

**MKTG 450: RESEARCH METHODS IN MARKETING**  
Syllabus for Spring 2009, Section 81

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### **Class Times**

Please note that **attendance in first class is mandatory**. We will meet on Wednesdays, 6:30-9:30pm. **Please note:** There will be no class on Wednesday, April 8th. A one-time make-up class will be held on Friday, April 10th, 6:30-9:30pm, room 101. All other classes will meet regularly on Wednesdays, 6:30-9:30pm.

### **Nature and Purpose of the Course**

The broad objective of the course is to provide a fundamental understanding of marketing research methods employed by well-managed firms. The course is aimed at the manager who is the ultimate user of the research and thus is responsible for determining the scope and direction of research conducted. In the course, we will cover the types of research design, techniques of data collection and data analysis. Emphasis will be on the interpretation and use of results rather than on the mathematical derivations. The course focuses on helping managers recognize the role of systematic information gathering and analysis in making marketing decisions, and develop an appreciation for the potential contributions and limitations of marketing research data.

### **Content and Organization**

The course is broadly structured to follow the steps in the marketing research process. The topics include problem definition, research design (exploratory, descriptive and causal), data collection methods, questionnaire design and attitude measurement, sampling schemes, and data analysis. Emphasis will be given to both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of marketing research.

### **Required Material**

1. Textbook: Feinberg F., T. Kinnear, and J. Taylor, Modern Marketing Research: Concepts, Methods and Cases, Thomson Corporation.
2. Software: SPSS Student Version 17.0 or higher. This comes bundled with the textbook. A full version of the program is available in the computer lab. A 30-day free trial version can be downloaded from the SPSS website.
3. MKTG 450 Course packet (lecture slides and supplemental materials will be distributed in class and/or via the course website)

## Course Pre-requisites

The pre-requisites for this course are:

1. Marketing Management Core Course (MKTG 430)
2. Decision Sciences and Statistics Core Course

## Class Sessions

Rather than merely rehashing concepts developed in the textbook, class sessions will be devoted to extending and applying the concepts. I will assume that all of you have completed the reading assignments (both chapters in the textbook and articles in the case packet) before coming to class. If you all come to class well prepared, we will be able to spend time on class exercises that simulate real world problems. You should be prepared to discuss and present in class the readings and/or problems that have been assigned for that session.

- **Cold Calling:** Cold calling will be used in class.
- **Attendance:** If you are unable to attend class you are responsible for catching up on the material covered or announcements made in class on that day.
- **No Laptops:** Please leave your laptop in its case during class.
- **No Cell Phones:** Remember to switch off your cell phone before class.

## Preparing a Case for Class Discussion

The objective of the use of cases is to illustrate how different marketing research methods have been applied to solve real world problems. The emphasis will be on the appropriateness and use of the research methodologies and techniques, as well as on the larger strategic issues.

In preparing a case for class discussion, read through the case very thoroughly. Do the data analyses and bring your results to class. Questions in the guideline are there only to guide your thinking. Be prepared to discuss the important marketing research issues addressed in the case and to present your results in class.

## Grading

Grades will be computed as follows:

<b>1. Class Participation</b>	10%
<b>2. Individual Assignments</b>	35%
<b>3. Group Assignment</b>	10%
<b>4. Group Project</b>	45%

### 1. Class Participation

Positive contributions to class discussion increase your score. During class you should be willing to expose your viewpoints and conclusions to the critical judgment of the class and demonstrate your ability to evaluate and build upon the opinions of your classmates. Attending class and not speaking has neither a positive nor a negative impact on your participation grade. Failing to attend significant portions of a class session, poor preparation, and detrimental participation (including being disrespectful to any class members) decrease your participation score. If you have to miss a class, you have to make up the materials with your group members.

## 2. Individual Assignments

There will be five individual take-home assignments. These assignments will be made available online and require you to apply the marketing research concepts covered in class. These assignments must be completed on an individual basis. I will take the highest four of the five grades. If you choose to submit only four assignments your grade will be based on the four assignments you submitted. Please use the Individual Assignments form on the website to submit your assignment [Submit > Individual Assignments].

## 3. Group Assignment

There will be one graded group assignment. Please use the Group Documents form on the website to submit your work [Submit > Group Documents].

*Note:* After submitting an assignment you will receive a confirmation email within 5 minutes. Please keep this email in your email inbox as a proof that you have submitted the assignment on time. If you do not receive the confirmation e-mail the assignment was not successfully submitted. You would need to resubmit the assignment. If you do not receive a confirmation email after the second submission, please send me an email describing the problem.

## 4. Group Project

The objective of the research project is to provide you with some experience in applying the concepts and methods of marketing research to a real marketing research problem. Please organize yourselves into groups of 4-6 in order to do the group assignment and the group project. Please find group members within your own section.

Please get approval of your research problem before you invest major time and resources in your project. Project approval entails submitting a project proposal in week 3 and meeting with me during weeks 3 and 4. The group can sign up for a time to meet with me via the course website. You have considerable freedom to follow your interests, although it is expected that the problem be relevant to marketing and that it will require a field research strategy that involves primary data gathering. All other things being equal, a project concerned with a realistic problem will be looked upon more favorably than one that deals with a trivial or contrived problem. Purely exploratory type projects with only qualitative data will not meet the course requirement. Projects will have to be of a descriptive variety where the research questions are well formulated.

Quite a few project opportunities are available from the Kellogg student project database, available through the course website. I strongly encourage you to go through the database. However, you are not constrained to select your project from this set. Please feel free to find other projects through your contacts.

An important point to keep in mind is that respondents in the survey should have the right to remain anonymous. This means that the data collected in the survey must be stored in a manner such that individuals' identities cannot be linked to their responses. Respondents must be assured before you collect data that their responses will be treated as confidential and will be anonymously analyzed. Under no circumstances should you give to your sponsor or anyone else your completed questionnaires, names and contact information of people you have interviewed, or other material that may reveal the identity of your respondents without their prior explicit approval.

Please note the following deadlines for the group project:

Group composition	week 1
Research proposal and Group Meetings	week 3
Self-monitoring: You should already have the research design, sampling approach, and data collection method. You should be drafting the surveys	week 5
Final Presentation & Technical Appendix	week 10

### *Research Proposal*

The proposal should cover the research purpose, research objectives, hypotheses, plans for data collection and analysis, and explain how the client will benefit from your research. A template for the proposal will be made available online.

### *Final Presentation & Technical Appendix*

The final presentation should focus on how the client can use the results of the research for decision-making & strategy. In addition to the final presentation you will need to submit a technical appendix with exhibits. A template for both the presentation and the technical appendix will be made available online.

### *Grading Key*

The group project will be evaluated based on the Final Presentation (50%) and the Technical Appendix (50%). Projects will be graded based on the consideration of the following issues:

- Specification of research objectives – is the problem well defined? Is there consistency between problem definition and specification of research objectives?
- Identification of research design, choice of sampling plan, questionnaire design, and choice of survey method – are they appropriate given your objective?
- Analysis and interpretation of data – does it address your research objective?
- Recommendation – How do your research findings address the business problem? Are your recommendations supported by your data? Are they insightful (and useful) to your client?
- Assessed relative difficulty of the project
- Overall presentation of the report

### *Web Surveys*

For those of you who would like to use a web survey, Kellogg offers Qualtrics that you can freely access (see: <http://www.kellogg.northwestern.edu/kis/websurveys/> ).

### *Peer Evaluation*

A peer evaluation form will be made available online. Please note that a negative peer evaluation can have a significant impact on your final grade (e.g., from A to B or B to C).

## **Student/Instructor Interaction**

If at any point during the course you have any questions regarding the materials covered in class or regarding preparation for assignments or cases, please raise them either in class so others may also benefit, or via email, or in person during office hours. If the scheduled office hours are inconvenient to you, please email me to make an appointment to meet.