SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTING AND FINANCE

ACCY403/903  THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF RESEARCH

6 credit points

SEMESTER 2, 2006  WOLLONGONG CAMPUS

Subject Coordinator

DR JANE ANDREW  School of Accounting and Finance
Room: 40.315
Phone: 42214009
Email: jandrew@uow.edu.au

CONSULTATION TIMES  To be advised
SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

SUBJECT DESCRIPTION
This subject is concerned with the nature of theory, research and theory construction in accounting and finance. It examines existing theories and the methodological bases for these theories. It provides a critique of the traditional forms of theory construction and proposes alternative methods. It compares quantitative and qualitative approaches to research and theory construction. It proposes the inclusion of traditionally overlooked dimensions to theories in accounting and finance such as the ethical, socially responsible and environmental.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES
By the end of the course you should be able to critically evaluate:

a. the traditional means by which theories have been constructed;
b. the extent to which research shapes theory;
c. the distinction between quantitative and qualitative research and the implications for theory, and
d. the success of proposed solutions to some contemporary problems.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS
Seminar: 2 hour interactive lecture
Main ideas will be presented, discussed and critiqued. Students will be expected to contribute to the discussion that evolves in class.

Workshop: 1 hour interactive and activity oriented
See WebCT site for each weekly activity. Students must come prepared and will be expected to present ideas, arguments and interpretations to their peers.
This hour is designed to ensure students are comfortable with the material they are reading and have an opportunity to ask questions of the lecturer. These tasks will assist your critical reading skills.

PERFORMANCE LEVEL
To be eligible to pass this subject, students must achieve an overall mark of at least 50%, and at least 45% on the final examination.

PARTICIPATION IN AND CONTRIBUTION TO SEMINARS AND WORKSHOPS
Seminars are intended to provide an interactive learning environment, by supporting students sharing ideas and questions, and supporting each other’s learning. The ideas, descriptions, explanations, examples and predictions of the set readings are critically explored and evaluated to derive understanding of each topic. All set questions must be prepared before class and students will be expected to present clear and concise responses during the seminar. You will be called on to present your answers, ideas, thoughts to the rest of the students, so it is essential that you prepare. ACCY903 is a 6 credit point subject. According to University of Wollongong Course Rule 003 (2(t)), each credit point has an implied workload of 28 hours over the duration of the subject. Thus the workload over the session equates to approximately 13 hours per week over a 13 week semester, inclusive of class time. You should spend an average of 11 hours per week outside of class on ACCY903 preparation, in addition to attending all classes. Study practices that do not meet these guidelines decrease your chances of successful completion of ACCY903.
SEMERN PROGRAM

THE MAIN REFERENCES

Textbook:

Secondary Texts:
Funnell, W. & Williams, R. (2005), Critical and Historical Studies in Accounting, Pearson. [FW]

Other:
Ball, R & C W Smith (1992), The Economics of Accounting Policy Choice, McGraw-Hill. [BS]
Jones, S, C Romano and J Ratnatunga (1995), Accounting Theory, a contemporary review, Harcourt. [JRT]

CLASS TIMES

Seminar: Thursday 15.30-17.30 Room: 67.104
Workshop: Thursday 18.30-19.30 Room: 20.2

SEMINAR READINGS

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING ARE INITIAL READINGS AND THAT YOU SHOULD READ AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE ON THE TOPICS. THE LETTER CODES (ABBREVIATIONS) REFER TO THE LIST OF BOOKS ABOVE. MANY REFERENCES ARE JOURNAL ARTICLES WHICH HAVE BEEN REPRINTED IN SOME OF THE ABOVE BOOKS OR ELSEWHERE.
Week 1: 20th July, 2006 - Introduction: What is Theory?

Seminar


Week 2: 27th July, 2006 - History and Development of Accounting

Seminar


Workshop


Supplementary Readings

1. FW Chapters 3-5, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17
2. HPH Chapters 1-3
3. MP Chapters 2 and 3

Week 3: 3rd August, 2006 - Nature and Uses of Accounting

*WE WILL ASSIGN GROUPS AND CENTRAL READINGS IN THIS WEEKS WORKSHOP*

Seminar


Workshop


Week 4: 10th August, 2006 - Approaches to Accounting Theory Construction

Seminar


**Workshop**


**Supplementary Readings**

1. CD Chapter 1
2. HPH Chapters 1- 6
3. MP Chapters 4 and 5

**Week 5: 17th August, 2006 - Positive Theorising**

*YOUR ‘IN CLASS ESSAY’ WILL BE DISTRIBUTED IN THIS WEEKS WORKSHOP*

**Seminar**


**Workshop**


**Supplementary Reading**

1. HPH Chapters 15 and 16
2. JRT Chapter 4 (especially introduction and articles by Ball & Brown, Watts & Zimmerman, Watts)
3. CD Chapter 7
4. BS Chapter 1 (especially articles by Watts, Watts & Zimmerman [both], Jensen)
5. GHH Chapters 9 and 10
6. FW Chapter 13

**Week 6: 24th August, 2006 - Regulation as Theory**

*YOUR ‘IN CLASS ESSAY’ WILL TAKE PLACE IN THIS WEEKS WORKSHOP*

**Seminar**

Workshop

1. Assessment 1: In Class Essay

Supplementary Readings

1. HPH Chapters 7-9
2. WTD Chapters 4 and 7

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Week 7: 31st August, 2006 - The Nature of Theory

Seminar


Workshop

GROUP TIME: This time is allocated to your group report. It is essential that you attend this class and that all group members are present. Should any issues arise, this is the time to discuss them.

Supplementary Readings

1. HPH Chapters 1 and 2 (again), 5 and 6

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Week 8: 7th September, 2006 - The Critiques of Mainstream Theory

Seminar


Workshop

1. JRT Chapter 5 introduction.

Supplementary Readings


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Week 9: 14th September, 2006 - Alternatives to Mainstream Theory

Seminar

Workshop


Supplementary Readings

1. CD Chapter 12

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Week 10: Research and Theory - Research & Theory

*YOUR GROUP REPORT IS DUE*

Seminar


Workshop


Supplementary Readings

6. FW – Chapters 8, 9 and 14.

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RECESS BREAK

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Week 11: 5th October, 2006 - Accounting & Social Responsibility

Seminar

4. MP Chapters 18 and 19

Workshop


Supplementary Readings

1. GHH Chapter 19
2. CD Chapter 9
4. FW – Chapters 10, 17 and 19
**Week 12: 12th October, 2006 - The Ethical Dimension**

**Seminar**


**Workshop**


**Supplementary Readings**

1. HPH Chapter 14

2. MP Chapter 16

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**Week 13: 19th October, 2006 - Review**

**NO SET READINGS AND THERE WILL BE NO WORKSHOP THIS WEEK**
### SECTION B: ASSESSMENT

#### Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Return date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Task 1  In Class Essay</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>24 Aug, 2006 (Week 6)</td>
<td>7 Sept, 2006 (Week 8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 2  Group Project</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>21 Sept, 2006 (week 10)</td>
<td>12 Oct, 2006 (Week 12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task 3  Final Examination</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>Per exam schedule</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### ASSESSMENT

**Assessment 1: In Class Essay**

**Topic**
You will be allocated a topic in the workshop one week prior to the ‘In Class Essay’ – week 5. You will then be able to research and plan an essay answer in preparation for the assessment. You are free to read widely and develop your argument.

During the workshop of week 6, you will be required to write an essay in 45 minutes that answers the question you have been allocated. This workshop will be conducted in exam conditions and no additional materials will be allowed in the room. **[You cannot take any notes, books, materials into the workshop].**

**Length:** 45 minutes of writing time

**Weighting:** 20%

**Due date:** 24 Aug, 2006 (Week 6)

**Return Date:** 14th Sept, 2006 (Week 9)
**Assessment 2: Group Project**

You are required to produce a 2000 word report. You must keep a record of all group meetings and discussions [date, time, who was present] and this must be submitted with your report.

**Requirements**

Each group will be allocated a **central reading** in week 3’s workshop. I will also discuss the assignment at that time.

**Part 1: 200 words**

You must provide and introductory overview of the general area and the importance of the research area to the development of accounting knowledge.

**Part 2: 800 words**

The group must present an insightful overview of this paper. This will explore the central theme of the paper, the key strengths and weaknesses of the work and how it contributes to accounting knowledge. In your answer identify what you think to be the epistemological, ontological and methodological position of the authors.

**Part 2: 1200 words**

The group must select **two articles** from the reference list of the **central reading**. These readings must be carefully selected, and must relate to the key arguments of the author. The report must explore how these papers have contributed to the **central reading**. In doing this, you must offer an overview of their paper and how it relates to a specific feature of the **central reading** in detail. Again, you need to identify what you think to be the epistemological, ontological and methodological position of the authors.

**Rules**

All group members must work together on this task. Every member must read the **central reading** in order to build a comprehensive understanding of the topic for your group report.

If a member is not participating, the group must contact the subject co-ordinator prior to the due date. A decision will be made as to how to proceed on a case-by-case basis.

The work must be referenced appropriately.

**YOU MUST KEEP A COPY OF YOUR REPORT**

Students will be assessed as a group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Size:</th>
<th>5 People</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length:</td>
<td>2000 words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weighting:</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Due Date:</td>
<td>10 May (week 11) in the seminar class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Return Date:</td>
<td>24 May (week 13) in the seminar class.</td>
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</table>

Details relating to this assessment will be discuss in more detail in the workshop of **WEEK 7**
EXAMINATIONS

**ASSESSMENT 3: FINAL EXAMINATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Weighting</strong></th>
<th>60%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Date</strong></td>
<td>The final examination period. The final examination date will be confirmed during the course of the subject and published on SOLS 3 to 4 weeks before the examination period.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time allowed</strong></td>
<td>3 hours 15 minutes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Structure of paper</strong></td>
<td>Essay style and short answer questions.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>General instruction</strong></td>
<td>All questions are to be answered. Questions are not of equal value.</td>
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**NOTE:** The examination format cannot be changed from that stated above without the written consent of all students enrolled in this subject.
```
Key to rating:
A  excellent/no problems  B  good/minor problems
   accurate/very appropriate  mainly accurate/largely appropriate
C  fair/some problems         D  poor/major problems
   fairly accurate/reasonably appropriate  inaccurate/inappropriate

(A) CONTENT

- Synthesis of material
- Accuracy and substance of argument.
- Argument flows logically.
- Strength of argument and thoroughness of exploration

(B) PRESENTATION

- Clear expression, structure and readability
- Correct spelling, grammar and punctuation

(C) REFERENCING

- Evidence of extensive reading
- Citations used effectively to explain argument
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONTENT</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>/10</td>
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<tr>
<td>PRESENTATION</td>
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<td></td>
<td>/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCING</td>
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<td>/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
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<td>/20</td>
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</table>
GROUP REPORT MARKING SCHEDULE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key to rating:</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>excellent/no problems accurate/very appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>good/minor problems mainly accurate/largely appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>fair/some problems fairly accurate/reasonably appropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>D</strong></td>
<td>poor/major problems inaccurate/inappropriate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(A) CONTENT

- Logical interpretation of central reading
- Clearly linked the two articles chosen for exploration.
- Accuracy and substance of argument.
- Argument flows logically.
- Strength of argument and thoroughness of exploration
- Successfully identified the stance of the authors

(B) PRESENTATION

- Clear expression
- Members could be understood easily
- The work was ‘engaging’ and ‘interesting’

(C) REFERENCING

- Evidence of extensive reading
- Additional material was chosen logically
- Material was used effectively to explain argument

TOTAL

/20
SUBMISSION, RETENTION AND COLLECTION OF WRITTEN ASSESSMENT

All assessment work is to be handed in at the start of the class seminar in the relevant week. Assignments not handed in during this time will be deemed late and attract late penalties. No posted, faxed or emailed assignments will be accepted. Late assignments must be handed directly to the subject coordinator. No assignments will be accepted that are found placed under an office door. Receipts will be issued for all assignments handed in and collected by students. These must be retained.

Assignment cover:

A Faculty of Commerce assignment cover sheet should be attached to each piece of written assessment. This cover sheet can be obtained from the website: http://www.uow.edu.au/commerce/pdf/assignmentcoversheet.pdf

Collection: Assignments will be returned during your seminar class in the relevant week as indicated for each assessment task.

PENALTIES FOR LATE SUBMISSION OF ASSESSMENT

Assessed work must be handed in by the date and time given. Assessed work handed in late can be penalised by the deduction (from the mark given to the assessed work) of 5 percentage points per 24 hours of the weekday or part thereof. The operation of this rule will not result in a negative mark being carried forward.

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism means using the ideas of someone else without giving them proper credit. For example, that someone else may be an author, critic, journalist, artist, composer, lecturer, tutor or another student. Unintentional plagiarism can result if you don’t understand and use the acceptable scholarly methods of acknowledgement. Whether plagiarism is deliberate or unintentional, the University may impose penalties, which can be very severe. When it is desirable, or necessary, to use other people's material, take care to include appropriate references and attribution. Plagiarism will not be tolerated and has led to expulsion from the University.

Students should visit the following University website and become familiar with the University’s policy on Plagiarism. http://www.uow.edu.au/handbook/courserules/plagiarism.html
### SECTION C: RULES, CODES OF PRACTICE & POLICIES

#### C1 UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Information on the following University Policies can be found at the websites below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical objection by students to the use of animal and animal products in coursework subjects</td>
<td><a href="http://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/ethicalobjectionanimals.html">http://www.uow.edu.au/about/policy/ethicalobjectionanimals.html</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* see brief explanation of policy below.

#### C1.1 Non-discriminatory Language

The Faculty of Commerce supports the University’s policy on the use of non-discriminatory language. It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they understand and abide by this policy. The policy is available at:

http://staff.uow.edu.au/eeo/nondiscrimlanguage.html

#### C1.2 Special Consideration Policy

The Faculty of Commerce recognises that it has a responsibility to ensure equity and consistency across its subjects for all students. Sometimes, in exceptional circumstances, students need to apply for special consideration in order to complete all assessable work.

The University applies strict criteria to the granting of special consideration. Before applying for special consideration students should carefully read the University’s policy. The policy can be found at:

C1.3 Student Academic Grievance Policy

The Faculty of Commerce aims to provide a fair, equitable and productive learning environment for all its students. The Student Academic Grievance Policy seeks to support the achievement of this goal by providing a transparent and consistent process for resolving student academic grievances.

Any student who has a grievance over a result should obtain a Faculty of Commerce Appeal of Assessment Form from the Schools or the Sub-Dean's Unit. The student should firstly take the form to the marker/lecturer to discuss the matter and, if the student is still not satisfied, s/he should take the next step as outlined on the form.

Once the grievance has been considered by the Faculty, if the student still feels the situation has not been fully resolved s/he may consult the Dean of Students. However, the Dean of Students can have no input into the academic judgement of the lecturer and can only review the grievance to ensure proper procedure has been followed.

For more information, please consult the policy in full at


C2 Faculty and School Policies

REFERENCING

WHY DO YOU NEED TO REFERENCE?

At University it is necessary to acknowledge the sources of information and ideas that you have incorporated in your assignments. Failure to do this thoroughly may result in accusations of plagiarism: this is the academic equivalent of stealing (because by not acknowledging someone else's work, you are presenting it as your own). Plagiarism is taken very seriously by the University and may result in expulsion from the University.

Referencing is not only about acknowledging other people's work: accurate referencing and lists of references are beneficial when researching a topic as they allow the reader to follow up information and read further into the area. In a sense, references provide readers with clues to help them explore different avenues of a topic. This aspect of referencing will become more valuable to you as you progress in your studies.

There is a correct procedure that must be followed when referencing and using footnotes. Not complying with these set techniques and format will most likely result in loss of marks.

When writing an essay it is easiest to reference as you go, making sure you are writing down all relevant information. This will save hours trying to find the source again in the library.

THE HARVARD SYSTEM OF REFERENCING

The Faculty of Commerce uses the Harvard system of referencing. This system makes use of short references within the body of the text. It is supplemented by a detailed list of references at the end of the text, which provides all the information necessary to find the source material. In-text references include the author and year of publication, and where necessary the page number(s).

It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they are familiar with the Harvard system of referencing and that they use it accurately in all written work submitted.

Students should consult the following University Library website for a detailed explanation and examples of the Harvard system of referencing.


CITATION OF ELECTRONIC SOURCES

It is necessary for students to reference all sources used in their written work, including file transfer protocol sites, worldwide web sites, telnet sites, synchronous communications (MOOs, MUDs, IRC, etc.) Gopher sites, and email, Listserv and Newsgroup citations.

It is the responsibility of students to ensure that they are familiar with the accepted Faculty of Commerce practice for referencing electronic material and that they use it accurately in all written work submitted.
Students should consult the following University Library website for a detailed explanation and examples of how to reference electronic material:


C3 SUPPORT SERVICES AND FACILITIES

LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

Learning Development offers a range of free services to all enrolled students who wish to improve their academic or English language skills. There are a range of workshops available including; essay writing and editing; reading for assignments; grammar; presentation skills; pronunciation and exam preparation.

For information on language and academic skills workshops, or to make appointments for consultations, please visit the Learning Resource Centre (LRC), Building 19, Ground Floor, Room G102, or Phone 02 4221 3977. For further information visit the website:


FACULTY LIBRARIANS

Each faculty has a Faculty Librarian who is available to help with research related enquiries. Research Help Desk staff are also available in the Library to assist with research needs.

The Faculty Librarians for Commerce can be contacted as follows:

email: lib_commerce@uow.edu.au

telephone: 42 213078

DISABILITY LIAISON OFFICER

The Disability Liaison Officer (DLO) can provide advice on how particular disabilities affect university study and information on resources available at the University for assisting students with disabilities. Students commencing courses are advised to contact the Disability Liaison Officer prior to the beginning of their first session of study. For further information on services offered, consult the Disability Services website or contact the office.

web address: http://www.uow.edu.au/student/services/ds/

telephone: 42 213445

fax: 42 215667

FACULTY DISABILITY ADVISERS

Faculty Disability Advisers are academic staff who provide assistance and support to students with disabilities within their Faculty and act as an intermediary between the student and the Faculty's academic and general staff. They provide support, educational advice and referral to appropriate staff on issues related to teaching and learning within the Faculty and the University. Students are advised to communicate specific information about the ways in which their disability affects learning to the Faculty Disability Adviser as soon as possible after enrolment.

The Faculty of Commerce Disability Adviser is Mr. Ron Perrin. Mr Perrin can be contacted as follows:
WOOLOYUNGAH INDIGENOUS CENTRE

The Woolyungah Indigenous Centre provides academic and personal support for Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander and other indigenous students. The Centre also runs an Indigenous Specific Orientation Program for students who gain entry to the University through the alternative admissions program.

For further information on services offered, consult the Aboriginal Education Centre website or contact the office.

Centre location: Building 30
web address: http://www.uow.edu.au/aec/
telephone: 42 213563
fax: 42 214244
email: wic_feedback@uow.edu.au