



LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

BA 306 I – Business Research Methodology

Fall Semester 2011 Course Syllabus

3 units = 45 lecture hours, Tuesday 9 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Prof. Elena Givental
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Office Hours: Tue. 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. or by appt.
Location: TBA

Course Description:

The course prepares students for the later Research Project (BA 399). The emphasis is made on practical work and not on memorizing or deriving formulas. Ethical aspects of research are featured. Students are expected to develop understanding and practice of research techniques, writing of short reports, use of statistical tools and presentation techniques, preparation of effective tables and diagrams, as well as footnotes and bibliographical references.

Learning Objectives:

1. to prepare students for the Research Project (BA 399)
2. to develop writing and presentation skills through the process of preparing a business research proposal
3. to develop practical skills in various business research techniques

Required Textbook:

Business Research Methods, 8th Edition (2010) by William G. Zikmund, Barry J. Babin, Jon C. Carr, and Mitch Griffin (published by South-Western, Cengage Learning)

ISBN-13: 978-0-324-32062-6

Available from Amazon.com, used in the \$30-\$75 range; there are books on reserve at Lincoln University library.

Grading: 260 points total

In-class midterm #1	50 points	Multiple choice, short answers
In-class midterm #2	40 points	Research article analysis (written)
In-class Final Exam	60 points	Multiple choice, case analysis
Critical Thinking Exercise	10 points	Short in-class essay
Survey Design Exercise	10 points	Homework assignment
Data Analysis Exercise	10 points	Homework assignment
Research Proposal Presentation	20 points	Individual oral presentation
Research Proposal	50 points	Final project (written)

Class Participation *

10 points

260 points totally

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

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		

Methods of Instruction: Class meetings will combine lectures, discussions, individual and group activities, case studies, and written tests. All lectures will be accompanied by power-point presentations. Group study and collaborations are encouraged; however, all assignments are graded individually. You will be provided with lecture notes posted in the class folder accessible from the computer lab. Below is the description of the exams and assignments you will have in this class.

Midterm #1 (50 points)

Midterm #1 exam covers the first half of the course. Exam questions are multiple-choice, open-ended questions, and short essays based on lecture material, practical exercises, and readings from your textbook.

Midterm #2 (40 points)

Midterm #2 is a written analysis of a research article (the questions and topics for the analysis will be provided).

Final exam (60 points)

Final exam is a cumulative test combining multiple-choice and open-ended questions with a written analysis of a provided case.

All exams are designed to test both your understanding of major concepts and practical skills as well as your readiness for BA399 Research Project.

Research Proposal (9-10 pages, 70 points: 50 points for a written proposal, 20 points for an oral presentation)

The research proposal is a concluding document in which business research theory comes together with practical research and writing 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 topic for the research proposal will be selected based on your interest from the three major areas of business research: financial management, marketing research, and human resources. The format and the content of your proposal will be discussed later in class in more detail. The grade for your research proposal will comprise of an individual oral presentation of your preliminary results (20 points) and a final written proposal (50 points).

Due November 29

Critical Thinking Exercise (in-class essay, 10 points)

You will write an analytical response to a given business case. It is intended to show your writing skills and your ability to utilize available business information for a managerial decision-making analysis.

Survey Design and Data Analysis Exercises (homework assignments, 10 points each)

Each assignment is intended to build practical skills in certain areas of business research. Methods for completing both exercises will be explained and discussed in class in more detail.

Class Rules:

No cell phone calls or text messaging in class

Class begins promptly at 9 a.m.

Late arrivals (over 10 minutes) will be reported as class absences

There are no make-up critical thinking exercise, midterms, or final exam except for special circumstance reasons

All planned or anticipated absences should be reported to the professor via e-mail

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

Aug. 23 #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.*

Aug. 30 #2 An Overview of a Research Process

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.*

Sep. 6 #3 Problem Definition: the Foundation of Business Research

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.*

Sep. 13 #4 Exploratory Research. Secondary Data Collection.

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

READ: *Textbook Chapters 7, 8.*

Sep. 20 #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, 10, 11, 12.*

Sep. 27 #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. The art of asking questions. Question phrasing, sequence, and layout.

Survey Design Exercise (home assignment, due October 11).

READ: *Textbook Chapters 13, 14, 15.*

October 4 MIDTERM # 1 IN-CLASS EXAM

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

Oct. 11 #7 Sample Design and Fieldwork

Sample design and procedures, sampling errors. Determining sample size: a review of statistical theory. The normal distribution. Population distribution, sample distribution, and sampling distribution. Central-Limit Theorem. The nature of fieldwork. Principles of good interviewing and fieldwork management. Survey Design Exercise: group discussion.

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

Oct. 18 #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 October 25).

READ: *Textbook Chapters 19, 20.*

Oct. 25 #9 Bivariate Statistics: Hypothesis Testing

The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis; hypothesis testing. Choosing the appropriate statistical technique. Differences between two variables: tests of differences, ANOVA. Measures of association: co-variation, simple correlation coefficient. Correlation and causality.

Data Analysis Exercise: group discussion.

READ: *Textbook Chapter 21, 22, 23.*

Nov. 1 #10 Introduction to Regression Analysis

Inferential statistics: regression analysis. Understanding business forecasting: linear regression analysis. Linear regression in MS Excel. Multiple regression analysis. Regression models.

READ: *Textbook Chapter 24.*

Nov. 8 MIDTERM # 2 IN-CLASS EXAM

Midterm: analysis of a research article

Nov. 15 #11 Communicating Research Results; Course Review

Efficient communication guidelines. Written report formats. The principles of oral presentation. Effective use of graphics in oral presentation. Discussion of the proposal research format and preliminary results. Course review.

Research Proposal due November 29

READ: *Textbook Chapter 25.*

Fall Recess November 22 - 26

Nov. 29 **Research Proposal Reports: Oral Presentations**

Individual in-class presentations of the research proposal: problem definition, literature review, research methods appropriate for the specific research (primary data collection methods, survey questionnaire, sample size, data analysis methods). Student discussion and assessment.

Final Research Proposal due

Dec. 6 **FINAL EXAM**

Cumulative exam: chapters 1-25 (lectures 1-11), case study

Updated August 16, 2011