



LINCOLN UNIVERSITY

BA 306 – Business Research Methodology

Summer Session June 6 - July 25, 2011

Course Syllabus

3 units, Monday & Wednesday 9 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.

Prof. Elena Givental
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Office Hours: Mon. 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. or by appt.
Location: Room 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 write a research proposal which combines many business research elements
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: 230 points total

In-class midterm	50 points	Multiple choice, short answers
In-class Final	60 points	Multiple choice, case analysis
Critical Thinking Exercise	20 points	Short in-class essay
Survey Design Exercise	10 points	Homework assignment
Data Analysis Exercise	10 points	Homework assignment
Research Proposal and Presentation	70 points	Assigned research topic
Class participation	10 points	

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 (50 points) and Final Exam (60 points)

Midterm 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. **Final exam** is a cumulative test combining multiple-choice and open-ended questions with a written analysis of a provided case. The 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 (6-8 pages, 70 points: 50 points for a written proposal, 20 points for an oral presentation)

The research proposal is a report 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 relevant to a certain area of business management will be assigned at the beginning of the class. The format and the contents of your proposal will be discussed in class in more detail. The grade for your research proposal will comprise of an individual oral presentation of the results (20 points) and a final written proposal (50 points).

Due July 20

Critical Thinking Exercise (in-class essay, 20 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, text messaging, or e-mail checking in class

Class begins promptly at 9 a.m.

Lecture attendance is mandatory

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

More than three absences may result in a non-passing grade

There are no make-up critical thinking exercise, midterm, oral presentation, or final exam except for special circumstances

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

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

TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, TEST SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

June 6 #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.*

June 8 #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.*

June 13 #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.*

June 15 #4 Qualitative Research Tools. 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. Bibliography and proper use of citations. Computerized database, searching and data retrieving.

READ: *Textbook Chapters 7, 8.*

June 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.*

June 22 # 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 June 29).

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

June 27 MIDTERM EXAM

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

June 29 #7 Sample Design and Fieldwork

Sampling 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.*

July 6 #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 July 11).

READ: *Textbook Chapters 19, 20.*

July 11 #9 Univariate and Bivariate Statistics

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.*

July 13 #10 Introduction to Regression Analysis

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

READ: *Textbook Chapter 24.*

July 18 #11 Communicating Research Results

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

Research Proposal due July 20

READ: *Textbook Chapter 25.*

July 20 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

July 25 FINAL EXAM

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

Updated May 21, 2011