LINCOLN UNIVERSITY
BA 298 II – Special Topics in Business

Spring Semester 2011 Course Syllabus
3 units, Thursday 9 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

Prof. Elena Givental   Office Hours: Th. 12:00 - 1:00 p.m. or by appt.
egivental@lincolnuca.edu   Location: Room 304

Course Description:
This course offers topics of specialized interest in the major fields of study. Case studies and independent research may be included. Topics vary each semester so students should not include this in a concentration unless they know it will be available. This course may be substituted in a concentration once with the permission of the Dean. (3 Units)

The course prepares students for research projects. The emphasis is made on practical work and not on memorizing or deriving formulas. Ethical aspects of research are featured. Students are expected to develop understanding and practice of research techniques, writing of short reports, use of statistical tools and presentation techniques, preparation of effective tables and diagrams, as well as footnotes and bibliographical references.

Learning Objectives:
1. to prepare students for research projects
2. to write a research proposal which combines all business research elements
3. to develop practical skills in various business research techniques

Required Textbook:
Business Research Methods, 8th Edition (2010) by William G. Zikmund, Barry J. Babin, Jon C. Carr, and Mitch Griffin (published by South-Western, Cengage Learning)
 ISBN-13: 978-0-324-32062-6
Available from Amazon.com, new and used in the $120-$150 range; there are books on reserve at Lincoln University library.

Grading: 230 points total

In-class midterm #1	40 points	Multiple choice, short answers
In-class midterm #2	40 points	Research article analysis (in-class)
Critical Thinking Exercise	20 points	Short in-class essay

Ten Short Quizzes	30 points	Multiple choice questions
Survey Design Exercise	10 points	Homework assignment
Data Analysis Exercise	10 points	Homework assignment
Research Proposal	70 points	Selected topic of your choice
Class attendance *	<u>10 points</u>	
	230 points totally	

Lecture attendance is required. Class attendance also involves asking appropriate questions and answering questions in class, contributing to classroom discussions and activities.

Grading Policy:

		96-100%	A	90-95%	A-
88-89%	B+	82-87%	B	80-81%	B-
78-79%	C+	72-77%	C	70-71%	C-
66-69%	D+	60-65%	D		
		less than 60%	F		

<u>Midterm #1 and Midterm #2</u> (40 points each)
Midterm #1 exam covers the first half of the course. Exam questions are multiple-choice, open-ended questions, and short essays based on lecture material, practical exercises, and readings from your textbook. Midterm #2 exam is a written analysis of a research article (the questions and topics to be analyzed will be provided). The exams are designed to test your understanding of major concepts and practical skills.

<u>Research Proposal</u> (10-12 pages, 70 points: 50 points for a written proposal, 20 points for an oral presentation)
The research proposal is a concluding document in which business research theory comes together with practical research and writing skills. In your research proposal you will pose a research question, provide literature review, describe research methods to be used in the project, and discuss preliminary results. The selected topic for the research proposal will be determined by your interest in a certain area of business management such as finance, marketing, human resources, operations, or strategy. The format and the contents of your proposal will be discussed later in class in more detail. The grade for your research proposal will comprise of an individual oral presentation of your preliminary results (20 points) and a final written proposal (50 points).
Due April 28

<u>Critical Thinking Exercise</u> (in-class essay, 20 points)
You will write an analytical response to a given business case. It is intended to show your writing skills and your ability to utilize available business information for a managerial decision-making analysis.

<u>Survey Design and Data Analysis Exercises</u> (homework assignments, 10 points each)
Each assignment is intended to build practical skills in certain areas of business research. Methods for completing both exercises will be explained and discussed in class in more detail.

<u>Short Quizzes</u> (10 quizzes, 3 points each): each class will start with a short 3 multiple-choice-question quiz promptly at 9 a.m. **No make-up quizzes will be offered**.

Class Rules:

No cell phone calls or text messaging in class
Class begins promptly at 9 a.m.
Late arrivals (over 15 minutes) will be reported as class absences
There are no make-up critical thinking exercises, midterm, or final exam except for special circumstance reasons
A deduction of 5 points will be made for each late assignment
Plagiarism or cheating will result in Zero grade for that test or assignment

TOPICS, ASSIGNMENTS, TEST SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

<u>Jan. 20   #1   Introduction to Business Research</u>
Research and theory building. The scientific method. Definition and scope of business research. Basic and applied research. Major topics for research in business. Sources of business information: global information systems, decision support systems. Business research in the 21st century.
<u>READ</u>:   *Textbook Chapters 1, 2, 3.*

<u>Jan. 27   #2   The Research Process: An Overview</u>
Decision making and types of business research: exploratory, descriptive, causal research. Stages in the research process: discovering and defining the problem, research design, sampling, data collection, data analysis, drawing conclusions. Ethical issues in business research.
<u>READ</u>:   *Textbook Chapters 4, 5.*

<u>Feb. 3   #3   Problem Definition: the Foundation of Business Research</u>
The nature of the business problem. Proper problem definition. The process of problem definition: understanding the background of the problem, stating research questions and research objectives. The research proposal plan.
Critical Thinking Exercise (in-class essay, 1 hour).
<u>READ</u>:   *Textbook Chapter 6.*

Feb. 10   # 4   Qualitative Research Tools. Secondary Data.

Exploratory research: reasons to conduct exploratory research, categories of exploratory research. Case studies and pilot studies. Secondary data in business research: classification, common external sources. Focus on global research. Bibliography and proper use of citations. Computerized database, searching and data retrieving.

READ: *Textbook Chapters 7, 8.*

Feb. 17   # 5   Research Methods for Collecting Primary Data

Survey research: the nature of surveys, errors in survey research. Respondent and administrative errors. Classification of survey research methods. Observation methods: the nature of observation studies and observation objects. Experimental research: the nature of experiments, basic issues of experimental design. Ethical problems in human observations and experimentation.

READ: *Textbook Chapters 9, 10, 11, 12.*

Feb. 24   # 6   Measurement Concepts in Business Research

Rules of measurement, types of scale. Attitude measurement: techniques for measuring attitudes, rating scales, practical decisions in selecting a measurement scale. Questionnaire design: an overview of the major decisions. The art of asking questions. Question phrasing, sequence and layout.

Survey Design Exercise (home assignment, due March 10).

READ: *Textbook Chapters 13, 14, 15.*

March 3   MIDTERM # 1 IN-CLASS EXAM

Midterm: chapters 1-15 (lectures 1-6)

Mar. 10   #7   Sample Design and Fieldwork

Sampling design and procedures, sampling errors. Determining sample size: a review of statistical theory. The normal distribution. Population distribution, sample distribution, and sampling distribution. Central-Limit Theorem. The nature of fieldwork. Principles of good interviewing and fieldwork management.
Survey Design Exercise: group discussion.

READ: *Textbook Chapters 16, 17, 18.*

Spring Recess March 14-20

Mar. 24   #8   The Basics of Data Analysis

Transforming raw data into information. The stages of data analysis: editing, coding, computerized data processing, error checking. Descriptive statistics:

tabulation, cross-tabulation, tabular and graphic methods of displaying data. Computer programs for statistical analysis. Interpretation of descriptive statistics data.

Data Analysis Exercise (home assignment, due March 31).

READ: *Textbook Chapters 19, 20.*

Mar. 31 #9 Univariate and Bivariate Statistics

The null hypothesis and the alternative hypothesis; hypothesis testing. Choosing the appropriate statistical technique. Additional applications of hypothesis testing. Differences between two variables: tests of differences, ANOVA. Measures of association: simple correlation coefficient, regression analysis. Data Analysis Exercise: group discussion.

READ: *Textbook Chapter 21, 22, 23.*

Apr. 7 #10 Introduction to Multivariate Analysis

Classification of multivariate techniques: dependence, interdependence, influence of measurement scales. Analysis of dependence and of interdependence. Multiple regression analysis. Factor and cluster analyses.

READ: *Textbook Chapter 24.*

Apr. 14 MIDTERM # 2 IN-CLASS EXAM

Midterm: analysis of a research article

Apr. 21 #11 Communicating Research Results

Communications Model. Written report formats. The principles of oral presentation. Effective use of graphics in oral presentation. Preliminary proposal result discussion. Course review.

Research Proposal due April 28

READ: *Textbook Chapter 25.*

Apr. 28-May 5 Research Proposal Reports: Oral Presentations

Individual in-class presentations of the research proposal: problem definition, literature review, research methods appropriate for the specific research (primary data collection methods, survey questionnaire, sample size, data analysis methods). Student discussion and assessment.

Final Research Proposal due

Updated February 3, 2011