Market Research Syllabus
Course # 94-829
Tuesday/ Thursday 9:00am – 10:20am, HBH 1000
H. John Heinz III College, Carnegie Mellon University
Spring 2011 – Mini 3

Instructor
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Office Hours
Office hours will be held immediately following class from 10:30am to 11:00am (location to be determined). Please make every effort to attend regularly scheduled office hours. If you need additional assistance, I will be available by appointment. Please try to request appointments by e-mail in advance.

Course Overview
This course will provide an introduction to market research as a business decision-making tool. The primary goal of this course is to equip students with an understanding of how market research can help them make business decisions and how they can transform research findings into actionable business insights. The course also aims to help students gain the ability to evaluate and interpret research designed and conducted by outside providers.

During the course, we will discuss a wide range of research methods including in-depth interviews, focus groups, surveys and modeling, and their application to the services and non-profit sectors. We will also discuss data sources and data collection methods. Students will have the opportunity to define a business problem, develop a research plan, collect and analyze data and present findings and their implications as a class project.

Course Objectives
This course aims to help students:

- Discuss what market research is and how, why, and when it's useful
- Identify a range of market research tools (e.g., focus groups, interviews, surveys), consider their strengths and weaknesses, and discuss when it would (and wouldn’t) make sense to use each
- Use these tools to solve business problems and craft business strategies
Required Reading

No textbook is required for this course. Please feel free to utilize any of the introductory market research books available at CMU or community libraries as a reference. The required reading materials highlighted in boldface in the Tentative Schedule below will be made available to you prior to the discussion date.

Attendance

Please let me know in advance if an emergency prevents you from attending class. Otherwise, I expect you to be there every class day, having read and thought about the assigned reading and ready to enter into a lively discussion. Managers leading market research projects must be able to clearly and succinctly explain their research strategies and results to their internal clients and discuss the merits of different business decisions. Participation in class discussions will help you hone these communication skills.

Cell Phones, Computer and Other Electronic Equipment Use in the Classroom

You can use your notebooks and tablets to take notes during the class; however do not use these in a way that interferes with your class participation (i.e. checking email, chat, web browsing, etc.)

Please turn off your cell phone or turn off their ringers before entering the classroom. If you need to take a call for a true emergency, please wait until you leave the classroom to engage in your conversation.

Course Materials

Course materials such as lecture notes and assigned reading materials will be available via blackboard. Please keep in mind that the lecture notes posted will be an outline of what we will discuss in the classroom and will not be a substitute for the entire content of the lecture. Blackboard is accessible at www.cmu.edu/blackboard.

Grading

Your grade will be based on:

I. Participation in classroom discussions - This will be 20% of your course grade so please read the assigned readings and be prepared to discuss. Your level of preparation for each class will determine the quality of our classroom discussions.

II. Group research project – This final assignment will make up 60% of your course grade. Each group will consist of 4 to 5 students. We will start discussing this assignment in our first class meeting to give you ample to
time to prepare. As part of the group research project, you are expected to
take the following steps:

1. Identify a business problem that you will conduct market research to
   solve. The clarity of your problem statement will be key to successfully
   executing the following steps
2. Determine the type of data needed to solve the problem you identified in
   step 1 and the research tool to collect the necessary data
3. Design your selected tool(s)
4. Analyze the data you collected
5. Present your findings and actionable insights in the classroom

III. Individual paper – You are required to submit a 750-word paper
    summarizing your individual experience drawn from the group research
    project. This individual effort will make up 20% of your final grade.

I will follow the Heinz College grading system for this class:
A+ Exceptional
A Excellent
A- Very Good
B+ Good
B Acceptable
B- Fair
C+ Poor
C Very Poor
C- Minimal Passing
R Failing

Academic Integrity
In any presentation, creative, artistic or research, it is the ethical responsibility of
each student to identify the conceptual sources of the work submitted. Failure to
do so is dishonest and is the basis for a charge of cheating or plagiarism, which is
subject to disciplinary action.

Cheating includes but is not necessarily limited to:

• Plagiarism, explained below
• Submission of work that is not the student’s own for papers, assignments
  or exams
• Submission or use of falsified data
• Theft of or unauthorized access to an exam
• Use of an alternate, stand-in, or proxy during an examination
• Use of unauthorized material including textbooks, notes or computer
  programs in the preparation of an assignment or during an examination
• Supplying or communicating in any way unauthorized information to
another student for the preparation of an assignment or during an examination

- Collaboration in the preparation of an assignment. Unless specifically permitted or required by the instructor, collaboration will usually be viewed by the university as cheating. Each student, therefore, is responsible for understanding the policies of the department offering any course as they refer to the amount of help and collaboration permitted in preparation of assignments

- Submission of the same work for credit in two courses without obtaining the permission of the instructors beforehand

**Plagiarism** includes – but is not limited to – failure to indicate the source with quotation marks or footnotes where appropriate if any of the following are reproduced in the work submitted by a student: a phrase, written or musical; a graphic element; a proof; specific language; and an idea derived from the work, published or unpublished, of another person.

Disciplinary action for cheating or plagiarism offenses is detailed in the University policy at [http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/GradDisc.html](http://www.cmu.edu/policies/documents/GradDisc.html).

**Tentative Schedule**

1/17 Introduction to Market Research and Research Process

  *Required Reading: ‘Backward’ Market Research*

1/19 Exploratory Research Design

  *Secondary Data, Interviews, Focus Groups, Projective Techniques*

1/24 Descriptive Research Design

  *Survey Design, Sampling Considerations, Observation*

1/26 Case Study Discussion: *Harvard Graduate Student Housing Survey*

1/31 Guest Speaker

  *Charlie Humphrey, Executive Director, Pittsburgh Center for the Arts & Pittsburgh Filmmakers*

2/2 Causal Research Design – Experimentation

2/7 Sources and Methods of Data Collection

  *Supplemental Resource: HBS Online Resource Guide*

2/9 Market Segmentation, Case Study Discussion: *The Broach Theater*

2/14 Data Analysis

2/16 Case Study Discussion: *Adios Junk Mail*

2/21 How to Conduct Cost-Effective Research
2/23  Research Report Preparation and Presentation
2/28  International Market Research
3/1   Group Project Presentations
3/8   Individual Papers Due