



DEPARTMENT OF
INFORMATION SCIENCE

INFO 490 - SENG 490
DISSERTATION

COURSE OUTLINE
Version 1.0

Full Year, 2023

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PAPER DESCRIPTION AND AIMS

Prescriptions

INFO490 - A supervised research project on an approved topic leading to the production of a dissertation.

SENG490 - A practical research project on a topic of interest. A written report, including a literature review associated with a topic of interest, will be the principal output of the paper.

Objectives

Upon successful completion of this paper, you should be able to:

- Carry out a self-contained piece of research under supervision using appropriate methods and practices in Information Science.
 - Critically evaluate your own and others' research.
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COURSE DELIVERY

Classes

Focus Group Day/Time: Friday 10.00am – 11.00am
Room: OBS 3.41 (Sherlock's Office)

Lectures, Tutorials and/or Labs: None. All content is delivered in focus group sessions with the coordinator, where all students are expected to attend.

Teaching Staff

COURSE COORDINATOR AND TEACHING STAFF

Course Co-ordinator Information Science:

Name: Associate Professor Sherlock A. Licorish
Office: OBS 3.41
Email: sherlock.licorish@otago.ac.nz
Office Hours: Please email to make an appointment.

You should contact the Course Coordinator with any administrative enquiries about the paper.

Remember that the principal responsibility for advice with regard to your research project remains with your supervisor. However, please feel free to consult Sherlock as needed. Please make an appointment beforehand where possible.

ASSESSMENT

Component	% Total	Performance Measure	Evaluator(s)
Research proposal	10%	Content, clarity, and citations.	Course Teaching Staff
Presentation 1 (Literature Review)	5%	Complies with presentation requirements.	Course Teaching Staff
Presentation 2 (Research Outcome)	5%	Complies with presentation requirements.	Course Teaching Staff
Dissertation (1 st Marker)	40%	Content and quality of research as presented in the dissertation, and the standard of presentation of the document.	Supervisor
Dissertation (2 nd Marker)	40%	Content and quality of research as presented in the dissertation, and the standard of presentation of the document.	An INFO academic appointed by the Course Coordinator

Dissertations and other 400 level major deliverables are subject to the scrutiny of an external examiner appointed by the University.

HONOURS

A minimum of 80% is needed for INFO490 if a student is to be considered eligible for First Class Honours. (Note that grades from all the Honours papers are averaged and 80% or more is required across these papers for First Class Honours.) First Class Honours *will not be granted* to anyone who fails to meet the deadline (below) for submitting their dissertation to be marked. Further, an 'incomplete' result will be sent to Registry for any student who fails to meet the deadline (below) for submitting their final dissertation copies ready for binding.

SCHEDULE OF MAJOR DELIVERABLES

Major deliverables should only be submitted after having first been shown to, discussed with, and approved by your supervisor. If you are required to submit a document to the Course Teaching Staff, please send it in PDF format.

Research Proposal

This is a document describing the intended research project in detail. It should provide a description of the proposed research sufficient for its purpose, method, validity, and the likelihood of its successful completion to be evaluated by a third party. Refer to *Research Proposal Checklist* while writing the proposal. Hand in your completed checklist with the proposal.

In effect, the *Research Proposal* is a formal plan for your project. As your project progresses you will almost certainly need to change your plan (but not resubmit the Research Proposal for marking). Do this in consultation with your supervisor.

Due 5pm, Friday 12 May 2023 (email to Sherlock)

Presentations

Presentation One: Here you present knowledge gleaned from the research literature—in relation to your project. This presentation is intended to give you an opportunity to get feedback from other researchers on your *Literature Review*. Refer to *Presentation Guidelines* when developing your presentation.

2:00 – 3:50pm, Friday 21 July 2023 – Room TBC

Presentation Two: In this final presentation you will describe your completed research project and its results. This provides you with an opportunity to get feedback from other researchers prior to submitting your dissertation. Refer to *Presentation Guidelines* when developing your presentation.

2:00 – 3:50pm, Friday 22 September 2023 – Room TBC

Literature Review

An extensive review of work already undertaken on the topic as published in academic journals, conference proceedings, trade magazines, technical reports, and on the Internet. The literature review *must relate to your research*—it is not acceptable for you to simply write up everything you read on the topic. The number of references cited should fall somewhere between 20 and 40 with full citations and references for each work in an appropriate format. This review is expected to be very close to the final *Literature Review section* of your dissertation. Refer to *Literature Review Checklist* while writing the review.

Due 5pm, Friday 13 July 2023 (email to Sherlock)

Dissertation (For marking)

A PDF version of your dissertation for marking by your supervisor and a second marker should be emailed to Sherlock. Also, a paper version of your dissertation should be printed out and delivered to the Course Coordinator for later review by an external examiner. For dissertation requirements see the *Dissertation Checklist*.

Due 5pm, Friday 6 October 2023 (email and deliver physical copy to Sherlock)

Dissertation (Final copy)

If you wish to have your dissertation bound, one copy of the finished document (incorporating any minor changes recommended by your supervisor and the second marker) should be printed out and delivered to the Information Science Receptionist ready for binding. Your supervisor *must approve and sign off* the changes made prior to final submission.

The bound copy will be paid for by the department and is yours to keep. You pay for any additional copies. (Arrangements for binding are made by the Department.)

An electronic copy (pdf) of the final, corrected dissertation will, at the Head of Department's discretion, be placed on the School of Business Digital Repository. A consent form authorising this placement should be handed in with the dissertation copy. A blank form is attached under Course Information on Blackboard.

If you do not wish to have your dissertation bound, then all that is required is the electronic copy (pdf) of the finished document (incorporating any minor changes recommended by your supervisor and the second marker) referred to in the previous paragraph.

Due 5pm, Friday 27 October 2023 (deliver to Information Science Receptionist)

STUDENT LEARNING SUPPORT AND INFORMATION

Student Charter

<http://www.otago.ac.nz/about/otago005275.html>

Guidelines for Learning at Otago

<http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/hedc/learning/>

Student Learning Centre

The Student Learning Centre, which is part of the Higher Education Development Centre, provides learning support, free of charge, to ALL enrolled students. Their services include:

- a workshop programme designed to help students to improve their learning strategies and their generic skills;
- individual assistance with learning issues;
- on-line study skills advice;
- a student leadership programme;
- a student-led peer support programme for students of all ages and backgrounds;
- conversational English groups for students from a non-English speaking background.

The Centre also provides two very helpful study guides, “Guidelines for Writing and Editing” and “Writing University Assignments” and these are available on the SLC website.

<http://slc.otago.ac.nz/>

Library Support

The Library website <http://www.otago.ac.nz/library> provides access to resources and services, including group room bookings, library hours and locations, past exam papers, subject guides, article databases and more.

If you need assistance either check out the self-help guides <http://otago.libguides.com/selfhelp>, or ask Library staff at the ground floor service desks, or email ask.library@otago.ac.nz

Māori Student Support

Ben Sommerville is the Kaiāwhina Māori (Māori student support) for Te Kura Pākihi | Otago Business School. He is able to answer any questions you may have about studying here at the University of Otago. He can provide information about scholarships, campus services, pastoral

and financial care. Ben is also here to support those students who are studying away from their whānau, hapū and iwi, to ensure they feel safe and supported. He has a passion for the development of Rangatahi and understands the struggles that can come with academic life.

Tel +64 27 513 6991

Email ben.sommerville@otago.ac.nz

Pacific Islands' Student Academic Advisor

Malo e lelei

Falaviena Faiva works part-time in the Dean's Office at the Otago Business School, Division of Commerce. Falaviena is of Tongan descent and one of our two Pacific Student Support Facilitators. She responsible for all second-year Pacific students within the division.

Deans Office, Otago Business School

Division of Commerce

Email: viena.faiva@otago.ac.nz

Cell Phone: 021 279 0914

Bula Vinaka

Jekope Ramala Maiono also works part time in the Dean's Office at the Otago Business School, Division of Commerce.

Maiono is of Fijian descent and our other Pacific Student Support Facilitator. He is responsible for all first-year Pacific students in the division

Deans Office, Otago Business School

Division of Commerce

Email: jekope.maiono@otago.ac.nz

Cell Phone: 021 279 0871

Disability Information and Support

Students are encouraged to seek support if they are having difficulty with their studies due to disability, temporary or permanent impairment, injury or chronic illness. It is important to seek help early, through one of the contacts below:

Website: <http://www.otago.ac.nz/disabilities>

65 Albany St, West Lane, ISB, Student Services

Tel: +64 3 479 8235 **Email:** disabilities@otago.ac.nz

APPROACH TO TEACHING AND LEARNING

Your focus in INFO/SENG490 is on a research project. This is a supervised project-based practicum whose final and key deliverable is a dissertation. There is no final examination.

To introduce you to the skills and knowledge required to successfully complete your project, the course begins with classroom-based sessions on scientific research and its methods. This introduction is designed to re-orientate students from being, typically, passive consumers and reproducers of established knowledge, to becoming *active evaluators and creators of original*

scientific knowledge.

The components of INFO/SENG490 are described in the following sections.

Research Methods Classes

The course begins with a series of focus groups on research methods. The series includes the following topics (subject to availability of teaching staff, and subject to change):

Focus Group	Probable Date	Topic
1	Mar 3	Introduction
2	Mar 10	Quantitative/Experimental Methodologies
3	Mar 17	Correlation and Causation
4	Mar 24	Tools for Research
5	March 31	Ethics and Professionalism
6	Apr 7	Māori Perspective on Research
Mid-Semester Break		
7	Apr 28	Descriptive and Inferential Statistics
8	May 5	Qualitative Research Methods
9	May 12	Thesis Writing

Supervised Research Project

What distinguishes INFO/SENG490 from most undergraduate papers is that you execute a piece of scientific research under the direct supervision of an experienced researcher. This is why the paper is a required component of an Honours degree. Research also characterises advanced university study such as Masters and Doctoral degrees by thesis. In industry, research methods and skills frequently support effective decision making.

In the case of INFO/SENG490, a high degree of originality in the research topic is not necessarily required, and the project is inherently of limited scope. However, a high standard of research design, data analysis and English communication is definitely expected. You can expect to achieve this through diligent effort throughout the year in close collaboration with your supervisor. The following section describes some (but not necessarily all) of the mutual responsibilities in the student/supervisor relationship:

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

You are responsible for selecting your research topic and finding an appropriate supervisor. Treat this as your most urgent task at the beginning of semester! Your selection is subject to the approval of the Course Coordinator.

While the successful conduct of your research project principally falls on your shoulders, it is vital for you to communicate with your supervisor frequently. *You should schedule weekly meetings, unless there are extremely good reasons to do otherwise.*

You are also expected to meet with the Coordinator at least bi-monthly to review your progress.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of your supervisor is two-fold:

- To provide guidance on the planning and conduct of the project, and
- To be one of the assessors of your dissertation.

In particular, it is your supervisor's responsibility to:

- Meet with you regularly, i.e. weekly.
- Help you refine the topic and its scope.
- Ensure that you adequately define the methodology.
- Provide advice on research methods and content during regular meetings.
- Provide feedback on draft documents.
- Report on progress to the INFO/SENG490 Course Teaching Staff where appropriate.
- Encourage a 'research attitude' in you, but *not* do your research or write your dissertation!

COURSE TEACHING STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

The role of the Course Teaching Staff is to:

- Provide overall management of the course.
- Prepare and present classroom sessions.
- Be a point of consultation in case of student or supervisor difficulties.
- Maintain an overview of the progress of students and their research projects.

COLLABORATION

Although you will have a personal focus on your research topic, you will find it beneficial to participate in the critical evaluation of each other's research work. Proof-reading another student's work can be extremely helpful to both parties, especially if English is their second language.

Dissertation

The dissertation is the ultimate product of your INFO/SENG490 research. It communicates the nature and outcomes of your research project. On successful completion of the course, you may decide to have it presented as a bound volume.

The dissertation sets out the research background, the methodology, the experiments, the results obtained, their analysis, and the conclusions reached. It should be a thoroughly referenced document that is carefully structured, comprehensive, and well-written.

The total length of the dissertation should be between 10,000 and 15,000 words. *However* the focus is quality not quantity! For more detailed guidance refer to the *Dissertation Checklist*.

DISSERTATION STRUCTURE

The dissertation will include *front matter*, as appropriate, and in the order indicated:

- A title page
- Acknowledgements
- A list of tables
- An abstract
- A table of contents
- A list of figures

The *body of the dissertation* will include, as appropriate:

- An introduction
- A statement of the research problem
- The purpose of the study
- The research question and hypothesis
- The scope of the study
- Definitions of terms
- A critical review of related literature
- A description of the method used
- The data obtained (perhaps as an appendix)
- An analysis of the data
- A discussion of results and their validity
- Conclusions and recommendations

The document should conclude with a list of references and any appendices.

Presentations

INFO/SENG490 is a research paper, and as such there is a particular focus on your communication of proposed research, and later, of its results. The ability to communicate effectively, both in written and verbal form, is an essential skill in any professional career – whether in industry, or academia. For this reason, there are two presentations scheduled during the year (noted above).

Feedback on each student’s presentation will be provided afterwards.

All Information Science teaching and research staff are invited to attend INFO/SENG490 presentations.

EXPECTATIONS AND WORKLOAD

All document deliverables are expected to be of a high professional standard, with a commensurate standard of English spelling and grammar. Work falling significantly short of this requirement will be returned for correction and resubmission.

Successfully completing your research project and writing the dissertation will be challenging! Do not underestimate the time and effort required.

Also, do not underestimate the enormous satisfaction students typically feel when, having successfully completed their investigation, analysed their data and written their report, they can choose to hold their bound dissertation, proudly admiring their name and project title in gold lettering on the spine of the book!

COURSE RESOURCES

Textbooks

RECOMMENDED

Leedy, P.D. and Ormrod, J.E., 2013. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*, 10th Edition. Pearson Prentice Hall, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey. Available for purchase at the UBS. One copy is held at the Science Library (reserve).

The 9th edition of Leedy and Ormrod is mostly usable if you can find a second hand one. Refer to the library’s 10th edition for page numbers and content variations. This addition is held at: The Bill Robertson Library (lending), the Central Library (reference) and the Science Library

(lending).

RESEARCH ETHICS AND TRUTHFULNESS

Absolute honesty and integrity is an essential requirement of scientific research!

Students should ensure that all submitted work is their own. Any student found responsible for dishonest practice (e.g. copying the work of others, use of unauthorized material in your documents) in relation to any piece of work submitted for assessment shall be subjected to the University's Dishonest Practice regulations. This may result in various penalties, including forfeiture of marks for the piece of work submitted, a zero grade for the paper, or in extreme cases, exclusion from the University (<https://www.otago.ac.nz/study/academicintegrity/index.html>).

Plagiarism is a form of dishonest practice. Plagiarism is defined as the copying or paraphrasing another's work, whether intentionally or through failure to take proper care, and presenting it as one's own. In practice, this means plagiarism includes any attempt in any piece of submitted work to present as one's own work, the work of another (whether another student or published authority). Any student found responsible for plagiarism shall be subject to the University's Dishonest Practice Regulations as outlined above. If you have any doubts whatsoever about whether, or how, to acknowledge the work of others, please consult with your supervisor, or the Course Staff.

CONCERNS ABOUT THE COURSE

We hope you will feel comfortable coming to talk to us if you have a concern about the course. The Course Staff will be happy to discuss any concerns you may have. Alternatively, you can report your concerns to the Class Representative who will follow up with departmental staff. If, after making approaches via these channels, you do not feel that your concerns have been addressed, there are University channels that may aid resolution. For further advice or more information on these, contact the Departmental Administrator or Head of Department.

DISCLAIMER

While every effort is made to ensure that the information contained in this document is accurate, it is subject to change. Changes will be notified on Blackboard, in class where possible and via your student email in urgent cases. It is your responsibility to be informed.