MARKETING DECISION SYSTEMS  
MBA 721 (3 credit hours) – SPRING 2012  
TUESDAY 7:20 - 10:00 pm - Classroom: Enterprise Hall 173

Professor: Dr. Nacef Mouri  
Office: ENT 136 (Enterprise Hall, Office 136, Fairfax campus)  
Office Hours: Tuesday 10:00 – 11:30 am  
Thursday 10:00 – 11:30 am  
Or by appointment  
E-Mail: nmouri@gmu.edu  
Telephone: (703) 993-1769  
Class Web Page: Blackboard

REQUIRED TEXT:  
- The professor has no control over textbook availability, price…  
- Students are responsible for acquiring and reading the required material.  
Additional readings will be posted online or distributed in class throughout the semester.

PREREQUISITE:  
Graduate standing  
• MBA623 – Marketing Management  
• MBA633 – Statistics for Business Decision Making

OVERVIEW

In this course we will explore marketing research, the information-gathering arm of marketing practice. We will view the topic primarily from the perspective of a consumer of marketing research – a busy manager who needs information to guide decision making. All the same, it is helpful to understand how producers of research approach the process. This background will help you be a better-informed consumer of research – able to participate in research design, evaluate the quality of marketing information that crosses your desk, and conduct marketing research projects yourself when appropriate.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:  
- Discuss the characteristics of “good” marketing research, and identify errors made in the research process  
- Discuss the stages of the marketing research process  
- Identify ethics problems in a marketing research situation and propose an ethically sound approach  
- Propose a research design to study a particular research question  
- Compare and contrast different research methods  
- Recommend good practice for a variety of research techniques  
- Design questionnaires with sound measurement properties  
- Become familiar with the issues and techniques of quantitative analysis, and learn how to use SPSS statistical software for data analysis.
ATTENDANCE POLICIES

There will be no attendance policy. However, students are encouraged to maintain regular attendance if they are to obtain maximum success in their studies. Moreover, simply attending class does not guarantee success. You need to pay attention, take comprehensive notes, read the chapters regularly, and ask for clarification when needed. Exams will follow my lectures very closely. If you miss class, be prepared to assume the consequences of your decision, including missing material covered for the exam and extra-credit opportunities. Please note that attendance is required for the presentations on May 1st. Points will be deducted from your presentation grade if you do not attend on presentation day.

ABOUT EXAMS

There will be three exams, two during the normal class time, and one during the final examination period (Take home exam). Test questions will cover material from lectures, discussions, audio/visual material, notes, and the textbook. The best way to prepare for exams is to attend every class, take good notes, and regularly read the book chapters.

Students who have questions regarding their exams are welcomed and encouraged to come by during office hours to discuss their concerns. Questions about any exam must be raised before the following exam. You will be able to monitor your progress in the class through Blackboard.

Please remember that:
1. Nobody will be allowed to come into the classroom once the first person completes the exam and leaves. There are absolutely no exceptions to this rule. Please arrive on time for the exams.
2. No student may continue taking an exam once time has been called. Therefore, students starting an exam late will have that much less time to take the exam.
3. No student may leave the room during an exam unless s/he is finished and has handed in all materials.
4. Exams can not be taken before or after the assigned dates and times. Therefore, you can not take an exam with another class or at any other time other than the assigned times.
5. Students with circumstances requiring them to receive a certain grade or maintain a particular GPA (e.g., graduation, loss of a scholarship, University probation or suspension, loss of a job offer, etc.) need to realize that they are responsible for working hard to achieve the needed class grade. Exceptions will not be made for individual students. Grades will be changed only if an input or calculation error was made. If you notice any discrepancies, it is important that you notify me as soon as possible.

Team Topic Presentations (different from the team project presentation at the end of the semester)

Each team will be assigned a topic for his/her individual presentation (see schedule on page 4 for Team Topic Presentations dates). Topics will be assigned randomly the first day of class.

Instructions:
1. Read the material in the textbook to learn about the research technique (example: qualitative research). I can also provide you with more information about the topic if needed.
2. Search the literature (internet, library, articles, books…) for examples of companies that used the technique and discuss them in your presentation. Except for a broad overview, do not delve into the details of how the technique works. Focus your presentation on how the technique was used by companies and the objectives that were achieved using the technique.
3. The more interesting the examples the better.
FINAL GRADES:

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<th>Component</th>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<td>Exam 2</td>
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<td>Final exam</td>
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<td>Team project</td>
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<td>Team Topic Presentations</td>
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* Class work includes in-class assignments, participation…

CLASS POLICIES and GMU HONOR CODE:

- As a courtesy to both your professor and your fellow students, all pagers, cellular phones, electronic games, radios, CD players, or other devices that generate sound must be turned off during class.
- Please avoid any disruptive behaviors such as: coming late to class, leaving early, intoxication, inconsiderate behavior (e.g., sleeping, reading for pleasure, working on outside assignments, excessive talking, eating/drinking.) A warning may be given for the first offense, however repeated violators will be penalized and may face expulsion from the class and/or other disciplinary proceedings. Please be considerate of your fellow classmates and your professor.
- GMU is committed to a policy of honesty in academics. Conduct compromising this policy may result in academic and/or disciplinary action. Cheating is a violation of student academic behavior standards. The GMU Honor Code can be found at (http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/handbook/aD.html) and applies to all activities and assignments in this course. Students will refrain from cheating, lying, plagiarizing, and stealing. This includes completing your own original work, except in cases where the teacher instructs students to work in groups, and giving credit to any other person whose ideas and printed materials (including those on the Internet) are paraphrased or directly quoted.
- Concerns about students’ dishonesty may be brought to me at any time and your anonymity will be protected if desired. Unless I am made aware of a situation, corrective action cannot take place. Any student who violates, or helps another student violate academic behavior standards will be pursued through the Office of the Dean of the School of Management and through the Dean of Students at GMU.
- Please note that if you do not agree with one or more issues in this syllabus, it is advisable that you drop the class since exceptions will not be made for individual students.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a disability, which will make it difficult for you to carry out the work outlined or which will require any sorts of accommodations on my part, please contact Disability Resource Center, Student Union Building 1, Room 222, Phone: 703-993-2474 (dwyne@gmu.edu). Ask the Centre to notify me as soon as you can so that I can make appropriate arrangements. Also, feel free to come and discuss this with me during my office hours or anytime that is convenient for you.

COMMUNICATION PROFESSOR-STUDENT

The official email address of each student is their GMU address. Therefore, all communications from the professor will go to that address. Please check your GMU inbox regularly. If you have another email address that you check more frequently, you can forward your GMU email to receive it to that address. Remember that it is your responsibility to check your GMU email on a regular basis.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic and chapter</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T. 1/24</td>
<td>Class Introduction - Syllabus - Ch 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T. 1/31</td>
<td>Ch 3 - Ch 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. 2/7</td>
<td>Ch 5 - Ch. 6 - Team Topic Presentation 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. 2/14</td>
<td>Ch 7 - Ch 8 - Team Topic Presentation 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. 2/21</td>
<td>Exam 1 <em>(Chapters 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)</em></td>
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<td>T. 2/28</td>
<td>No class</td>
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<td>T. 3/6</td>
<td>Ch 9 - Ch 13 - Team Topic Presentation 3</td>
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<td>T. 3/13</td>
<td>Spring Break</td>
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<td>T. 3/20</td>
<td>Ch 14 - Ch 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>T. 3/27</td>
<td>Exam 2 <em>(Chapters 9, 13, 14, 15)</em></td>
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<td>T. 4/3</td>
<td>Ch 10 - SPSS workshop</td>
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<td>Ch 19 - Ch 20 - Ch 25</td>
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<td>T. 4/24</td>
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<td>T. 5/1</td>
<td>Project reports are due today - Team Project Presentations - Take-home</td>
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<td>T. 5/15</td>
<td>Take-Home exam due by 5pm</td>
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*The Syllabus may be adjusted if deemed necessary by the professor. It is the student’s responsibility to stay aware of any changes made. Exam dates however, will not change. The final exam will be a take-home. You will receive it May 1st. It will be due by May 15th. You should expect to spend 10 to 15 hours on the final.*
Presentation and Report Guidelines

Teams will be comprised of 3 students and will present May 1st. Presentations should be about 30 minutes long and all team members must participate in the presentation. The order in which teams will present will be random.

You are strongly encouraged to start thinking of a project topic as early as possible (this would be the first step in the marketing research process). This could be:

- A problem that your company is facing,
- An opportunity that you think your company should take advantage of,
- A product or service that you think could be an innovation in the marketplace,
- Any idea that you can think of where you could use the marketing research process.

If you have difficulties coming up with a topic, let me know and I will help you find one.

Overview: Based on the topic that you choose and the problem/opportunity that you identify, you will write a questionnaire that will help you get the answers you need. The questionnaire should be about 2 to 3 pages long and you should be able to administer it in 5 to 10 minutes. You will use your questionnaire to collect data. You will need to collect 33 questionnaires per team member. You will then analyze the data and report the findings in your presentation. For the purposes of this project, a random sample of GMU students is valid.

Example of a presentation flow

1. Introduction — Introduce your team, brief overview of the topic and overview of the presentation to help your audience follow along, state your research objectives and the process that you followed.

2. Talk about your questionnaire. What is the purpose of the questions that you used? Why did you use the types of scales you used? (Nominal, ordinal, Likert…).

3. Talk about your data collection. Where, when, and how did you conduct the survey? Did anything happen while you were collecting the data that would be interesting to share with the rest of the class?

4. Survey results

- It is recommended to start with a demographic profile of your sample (Gender, age…). Present demographic results and discuss the implications of the demographic profile.

- Then, analyze the other survey questions. For important questions, present the results and an explanation of why the results turned out the way they did (you do not have to present the results for every single question on your questionnaire). **Note:** If it turns out that you did not get
the information you needed from a particular question (or questions), let us know, and explain how you would change or improve the question(s) in a future questionnaire to achieve your objectives.

- Talk about your open-ended questions. How did you code them? How did you analyze them? What insight did you get from them?

- Highlight what you think is important in the study. Are the results what you expected? Why or why not? Explain. What do you think is going on? Do you think the study you conducted fulfilled your objectives?

- You can also talk about differences between different demographic groups on different questions. Compare men and women, students and non-students, etc.

- Illustrate your discussions with graphs and tables. (Refer to and explain each table or graph).

- Be insightful and creative. I am just giving you some ideas. I welcome creativity. Try to find something interesting! You can also compare any of your survey findings with what you already know or learned in previous classes. Does anything seem to be different from what you expected based on your prior knowledge?

5. Conclusion—what you learned and the limitations of your study. Any problems you encountered while doing the research and recommendations for solving these problems in the future. Information that you did not think about collecting that could have been valuable for the analysis. You could present some questions that you would add to your questionnaire if you were to redo the study. Similarly, there might be some questions that you used that you would not use again.

6. A professional presentation of the written report is absolutely essential. Points will be deducted for errors in spelling and grammar. Please proof read your report.

7. Presenters must be dressed professionally. Professionalism is critical to success in the real world. All members of the team must present and participate equally. You may use notes, but do not read. Maintain eye contact, and keep your audience interested. Your classmates and I can ask questions both during and after the presentation. When answering questions, pause to think and answer carefully. Help each other answer questions. If necessary, ask the person who asked the question if he/she thinks you have answered the question appropriately.

**Report**

The project report should be about 10 pages long (not including tables and graphs) and should summarize the different stages of the project and the actions that team members took in every step of the project. In addition to the information used in the presentation, the report should contain an analysis of all questions in the questionnaire. **In your writing, refer to tables and graphs in the appendix whenever appropriate.**

Teams should turn in a copy of the slides used in the presentation the day they present (3 slides per page). **Reports are due May 1st.** Grades will be based on the quality of the presentation as well as the quality of the written report. Make sure there are no spelling or
grammatical errors in your report.

The report should be double-spaced and free of handwritten corrections. 12-Point font. Times New Roman. PowerPoint slides should be printed in “handout – 3 slides per page” format. 

Checklist for the report:

1 – Report, tables and graphs
2 – Questionnaire used
3 – Appropriate SPSS output.

Peer Evaluation: A peer evaluation form will be distributed later in the semester and should be returned to me the day of presentations. This form will be considered in making an evaluation of team members. The form will remain confidential now and in the future and should be filled out in private.

Attendance: You must attend presentations on May 1st. Students who do not attend presentations, come in late on presentation day, or leave before all teams are done presenting, will be penalized. Keep in mind also that the final exam might include questions based on issues discussed during the presentations.
Student Information Form

MARKETING DECISION SYSTEMS
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TUESDAY 7:20 - 10:00 pm - Classroom: Enterprise Hall 173

Please write clearly:

First Name: _____________________ Last Name: _____________________

Undergraduate Major: ________________________________________________

Graduate Concentration: ______________________________________________

- Did you receive your undergraduate degree from an institution other than GMU?
  Yes  No

If yes, which institution? _____________________________________________

- What marketing classes have you taken both at the undergraduate and graduate levels? If none, write “none”

  _______________________________________________________________

- Did you take the “Marketing Research” (or equivalent) class at the undergraduate level?
  Yes  No

- Did you take the “Principles of Marketing” (or equivalent) class at the undergraduate level?
  Yes  No

- Have you ever worked with SPSS software before?  Yes  No

- What do you expect to learn from this class? If not sure, just write “not sure”

  _______________________________________________________________

- Are you registered at GMU as an international student?  Yes  No

- If you have a full time or a part time job, what industry is it in (manufacturing, healthcare…)?

  _______________________________________________________________

- If there is a specific reason why you took this class and you would like me to know about it, please let me know on a separate sheet. Otherwise, you are done.