USC Marshall School of Business

MARKETING 470
MARKETING RESEARCH
Fall 2008

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Class meetings: T.Th 2 to 3.50 PM (BRI 5)
Office Hours: T 4 to 5 PM; Th.12:00 PM-1:00 P.M and by appointment

Course Objectives:

Collection of accurate information about the marketing environment is critical to the managers responsible for a company's marketing strategies and programs. This includes information about competition, external environment and current as well as potential customers. Marketing research is concerned with providing relevant, accurate and timely information for marketing decisions. Whether or not you ever work in a marketing research function, at some point in your business career, you most likely will need to deal with marketing research, either as a producer or as a user.

This course is designed to provide an overview of marketing research and its use in making more effective marketing decisions. The course has the following major objectives:

(1)   To learn taking general marketing problems and structuring them in terms of information need and questions that can be researched.

(2)   To provide an understanding of primary and secondary sources of information, including issues in data collection.

(3)   To become familiar with some specific techniques for analyzing marketing research data.

(4)   To provide experience managing a marketing research project, working in a group, and making effective oral and written presentations.

These objectives are relevant not only to those directly involved in creating marketing research, but also to "consumers" of marketing research, particularly managers who commission and evaluate marketing research consulting studies. The course will help you get skills that enable you to effectively evaluate marketing research proposals, interpret, review and criticize the subsequent reports, and appraise its usefulness to management. The course will also provide a basis for starting careers in market research field and for pursuing additional study in order to become a research specialist. By the end of the course, you will have some experience with the planning and execution of a research project.

In addition to its focus on informed business decision-making, this course is intended to provide technical skills related to the design, implementation, interpretation and use of marketing research. Thus, we will spend some time on the mechanics of data reading and analysis, in addition to devoting considerable attention to the design and interpretation of research that matches specific types of marketing decisions. Throughout the course, illustrations will be provided through application exercises, case studies, and PC-based analyses of market research data. The course assumes a working knowledge of basic statistics and attempts to build specific knowledge more relevant to marketing research. We will use Microsoft Excel and SPSS as our primary statistical software. Both these packages are available in the Marshall school's computer lab locations. Some of our class meetings will take place in a computer class room to permit hands-on experience. SPSS may now also be accessed on any computer through the MyMarshall Portal (Services / Marshall Virtual Lab (Citrix Applications).

Class Sessions and Assigned Readings:

The required textbook for the class is given below:

Basic Marketing Research: Using Microsoft Excel Data Analysis (Second edition) by Alvin Burns and Ronald Bush (2008); Pearson / Prentice Hall publications.

The textbook can be bought as a traditional hard copy book from your favorite online source like Amazon.com. In view of very high cost of textbooks, this book also has an option for electronic access as an eTextbook at a considerable (about 50%) saving. Please visit www.coursesmart.com for acquiring the book in this manner.

Unless explicitly excluded (excluded chapters and sections attached as Appendix 1 at the

end of this document), the entire textbook is relevant. Besides the material in the textbook, some cases and other readings will be made available throughout the course, which also become part of your required readings. I will not always use PowerPoint in class. However, some PowerPoint slides as lecture notes will also be made available on Blackboard a day before the class and topics covered therein will be especially relevant for class discussions and quizzes / examinations.

Class sessions will include i) lectures, ii) discussions of cases, problems, and examples, iii) demonstrations of PC-based analytical techniques, and iv) in-class exercises. Reading assignments in the textbook and course packet are designed to complement the class lectures and discussion. Some material is presented in the texts that will not be covered in class and some material that is covered in class will not be covered in the texts. This provides a means for exposing you to a broader range of material than would otherwise be possible. In addition, the text organizes and presents material in a different manner than is used in lecture. This is designed to facilitate learning in a broader context. Reading assignments in the text should be reviewed for topical content prior to class. The posted lecture notes should also be carefully reviewed prior to the class. Also read the book for additional real life example of marketing research in practice. The book also includes a running case spread over several chapters that will often form an important part of class discussions. Any assigned case, whether from the book or separately distributed, should be read more carefully for comprehension and analysis and attempt should be made to address discussion questions, if provided. For assigned cases everyone is expected to have prepared the case.

If questions arise during the course of reading assigned material they should be noted and asked in class, or an e-mail inquiry can be sent to the instructor. Such e-mail inquiries and their answers will often be shared with the class as a whole.

Class Communication Tool:

We will use the USC Blackboard system (blackboard.usc.edu; NO www) as a class communication tool. During the first class, we will go through the features of the system and generally talk about what to expect where on class Blackboard postings.

Course Evaluation:

> 21 % Announced Quizzes (7% each X 3 best out of 4)
>
> 18 % Individual Assignments (6% each X 3 best out of 4)
>
> 24 % Two Group Projects: Reports and Presentation
>
> 27 % Comprehensive final exam
>
> 10 % Class Participation

Announced Quizzes:

The quiz dates are given in the class schedule. No make-up quiz will be given unless justified by a documented sickness, other emergency or USC-related travel. Your personal travel, including going out of town for job interviews, will not generally be a valid reason for giving a make-up quiz. Each quiz is for a maximum of 45 minutes given in one half of the class. They could be open book or closed book and the nature of each quiz will be announced in class. The coverage of topics for each quiz will also be announced in class but it will typically exclude the material covered during the class just prior to the quiz session. Also, quizzes in this class are never cumulative.

Final Exam:

There is one final exam, to be held during the final exam period. This is a comprehensive exam. It will include multiple choice and short-answer questions. These questions may require some specific computation, new research design, development and critique of survey questions etc. The exam will be closed-book and closed-notes. A formula sheet will be provided so that this is not a test of memory alone. We will use a case, possibly from the textbook, to provide the context of many of the final exam questions.

Individual Assignments:

A set of assignments will give you the opportunity to practice using some of the tools and analytical techniques we will be studying during the course. More specific guidelines for these assignments can be found under Assignments/Homework subfolder of Blackboard. Announcements will be made during the class meetings about the homework but it is your responsibility to be up to date with the details and due dates. All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date mentioned in the class schedule. All assignments must be type-written and may be digitally submitted using digital drop box facility of the Blackboard. Type-written hard copy assignments will also be accepted. No late assignment will be accepted unless justified by a documented sickness, emergency or USC-related travel.

Some optional assignments will also be posted on Blackboard. These may include end-of-the chapter questions considered especially relevant for the exam and quizzes. Brief answers or guidelines for these also may be posted closer to the quiz/exam date.

Group Projects:

You will have two group projects, one involving significant secondary research (8 points) and the other will involve collecting and analyzing primary data (16 points). For the second project, you could either choose to collect qualitative data using focus groups or conduct a small survey and analyze the data collected from there. The two projects need not be linked. The details of the projects are being posted separately on Blackboard.

Class Participation

As an important part of the learning in this course comes from class discussions of cases and readings, you are expected to participate actively in class sessions. The level of class discussions and how much you gain from them depend in large part on how well prepared you are for each class and how actively you take part in the discussions. Thus, your level of preparation for class sessions and participation in discussions will be factored into the final evaluation. **There is *cold-calling* in this class**. Anybody from the entire class might be randomly called upon to contribute his/her thoughts in the class discussion so everyone must be prepared.

Class Absence

I *usually* do not take attendance with the following exceptions. Any class with a guest speaker has mandatory attendance. Additionally, any student that informs me before the class of his/her intended absence from one or more class meetings may receive a small assignment to compensate for the lack of class participation. If the student does not finish this assignment on time, then the student will be marked absent from the class. There are two other ways of being marked absent. One is being absent without prior information when I randomly decide to take a class attendance. Second is if you are absent without prior information and are randomly called upon to contribute to the discussion in class. In each case, a marked absence will affect your class participation grade.

Final Grade

Individual elements of the evaluation will not be curved. Your total score out of 100 will be calculated by taking a weighted average and then an approximate grading curve will be applied to the class scores for arriving at the class GPA according to the

school guidelines (a target of 3.3).

Academic Integrity:

Members of the class are expected to adhere to the principles of academic integrity that govern students registered at USC. Written analyses should be the student's own work. For all the homework assignments, it is acceptable to have discussions with other classmates but the final submissions must be demonstrably your own work. You need to at least present the answer in your own words and do not turn in exactly the same computer output, for example.

Academic Accommodations for Students with disabilities:

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. DSP is located in STU 301, Phone: (213) 740-0776.

Paperwork Return and Retention:

During the semester, all efforts will be made to grade and return the assignments and examination papers within a reasonable time, usually not exceeding two weeks. Assignments and project work turned in during the last two weeks of class will not be returned to students, but will be available for viewing in my office after grading. These papers, along with any unclaimed graded paper from the semester will be kept in my office till the end of fourth week of the next semester, i.e., Spring 2009. After that date, all graded papers will be discarded and hence, will not be available should a grade appeal be pursued by a student following receipt of his/her course grade.

Student Feedback:

I expect you to be involved with the class. You are strongly encouraged to contact me before, during or after the class, or during scheduled office hours to raise or clarify any issue regarding the course, especially things that are not going well. If you feel hesitant to raise an issue publicly during class or if my office hours are inconvenient, please email me to share your concern or to schedule an appointment.

Appendix 1: Excluded Chapters and Sections from the Textbook

- The following chapters and sections are EXCLUDED:

    o Chapter 1, pages 15-17: Marketing Information Systems

    o Chapter 2 is not explicitly assigned, but I advise you to skim through the chapter for general familiarity with marketing research industry and especially, the issue of ethics in marketing research.

    o Chapter 15 is not explicitly assigned but you may want to skim through the chapter for practical tips in project preparation and presentation.

- No direct question will be asked in any quiz or exam from the details of industry examples and vignettes in the textbook. However, they are often very interesting and give you a real world feel about issues discussed in class.

- The continuing case "College Life E-zine" is expected to be a major part of class discussion but all other cases in the book are excluded unless explicitly announced in class.

Appendix 2: Tentative Class Schedule

Date	Topic	*Readings*, **Cases**, *Due Dates*
Week 1 Aug 26	Course Introduction	*Chapters 1, Chapter 2 (Skim part on ethics)*
Aug 28	Marketing Research Process and Research Design	*Chapters 3 and 4 (only skim)* *College Life E-zine case (from textbook)*
Week 2 Sep 2	Descriptive Analysis of Information for Marketing Decision Making	**Case: Procter and Gamble Italy: The Pringles Launch** *(will be distributed)*
Sep 4 **Class meets in BRI 202A**	Getting Started with Descriptive Data Analysis on Computers	*Handout on getting started with SPSS* *Chapter 11* ***Group Formation due*** **(Activity in Computer lab)**
Week 3 Sep 9	Data Analysis Basics – Beyond Descriptive Statistics: Sample Information and Confidence Interval	*Chapter 12*
Sep 11	Steps in Hypothesis Testing and Simple Hypotheses of one variable	*Chapter 12*
Week 4 Sep 16 **Class meets in HOH 415**	Connecting Variables for Segmentation: Hypothesis Testing of Differences Two groups (t / z - tests) Multiple groups (ANOVA)	*Chapter 13* **(Activity in Computer lab)**
Sep 18	Implementing Segmentation by Examining Association: Analysis of Multiple Variables contd. (Cross-tab and chi-squared test)	*Chapter 14*
Week 5 Sep 23	Understanding Relationship Among several Variables: Correlation and Regression	*Chapter 14*
Sep 25	Quiz only class	*Reading: Short note on MDS* **QUIZ 1**
Week 6 Sep 30 **Class meets in HOH 415**	Forecasting, especially with regression	***Individual Assignment 1 due (Descriptive, hypothesis testing, Correlations)*** **(Activity in Computer lab)** *Reading: Short note on Forecasting*
Oct 2 **Class meets in BRI 202A**	Review / Catch-up / Practice on Computers	**(Activity in Computer lab)**

Week 7 Oct 7	Positioning and Multi-Dimensional Scaling	*Reading: Short lecture note on Forecasting, esp. with regression*
Oct 9	Primary Data Collection: Surveys	*Chapter 7* **QUIZ 2**
Week 8 Oct 14 **Class meets in HOH 415**	Information Gathering: Secondary and Archival Data Collection Using Library Resources	*Chapters 5 and 6* **(Activity in Computer lab)**
Oct 16	Measurement and Scaling	***Assignment 2 due (Regression /MDS / Forecasting)*** *Chapter 8*
Week 9 Oct 21	Questionnaire Design Issues	*Chapter 9*
Oct 23	Sampling Basics and Sample Size Determination	*Chapter 10* **QUIZ 3**
Week 10 Oct 28	Group Presentation of Project 1	***Project Report # 1 Due***
Oct 30	Catch up and Sample Size Determination	*Chapter 10*
Week 11 Nov 4	Primary Data Collection: Qualitative Research and Observations	*Reading: Short Lecture Note* ***Assignment 3 due (Ask or Observe)***
Nov 6	**Focus Group Exercise (location TBA)**	*Reading: Handout on Conducting Focus group*
Week 12 Nov 11 **Class meets in HOH 415**	Marshall Survey System Getting started and basic training	**QUIZ 4**
Nov 13	GUEST LECTURE – Joanne Gordon	*Handout on qualitative methods*
Week 13 Nov 18	Causal Studies and Experimental Design	*Chapter 4 – relevant portions* *Reading: Short Lecture Note*
Nov 20	Marketing Research for Advertising Decisions	*Reading: Short Lecture Note*

Week 14	Comprehensive Case Review *and*	*Assignment 4 due (Sample size,*
Nov 25	Project Help Workshop	*audience measurement, Qualitative Research)*
Nov 27	**Thanksgiving Break**	
Week 15 Dec 4	Course Review / Revision for the final exam	
Dec 6	**Group Project Presentations - II**	*Project Report # 2 due*
Final Exam Week	**Final Exam**	**Thursday Dec 11th: 2 - 4 PM**