Course Syllabus

BUS 253a: Marketing Research
Professor Jane E.J. Ebert

Tuesdays and Thursdays 9.30-10.50 am
In International Hall, Sacher 116

Professor: Jane E.J. Ebert, Ph.D.
jebert@brandeis.edu
(781) 736 2294
Office: Lemberg 250
Office hours: Tuesdays 11am-12.30pm
and by appointment

TA: Hannah DeRoche
hderoche@brandeis.edu
**Course Description**

Marketing research is critical for leaders to make informed business decisions for their company's success. This course is for individuals who want to be good leaders or marketing managers: individuals who can make informed decisions of how to obtain the data they need to answer their questions, who can ask intelligent and pertinent questions of marketing research professionals, who are able to assess the quality of marketing research conducted, and who are able to understand and interpret the research data and results they encounter.

**Course Format**

The first half of the course includes learning about and experience with important marketing research tools such as interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires. This knowledge will come from lectures, cases, readings, and discussions in class, but also from hands-on experiential learning through your involvement in a semester-long group project. In the second half of the course we will cover a variety of statistical tests that you will use to analyze the data that you collect in your group project. You should aim for a high-level integrated understanding of the topics we cover, combined with a deeper detailed knowledge and understanding of the specific topics and tools that we examine. You have a big part to play in your learning – you need to work hard, read carefully, think about the material, complete the assignments, and ask questions in class.

**Learning Goals**

You will learn how to:
1) clearly define research problems
2) apply a research process to solve a marketing problem
3) apply qualitative and quantitative methods to gain marketing intelligence
4) use Qualtrics software to collect data from consumers
5) use SPSS software to analyze your data
6) critically assess data and results
7) present research findings in a formal presentation and in writing.

**Prerequisite:** BUS 252a is recommended. In addition, familiarity with statistics from an introductory statistics course is expected.

**Course Materials**

All materials listed below are required. The assigned readings will form the basis of the two exams and of discussions in class. **I will assume that you have completed all the readings in preparation for class.** We will typically use some time in class to discuss in detail or to apply several of the concepts covered in the readings.

1. **Textbook:** *Marketing Research (10th edition ISBN-13 9781118808849; or 11th edition ISBN-13 9781119392019)* by McDaniel and Gates (listed as “M&G” in schedule below) and published by Wiley is required for the course. This textbook is available at the Brandeis bookstore. E-rentals, used books, etc are all available for this book (e-rental price from $26) at Brandeis or from other sources.
like Amazon, Barnes and Noble, and the publisher Wiley. (Note: Do NOT get this textbook confused with the simpler textbook by the same authors named Marketing Research Essentials.)

2. **Software.** 1) *Qualtrics* is used in this course and is available to use for free through Brandeis. You will need to create a Qualtrics account with your UNet ID at brandeis.qualtrics.com. 2) some work with statistics using *Excel* is also required for this course. Brandeis provides free licenses for Excel to students. For instructions regarding downloading and obtaining the software license, visit http://brandeis.onthehub.com/. You will need to log in using your UNet ID. After logging in, follow the downloading steps as instructed. If you have questions or problems, please contact LTS or the IBS IT office.

   Information will be provided later for setting up *R*. The course includes homework exercises and workshops to help you with the software. In addition, you can contact the TA or me for assistance in using the software for your projects.

3. **Coursepack.** Cases and readings from Harvard publishing are contained in an electronic “coursepack” I have set up there. The Harvard publishing web address for the coursepack is provided in a document on the Latte class website. Please go to that address to purchase and download the readings. You may need to register first on the Harvard publishing web site if you have not done that for other courses. If you have any problems call the customer service at (800) 988-0886, and please let me know. The discounted price is around $4 for each case/reading. **You can print out each case to bring to class or download it to an electronic device to have it available for reading in class. (Note: electronic devices are only allowed in class for workshops and cases.)**

4. **Remaining readings.** These will be electronic files and will be posted on the Latte site for the class for you to download in advance of the relevant class. (Most of these readings are available for free to the Brandeis community through the Brandeis Library electronic sources, e.g., Wall Street Journal and other media articles. The remaining files consist of shorter excerpts, e.g., a single chapter, from other books.)

5. **Class slides.** Handouts containing the slides for each class will be available in class. These slides provide an outline of the class material and important points, but you will need to take additional notes to fully capture the material discussed in class.

6. **Assignments.** Assignments will be posted on the Latte class website or handed out in class.

*Workload expectation*

As this is a four-credit course, you are expected to spend a minimum of 9 hours of study time per week in preparation for class (readings, exercises, assignments, preparation for exams, research, etc.)

*Course Evaluation*

All assignments are **required.**

Class participation.................................................................22%

includes attendance, contribution to class, case discussions, and 3 individual exercises assigned for class (Qualtrics, sampling, statistics)

Exam 1.................................................................23%

Exam 2.................................................................23%

Data analysis problem sets........................................6%

Research Project Presentation submission (includes survey)........22%

Other project requirements.................................................4%

(includes topic proposal, and summary of interview research results)
Class participation. First, I expect each student to come to class on time, having thoughtfully prepared all readings and assignments due that day. Simply attending class is not enough to do well. You need to contribute to discussions. The cases provide especially good opportunities for contributing. **You should aim to contribute to discussion (with a response, comment, or question) in most classes, but especially in the case discussion classes.** I pay attention to both the quality and quantity of your comments. All classes involve some discussion or class exercise, and a lively discussion of the topics by the whole class will greatly improve learning and understanding for everyone. **If you are hesitant, or finding it difficult, to participate in class, please come and see me (ideally early on in the semester).** I will work with you on this.

Attendance. I take attendance in the course. The text cannot replace what you miss if you are absent. In addition, we will cover important material not covered in the text. It is your responsibility to catch up on any material you miss by reading the textbook and borrowing class-notes from others in the class. Please let me know in advance by email if you need to miss a class. I allow each student up to 2 absences of regular class periods (interviews, career treks, sickness, religious observance, sports events, other extra-curricular demands, etc) without impacting participation grade. **Use these wisely.** For each additional absence, your participation grade will be reduced a half-step, e.g., A- becomes A-/B+; B becomes B/B-.

**Attendance is mandatory for all project presentation days.** If you have perfect attendance, but never actively participate in class discussions, your participation grade will be C+. Consistent lateness can also seriously affect your participation grade.

Exams: Two exams (closed-book, in class) will be administered during the semester. These will consist of a combination of multiple-choice and short-answer questions (from a few words to a couple of paragraphs in length, from brief numerical responses to longer calculations). The exams will test your understanding and knowledge of the readings and lectures. Exam 1 will examine the work covered until that point (i.e., the first half of the course). Exam 2 will focus on the material from the second half of the course. You must remain in the classroom until you have completed the exam, and you will be assigned a seat for the exam. Both the TA and I will be available to assist with exam preparation in office hours, by appointment, on email, or via phone. No make-up exams are given.

Research project: You will participate in the project in groups of 4-5 individuals, and you will be graded as a group. I will assign you to groups, using information provided by you on your past experience, attempting to mix students from varied backgrounds where possible. You can pair with one other person for group assignment, if you wish. **All group members are expected to participate fully in every part of the project,** including attending group meetings, preparing each assignment, conducting analyses, and writing up and presenting the project report. If there is a “free rider” problem in any group, the group should talk to the group member first to try to resolve the problem. If that doesn’t solve the problem, the group should meet with me to work it out. At the end of the course, I will also ask each group member to assess their fellow group members’ contributions to the project. These assessments may influence individuals’ project grades.

There are several assignments for the group project, including conducting exploratory research (using in-depth interviews) and designing a survey. The project culminates in a research presentation in class, also submitted for grading with supporting notes and appendices. More information on the separate assignments for the project will be provided later in the semester.
**Other Project Requirements:** These requirements will be graded using a 0 (if the assignment is not completed), /-, / or /+

**Class Conduct**

**Arriving on time.** Latecomers are distracting. Habitual tardiness will have a negative impact on your participation grade.

**Use of technology in the classroom.** To help you and your fellow students stay focused on the class, laptops, tablets, and phones are prohibited unless otherwise indicated for a particular class (i.e., statistics workshops or cases). *During class, please keep them turned off or an airplane mode, and in your bag. You may be marked as absent if you use one of these devices without permission during class.*

**Late assignments.** Late assignments will not be accepted without my prior permission and will incur a penalty unless the circumstances are exceptional (as judged by me).

**Academic honesty.** You are expected to be honest in all of your academic work: individual work should be worked on individually. Please consult Brandeis University Rights and Responsibilities ([http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rr/](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/srcs/rr/)) for all policies and procedures related to academic integrity. Students may be required to submit work to TurnItIn.com software to verify originality. Allegations of alleged academic dishonesty will be forwarded to the Director of Academic Integrity. Sanctions for academic dishonesty can include failing grades and/or suspension from the university. Citation and research assistance can be found at LTS - Library guides ([http://guides.library.brandeis.edu/c.php?g=301723&p=2013447](http://guides.library.brandeis.edu/c.php?g=301723&p=2013447)).

**Disabilities.** If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

**Communications and Getting Help**

I will communicate any changes in the syllabus or additional instructions about requirements in class and via email. Please ensure that you check your Brandeis email address regularly.

I hope you will enjoy participating in the class discussions. If you are hesitant to participate for any reason or if you have questions about anything, please come and see me. I am happy to help. Please don’t hesitate to contact me or the TA for assistance for any reason, or if you have questions, comments, or concerns about the course. I can be reached by email (jebert@brandeis.edu), by phone (office, 781 736 2294), or in my office (Lemberg 250). E-mail is typically the best way to contact me outside of class. Office hours are on most Tuesdays (11am - 1pm) and by appointment (emailing at short notice for an appointment is often fine). The teaching assistant for the class is Hannah DeRoche (hderoche@brandeis.edu).
**Schedule of Classes and Assignments**

This schedule could change, e.g., to accommodate a guest speaker or due to weather-related school closings. Changes will be announced in class and via (your Brandeis) email.

(M&G chapter numbers indicated are for the 10th edition)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>In class</th>
<th>Readings and reading-related tasks to complete before class</th>
<th>Instructions and Assignments (Assignments are due as paper copies, at or before the beginning of class, unless stated otherwise)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>T 1/14</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>M&amp;G Ch. 1 (optional)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Th 1/16</td>
<td>Case discussion</td>
<td>In coursepack: HBS The Coop</td>
<td><strong>Individual:</strong> Prepare responses to case questions (for discussion in class, nothing to hand in)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>T 1/21</td>
<td>Workshop on Secondary data research resources with Business Librarian</td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Bring laptop computer or tablet to class</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Th 1/23</td>
<td>Secondary research</td>
<td>1) M&amp;G Ch. 4</td>
<td><strong>Project:</strong> After class (by midnight), complete Google form for group assignments.</td>
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<td>2) Media article for secondary research</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>T 1/28</td>
<td>Qualitative research</td>
<td>1) M&amp;G Ch. 5 (Optional, Ch. 7)</td>
<td><strong>Project:</strong> By midnight, email me with 1-2 potential project topics for your group.</td>
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<td>2) Media article for qualitative research</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Th 1/30</td>
<td>Observational research</td>
<td>1) M&amp;G Ch. 8</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>2) Media article for observational research</td>
<td><strong>Project:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>T 2/4</td>
<td>Case discussion</td>
<td>In coursepack: HBS The Harvard Graduate Student Housing Survey</td>
<td><strong>Individual:</strong> Prepare responses to case questions (for discussion in class, nothing to hand in)</td>
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<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Th 2/6</td>
<td>Survey research 1: Questionnaire design</td>
<td>M&amp;G, Chs. 11, 12</td>
<td><strong>Project:</strong> 1) Hand in (paper copy) proposal for group project topic (see instructions on Latte)</td>
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<td>2) Write your interview guide (e.g., 3-4 main questions, with ideas for follow-up probes; see instructions on Latte. Not to hand in.)</td>
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<td>#</td>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Reading(s)</td>
<td>Project:</td>
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| 9  | T 2/11 | Causal research              | 1) M&G, Ch. 9  
2) Media article for causal research |                                                                                              |
| 10 | Th 2/13| Exam 1                       | Review slides, readings, and notes for exam                                | After exam, **conduct your in-depth interviews** (2 by each group member) and **make notes** (Nothing to hand in) |
|    |        |                              |                                                                           |                                                                                              |
|    | T 2/18 | NO CLASS - Midterm Recess   |                                                                           |                                                                                              |
|    | Th 2/20| NO CLASS - Midterm Recess   |                                                                           |                                                                                              |
| 11 | T 2/25 | Sampling                    | M&G, Ch. 13                                                                | **Individual:** **Complete sampling exercise and submit some results in Google form** (see instructions on Latte) |
| 12 | Th 2/27| Survey research 2: Survey error | 1) M&G, Ch. 6  
2) Media article for survey error | **Individual:** **Complete online Qualtrics exercise and email to TA** (see instructions on Latte)  
**Project:** **Hand in (paper copy) summary of results from your in-depth interviews** (see instructions on Latte) |
| 13 | T 3/3  | Introduction to data analysis | M&G, Chs. 14, 15 (from “Step Five: Tabulation and Statistical Analysis” to end) |                                                                                              |
| 14 | Th 3/5 | t-tests                     | M&G, Ch. 16 (from beginning, include the sections on “Hypothesis Testing”, and “P-values and Significance Testing”. The sections in between are optional.) | **Project:** 1) Complete your survey questionnaire  
2) **(Optional)** Sign up for a survey questionnaire feedback meeting of your group with me  
3) Two days before your meeting, **hand in (paper copy) a paragraph explaining your survey research goal AND a paper copy of your survey questionnaire** (see instructions on Latte) |
| 15 | T 3/10 | $\chi^2$ and correlation    | M&G, Ch. 16 (section on “Goodness of Fit”),                | **Project:** **Optional group meetings with me this week for survey** |

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*Note: Students are encouraged to check the university's online platform for the latest updates and requirements.*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Instructions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Th3/12</td>
<td>Regression 1</td>
<td>M&amp;G, Ch. 17 (from “Example of Bivariate Regression”)</td>
<td>Individual work: <strong>Hand in your answers (paper copy) for Data analysis problem set 1</strong>&lt;br&gt;Project: <strong>Optional group meetings with me this week for survey questionnaire feedback</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>T3/17</td>
<td>Regression 2</td>
<td>1) M&amp;G, Ch. 18 (“Regression analysis”)</td>
<td>Project: Finalize your questionnaire and begin to collect data</td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Th3/19</td>
<td>Workshop: Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual: Bring laptop to class. Ensure statistics software is working on your laptop, download Movie theater data from Latte, complete and email Movie theater statistics exercise to TA <strong>BEFORE class</strong> (see instructions on Latte)</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>T3/24</td>
<td>Workshop: Analysis</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual: Bring laptop to class. Ensure statistics software is working on your laptop and Movie data is downloaded Project: This week, complete your survey data collection</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Th3/26</td>
<td>Project workshop</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual: <strong>Hand in your answers (paper copy, and keep a copy for yourself) for Data analysis problem set 2.</strong>&lt;br&gt;Project: Bring laptop computer (with group project data collected so far). This week, complete your survey data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>T3/31</td>
<td>Guest speaker</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Th4/2</td>
<td>Exam 2</td>
<td>Review readings, slides, and notes for exam</td>
<td>Project: Bring laptop computer (with your group project data file in Excel.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>T4/7</td>
<td>Project workshop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Th 4/9 | NO CLASS –  
*Passover and Spring Recess*                      |
| T 4/14 | NO CLASS -  
*Passover and Spring Recess*                         |
| Th 4/16| NO CLASS -  
*Passover and Spring Recess*                         |
| 24     | T 4/21 Project presentations                           |
| 25     | Th 4/23 Project presentations                          |
| 26     | T 4/28 Project presentations  
Brief wrap-up                                           |

Project: All groups **hand in Research Project Presentation submission** (see instructions on Latte)