reference correctly, see: <a href="http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html">http://www.lc.unsw.edu.au/onlib/ref.html</a></td>
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**STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES AND CONDUCT**

You are expected to conduct yourself with consideration and respect for the needs of everyone involved in the course. Conduct which disrupts a class unduly, such as talking to
your friends, instant messaging or using mobile phones, is unacceptable and disruptive. Students may be asked to leave the classroom. Students are expected to be familiar with and adhere to university policies in relation to class attendance and general conduct and behaviour, including their obligations in relation to workload, assessment and keeping informed. More information on student conduct is available at: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/BehaviourOfStudents.html


**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY**

UNSW Policy requires each person to work safely and responsibly, in order to avoid personal injury and to protect the safety of others. As a student, you may encounter health and safety issues on campus. It is important that:

- In the event of a fire alarm, you gather your belongings and use the nearest building stairway exit – do not use the lifts.
- If you see a hazard while on campus, you should report it to Campus Security (9385-6000), your lecturer or other appropriate university employee.
- In the first lecture you will receive information about safety procedures that relate specifically to our classrooms. If you miss this information, please ask me for it. For more information, see http://www.ohs.unsw.edu.au/.

**APPLICATIONS FOR SPECIAL CONSIDERATION**

You should seek assistance early if you suffer illness or misadventure which affects your course progress. If your work is impeded by personal circumstances, you may be eligible for special consideration and/or a supplementary examination.

**General Information on Special Consideration:**

1. All applications for special consideration must be lodged online through myUNSW within 3 working days of the assessment (Log into myUNSW and go to My Student Profile tab > My Student Services channel > Online Services > Special Consideration). You will then need to submit the originals or certified copies of your completed Professional Authority form and other supporting documentation to Student Central. For more information, please study carefully the instructions and conditions at: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/SpecialConsideration.html.
2. Please note that documentation may be checked for authenticity and the submission of false documentation will be treated as academic misconduct. The School may ask to see the original or certified copy.
3. Applications will not be accepted by teaching staff. The lecturer-in-charge will be notified when you lodge an online application for special consideration.
4. Decisions and recommendations are only made by lecturers-in-charge (or by the Faculty Panel in the case of UG final exam special considerations), not by tutors.
5. Applying for special consideration does not automatically mean you will be granted a concession.
6. Special consideration requests do not allow lecturers-in-charge to award students additional marks.

Your application for special consideration is judged on the following criteria:
1. Does the medical certificate contain all relevant information? For a medical certificate to be accepted, the degree of illness, and impact on the student, must be stated by the medical practitioner (severe, moderate, mild). A certificate without this will not be valid.
2. Has the student performed satisfactorily in the other assessment items? Satisfactory performance would require at least completion of other assignments and meeting the obligation to have attended 80% of tutorials.
3. Does the student have a history of previous applications for special consideration? A history of previous applications may preclude a student from being granted special consideration.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

You may have a grievance regarding course content or assessment outcomes. Please read the advice at: https://my.unsw.edu.au/student/atoz/Complaints.html about procedures for resolving your complaint. It is important to deal promptly with such issues.

STUDENT RESOURCES AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The University and the ASB provide a wide range of support services for students, including:

- **ASB Education Development Unit (EDU)**
  http://www.asb.unsw.edu.au/learningandteaching Click on ‘Student Services’. Academic writing, study skills and maths support specifically for ASB students. Services include workshops, online resources, and individual consultations. EDU Office: Room GO7, Ground Floor, ASB Building (opposite Student Centre); Ph: 9385 5584; Email: edu@unsw.edu.au Visit us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/educationdevelopmentunit

- **ASB Student Centre** http://www.asb.unsw.edu.au/requests Advice and direction on all aspects of admission, enrolment and graduation. Ground Floor, West Wing, ASB Building; Ph: 9385 3189

- **Blackboard eLearning Support**: For online help using Blackboard, follow the links from www.elearning.unsw.edu.au to UNSW Blackboard Support / Support for Students. For technical support, email: itservicecentre@unsw.edu.au; ph: 9385 1333

- **UNSW Learning Centre** (www.lc.unsw.edu.au) Academic skills support services, including workshops and resources, for all UNSW students. See website for details.
• Library training and search support services:  
http://info.library.unsw.edu.au/web/services/services.html

• IT Service Centre: Technical support for problems logging in to websites, downloading documents etc.  
https://www.it.unsw.edu.au/students/index.html
UNSW Library Annexe (Ground floor)

• UNSW Counselling and Psychological Services  
(http://www.counselling.unsw.edu.au)  
Free, confidential service for problems of a personal or academic nature; and workshops on study issues such as ‘Coping With Stress’ and ‘Procrastination’.  
Office: Level 2, Quadrangle East Wing; Ph: 9385 5418

• Student Equity & Disabilities Unit (http://www.studentequity.unsw.edu.au) Advice regarding equity and diversity issues, and support for students who have a disability or disadvantage that interferes with their learning. Office: Ground Floor, John Goodsell Building; Ph: 9385 4734

CONTINUAL COURSE IMPROVEMENT

On a regular basis, I seek feedback from students regarding their impressions of the material offered in this course and I use this information when making improvements to subsequent outlines ie this outline has been influenced by comments made by previous students about their preferences, problems and proposals. Apart from informal discussions with students, I use UNSW’s Course and Teaching Evaluation and Improvement (CATEI) Process to gather student feedback. However, please feel free to come and talk to me about any difficulties you have with Industrial Relations during session. The sooner I know about a problem, the sooner I can fix it.