

BUS 230: Business and Economics Research and Communication
Instructor: James Murray, Ph.D.
Spring 2013

Instructor Information

James Murray, Ph.D.
Office: 403T Wimberly Hall
Email: jmurray@uwlax.edu

Meeting Time / Location

Discussion Session (Section 10D): 2:15pm - 4:05pm Monday Room 3212 Centennial

Lab Sessions:

- Section 05: 2:15pm - 3:10pm Wednesday in Room 216 Wimberly Hall
- Section 06: 3:15pm - 4:10pm Wednesday in Room 216 Wimberly Hall
- Section 07: 4:15pm - 5:10pm Wednesday in Room 216 Wimberly Hall

In Lab sessions you will often need to work with your group members, so it is necessary to come to the time / section you are scheduled.

Course Description

This course explores the scientific method as used in business and economic research. Specifically, it looks at the five main steps in the research process: the identification and definition of the research problem, research design, collection of the data used to study the research problem, statistical analysis of this data, and the interpretation and presentation of the results of the study. Students then apply this knowledge to an actual business problem in order to complete an original research project.

Course Learning Objectives

The learning objectives for this course are given below. After each is a short abbreviation that indicates which College of Business Administration learning goals (given in the next section) that each works towards.

1. Develop the ability to define a research problem: Formulate research questions and hypotheses that are measurable, well-defined, address the overall problem, are directly related, and reflect the scope of the problem (CT-1)
2. Recognize and use the appropriate techniques to collect or use survey data to address a research problem:
 - (a) Recognize the ethical responsibilities of conducting human subjects research. (CBA-5)
 - (b) Compare the advantages and disadvantages of different survey methods (CBA-3).
 - (c) Identify sources of respondent and administrative error and develop the ability to construct and administer a survey instrument that minimizes these errors (CBA-3).
 - (d) Recognize the implications of probability vs. non-probability sampling on the interpretation of primary data (CBA-3).

3. Interpret data using statistical analysis.
 - (a) Identify and compare the types of measurement scales used in conducting research (CBA-3).
 - (b) Analyze the scale of measurement to determine the types of descriptive and inferential statistics that can be used to interpret data (CBA-3).
 - (c) Formulate conclusions and recommendations based upon statistical results (CBA-3).
4. Develop the ability to effectively communicate research results both written and orally (CBA-1, CBA-2).
5. Develop the ability to critically evaluate limitations, errors, and biases in research (CBA-3).

CBA Learning Outcomes

The course learning objectives above contribute to the larger learning goals for all College of Business Administration (CBA) majors,** which are the following,

1. Communication - the ability to convey information and ideas effectively:
 - CBA-1: Students will convey information and ideas in professional business reports.*
 - CBA-2: Students will convey information and ideas in oral presentations.*
2. Decision Making and Critical Thinking - Have the ability to think critically when evaluating decisions.
 - CBA-3: Students will evaluate alternatives and understand the ramifications of those alternatives within a business context.*
3. Global Context of Business - Have the ability to serve others in a global environment.
 - CBA-4: Students will demonstrate the ability to integrate global perspectives in business decisions.
4. Social Responsibility - Be prepared to be socially responsible citizens.
 - (a) CBA-5: Students will demonstrate the ability to consider the effects of business decisions on the entire social system.*
5. Major Competency - Have proficiency in the primary functional area of study:
 - CBA-6: Students will apply functional area concepts and decision-making techniques and tools appropriately while incorporating concepts from other functional business area into the primary area.

* The learning activities in this class are especially designed to further these CBA learning outcomes.

** Developed by faculty with input from students, alumni, and business community. Adopted by faculty vote on January 21, 2010.

Course Resources

- Class website: <http://www.murraylax.org/bus735/fall2012/>. Most material handed out in class will be posted on the class website.
- The textbook from Textbook Rental is actually a combination of chapters from two textbooks:
 - Zikmund, W.G., B.J. Babin, J.C. Carr, and M. Griffin (ZBCG). (2010). *Business Research Methods*, 8th Edition. Mason, OH: Cengage Learning.
 - Carver, R. and J.G. Nash (CN). (2012). *Doing Data Analysis with SPSS Version 18.0*, 5th Edition. Mason, OH: Cengage Learning.
- Computer Software: You will need to use SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Microsoft Excel throughout the semester. SHAB describes how to conduct various statistical methods for SPSS Version 18, however, previous versions 17 and 16 and the latter versions 19 and 20 are all very similar. SPSS Version 20 is installed in all GCA (General Computing Access) computer labs across campus. UW-L Technology Services also sells SPSS Version 20 for a reduced price (\$45) if you want to install it on your home computer.
- *Desire2Learn* will be used for turning in homework assignments, taking quizzes and exams, and communicating grades.

Office Hours

Regular office hours are 10:00am-11:00am Monday through Thursday. These are times when you can drop by unannounced and expect me to be in my office. If you would like to make an appointment for a different time, please check my calendar and send me an e-mail. Keeping up with the material usually requires frequent office visits, so frequently coming to my office for questions may be essential to your success.

Office hours are not a substitute for attending class. Except when missing class for very extreme circumstances that were promptly discussed with me, it is not acceptable to use office hours to ask questions about material you missed while not in attendance.

Outside of my regularly scheduled classes and office hours, my availability changes all the time. You can visit my calendar at <http://www.murraylax.org/calendar.html>. It is constantly updated.

Assessment

Learning will be assessed through weekly quizzes, homework, and exams. The grading breakdown will be:

Quizzes / In-class Exercises / Homework : 15%
Exam 1: 20%
Exam 2: 20%
Final Exam: 15%
Research Project: 30%

Grade Breakdown

93-100	A	67-76	C
89-92	AB	57-66	D
81-88	B	0-56	F
77-80	BC		

I reserve the right to scale every person's grade up by the same amount on any graded item in the event that much of the class falls short of the scale above. However, even if the grades are significantly low, there is no guarantee that I will ever do this.

Quizzes / In-class exercises / Homework

There may be announced quizzes, unannounced (pop) quizzes, and in-class exercises given throughout the semester. Adequate preparation for these will involve reading ahead for class and completing homework assignments on time. Classes will begin with your questions so that you can resolve any problems with assigned work before the quiz begins. Quizzes may sometimes be open book and/or open note. Sometimes in-class exercises will be given, some of which must be done in small groups. Homework assignments outside of work for your project will be given on occasion, and be similar to in-class exercises and exam questions.

Exams

There will be two mid-term exams during the semester and a cumulative final exam. Exams will compose of multiple choice questions based on material covered in class and material from the textbook and any other readings handed out in class. The exam dates are as follows:

- Exam 1: Monday, March 11.
- Exam 2: Monday, April 22.
- Final Exam: Wednesday, May 15, 7:45am-9:45am.

The final exam time is determined by the university-wide final exam schedule given here, <http://www.uwlax.edu/records/Timetable/finalexamschedule.htm>.

Attendance

Attendance is required to receive credit for quizzes, in-class exercises, and exams. However, if you need to miss a class day or exam day because of illness or emergency you can be excused and arrangements can be made for you to make up missed work. Attendance to your group meetings is always required, unless your group excuses you for illness or emergency according to the terms of your group's contract.

Research Project

Learning how to conduct and complete a group research project is the main goal of this course. The research project assignment has the following characteristics:

1. *Work in assigned groups*: One of the goals of this class is to learn how to work with a team on a substantial project. Employers often stress that they seek people who can work productively with a team as well as have the discipline to work independently and stay on task. While the project is a group project, it will be necessary for the group members to often divide tasks and work independently. Like the real world, you do not get to choose who you work with.
2. *Weekly meetings (with minutes!) with group members*: You are required to meet with your group once per week outside of class. Minutes are a written record of what you discussed during your meeting. You must submit minutes for every meeting.
3. *Team Contract*: A contract that your group will write and all agree to. The contract specifies where/when you will meet, how group meetings will be conducted, how group decisions will be made, how conflicts within the group will be resolved, how free-rider problems will be addressed and dealt with, etc. The purpose of the contract is to ensure that your group can work well together throughout the semester even though challenges may arise.
4. *Choose a research question*: This is a difficult, underestimated stage of the research project. You need to find an question that (1) is important to answer, (2) whose answer is unknown or not fully known, (3) is focused, (4) can be motivated in a literature review, and (5) that has the ability to be answered by collecting and analyzing data.
5. *Collect primary data*: You must develop your own survey and collect data. Much of the class will focus on collecting samples, writing questionnaire, treating research participants ethically, etc.
6. *Completion of the National Institute of Health (NIH) Tutorial*: Because data collection involves human subjects, before you collect data you must complete this tutorial which describes procedures for collecting data when human subjects are involved.
7. *Written Research Proposal*: Prior to collecting data you must submit a written research proposal which (1) states the research question, (2) briefly introduces the research; (3) describes in detail how you will be collecting data, including the precise questionnaire and informed consent form that you will use; (4) describes briefly how the data is likely to be analyzed; and (5) describes how or why the data and methodology are likely to answer your research question.
8. *Oral Research Proposal*: You and your group will also give an oral presentation of your research proposal outside of class. The intent of this presentation is to mimic a business presentation that you may give to clients or your supervisors. We will schedule a conference room on campus to have the presentation. You should imagine your instructor as your client or supervisor, and your objective is to convince that person that you have a worthwhile research idea that deserves your clients' or your business's time and money.
9. *Write a research report*: The research report does not have a page requirement, but a complete report might be about 20-30 double-spaced pages (not including appendices). A complete research report includes the following sections: (1) an introduction (literature review can be included in the

introduction); (2) a full description of your methodology, detailed enough so that a reader could replicate it; (3) a full description of your results; and (4) discussion and conclusion.

10. *Present a research report:* All the research projects will be presented by the entire group on the last day of class, and on final exam day.
11. *Peer evaluation:* You will complete forms from time to time during the semester which asks you to evaluate how well your group members contribute to the project, and each of your group members will similarly evaluate you. You will receive grades based on having completed these forms and based on how well your peers evaluated you. Also, during your oral presentation to the class, your audience will evaluate your presentation. Similarly, you will evaluate your classmates oral presentations.

Research Project Deadlines

Below is a list of weekly assignment that are specific for your project, along with anticipated deadlines. These deadlines are subject to change to give the class flexibility in completing their projects. See the class website for a up-to-date deadlines.

Date	Week	Description
Mon-Wed, Jan 28-30	Week 1	Assigned to groups. Begin working on contract. Begin brainstorming ideas.
Monday, February 4	Week 2	Contract due. First meeting minutes due. Turn in 4-5 questions for your clients.
Monday, February 11	Week 3	No project deadlines.
Monday, February 18	Week 4	Title of project and annotated bibliography due.
Monday, February 25	Week 5	Written research proposal due.
Monday, March 4	Week 6	Introduction section due. Informed consent statement due.
Monday, March 11	Week 7	Exam 1 on Wednesday.
Mon-Fri, Mar 18-22	Spring Break	Enjoy the break!
Wednesday, March 27	Week 8	First draft of questionnaire due.
Wednesday, April 3	Week 9	Qualtrix survey due. Target date to send out surveys.
Mon-Wed, April 8-10	Week 10	No project deadlines.
Mon-Wed, April 15-17	Week 11	Methodology section due.
Monday, April 22	Week 12	Exam 2 on Monday.
Mon-Wed, Apr 29-May 1	Week 13	No project deadlines.
Mon-Wed, May 6-8	Week 14	Results section due on Monday. Presentations on Monday and Wednesday.
Wednesday, May 15	Finals Week	Final Exam: 7:45am-9:45am. Final draft of entire research report due.

Research Project Grade

Your entire research project is 40% of your final grade, but that total is broken down into the following categories:

Category	Contribution Towards Project Grade
Weekly minutes assignments	5%
Written research proposal	8%
Oral research proposal	8%
Introduction first draft	8%
Methodology first draft	8%
Results first draft	8%
Final Written paper	40%
Oral presentation	15%
Peer evaluation	May cause an increase or decrease in overall project grade.

E-mail Guidelines

I insist on the following e-mail etiquette rules (many of these are also recommended by the College of Business Administration). Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in a reply with a friendly reminder to follow these e-mail guidelines.

- Allow one business day to elapse before expecting a reply.
 - Questions sent by e-mail should be able to be answered with only a few words, such as 'yes' or 'no' questions. Questions whose answers involve explaining class material are not appropriate over e-mail. For answers to these questions you should come to office hours, or send an e-mail requesting we meet at a different time.
 - Always include a subject that is brief but still has sufficient detail, *including the class you are in (BUS 230)*.
 - Look at your class notes and syllabus before sending an e-mail. Do not ask a question whose answer is on the syllabus or announced in class (unless you missed class for a legitimate reason).
 - Always spell check, grammar check, and re-read your e-mail before sending it.
 - When requesting to meet with me outside of regularly scheduled office hours, consult my calendar (<http://www.murraylax.org/calendar.html>) and suggest a time we meet in your first e-mail correspondence.
-

Disabilities

Any student with a documented disability (e.g., physical, learning, psychiatric, vision, or hearing, etc.) who needs to arrange reasonable accommodations must contact the instructor and the Disability Resource Services office (165 Murphy Library, 785-6900) at the beginning of the semester. Students who are currently using the Disability Resource Services office will have a copy of a contract that verifies they are qualified students with disabilities who have documentation on file in the Disability Resource Services office.

Academic Dishonesty

I follow the policy stated University Academic Handbook with regard to cheating and academic dishonesty. The student handbook can be found online at http://www.uwlax.edu/studentlife/eagle_eye.htm. In the event a student is caught cheating I will pursue the harshest penalty that the University will allow, regardless of how small the offense may appear.

Preliminary Topics Schedule

Below is list of topics and the main readings for this class. This is a preliminary schedule; time constraints and the needs of the class might result in re-arrange the schedule.

Dates	Week	Description
January 28-30	Week 1	Introduction to the class. Discussion of group contracts and minutes.
February 4-6	Week 2	Business Research Process (ZBCG, Ch 4), Problem definition (ZBCG, Ch 6)
February 11-13	Week 3	Business ethics (ZBCG, Ch 5), NIH tutorial
February 18-20	Week 4	Survey research (ZBCG, Ch 9), Scale of measurement (ZBCG, Ch 13)
February 25-27	Week 5	Finish scale of measurement, Questionnaire design (ZBCG, Ch 15)
March 4-6	Week 6	Computerized questionnaires: Qualtrix. Sample design (ZBCG, Ch 16)
March 11-13	Week 7	<i>Exam 1 on Monday, March 11.</i> Finish sample design.
March 18-22	Spring Break	Enjoy the break!
March 25-27	Week 8	SPSS intro (CN, Sessions 2-5), Inferential Univariate and Bivariate stats (ZBCG, Ch 21-22), Stats in SPSS (CN, Sessions 10-12)
April 1-3	Week 9	Continued.
April 8-10	Week 10	Correlation, Chi-squared test of association (ZBCG, Ch 23, Stats in SPSS (CN, Session 20)
April 15-17	Week 11	Continue previous week work.
April 22-24	Week 12	<i>Exam 2 on Monday, April 22.</i>
Apr 29-May 1	Week 13	Presenting and communicating results (ZBCG, Ch 25)
May 4-6	Week 14	Presentations
May 15	Finals Week	Final Exam: Wednesday, 7:45am-9:45am.

Rubric Describing Expectations for Written Communication

The College of Business Administration has a common rubric to evaluate *formal writing* in all of our courses. We use this rubric to assess student learning throughout the college, and use this student performance data to inform decisions to make changes curriculum and/or in teaching strategies. I share this with you so that you know what our expectations are of you in terms of written research project.

Trait	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Above Expectations
Purpose and audience is addressed	Demonstrates minimal attention to purpose and audience: purpose is not clear to reader, or writing is inappropriate for audience.	Demonstrates an awareness of purpose and audience: purpose is generally clear to reader and audience is addressed in a generally acceptable manner.	Writing consistently: maintains focus on purpose and appropriately addresses audience.
Organization of ideas and content is logical	Organization of ideas and content is ineffective and/or unfocused: paragraphs are not coherent and/or transitions are lacking.	Organization of ideas and content contributes to understanding: Paragraphs contain coherent ideas; transitions are used between most ideas.	Organization of ideas and content clearly create understanding: Paragraphs contain coherent ideas which are effectively connected with transitions. Writing is very focused and concise, with clear introduction and conclusion.
Content/ideas are developed	Content is used to identify only ideas that are obvious.	Content is used to explore ideas.	Content is used to convey depth of ideas.
Sources or evidence support ideas	Uses minimal evidence to support ideas and/or does not cite sources.	Uses evidence to support ideas and/or cites sources but some inconsistencies exist.	Uses evidence to thoroughly support ideas and consistently cites sources appropriately.
Genre or disciplinary rules are followed	Use of important conventions is inconsistent.	Demonstrates consistent use of most important conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s).	Demonstrates consistent use of all conventions particular to a specific discipline and/or writing task(s).
Grammar, spelling and syntax is correct	Meaning of language is impeded due to errors.	Language has few errors.	Language conveys ideas succinctly and is nearly error free.

Rubric Describing Expectations for Oral Communication

The College of Business Administration has a common rubric to evaluate *oral presentations* in all of our courses. We use this rubric to assess student learning throughout the college, and use this student performance data to inform decisions to make changes curriculum and/or in teaching strategies. I share this with you so that you know what our expectations are of you for your oral presentations of your research proposal and your final research project.

Trait	Below Expectations	Meets Expectations	Above Expectations
Verbal delivery achieves purpose (a) language, (b) voice, (c) pace.	(a) Language is inappropriate for the audience; (b) Voice is inaudible or lacks expression; (c) Pace is halting or too fast to understand	(a) Language is appropriate for the audience; (b) Voice is generally audible with some expression; (c) Pace is generally understandable	(a) Language is appropriate for the audience; (b) Voice is always audible and appropriately expressive; (c) Pace flows and maintains interest
Physical delivery achieves purpose (e.g. mannerisms, eye contact) (a) delivery technique (b) poise	(a) Physical delivery detracts from the presentation; (b) Speaker appears uncomfortable.	(a) Physical delivery makes the presentation understandable; (b) Speaker appears comfortable.	(a) Physical delivery makes the presentation interesting; (b) Speaker appears confident.
Use of media helps to deliver information/ideas	Visual aids are sometimes irrelevant and/or fail to convey information which improves understanding of the content.	Visual aids are relevant and convey information which improves understanding of the content.	Visual aids are relevant, clear, and generate interest and understanding of the content.
Organization of ideas and content is logical (introduction, transitions, conclusions)	Organizational sequence is not clear, and/or presentation feels disjointed.	Organizational sequence is clear with only minor transitional problems.	Organizational sequence is clear and creates a cohesive presentation.
Content and ideas are developed	Information is insufficient to support the ideas presented or irrelevant content is presented.	Information is generally sufficient to support the ideas presented and minimal irrelevant content is presented.	Information is relevant, supports the ideas presented and lends credibility to conclusions.
Central message is conveyed	No conclusions are presented.	Conclusions are presented although the central message lacks focus or is not compelling.	Conclusions make clear a compelling central message of the presentation