

**C. T. Bauer College of Business
University of Houston**

MARK 4338: Information of Marketing Decisions

Instructor	Professor Ye Hu
Optional Text:	Burns, Alvin C., and Ronald F. Bush: <i>Basic Marketing Research Using Microsoft® Excel Data Analysis</i> (2 nd Edition), Prentice Hall. ISBN: 978-0132059589. Used book available at Amazon. (B&B)
Required Software:	Microsoft Excel
Course Website:	Blackboard Vista – you are supposed to check your Blackboard Vista and email before each class for updates, emails, and announcement.

Course Prerequisites

Marketing Management and Business Statistics or their equivalents are required. Given the quantitative nature of the some materials covered in the course, please make sure that you feel comfortable with the ABCs in your statistics course. Throughout the semester, we'll have multiple Computer Lab sessions. Bring your laptop to the class during those sessions.

Course Description and Objectives

The goal of the course is to familiarize students with how to collect and apply information for marketing decisions. The process involves developing research questions, collecting data, analyzing it and drawing inferences, with a view to making better business decisions. To this end, the course is organized into two basic parts: (1) Data Collection and Research Design and (2) Tools and Applications of Market Research. The objectives of this course are:

1. To improve the student's problem definition skills. To properly engage in marketing research it is critical to assess when and how this research should be performed.
2. Evaluate research design and data collection. Students will be introduced to sources of data and corresponding procedures to analyze these types of data.
3. To provide the student with the necessary skills to implement a research design selection of a data collection method, development of the data collection instrument, sample design, and the actual collection of the data.
4. Be able to competently review and criticize research, appraise its usefulness to management, and have some experience with certain phases of the research process.

To achieve these objectives we will use a combination of lectures, cases, class discussion, and hands-on exercises. Assignments will be in the form of readings from the text, case preparation, and data analysis exercises.

In the course we will use a variety of readings and computer-based exercises. Lecture notes and additional handouts will be made available throughout the semester. The readings are designed to introduce marketing research concepts and principles.

The computer and data-based exercises are designed to give you “hands-on” experience with marketing research analyses. Thus, the course is designed to help you become an intelligent consumer and producer of marketing research.

Grading

The grade of this course is not curved. Your grade in the course will be based on the cumulative points you earn. Attendance is taken in all classes. The grading components are as follows:

1. Attendance: 30
2. Assignments: 40
3. Class Participation: 20
4. Exam I: 100
5. Exam II: 100
6. Group Project: 110

A maximum of 20 bonus points may be given for marketing research participations. Further details will be provided during the semester.

The grading scales are:

Grade	Total Points	Details		
A, A-	Points \geq 350		$370 \leq A$	$350 \leq A- < 370$
B+, B, B-	$300 \leq$ Points < 350	$340 \leq B+ < 350$	$320 \leq B < 340$	$300 \leq B- < 320$
C+, C, C-	$270 \leq$ Points < 300	$290 \leq C+ < 300$	$280 \leq C < 290$	$270 \leq C- < 280$
D+, D, D-	$240 \leq$ Points < 270	$260 \leq D+ < 270$	$250 \leq D < 260$	$240 \leq D- < 250$
F	< 240			

Please note that no late assignments will be accepted. Any questions about grading must be submitted in writing within one week after the assignment is returned. All written work is due at the beginning of class on the due date.

Guidelines for the Group Project

The group project will give you an opportunity to search a topic relating to Marketing Research of your own choosing. Since the research project will involve a considerable amount of time and effort, it is vitally important that you work on a project that you find interesting. You have the option to choose **one** of the following focuses for your project:

- (1) *Primary data collection and research* Present a marketing plan for a new business. This would include:
 - develop a business idea
 - conduct marketing research to study viability of the business idea (collecting and analyzing data)
 - conclusions or recommendations based on your analysis

- (2) *Secondary data collection and research* Analyze a specific issue at an e-commerce website (for instance, eBay) in depth. Your analysis shall be based on data related to the research topic (e.g., pricing trend of Wii at eBay.com, social network expansion at Facebook.com). So this topic to engage collecting & analyzing data to answer your research questions.

- (3) *Secondary data research* If you have access to the transaction data of a business (from your friends, or the company you've worked for, etc.), construct a set of research questions (hypotheses) based on the data. Analyze the data to answer your questions. Provide recommendations based on your results.

At the end of the semester, each group will present their project to the class. Each group would have 15 minutes for presentation. This includes time for questions. Please make sure that you finish your presentation in the allotted time. The sequence of the presentations will be determined in class.

The best way of thinking about the presentation is as providing an entertaining and informative discussion of the major features and results of your project. Your goal is to clearly communicate your project to your audience. You should keep in mind that nobody outside of your project group would be as familiar with the results of your project as you are. Therefore, do not race through tables and figures when making your points. Your presentation should be structured for a managerial audience. Therefore it is important that in your presentation you present the material in an interesting and managerially relevant fashion. (Avoid presenting the null hypothesis etc. We will do that in the class to understand statistics, but when you are presenting you can skip the basics of statistics. *Therefore focus on what the analysis means.*).

It is very important that you rehearse, as a group, your full presentation beforehand. Also, be sure that all group members are familiar with using PC presentation software. Your best defense is rehearsal. Be organized, be rehearsed, have good visual aids, and you will do fine.

Each group should turn in (email me) an electronic copy of your PowerPoint slides. Failing to do so will result in a downgrade for your final project.

Your presentation should be organized as follows:

1. *Clear statement of your research purpose and objectives.* Provide a background for your project. Your goal here is to get your audience interested in the problem and help them understand exactly why you are doing this project, and how the results will be useful to the decision maker.
2. *Sampling and Data Collection.* In the presentation, concentrate on describing how you sampled respondents and collected your data, and justifying why you did it the way you did it. It would be appropriate (and interesting and informative) to point out any unusual problems that arose during data collection.
3. Briefly highlight the main information that you collected using the questionnaire.
4. *Analysis* (this should provide answers to research questions) Use clearly legible tables and figures to illustrate your points. This is the crucial and longest section of your presentation. At least half of the time should be allocated to analysis. It should be tightly organized around answering your research questions, rather than around the types of analyses you performed. This is not the forum to present a complete run down on every analysis your group did. Instead, focus on answers to your research questions.
5. *Recommendations* (this should relate to decision alternatives). Given your analyses, what should your client do and why? Identify anything you think, in hindsight, you should have done differently. Please make sure that your recommendations follow from your research. Don't make vague recommendations that are too general and not actionable. Recommendations should be specific and actionable. Before making recommendations carefully consider the pros and cons.

Grading of project presentations

To evaluate your group presentation, the following criteria will be used:

- Clarity of presenters (10 points)
- Professionalism of presenters (5 points)
- Quality of visual aids (10 points)
- Organization/time allocation (5 points)
- How interesting was the presentation? (10 points)
- How actionable and useful was this study? (10 points)
- Quality of Analysis (50 points)

Honor Code

All submitted work must adhere to University of Houston's Code of Academic Integrity. Assignments are all individual. Identical assignments will receive 0 in grade. Please refrain from behavior such as cell phone texting, chatting in class. *Repeated distractive behavior in the classroom or excessive absence from classes will result in instructor withdrawn from the course.*

Schedule of Class Meetings [Subject to Change without Further Notice]

B&B = Burns and Bush: *Basic Marketing Research*

SESSION 1

TOPIC Introduction
READINGS B&B Ch. 1-2

SESSION 2

TOPIC The Marketing Research Process
READINGS B&B Ch. 3-4

SESSION 3

TOPIC Guest Speaker/Groups sign ups (end of the class)

SESSION 4

TOPIC Case Study: Coors
READINGS Coors Distributorship Case

SESSION 5

TOPIC Secondary Data
READINGS B&B Ch. 5-6

SESSION 6

TOPIC Primary Data Collection and Focus Group

SESSION 7

TOPIC Survey & Questionnaire Design
READINGS B&B Ch. 7&9

SESSION 8

TOPIC Measurement & Scaling
READINGS B&B Ch. 8

SESSION 9

SOFTWARE LAB #1 Introduction to Software
(COMPUTER)

SESSION 10

TOPIC Causality and Experimentation
READINGS Class Notes

SESSION 11

TOPIC	Review for Exam 1
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SESSION 12

TOPIC	Exam 1 (in class)
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SESSION 13

TOPIC	Group Meeting: define research project
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SESSION 14

TOPIC	Sampling Design
READINGS	B&B Ch. 10

SESSION 15

TOPIC	Presentation: Project proposal
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SESSION 16 

SOFTWARE LAB #2 (COMPUTER)	Graphing, Descriptive Statistics, and Confidence Intervals
READINGS	B&B Ch. 11

SESSION 17

TOPIC	Cross Tabulation
READINGS	B&B Ch. 12-13

SESSION 18

TOPIC	Correlation & Regression
READINGS	B&B Ch. 14

SESSION 19 

SOFTWARE LAB #3 (COMPUTER)	Regression
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SESSION 20

TOPIC	Conjoint Analysis
READINGS	Class Notes

SESSION 21 

SOFTWARE LAB #4 (COMPUTER)	Conjoint Research
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SESSION 22

TOPIC	Segmentation & Cluster Analysis
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READINGS

B&B Ch. 21

SESSION 23

TOPIC Perceptual Mapping
READINGS Class Notes

SESSION 24

TOPIC Project consulting (no class)

SESSION 25

TOPIC Group Presentations

SESSION 26

TOPIC Course Wrap up & Review for Exam 2
READINGS Class notes & textbook

SESSION 27

TOPIC Exam 2 (in class)

SESSION 28

TOPIC TBD, flexible day