Unit Outline
Faculty of Business and Government

Unit Title: Contemporary Issues in Accounting
Unit Number: 6399
This Unit Outline must be read in conjunction with:

a) *UC Student Guide to Policies*, which sets out University-wide policies and procedures, including information on matters such as plagiarism, grade descriptors, moderation, feedback and deferred exams, and is available at *(scroll to bottom of page)*
   http://www.canberra.edu.au/student-services

b) *UC Guide to Student Services*, and is available at *(scroll to bottom of page)*
   http://www.canberra.edu.au/student-services

c) Any additional information specified in section 6h.

### 1: General Information

#### 1a Unit title

Contemporary Issues in Accounting

#### 1b Unit number

6399

#### 1c Year offered

Teaching period 1, 2011

#### 1d Credit point value

3

#### 1e Unit level

3

#### 1f Name of Unit Convener and contact details (including telephone and email)

Dr. Jesmin Islam  
6201-5439 (0422 367 346 in emergencies); office 6C16A  
Jesmin.Islam@canberra.edu.au

All emails about the unit are to include both the unit number (6399) and your student number in the subject line. Emails which do not contain this information in the subject line may not be received by the unit convener.

Consultation hours are posted to *LearnOnline* and on the notice board outside 6C16A.
1g Administrative contact details (including name, location, telephone and email)

Rhonda VandenBroek
6C3
6201-2715
rhonda.vandenbroek@canberra.edu.au

2: Academic Content

2a Unit description and learning outcomes

Syllabus

This unit provides a study of:

1. accounting theory and theory development;
2. alternative measurement systems;
3. perspectives on accounting regulation;
4. public sector accounting together with contemporary issues in accounting as they develop.

Learning Outcomes

On successful completion of this unit students will have:

1. an understanding of approaches to theory formulation;
2. knowledge of alternative measurement systems;
3. an awareness of and ability to critically analyse contemporary issues in accounting;
4. an awareness of and ability to critically analyse accounting regulatory frameworks;
5. the ability to apply and critically analyse concepts and techniques introduced in prerequisite units; and
6. enhanced generic skills in communication, research and analysing information.

2b Generic skills

On successful completion of this unit students will have enhanced generic skills in:

1. communication: including being able to present and defend their point of view in writing.
2. research: including being able to undertake independent research in the literature of the discipline and determine its quality and relevance.
3. information technology: including enhanced skills in using Microsoft Excel and various data bases such as Mint Global.
4. analysing information: including analysing accounting information and extracting the most important elements from an array of data.

Other generic skills will also be developed in this unit but will not be assessed. These include:

- information literacy;
- problem solving;
- working with others;
- professional ethics;
- social responsibility and
- personal attributes.

2c Prerequisites and/or co-requisites

Accounting for Managers, Accounting Systems and Practices and substantial progress through the accounting major.

Substantial progress through the accounting major means that you will complete the accounting major at the end of this semester if you pass all units in which you are enrolled.

3: Delivery of Unit and Timetable

3a Delivery mode

Traditional mode, that is, on-campus in standard semesters with face-to-face weekly lectures and tutorials. **Lectures are on Fridays, 2pm to 4pm in 12B02.**

3b Timetable of activities, such as lectures/ tutorials/ practicals/ field classes, showing key dates and topics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Introduction to Financial Accounting Theory (Ch 1)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Regulation of Financial Accounting (Ch 2 &amp; 3)</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Introduction to Normative Theories – CPP and CCA (Ch 5)</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Normative Theories – CoCoA and Conceptual Framework (Chs 5 &amp; 6)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Systems-Oriented Theories (Ch 8)</td>
<td>2&amp; 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>International Accounting (Ch 4)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Review Test (Friday, 25th March, 2011)</td>
<td>1 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Class Free Period</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Social and Environmental Accounting (Ch 9)</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5 &amp; 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Positive Accounting Theory (Ch 7)</td>
<td>1 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Capital Market Research (Ch 10)</td>
<td>1 &amp; 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Public Sector Accounting (Readings)</td>
<td>1, 4 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Behavioural Research (Ch 11)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Review</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4 &amp; 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Information about class preparation and readings for each topic and lecture notes are on LearnOnline. If your tutorial falls on a public holiday, you should attend another tutorial during that week.

4: Unit Resources

4a Lists of required texts/readings


4b Materials and equipment

Calculators (non-programmable, if you want to use them in the exam) are recommended for all students.

4c Unit website

The unit website is available through LearnOnline.

5: Assessment

5a Assessment overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment item</th>
<th>Due date</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
<th>LOs</th>
<th>GSs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Review Test</td>
<td>Friday, 25th March, 2011</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Essay (Group Assignment)</td>
<td>Thursday, 5pm, 21st April, 2011</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Exam</td>
<td>Examination period</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>1, 2, 3, 4</td>
<td>1, 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5b Details of each assessment item

Review Test

Description: A 90 minute review test will be held in the lecture theatre during lecture time at 2.00 pm on Friday, 25th March, 2011. Students should be seated with bags placed at the front of the lecture theatre. The review test will cover issues relating to topics 1 to 5 of the unit outline (3b). The review test will consist of 40 multiple choice questions (each question worth one mark).

Permitted materials: non-programmable calculator and 2B pencils. The test will be a closed book test.

Failure to attend: If students have acceptable reasons for non-attendance (e.g. illness, family tragedy etc.), they must communicate this to the lecturer as soon as possible before the test. If you fail to sit the review test, and your failure is without acceptable grounds, you will be awarded a fail grade (NC) for the unit.
Research Essay (Group Assignment):

Essay topic:


Part 1. Discuss how the Commonwealth Government’s decision to create this body can be explained in terms of a theoretical perspective discussed in this unit. Your answer must be based on a theoretical perspective. If you produce an atheoretical ([http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/atheoretical](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/atheoretical)) response and simply quote the material in the documents provided by the Board, you will be given 0 marks for this part of the assignment. To strengthen your arguments for the theoretical perspective you choose, you will need to examine a number of sources of information.

Part 2. Using this theory, or another one, discuss whether you expect the WASB to be effective. You may like to consider the threats to its mandate and rules it proposes, as well as other issues. Again, your answer must be based on a theoretical perspective. An atheoretical response will be given 0 marks for this part of the assignment.

Marking Guide (exclusive of penalties)

1. Introduction/overview of the essay (5 marks);
2. Quality of the theoretical perspective(s) (40 marks);
3. Arguments relating to issue one (20 marks);
4. Arguments relating to issue two (20 marks);
5. References (5 marks);
6. English expression/grammar (10 marks);

Marks will be deducted for:

- Plagiarism;
- Atheoretical responses (see above);
- Late essays;
- Incomplete or inaccurate referencing;
- Exceeding the allowed word limit and
- Not complying with submission requirements.

This essay will be attempted by groups of 2-3 students. **Under no circumstances will 4 students be allowed to be in a group.** Students should include at the end of the essay a declaration stating the
names of the group members and the contribution of each member toward the essay/assignment. Each member should contribute to the essay approximately equally. **Failure to provide a declaration will result in a penalty of 10% of total marks for the essay.**

**Length: 2000 words with 20% margin of error.**

Students are encouraged to undertake the Library’s free training courses on finding journal articles and companies’ annual reports using databases and on using Endnote or RefWorks before starting this assignment.

Essays are to be submitted in Microsoft Word format. Please ensure that essays are submitted to the tutor or the lecturer or dropped in box no.113 by the due date by **5pm on the 22nd of April, 2011**. Please also ensure that an assignment cover sheet is attached to your essay. I only want one copy per group to be submitted. A single member from each group will also submit a copy via the assignment drop box in LearnOnline by the deadline.

Essays are to be referenced using the author-date (also known as the Harvard method) referencing system. See section 6h of this outline for further information. The essay is to be presented in a professional manner.

Before submitting the research essay, students must view the Academic Integrity Module website and give a declaration in writing that they fully understand the rules involved. **Failure to provide a declaration will result in a penalty of 10% of marks.**

Deliberately submitting viruses or other malicious software (malware) is academic misconduct.

Extensions of assignments will not be granted unless supported by medical certificate. Assignments are to be properly referenced. I recommend that students use Zotero, Endnote or RefWorks to manage their references.

Individual comments on the essays will be provided on essay marking sheets. Allow two to three weeks time for the marking of the assignments. Assignments submitted after the due date (whether an extension has or has not been granted) may not be marked before the final exam.

**Final Exam**

The final examination will be held during the examinations period at the end of the semester. Answers on the exam answer script should be written only in **blue or black ink. Marks will be deducted for writing answers in pencil or red ink.** The time and location of the exam will be announced through OSIS.

Students are only entitled to a deferred exam for medical and similar reasons. **Under no circumstances will the unit coordinator organise or agree to an early final exam or special final exam.** Students must organise their personal affairs so that they can sit for the final exam.

The exam will be three hours long.

- Students will be permitted to bring the following materials into the exam:
  - Calculator – Non-programmable;
  - Unannotated Non-Electronic Language Dictionary (English/Foreign);
  - Two sides of A4 handwritten notes (**no typed or photocopied notes permitted**).

Communication devices such as mobile phones and pagers are not permitted in exam rooms.
5c Special assessment requirements

Students must attempt all assessments, achieve at least 40% in the final exam and 50% overall to pass the unit.

5d Supplementary assessment

Standard University provisions apply.

5e Academic Integrity

Students have a responsibility to uphold University standards on ethical scholarship. Good scholarship involves building on the work of others and use of others work must be acknowledged with proper attribution made. Cheating, plagiarism, and falsification of data are dishonest practices which contravene academic values.

5f Text-matching software

Text matching software and services may be used on all assessment items.

6: Student Responsibility

6a Workload

The amount of time you will need to spend on study in this unit will depend on a number of factors including your prior knowledge, learning skill level and learning style. Nevertheless, in planning your time commitments you should note that for a 3cp unit the total notional workload over the semester or term is assumed to be 150 hours. These hours include time spent in classes. The total workload for units of different credit point value should vary proportionally. For example, for a 6cp unit the total notional workload over a semester or term is assumed to be 300 hours.

6b Special needs

Students who need assistance in undertaking the unit because of disability or other circumstances should inform their Unit Convener or UC AccessAbility (formerly the Disabilities Office) as soon as possible so the necessary arrangements can be made.

6c Attendance requirements

Attendance at classes is not compulsory unless it is a condition of your student visa.

Students are expected to be on time for classes. All classes will start exactly at the scheduled starting time.

Students are expected to have read the textbook and lecture notes prior to attending lectures. Students are also expected to have prepared answers to the questions prior to tutorials and be prepared to discuss the questions in tutorials.

Past experience indicates that student who do not attend classes have difficulty passing the subject. In semester 2, 2009 in the equivalent undergraduate unit, all students who attended more that 75% of classes passed the unit. Only half of the students who attended less than 50% of the classes passed the unit.
6d Withdrawal

If you are planning to withdraw please discuss with your unit convener. Please see this link for further information on deadlines.

6e Required IT skills

Students are expected to be able to use Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel in addition to University systems available over the Internet (e.g. OSIS, Email, E-Reserve, LearnOnline, Library Catalogue, and Library Databases).

Students are encouraged to use Zotero, Endnote or RefWorks for managing references for their research essay.

The Library conducts free training courses for students for using RefWorks and for finding journal articles using the Library’s databases. See the Library website for the schedule for these courses and to register.

6f Costs

Students are required to obtain a copy of the text book and a non-programmable calculator.

6g Work Integrated Learning

There are no work integrated learning components in this unit.

6h Additional information

Feedback

Feedback on your performance during the semester is obtained primarily through your self-assessment of your performance in tutorials. If you are unsure of the quality of your performance in tutorials, ask the unit convener.

Feedback on your performance during the semester is also obtained from your performance in the review test and later on in the essay. Feedback on the review test will be provided through moodle announcements. Feedback on the group assignment is not a good indicator of your overall performance as that assignment only addresses one of the unit’s learning outcomes.

The research essay and final exam are not designed to provide you with feedback on your performance. The research essay is due so late in the semester that any feedback that you do get will be received too late for you to take any significant corrective action.

No feedback system is capable of giving you 100% assurance of your performance in the unit.

Referencing

7: **Student Feedback**

All students enrolled in this unit will have an opportunity to provide anonymous feedback on the unit at the end of the Semester via the Unit Satisfaction Survey (USS) which will be presented to you on OSIS.

This unit has been developed over the years from student feedback. Some of the enhancements implemented recently from student feedback include:

- providing the marking criteria for the assignments at the beginning of the semester
- increasing the marks for the group assignment/research essay from 10% to 30%

8: **Authority of this Unit Outline**

Any change to the information contained in Section 2 (Academic content), and Section 5 (Assessment) of this document, will only be made by the Unit Convener if the written agreement of Head of Discipline and a majority of students has been obtained; and if written advice of the change is then provided on the unit site in the learning management system. If this is not possible, written advice of the change must be forwarded to each student enrolled in the unit at their registered term address. Any individual student who believes him/herself to be disadvantaged by a change is encouraged to discuss the matter with the Unit Convener.