

Business Research Methodology

Spring Semester 2010

BA306 (II), 3 units, Thursday 12:30-3:15 pm

Prof. Elena Givental
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Office Hours: Th. 3:15-4:00 pm or by appt.
Location: TBA

Course Description:

The course objective is to prepare students for the later Research Project (BA 399). The emphasis is made on practical work and not on memorizing or deriving formulas. Students will develop understanding of the meaning of research and will practice various research techniques such as writing of short reports, use of statistical tools in oral presentations, preparation of effective tables, graphs, and diagrams as well as bibliographical references. Ethical aspects of research will be emphasized. The course concludes with writing a research proposal which combines all the business research elements that are studied during the semester.

Required Textbook:

Business Research Methods, 7th Edition (2006) by William G. Zikmund (published by Thomson South-Western)

ISBN: 0-03-035084-0

Available from Amazon.com, new and used in the \$30-\$90 range; there are also two books on reserve at the Lincoln University library.

Grading: 340 points total

In-class midterm	50 points	Multiple choice, short answers
Final in-class exam	50 points	Multiple choice, open-ended questions, short answers
Critical Thinking Exercise	30 points	Short in-class essay
Survey Design Exercise	30 points	Details will be discussed in class
Data Analysis Exercise	30 points	Details will be discussed in class
Research Proposal	100 points	Selected topic of your choice
Group Presentation (graded individually)	30 points	Details will be discussed in class
Class participation*	20 points	

* **Class participation** means asking appropriate questions and answering questions in class, contributing to classroom discussions and activities. **Lecture attendance is required.**

Grading Policy:

		96-100%	A	90-95%	A-
88-89%	B+	82-87%	B	80-81%	B-
78-79%	C+	72-77%	C	70-71%	C-
66-69%	D+	60-65%	D		
		less than 60%	F		

Midterm and Final Exam

Each exam will cover material from specific parts of the course. Exam questions will be multiple-choice, open-ended questions, and short essays based on lecture material, practical exercises, and readings from your textbook. The exams will be designed to test your understanding of major concepts as well as your practical skills.

Research Proposal (10-12 pages)

The research proposal will be a concluding document in which business research theory will come together with practical skills. In your research proposal you will pose a research question, provide literature review, describe research methods to be used in the project, and discuss preliminary results. The selected topic for the research proposal will be determined by your interest in a certain area of business management such as finance, marketing, human resources, operations, or strategy. The format and the contents of your proposal will be discussed later in class in more detail.

Due May 13

Critical Thinking Exercise (1-2 pages, in class)

You will write an analytical response to a presented business case. It should be written in the form of an essay and show your ability to utilize available business information for managerial decision-making.

Group Presentations, May 6.

The topics for the presentations, as well as the size of each group and the presentation format will be determined later and discussed in class.

Class Rules:

No cell phone calls or text messaging in class

Class begins promptly at 12:30 P.m.

Late arrivals (over 15 minutes) will be reported as class absences

There will be no make-up midterm, final exam, or group presentation except for special circumstance reasons

A deduction of 5 points will be made for each late assignment

Plagiarism or cheating will result in Zero grade for that test or assignment

TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, TEST SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

Jan. 21 #1 Introduction to Business Research

Research and theory building. The scientific method. Definition and scope of business research. Basic and applied research. Major topics for research in business. Sources of business information: global information systems, decision support systems. Business research in the 21st century.

READ: *Textbook Chapters 1, 2, 3.*

Jan. 28 #2 The Research Process: An Overview

Decision making and types of business research: exploratory, descriptive, causal research. Stages in the research process: discovering and defining the problem, research design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, drawing conclusions.

Ethical issues in business research

READ: *Textbook Chapters 4, 5.*

Feb. 4 #3 Problem Definition and the Research Proposal

The nature of the business problem. Proper problem definition. The process of problem definition: understanding the background of the problem, stating research questions and research objectives. The research proposal plan.

Critical Thinking Exercise (in-class essay, 1 hour).

READ: *Textbook Chapter 6.*

Feb. 11 # 4 Qualitative Analysis. Primary and Secondary Data.

Exploratory research: reasons to conduct exploratory research, categories of exploratory research. Case studies and pilot studies. Secondary data in business research: classification, common external sources. Focus on global research.

Bibliography and proper use of citations. Computerized database searching and data retrieving.

READ: *Textbook Chapters 7, 8.*

Feb. 18 # 5 Research Methods for Collecting Primary Data

Survey research: the nature of surveys, errors in survey research. Respondent and administrative errors. Classification of survey research methods. Observation methods: the nature of observation studies and observation objects.

Experimental research: the nature of experiments, basic issues of experimental design. Ethical problems in human observations and experimentation.

READ: *Textbook Chapters 9, 11, 12.*

Feb. 25 # 6 Measurement Concepts in Business Research

Rules of measurement, types of scale. Attitude measurement: techniques for measuring attitudes, rating scales, practical decisions in selecting a measurement scale. Questionnaire design: an overview of the major decisions. The art of asking questions. Question phrasing, sequence and layout.

Survey Design Exercise (home assignment, due March 25).

READ: *Textbook Chapters 10, 14, 15.*

Mar. 4 Preliminary Research Proposal Reports (1)

Individual in-class presentations of the preliminary research proposal results: research question and literature review.

REVIEW: *Textbook Chapters 1-15.*

Mar. 11 MIDTERM IN-CLASS EXAM

Midterm: chapters 1-15 (lectures 1-6)

Mar. 25 #7 Sample Design and Fieldwork

Sampling design and procedures, sampling errors, determining sample size. Population distribution, sample distribution, and sampling distribution. Central-Limit Theorem. The nature of fieldwork. Principles of good interviewing and fieldwork management.

Survey Design Exercise: individual presentations and group discussion.

READ: *Textbook Chapters 16, 17, 18.*

Apr. 1 #8 The Basics of Data Analysis

Transforming raw data into information. The stages of data analysis: editing, coding, computerized data processing, error checking. Descriptive statistics: tabulation, cross-tabulation, tabular and graphic methods of displaying data. Computer programs for statistical analysis. Interpretation of descriptive statistics data.

Data Analysis Exercise (home assignment, due April 8).

READ: *Textbook Chapters 19, 20.*

Apr. 8 #9 Univariate Statistics: Stating a Hypothesis

The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis; hypothesis testing. Choosing the appropriate statistical technique. Additional applications of hypothesis testing.

Data Analysis Exercise: individual presentations and group discussion.

READ: *Textbook Chapter 21.*

Apr. 15 Preliminary Research Proposal Reports (2)

Individual in-class presentations of the preliminary research proposal results: research question, literature review, and **research methods** appropriate for the specific research.

Apr. 22 #10 Intro to Bivariate and Multivariate Analysis

Test of differences. Simple correlation coefficient. Regression analysis. Classification of multivariate techniques: analysis of dependence and analysis of interdependence. Multiple regression analysis. Factor and cluster analyses.

READ: *Textbook Chapters 22, 23, 24.*

Apr. 29 #11 Communicating Research Results

Communications Model. Written report formats. The principles of oral presentation. Effective use of graphics in oral presentation. The research follow up. Course review.

REVIEW: *Textbook Chapters 16-25.*

May 6 Group Presentations

Thursday, May 13 FINAL IN-CLASS EXAM

Midterm: chapters 16-25 (lectures 7-11)

Research Proposal due

Updated December 22, 2009

