

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY
BA 312 — Business Research Methodology
 Course Syllabus
Spring 2026

Instructor	Prof. Alexander Anokhin, PhD
Credits / Level	3 units / 45 hours • Mastery 2 (M2)
Schedule	Mon & Wed, 3:30 PM – 6:15 PM (Pacific)
Class Format	Live synchronous sessions via Zoom (see Class Format & Zoom Access below)
Office Hours	Mon & Wed, 6:15 PM – 7:15 PM (Pacific), via Zoom or by appointment
Email	aanokhin@lincolnuca.edu
Zoom Link	https://lincolnuca-edu.zoom.us/j/4929867479 Meeting ID: 492 986 7479
Textbook	Bryman, A. & Bell, E. (2019). <i>Business Research Methods</i> (5th ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. ISBN: 9780198809876
Last Revision	January 5, 2026

Class Format & Zoom Access

This course meets live and synchronously online via Zoom. Attendance at the scheduled sessions (Mon & Wed, 3:30–6:15 PM Pacific) is expected, with cameras on whenever possible to support discussion and in-class activities. The same link is used for every class meeting and for office hours.

Join URL: <https://lincolnuca-edu.zoom.us/j/4929867479>

Meeting ID: 492 986 7479

- Log in a few minutes early; recurring tardiness disrupts the session for everyone.
- Keep your microphone muted unless speaking, and use the chat or the “raise hand” feature to contribute.
- Sessions may be recorded for enrolled students who miss class; recordings are not a substitute for live participation.
- A stable internet connection is your responsibility. If you are disconnected, rejoin promptly using the same link.

Catalog Description

The course objective is to prepare the student for business research. Emphasis is on practical work, not on memorizing or deriving formulas. Ethical aspects of research are featured. Students are expected to develop understanding and practice in research techniques, the writing of short reports, the use of statistical tools and presentation techniques, the preparation

of effective tables and diagrams, and the proper use of footnotes and bibliographical references. (3 units)

Prerequisites: BA 45 or BA 241, BA 301, BA 304.

Educational Objectives

The primary objective of this course is to introduce students to business research, its purpose, and its methodology. The secondary objectives are to enable students to identify a research problem, write a proposal, design a study, and conduct data collection.

Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

#	Course Learning Outcome	Program LO	Institutional LO	Assessment
1	Demonstrate an understanding of the scientific method and the requirements for high-quality research.	PLO 2	ILO 1b, 2b, 4b	In-class activities; course project
2	Clearly communicate research purpose, methods, and results to all relevant stakeholders.	PLO 3	ILO 2b, 7b	In-class activities; course project
3	Identify a business problem and propose research activities that aid decision-making.	PLO 4	ILO 4b, 5b, 6b	In-class activities; course project
4	Develop and implement a framework for collecting and analyzing data relevant to a business decision; be familiar with major research designs, approaches, and methods.	PLO 5	ILO 1b, 2b, 4b	Final exam
5	Analyze the ethical implications of the research process and formulate an effective, rigorous research strategy.	PLO 6	ILO 3b	In-class activities; course project

Procedures & Methodology

The lecture method is combined with in-class activities of various kinds. Core concepts drawn from the textbook are augmented with supplementary sources (made available on the class website) and applied to real-life situations during class activities.

This course contains a great deal of theoretical and abstract material that becomes practical only through class activities and discussion. Active class participation is therefore essential to your success.

Class Rules

- Attendance is required. Attendance will be taken at each session at a time chosen by the instructor.
- Arrive (join the Zoom session) on time. Joining late disrupts the flow of the session and affects everyone's experience.
- All in-class activities, exams, and project deliverables must be completed and submitted on time.
- Detected cheating or plagiarism will result in a grade of “F” for the assignment or exam, and may be referred for further action under University policy.

Final Exam

The final exam consists of questions based on the lectures, the assigned chapters, supplementary readings, and practical assignments. The exam is comprehensive, with special emphasis on several key topics of the course that will be identified in class.

Course Project: Business Research Proposal

The signature deliverable of this course is an individual business research proposal. Rather than carrying out a full study, you will design one: you will identify a real business problem, justify why it is worth investigating, review what is already known, and lay out a rigorous, feasible plan for answering your research questions. The proposal is built incrementally across the term through a series of milestones, and it culminates in live presentations across the two classes before the final exam, plus a polished written document due at the final class. The project is worth 25% of the course grade and is the primary vehicle for assessing Course Learning Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 5.

Choosing a Topic

Your topic should address a genuine business problem or decision—something an organization (real or realistic) actually needs to understand. Strong topics are specific, researchable within the constraints of a single study, and connected to a decision that data could inform. We will workshop and refine topics during early in-class assignments; you must have your topic approved by the instructor before submitting the annotated bibliography.

Examples of the kind of question a proposal might address:

- What factors drive customer churn for a regional subscription service, and which are most actionable?
- How does a hybrid-work policy affect perceived productivity and retention among knowledge workers?
- Which attributes most influence small-business owners' choice of a payments provider?

Required Components of the Written Proposal

The final written proposal should be approximately 2,500–3,500 words (excluding title page, references, and appendices) and must include the following sections:

1. **Title Page & Abstract.** Project title, your name, course, and date, followed by a 150–200 word abstract summarizing the problem, approach, and intended contribution.
2. **Introduction & Problem Statement.** The business context, the specific problem, and the decision the research will inform. Make the stakes clear.
3. **Significance / Rationale.** Why this research matters and who benefits from the answers.
4. **Literature Review.** A synthesis—not a list—of relevant prior work that frames your study and identifies the gap it addresses.
5. **Research Questions & Objectives.** Clearly stated, researchable questions and the objectives that follow from them.
6. **Research Design & Methodology.** Your overall strategy (qualitative, quantitative, or mixed), the specific design, and a justification of why it fits your questions.
7. **Sampling & Data Collection.** Target population, sampling approach, sample size logic, and the instruments or protocols you will use (e.g., questionnaire, interview guide, experimental setup).

8. **Planned Data Analysis.** How you will analyze the data you collect and how that analysis answers your questions.
9. **Ethical Considerations.** Risks to participants, informed consent, confidentiality, and responsible data handling.
10. **Timeline & Feasibility.** A realistic schedule and an honest account of limitations and constraints.
11. **References & Appendices.** APA-style reference list, plus draft instruments (questionnaire items, interview guide, consent form) in appendices.

Formatting Requirements

- Typed, double-spaced, 12-point Arial or Times New Roman, with 1-inch margins and page numbers.
- APA (7th edition) style for in-text citations and the reference list.
- Tables and figures numbered, titled, and referenced in the text.
- Submitted as a single PDF or Word file via the class website by the posted deadline.

Milestones & Timeline

The project grade is distributed across the milestones below. Earlier milestones receive feedback that you are expected to incorporate into later submissions; the bulk of the grade rests on the final written proposal and the presentation. All weights are shares of the project's 100% (the project itself is 25% of the course grade).

Course Week	Milestone / Deliverable	What to Submit	Weight
Week 2 · Mon	Topic & Problem Statement	One paragraph describing the business problem and the decision it informs.	Feedback only
Week 3 · Mon	Annotated Bibliography	5–7 sources with 2–3 sentence annotations each.	10%
Week 3 · Wed	Research Questions & Strategy	Refined research questions, objectives, and chosen approach (qual / quant / mixed).	10%
Week 5 · Wed	Full Proposal Draft	Complete draft of all required sections (see below).	15%
Week 6 · Mon	Peer Review	Structured written feedback on one classmate's draft.	10%
Weeks 6–7	Final Presentation	8–10 minute presentation with visual aids, delivered live on Zoom across the two classes before the final exam.	20%
Week 7 · Wed	Final Written Proposal	Polished proposal incorporating instructor and	35%

Course Week	Milestone / Deliverable	What to Submit	Weight
		peer feedback, due at the final class (graded with the rubric below).	
Total	Graded deliverables		100%

Final Presentation

Presentations are held across the final two class sessions before the final exam; your assigned day will be posted in advance. You will deliver an 8–10 minute presentation of your proposal, live on Zoom, followed by 2–3 minutes of questions. Treat this as a pitch to decision-makers: focus on the problem, why it matters, and how your design will produce trustworthy answers—not on reciting every section of the paper.

- Use clear visual aids (slides); share your screen and confirm visibility before you begin.
- Stay within the time limit; practice beforehand and time your run-through.
- Be prepared to defend your methodological choices and acknowledge limitations.
- All students are expected to attend and engage with peers' presentations.

Grading Rubric for the Final Written Proposal

The final written proposal (the 35% milestone above) is scored out of 100 points using the rubric below. The final presentation is graded separately on the criteria listed under “Final Presentation.”

Criterion	What Strong Work Looks Like	Points
Problem & Significance	The business problem is clearly defined, realistic, and tied to a concrete decision. The reader understands why the research matters.	15
Literature Review	Relevant, credible sources are synthesized (not just listed) to establish context and identify a gap the study addresses.	15
Research Questions & Objectives	Questions are specific, researchable, and logically connected to the problem and to the chosen design.	15
Methodology & Design	Research strategy, design, and methods are appropriate, justified, and feasible within stated constraints.	25
Sampling & Data Collection	Population, sampling approach, and instruments are clearly specified and matched to the research questions.	12
Ethical Considerations	Risks to participants, consent, confidentiality, and data handling are identified and addressed responsibly.	10
Writing, Structure & Citations	Proposal is well-organized, professional, free of errors, and uses consistent APA-style references.	8
Total		100

Academic Integrity & Use of AI

The proposal must be your own work. You may use AI tools to brainstorm, check grammar, or test the clarity of your writing, but the analysis, methodological reasoning, and final prose must be yours, and you must disclose any substantive AI assistance. Fabricated sources or data, and uncited use of others' work, are violations of the academic-integrity policy and will be treated accordingly. All projects must comply with Lincoln University research guidelines.

Grading Policy

All assignments, quizzes, projects, and exams are evaluated using the scale below.

Range	Grade	Range	Grade
94–100	A	73–76	C
90–93	A-	70–72	C-
87–89	B+	67–69	D+
83–86	B	60–66	D
80–82	B-	0–59	F
77–79	C+		

Component Weights

Component	Weight
Participation & In-Class Activities	25%
Research Project (proposal + presentation)	25%
Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	30%

Course Schedule

The schedule is tentative and may be adjusted as the term progresses; any changes will be announced in class and posted to the class website.

Wk	Day	Topic	Reading	Assignment
1	Mon	Overview of business research: the research process from question to write-up, and the role of theory and evidence in business decisions.	Ch. 1	Assignment 1: Research in Real Life
	Wed	Formulating research questions: applied vs. fundamental research, defining the problem, and the role of the research proposal.	Ch. 4	Discussions 2.1 & 2.2; Project: Topic & Problem Statement introduced

Wk	Day	Topic	Reading	Assignment
2	Mon	Approaches to research: deductive vs. inductive reasoning, the main epistemological and ontological positions, and quantitative vs. qualitative strategies.	Ch. 2	Assignment 2; Project: Topic & Problem Statement due
	Wed	Reviewing the literature: types of review, searching and evaluating sources, and synthesizing prior work; writing a thesis or internship report.	Ch. 5	Case Study: MontGras Winery; Project: Annotated Bibliography assigned
3	Mon	Survey methods: structured interviews and self-completion questionnaires, including question design and common sources of error.	Ch. 10, 11	Discussion: Questionnaire Evaluation; Project: Annotated Bibliography due
	Wed	The experimental method: experimental and quasi-experimental designs, validity, and control.	Slide deck	Assignment 3: Experiment Design; Project: Research Questions & Strategy due
4	Mon	Midterm Exam.	Ch. 1–5, 10–11; slide decks	Midterm Exam
	Wed	Qualitative research: the qualitative research process, qualitative interviewing, and analyzing qualitative data.	Ch. 17	—
5	Mon	Focus groups: planning and moderating group discussions, group dynamics, and analyzing focus-group data.	Ch. 21	Assignment 4: Focus Group Analysis
	Wed	Sampling: probability and non-probability sampling, sample size, and representativeness.	Ch. 9, 18	Project: Full Proposal Draft due
6	Mon	Data analysis: preparing data and an introduction to descriptive and inferential analysis of quantitative and qualitative data.	Ch. 15, 24	Project: Peer Review due
	Wed	Course project presentations — Part 1 of 2.	—	Final Presentations (live on Zoom)
7	Mon	Course project presentations — Part 2 of 2.	—	Final Presentations (live on Zoom)
	Wed	Final Exam (comprehensive).	Comprehensive	Final Written Proposal due

Note: Readings refer to chapters in Bryman & Bell (2019), *Business Research Methods*, 5th ed.