USC Marshall
School of Business

Syllabus – Fall 2024 – Friday– 1:00-2:50 p.m.– 2 units
HOH 806

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Office hours:

Fridays   1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
or by appointment
in HOH806, at https://usc.zoom.us/j/4657329913, or by phone

"The important thing is to never stop questioning."

- Albert Einstein

Course Description

"Honors Seminar in Finance and Business Economics," BUAD 494, continues BUAD 493 from the Spring semester. BUAD 493 introduced you to basic quantitative research methods and allowed you to apply these methods to a topic you chose and for which you wrote an original research project proposal. You will turn that proposal into a successfully completed research paper in this course. Successful completion is necessary to graduate with honors from the USC Marshall School of Business.

Learning Objectives

- This class will develop your ability to read critically and understand academic articles.
- Generate exciting research questions and testable hypotheses.
- Conduct a thorough literature review.
- Identify methods appropriate to your research question.
- Write an academic research paper.

Prerequisites and/or Recommended Preparation:

This course is open only to Marshall students who have completed BUAD 493 in the Spring semester.

Course Format

This course format is supervised research. Students will work independently after meeting once as a class at the beginning of the semester. Students should meet with me once a week to discuss their progress. Each student will schedule a recurring Zoom session with me for this purpose. We may also meet in person, by mutual agreement. On Wednesday, December 4, at one or more mutually agreed times, we will reconvene as a class, and students will present their completed research projects to each other.

Required Materials

- O'Leary, Zina: *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*, Sage (4th Ed.) (2021). You can rent or buy it on Sage at https://us.sagepub.com/en-us/nam/the-essential-guide-to-doing-your-research-project/book271655 or buy it on Amazon at https://www.amazon.com/Essential-Guide-Doing-Research-Project/dp/1529713463. This book provides a general guide for how to do research.

- Huff, Darrell: *How to Lie with Statistics*, W. W. Norton & Company, (1954) ISBN: 0393310728. You can find it on Amazon at https://www.amazon.com/How-Lie-Statistics-Darrell-Huff-ebook/dp/B00351DSX2. This book provides a classic introduction to how statistics are inadvertently and intentionally misused. It is very short. You should be able to read it in an hour. You can get a copy for under $10.

Supplemental Materials

- Tufte, Edward R., *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information,* Graphics Press (2nd Ed.) (2001) ISBN: 9780961392147. You can find it on Amazon at https://www.amazon.com/Visual-Display-Quantitative-Information/dp/0961392142. This book provides excellent principles and examples for presenting quantitative results in graphs, charts, and tables.

I strongly encourage you to read business news stories regularly as they often identify issues upon which further research would be exciting and productive. *The Economist*, *The Financial Times,* and *The Wall Street Journal* are good starting places.

Attendance Policy

Attendance at our weekly one-on-on meetings is expected. If you cannot attend a meeting, let me know as soon as possible. Attendance on the last day of class is required.

Extra Credit Policy

No opportunities will be available to improve your grade by completing extra credit work.

Grading

I will assign a final course grade based on your performance in the course. Students will be evaluated on the following basis:

Grading Summary

Assignments	% of Overall Grade
Research paper, due Wednesday, December 18 at 1:00 p.m.	80%
Oral presentation of research paper, Wednesday, December 4	20%
TOTAL	100%

Oral Presentation of Research Paper

You will present your research paper to the class on Wednesday, December 4 at a mutually agreed time or times. Plan to do your presentation in 30 minutes or less. The class and I will then ask questions and discuss your results. Please arrange to attend the entire session(s).

Final Research Proposal
A complete, clean draft of your final research project paper suitable for distribution to your classmates before your oral presentation on Wednesday, December 4, is due Sunday, December 1 at 11:59 p.m.

Your final research project paper is due Wednesday, December 18 at 1:00 p.m. (The end of our final examination session if we had one.)

The research proposal should consist of the following sections:

Abstract
100 words or less

1. **Introduction**
   Use a top-down approach to frame and motivate the research.
   Identify the primary objective of the research.

2. **Literature review**
   Preliminary Proposal: Identify the related papers and show how you will organize their discussion.
   Final Proposal: Identify the related papers and briefly explain how their results bear on your research.

3. **Data**
   Identify the data you will obtain and explain how you will obtain them.

4. **Proposed methods and expected results**
   Identify your methods and explain how they will address your question.

5. **Discussion of the significant weaknesses and risks of the proposal**
   Identify the major challenges you expect to face with the execution of the project and also with getting others to accept your results.

6. **Robustness tests (if any)**
   Describe any analyses you will do to address the significant weaknesses of the project.

7. **Conclusion**
   Briefly summarize your results and identify how people should use them.

I will grade the project using the following rubric:
1. Importance of the research question   20%
2. Quality of the research design   20%
3. Identification of relevant risks   20%
4. Clarity of the writing   20%
5. My assessment of the probability of successful implementation   20%

Open Expression and Respect for All

An essential goal of the educational experience at USC Marshall is to be exposed to and discuss diverse, thought-provoking, and sometimes controversial ideas that challenge one's beliefs. This course will support the values articulated in the USC Marshall "Open Expression Statement."

Some Comments about Work Habits

Good discipline is a crucial attribute of successful businesspeople. Working independently toward a goal is vital to career success because supervisors often do not have the time or the desire to manage their subordinates closely. And good discipline is essential for entrepreneurs who have no supervisors.

USC Marshall Critical Thinking Initiative

The USC Marshall Critical Thinking Initiative is a school-wide effort to improve your critical thinking skills to be more successful problem solvers in class and the workplace. In this course, you will engage in many learning activities to develop and apply your critical thinking skills in a disciplined manner so that you can outperform others to get your desired job and excel further in your career. Your critical thinking ability is an important part of this course's evaluation/grading process.

<u>Marshall Guidelines</u>

Add/Drop Process

Most Marshall classes are open enrollment (R-clearance) through the Add deadline. If an open seat is available, you can add the class using Web Registration. If no space is available, you must continue checking Web Registration or the Schedule of Classes (https://classes.usc.edu) to see if a space becomes available. Students who do not attend the first two class sessions (for classes that meet twice per week) or the first class meeting (for classes that meet once per week) may be dropped from the course. There are no formal wait lists for Marshall undergraduate courses, and professors cannot add students or increase the course capacity. If all course sections are full, you can add your name to an interest list by contacting the Office of Undergraduate Advising & Student Affairs; if new seats or sections are added, students on the interest list will be notified.

Further, if you are absent three or more times before February 23, 2024 (the last day to withdraw from a course with a grade of "W"), I may ask you to withdraw by that date. These policies maintain professionalism and ensure a fair system for all students.

Marshall Grading Guidelines

Assignment/Exam Grading Policy: As the instructor, I determine what qualifies as an accurate grade on an assignment, exam, or another deliverable, and my evaluation of the performance of each student is the final basis for assigning grades for the class.

Retention of Graded Coursework

I retain all graded works that affect the course grade for one year after the end of the course if I have not returned the graded work to the student. If I return graded work to you, you are responsible for filing it.

Returned Papers

To protect the confidentiality of your work, you must pick up your own graded paperwork. I will not give your papers to anyone else. When I return paperwork, students who miss class sessions must come to office hours or arrange an appointment to retrieve the material.

Marshall Technology Policy

Laptop and Internet usage is not permitted during academic or professional sessions unless otherwise stated by the respective professor or staff. The use of other personal communication devices during academic or professional sessions is considered unprofessional and is not permitted. ANY e-devices (cell phones, iPads, other texting devices, laptops, I-pods) must be completely turned off during class time. Upon request, you must comply and put your device on the table in off mode and FACE DOWN. You might also be asked to deposit your devices in a designated area in the classroom. Videotaping faculty lectures is not permitted due to copyright infringement regulations. Audiotaping may be permitted if approved by the professor. Use of any recorded or distributed material is reserved exclusively for the USC students registered in this class. Exceptions to this policy may be granted to individual students with appropriate documentation on a case-by-case basis.

Use of Recordings

Pursuant to the USC Student Handbook (www.usc.edu/scampus, Part B, 11.12), students may not record a university class without the express permission of the instructor and announcement to the class. In addition, students may not distribute or use notes or recordings based on University classes or lectures without the express permission of the instructor for purposes other than personal or class-related group study by individuals registered for the class. This restriction on unauthorized use applies to all information that is distributed or displayed for use in relationship to the class.

Artificial Intelligence Tools

Unless explicitly prohibited, you may use AI tools (e.g., ChatGPT and image generation tools) in this course. Learning to use AI is an emerging skill. I welcome the opportunity to meet with you to provide guidance with these tools during office hours or after class. Keep in mind the following:
- AI tools can help you brainstorm topics or revise your written work. Good AI-based grammar checkers (for example, Grammarly) are particularly useful for revising your written texts. However, be aware that texts sent to some AI tools may not be secure. Do not send confidential texts to them.
- You will get low-quality results if you provide minimum-effort prompts to AI engines. You must refine your prompts to get good outcomes. Creating good prompts requires thoughtful work.
- Proceed with caution when using AI tools. Do not assume the information these tools provide is accurate or trustworthy. If a tool gives you a number or fact, assume it is incorrect unless you know the correct answer or can verify its accuracy using a more reliable source. You will be responsible for any errors or omissions produced by AI tools. These tools work best for topics you understand.
- You must acknowledge using AI tools. Include a paragraph at the end of any assignment that uses AI that explains how (and why) you used AI and identifies the prompts you used to obtain your results. Failure to do so is a violation of academic integrity policies.
- Be thoughtful about when AI is useful. Consider its appropriateness for each assignment or circumstance. The use of AI tools requires attribution. You must clearly attribute any material from any source you did not write.

USC Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Integrity:
The University of Southern California is a learning community committed to developing successful scholars and researchers dedicated to pursuing knowledge and disseminating ideas. Academic misconduct, which includes any act of dishonesty in the production or submission of academic work, compromises the integrity of the person who commits the act and can impugn the perceived integrity of the entire University community. Misconduct undermines the University's mission to research, educate, and contribute productively to our community and the world.

All students must submit assignments that represent their original work. They must prepare them specifically for the course or section to which they submit them. Students may not submit work written by others or "recycle" work prepared for other courses without obtaining written permission from the instructor(s).

Other violations of academic integrity include but are not limited to, cheating, plagiarism, fabrication (e.g., falsifying data), collusion, knowingly assisting others in acts of academic dishonesty, and any act that gains or is intended to gain an unfair academic advantage.

The impact of academic dishonesty is far-reaching. Academic dishonesty is a serious offense against the University. All incidences of academic misconduct will be reported to the Office of Academic Integrity and could result in outcomes such as failure on the assignment, failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the University.

For more information about academic integrity, see the student handbook or the Office of Academic Integrity's website, and University policies on Research and Scholarship Misconduct.

Please ask your instructor if you are unsure what constitutes unauthorized assistance on an exam or assignment or what information requires citation and/or attribution.

Students and Disability Accommodations:

The University of Southern California welcomes students with disabilities into all its educational programs. The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) determines appropriate accommodations for students who encounter disability-related barriers. Once a student completes the OSAS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and OSAS determines accommodations are reasonable and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be available to generate for each course. Students must give the LOA to each course instructor and follow up with a discussion. These notifications should be made early in the semester, as accommodations are not retroactive. You can find more information at osas.usc.edu. You may contact OSAS at (213) 740-0776 or via email at osasfrontdesk@usc.edu.

Support Systems:

Counseling and Mental Health - *(213) 740-9355 – 24/7 on call*
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention.

988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline - *988 for both calls and text messages – 24/7 on-call*

The 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline (formerly known as the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline) provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, across the United States. The Lifeline is a national network of over 200 local crisis centers that provide custom local care and resources based on national standards and best practices. The new, shorter phone number makes it easier for people to remember and access mental health crisis services (the previous 1 (800) 273-8255 number will continue to function indefinitely). It represents a continued commitment to those in crisis.

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) - *(213) 740-9355(WELL) – 24/7 on-call*
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender- and power-based harm (including sexual assault, intimate partner violence, and stalking).

Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title IX (EEO-TIX) - *(213) 740-5086*
Information about how to get help or help someone affected by harassment or discrimination, rights of protected classes, reporting options, and additional resources for students, faculty, staff, visitors, and applicants.

Reporting Incidents of Bias or Harassment - *(213) 740-5086 or (213) 821-8298*
Avenue to report incidents of bias, hate crimes, and microaggressions to the Office for Equity, Equal Opportunity, and Title for appropriate investigation, supportive measures, and response.

The Office of Student Accessibility Services (OSAS) - *(213) 740-0776*
OSAS ensures equal access for students with disabilities by providing academic accommodations and auxiliary aids under federal laws and university policy.

USC Campus Support and Intervention - *(213) 740-0411*
Assists students and families in resolving complex personal, financial, and academic issues adversely affecting their success as a student.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion - *(213) 740-2101*
Information on events, programs, and training, the Provost's Diversity and Inclusion Council, Diversity Liaisons for each academic school, chronology, participation, and various resources for students.

USC Emergency - *UPC: (213) 740-4321, HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24/7 on-call*
Emergency assistance and avenue to report a crime. Latest updates regarding safety, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible.

USC Department of Public Safety - *UPC: (213) 740-6000, HSC: (323) 442-1200 – 24/7 on-call*
Non-emergency assistance or information.

Office of the Ombuds - *(213) 821-9556 (UPC) / (323-442-0382 (HSC)*
A safe and confidential place to share your USC-related issues with a University Ombuds who will work with you to explore options or paths to manage your concern.

Occupational Therapy Faculty Practice - *(323) 442-2850 or* otfp@med.usc.edu
Confidential Lifestyle Redesign services for USC students to support health-promoting habits and routines that enhance quality of life and academic performance.

COURSE CALENDAR

As noted above, I expect to meet individually weekly with every student. Here is a list of our joint meeting and project due dates:

First Meeting: Friday, August 30, 2024

Written Project Report Suitable for Presentation: Sunday, December 1 at 11:59 p.m.

Oral Project Presentations: Wednesday, December 4, at one or more mutually agreed times

Final Written Project Report Due Date: Wednesday, December 18 at 1:00 p.m.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Addresses and Telephone Numbers

Professor Larry Harris   (323) 244-1154 cell
Fred V. Keenan Chair in Finance   (213) 740-6496 office
USC Marshall School of Business
Hoffman Hall 806
Los Angeles, CA 90089-0804   You may call me anytime between
                                                                     7:00 a.m. and 9:30 p.m. I probably
LHarris@USC.edu   won't answer on Friday night or
Larry@LarryHarris.com   Saturday.

How to Reach Me

1. Drop-in during office hours—no appointment is necessary. I will keep office hours in person in my office and on Zoom at https://usc.zoom.us/j/4657329913. Call me if you cannot find me on Zoom, and I'll open the Zoom session.

    My office hours this semester are:

    Fridays   1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

2. Arrange to meet me by appointment.

3. Call me on the telephone. You may call anytime between 7:00 a.m. and 9:30 p.m., but I probably won't answer on Friday night or Saturday. If I do not answer and you want to leave a message, please email me. I rarely check for voice or text messages.

4. Arrange to dine with me before or after class. Consider inviting your classmates too.

5. Send me an email at LHarris@USC.edu. While I am always happy to answer course topics, I prefer to respond orally rather than by email. The opportunity to listen and respond appropriately usually produces more effective learning.

    It is better to email me than to text me.