VICTORIA
UNIVERSITY OF WELLINGTON

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies

Master of Arts
LALS 540 Evaluating Research in Applied Linguistics

TRIMESTER 1 2013
4 March – 3 July 2013

Trimester dates
Teaching dates: 18 March to 7 June 2013
Easter break: 28 March to 3 April 2013
Mid-trimester break: 22–28 April 2013
Study week: 10–14 June 2013
Examination/Assessment Period: 14 June to 3 July 2013

Withdrawal dates
Information on withdrawals and refunds may be found at
www.victoria.ac.nz/home/admisenrol/payments/withdrawlsrefunds

Course Coordinator and Lecturer:

Dr. Stuart Webb

Office:	Von Zedlitz Building, Room 412
Office hours:	By appointment
Phone:	(04) 463 9779 (direct line) Fax: (04) 463 5604
E-mail:	stuart.webb@vuw.ac.nz
Post:	School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies
	Victoria University of Wellington
	PO Box 600
	Wellington 6140
	NEW ZEALAND

Course Administrator:

Janet Attrill

Office:	von Zedlitz Building, Room VZ210
Phone:	463 5600/463 5894 Fax: 463 5604
E-mail:	janet.attrill@vuw.ac.nz
Post:	As Above

Class times and rooms:
Monday 4:10-6:00 pm, 24 Kelburn Parade: Room 103

Teaching/learning summary
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 actively in activities and discussions. Further information about Blackboard is available under Frequently Asked Questions, under the Study tab of the School website.

For distance students, the course is available at http://blackboard.vuw.ac.nz. 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, contact scs-help@vuw.ac.nz or phone (04) 463 5050. If you want to use other student computing services, you need to call the SCS Help Desk on (04) 463 5050. Staff will re-confirm your username and re-set your password after confirming your identity. A useful website is http://www.victoria.ac.nz/its/student-services. If you are an international student the following site could be useful for you: http://www.victoria-international.ac.nz.

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.

Course 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		Topic	Methodology focused reading	Other reading
1	18/3	Teachers and research	Burns (2010)	Tsui (1996)
2	25/3	Characteristics of good research	McDonough & McDonough (1997)	Fathman and Whalley (1990)
3	8/4	Classroom observation	McDonough & McDonough (1997)	Block (1994)
4	15/4	Diary studies	McDonough & McDonough (1997)	Krishnan & Lee (2002)

5	29/4	Experiments 1	Mackey & Gass (2005)	Peñate Cabrera & Bazo Martinez (2001)
6	6/5	Experiments 2	Mackey & Gass (2005)	Horst, Cobb, & Meara (1998)
7	13/5	Survey research	Dornyei & Csizer (2012)	Yamashita (2004)
8	20/5	Introspection/ verbal reports	Gass (2001)	Mackey, Gass, & McDonough (2000)
9	27/5	Case studies	Duff (2012)	Harklau (2000)
10	By Distance (3/6 – 7/6)	Review of criteria for evaluating quantitative and qualitative research	None	Chapelle & Duff (2003)

Learning objectives:
By the end of the course, you should have achieved these objectives:
1. To understand the nature and scope of research in applied linguistics.
2. To be able to discuss the relevance of research in your own professional situation.
3. To be knowledgeable about research issues, particularly concerning the criteria for good quality research.
4**.** To be able to evaluate published research studies, by considering the strengths and weaknesses of the design and the wider applicability of the findings.

Expected workload:
It is anticipated that you will need to devote approximately 15 hours per week to this course (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.

Readings:
Set texts:
A set of required readings is available as downloadable files from the LALS 540 Blackboard site.

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

Mackey, A. & Gass, S.M. (2012). Research Methods in *Second Language Acquisition: A Practical Guide.* Wiley Blackwell.

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

Paltridge, B. & Phakiti, A. (2010). *Continuum companion to research methods in applied linguistics*. Continuum.

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

Postgraduate textbooks and student notes will be available from vicbooks' new store, Ground Floor, Easterfield Building, Kelburn Parade.

Customers can order textbooks and student notes online at www.vicbooks.co.nz or can email an order or enquiry to enquiries@vicbooks.co.nz. Books can be couriered to customers or they can be picked up from nominated collection points at each campus. Customers will be contacted when they are available.

Opening hours are 8.00 am – 6.00 pm, Monday – Friday during term time (closing at 5.00 pm in the holidays). Phone: 463 5515.

Assessment requirements

Your achievement of the course objectives will be assessed by means of weekly article responses, one assignment, and two tasks:
• Article responses (200 words), due weekly and worth 10%
• Task 1(800-1000 words), due Monday 15 April and worth 25%
• Task 2 (800-1000 words), due Monday 13 May and worth 25%
• Assignment 1 (1800-2000 words), due Monday 3 June and worth 40%

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, not the McDonough and McDonough book. You will need to write a short (200 word) critique. You need to bring these responses with you to class each week. I will not accept late responses. These questions 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 in the discussion board.

By the day of each lecture (Mondays weekly) you will be required to read the assigned readings and write a response. These should be similar to those of the on-campus students, described above. You should read the responses by other students and comment on them in separate entries or by using the comments option.

Task 1: Replication

Carefully read the Littlewood (2000) article posted under the class readings tab on Blackboard. For your task, you should consider how you would conduct a new study designed to answer the same research question that Littlewood asked. Your task should include a discussion of the strengths of the article as well as the weaknesses, as well as discussion of how your study would overcome the most important weaknesses. You should also consider any new problems that might arise in your replication study. You should support your discussion with reference to the core text and other studies. Task 1 relates to all four learning objectives.

Task 2: Research methods

Choose one of the general research questions below, and decide which primary research method you would use to investigate the question. Explain how, where, and among which participants you would carry out the study. You should use the core text and other literature to support your choice, and should consider how your selection of a research method might

impact on your findings. When you are writing your papers remember that this course is about methodology not about the different topics which the questions focus on. Task 2 relates to all four learning objectives.

Research Questions:
- Do students attend to grammar when engaged in second language writing?
- What motivates students most in the language classroom?
- Does working in an English medium environment help students to learn English?

Assignment 1: Contrasting two research articles
Compare the two research studies by Barkhuizen (1998) and by Garrett & Shortall (2002), which are available on Blackboard. After providing a suitable introduction, write an 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.

Submitting assignments and tasks

On-campus students must submit a hardcopy to the School office and or submit electronically through BB. Distance students must submit through Blackboard.

If you have a problem submitting through BB you can submit by email to LALS-MA@vuw.ac.nz. However, please note that I will not be looking for submissions in that mailbox so if you were to submit there you will need to let me know.

All assignments will automatically be submitted to Turnitin to check for plagiarism.

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)
• Follow APA citation guidelines.

Hard copy submissions
• Put a LALS cover-sheet on the assignment, and complete the information requested there
• 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

Penalties:

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.

For assignments handed in late without an extension the maximum grade possible is B+ and no personal comment will be provided

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

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

Mandatory Course Requirements:
In order to pass this course, you must attend all lectures unless otherwise excused (on-campus students) or participate online (distance students), and complete both assignments. Additionally, you should prepare article responses ahead of time and bring them to class or upload them to the website (distance) on blackboard on the day of each lecture.

Class representative
The class representative for the MA programme is Rebecca White (whiterebe6@myvuw.ac.nz). Her contact details are available to VUWSA, the Course Coordinator and the class. As the class representative, Rebecca provides a communication channel to liaise with the Course Coordinator on behalf of students.

Academic integrity and plagiarism
Academic integrity means that university staff and students, in their teaching and learning are expected to treat others honestly, fairly and with respect at all times. It is not acceptable to mistreat academic, intellectual or creative work that has been done by other people by representing it as your own original work.

Academic integrity is important because it is the core value on which the University's learning, teaching and research activities are based. Victoria University's reputation for academic integrity adds value to your qualification.

The University defines plagiarism as presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not. 'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea. Even if it is presented in your own style, you must acknowledge your sources fully and appropriately. This includes:

- Material from books, journals or any other printed source

- The work of other students or staff

- Information from the internet

- Software programs and other electronic material

- Designs and ideas

- The organisation or structuring of any such material

Find out more about plagiarism, how to avoid it and penalties, on the University's website: http://www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/plagiarism

Use of Turnitin

Student work provided for assessment in this course may be checked for academic integrity by the electronic search engine http://www.turnitin.com. Turnitin is an online plagiarism prevention tool which compares submitted work with a very large database of existing material. At the discretion of the Head of School, handwritten work may be copy-typed by the School and subject to checking by Turnitin. Turnitin will retain a copy of submitted material on behalf of the University for detection of future plagiarism, but access to the full text of submissions is not made available to any other party.

Where to find more detailed information

Find key dates, explanations of grades and other useful information at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study. Find out how academic progress is monitored and how enrolment can be restricted at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/academic-progress. Most statutes and policies are available at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/policy, except qualification statutes, which are available via the *Calendar* webpage at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/study/calendar (See Section C).

Other useful information for students may be found at the Academic Office website, at www.victoria.ac.nz/home/about/avcacademic.

Victoria University of Wellington
School of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies

COVER SHEET

**COURSE NAME &
CODE**
 e.g. LING 211

SURNAME :_____

GIVE NAME :_____

ID NUMBER :_____

TUTOR / LECTURER :_____

ASSIGNMENT TITLE :_____

NUMBER OF WORDS :_____

DUE DATE :_____

Please complete the following checklist: **tick box**

I have checked my work carefully before submitting	☐
I have included a list of references, properly formatted	☐
I have numbered the pages of this work	☐
I have retained a copy of this work	☐
There is no plagiarism in this work	☐
I value your feedback and will collect my work promptly	☐
OR	
I do not require any feedback on this work	☐

STUDENT'S SIGNATURE : _____

DATE :_____