

**BA 595 APPLIED BUSINESS RESEARCH
ONLINE COURSE SYLLABUS
Summer 2012**

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Office Hours: Tuesday & Thursday 8:30 – 10:30

Welcome to Web-Based BA 595!

*The best way to contact me is by email. This is an online course; therefore, **expect most communication to be online** as well. I will respond to emails within a 48 hour time period. Please **ONLY** send emails to Jeremy_stjohn@tamu-commerce.edu. All emails must include BA 595 in the subject line.*

COURSE DESCRIPTION: A course to investigate the techniques of the research process as applied to business and economics. Experience is gained in defining research problems, designing a research project, and in collecting, analyzing, recording, and interpreting data. Also, an analysis of pertinent research literature in business and economics is conducted.

COURSE PREREQUISITE(S): No graduate prerequisites. This should be one of the first courses taken in the MBA program.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate secondary data to solve business problems.
- Students will develop a research plan including a problem statement, hypotheses, related literature, and methodology.
- Students will understand the scientific method of research and be able to differentiate between descriptive, historical, correlational, and experimental research methods.

MEANS TO ACCOMPLISH OBJECTIVES:

1. The student will be required to prepare two papers. These papers will be prepared in accordance with APA Publication Manual.
2. The student will select a research problem, prepare and turn in a prospectus indicating the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the study's hypothesis(es), the methodology to be employed in the study and a review of the literature pertaining to the problem.

TEXTBOOK(S) AND OTHER REQUIRED MATERIALS:

Business Research Methods. William G. Zikmund, 8th edition, 2010.
ISBN-10: 1439080674 or ISBN-13: 978-1439080672

Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th edition, 2009.
ISBN-10: 1433805610 or ISBN-13: 978-1433805615

GRADING POLICY:

Paper #1	50 points
Paper #2	200 points
Discussion Questions	50 points

Concept Quizzes	100 points
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Minimum percentages for grade level are as follows:

A	90+	percent of total points
B	80-89	percent of total points
C	70-79	percent of total points
D	60-69	percent of total points

One grade will be deducted each day for papers turned in late. Anyone caught plagiarizing will receive an “F” in the course.

Students with Disabilities:

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact:

Office of Student Disability Resources and Services
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Gee Library
Room 132
Phone (903) 886-5150 or (903) 886-5835
Fax (903) 468-8148
StudentDisabilityServices@tamu-commerce.edu

- “All students enrolled at the University shall follow the tenets of common decency and acceptable behavior conducive to a positive learning environment.”
- Students enrolled in on-line courses have the same rights and responsibilities as students in live-taught courses.
- Refer to Student’s Guide Book located at:
www.tamu-commerce.edu/studentlife/guidebook.htm

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citation, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.

ALL WORK SUBMITTED TO THIS PROFESSOR WILL BE VERIFIED BY TURNITIN.COM. BEFORE SUBMITTING YOUR PAPERS TO ME, I WILL ALLOW YOU TO SUBMIT THEM TO TURNITIN TO BE CHECKED FOR PLAGIARISM. AFTER YOU ARE SATISFIED WITH YOUR WORK, THEN SUBMIT THE PAPER TO ME. YOU SHOULD HAVE NO MORE THAN 20-25 PERCENT OF THE MATERIAL SHOWN AS “COPIED.”

All students are to read, sign and return the honesty policy for the College of Business and Technology. (See online)

TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

Module	Reading Assignments	Paper Assignments Due

Jan 17 – Week 1	Chapters 1 and 8	
Jan 23 – Week 2	Chapters 3 and 4	Paper 1 due
Jan 30 – Week 3	Chapter 6 and 9	
Feb 6 – Week 4	Chapters 10 and 11	
Feb 13 – Week 5	Chapter 13 and 16	Paper 2 due

Discussions for Week 2 are due by January 27, 2012 11.59 S.T.
Discussions for Week 3 are due by February 3, 2012 11.59 S.T.
Discussions for Week 4 are due by February 10, 2012 11.59 S.T.
Discussions for Week 5 are due by February 27, 2012 11.59 S.T.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

In this course, you will be expected to participate in weekly discussions. Professional communication is always expected. In order for you to achieve the maximum number of points for your Discussion grade, please answer each thread on three separate levels:

1. Answer the posted question (10 points)
2. Respond to other's posted questions (6 points)
3. Reply to any persons who have responded to you (4 points)

Discussion questions and topics may be added to the discussion area throughout the Semester. You will need to visit the area regularly. You are to consider the question or topic and post an appropriate response. You should support your response with external sources (not textbooks) whenever appropriate. I will grade your responses based upon the quality of the response. This is to be an attempt to create a seminar environment where you will be able to increase one another's knowledge of the subject. You should visit this at least once a week to read the material and respond appropriately. You may add information at a later time as you would in a regular discussion.

CONCEPT QUIZZES

There will be online quizzes covering the chapter reading assignments. They will be randomly assigned true/false, multiple choice and available on the course website (ecollege). These may be taken open book and with open notes. You may use any appropriate source except other students for your answers. You will receive a grade as soon as you complete each quiz. Due dates will be announced in ecollege and you will generally have 5 to 7 days after the quiz is announced to complete it. You will not have access to any of the submission mechanisms after that date.

TERM PAPER ASSIGNMENTS

The following are the specific assignments:

Paper 1. See Course eCollege website for due date.

Prepare a short term paper on a business/economics topic of your choice, preferably one you are familiar with or very interested in (4 pages of CONTENT). Follow APA format. **Please review the APA Tutorial provided in the menu item titled “Tutorials to Help You Get Started.”** Use a 12 point font single spacing. Your grade on paper 1 will be based on format and clarity of ideas. Make sure your paper is concise not wordy and that it flows, explains and makes sense. Recommendation: have someone else read your paper and provide input. You are to assume this is the foundation for a publishable paper. Be careful when you use direct quotes, see APA page 117. Other studies should always be cited but rarely quoted. Most of the time you are identifying and discussing the findings of previous studies using your own words. Direct quotes are used if doing otherwise would mean the loss of meaning or if the person you are quoting is famous (so their direct words lend credibility to your study). Quotes should not exceed one sentence for this paper.

Format Requirements for Paper 1

Paper Component	Criteria
Title Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes title of paper, name of author, institutional affiliation, running head, and page number. • May include author note. • Follows APA guidelines for placement and formatting of each part.
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a brief summary of the contents of the paper in an accurate, non-evaluative, concise manner. • Is 150 to 250 words in length. • Begins on a new page immediately following the title page. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, abstract heading, paragraph indent, text alignment, and line spacing. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents and defines the specific topic of the paper. • Describes the manner in which the topic will be explored. • Citations • Begins on a new page following the abstract. • Title of paper is at the top of the new page before the introduction begins. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of citations in text. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.
Body	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents previous research on the topic in a systematic manner (e.g., grouped by conceptual agreement, by similar methodologies, by historical development). • Presents / cites research from scholarly or peer reviewed sources only (See Note 4). • Identifies relations, contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies in previous research presented. • Is identified by an appropriate APA Level 1 heading. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of citations in text. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summarizes the main points of the research presented in the body. • Suggests the next step(s) in addressing the topic. • Citations, if used, are from scholarly or peer reviewed sources only (See Note 4).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is identified by an appropriate APA Level 1 heading • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of citations in text. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an entry for each reference cited in text. • Includes entries (four or more) from scholarly or peer-reviewed journals only (with documentation available upon request). • Has no entries for references not cited in text. • Begins on a new page immediately following the conclusion. • Is identified by an appropriate APA Level 1 heading. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of each entry. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos).

Note 1: The overriding criterion is original work and authenticity. If it is determined that the paper is not an original work and/or the paper is not the work of the student, a grade of 0 will be assigned to the paper.

Note 2: A paper must be submitted to turnitin and must have a turnitin score of 25% or less. A paper that does not have a turnitin score will be assigned a grade of 0. A paper with a turnitin score greater than 25% will be assigned a grade of 0.

Note 3: The content portion of your paper (introduction, body, and conclusion) may be no more than four (4) pages in length.

Paper 2. See Course eCollege website for due date.

The student will select a research problem, prepare and turn in a prospectus indicating the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the study's hypothesis(es), the methodology to be employed in the study and a review of the literature pertaining to the problem. Paper 2 will normally be a continuation of paper 1 (the content of paper 1 will most likely go in the introduction or literature review) but you can choose a different topic if you like. Your paper 1 does not need to be quoted or even cited since your paper 1 is your own, unpublished work. Published works, even if they are your own, must be cited. You will develop a questionnaire to be used to solve your problem. In a Prospectus--a plan to do research--you do everything except collect data. More information about this paper requirement is located below and under the "Research Paper" menu item.

NOTE: You will NOT be collecting the actual data in this class or analyzing results; however, you should be aware of the following research procedures:

RESEARCH STUDIES/HUMAN SUBJECTS

Procedure A15.02

Texas A&M University-Commerce recognizes the need for investigation in which human beings may serve as research subjects. The University acknowledges and accepts its responsibilities for ensuring that the privacy, safety, health, and welfare of such subjects are adequately protected. All research, which involves any form of participation of human subjects, qualifies as human subject research. This includes certain survey research, research by students as well as by faculty and staff and both internally and externally funded research.

In order to comply with federal regulations as well as to conform to guidelines of the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the principal investigator should obtain approval of their research protocol from the IRB prior to any contact with human subjects.

If you are using humans in any of your research, contact your professor before proceeding with the research project. A determination will be made as to the need for IRB review and approval.

PAPERS WILL BE GRADED ON CONTENT, ORGANIZATION, AND FORMAT.

**PAPER 2 (PROSPECTUS)
SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR PAPER 2**

1. For Paper 2 you will develop a finished "Prospectus for a Thesis." The student is referred to APA Manual for the mechanical details of a prospectus preparation.
2. Approval of the research topic by the instructor can be obtained at any time, but no later than **the end of the second week.**
3. The student should include subheadings for each of the following elements when preparing Chapter 3 of the prospectus:
 - A. Background--What led you into doing this problem--Why are you interested in this problem?
 - B. Problem Statement--What is the problem of your study? You need to be VERY specific. When we talk about a "problem" in research, it does not necessarily mean that something is "wrong." You can have a "problem where you are trying to determine the attitudes and opinions of a response group.
 - C. Purpose of Study--Why is your study important?-- What is the significance of your study.
 - D. Study Hypothesis(es)--an "educated guess" on the results of your study. You should offer support for why you think the results will support your hypothesis(es).

CHAPTER 2 - is titled "Review of Related Literature." A literature review is where you "review" published material that relate to your problem. IF YOU CHOOSE THE SAME TOPIC (PROBLEM) YOU USED FOR PAPER 1, YOU MAY USE THIS PAPER FOR YOUR REVIEW OF LITERATURE. If you choose a different topic for your Prospectus you must do another review of literature that relates to your new topic.

CHAPTER 3 - Titled Methodology. In this chapter you will tell the reader very specifically HOW you are going to solve your problem that was stated in Chapter 1. You must give very detailed information in this chapter. For example describe your proposed sample. This must be a realistic sample--how will you get names, addresses, etc. of your sample group. You cannot say you are going to survey people in Dallas. In other words, describe in detail the procedures and steps that will be used to gather the data.

CHAPTER 4 - Titled Findings - since we are not going to collect data we will not have any findings. However, I would like for you to develop two graphics for this chapter. You will need to make up the data to be used on the graphics.

CHAPTER 5 – Titled Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations. In this chapter all you will need to do is the Summary. We must have data in order to do conclusions and recommendations. In the Summary you will need to state "what you did"--your problem statement. Also, in this Chapter, you need to tell "how you did it" --Methodology.

EACH CHAPTER SHOULD BEGIN ON A NEW PAGE.

The Appendix will contain your cover letter and a copy of your questionnaire. The reference page is located before the appendix.

Rubric for Paper #3

Criteria	1 (Unsatisfactory)	2 (Emerging)	3 (Proficient)
Students will demonstrate the ability to use appropriate secondary data to solve business problems.	No citations, statements unsupported	Citations but not the best or most appropriate, most statements and ideas supported	Appropriate citations important statements and ideas well supported
Students will develop a research plan including a problem statement, hypotheses, related literature, and methodology.	Missing review of key literature; Grammar mistakes; difficult to understand; poor organization; Incorrectly stated problem, purpose. Incorrect or un-testable hypotheses; untestable hypothesis	Literature review supports paper, Problem, purpose and hypotheses done correctly; General English mechanics OK with minimal wordiness	Problem(s), purpose very clear and well thought-out, hypotheses clear, agree with purpose, correct terminology used; well connected thoughts; INTERESTING
Students will understand the scientific method of research and be able to differentiate between descriptive, historical, correlational, and experimental research methods.	Major obvious flaws in validity; scientific method not followed; terminology incorrectly used; research methods incorrect or inappropriate	Scientific method followed;	Problem solving approach is most appropriate; data collection designed for appropriate data analysis; appropriate data analysis described; well organized

Detailed Requirements for Paper 3

Paper Component	Requirements
Title Page	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes title of paper, name of author, institutional affiliation, running head, and page number. • May include author note. • Follows APA guidelines for placement and formatting of each part.
Table of Contents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins on a new page following the title page. • Lists the major parts of the study and the page number on which each part begins (Includes each component listed below in the order listed). • Has leader dots to guide the reader's eye from each part to its corresponding page number. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos).
Abstract	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a brief summary of the study in an accurate, non-evaluative, concise manner. • Is 150 to 250 words in length. • Begins on a new page following the Table of Contents. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, abstract heading, paragraph indent, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of citations in text. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents background information for the study, the purpose of the study, a problem statement, and hypothesis(es). • Citations, if used, are from peer-reviewed or scholarly sources only (See Note 4 below). • Begins on a new page following the Abstract. • Has an appropriate APA Level 1 heading to identify the chapter. • Has appropriate APA Level 2 headings to identify each part of the introduction (see first item in this section for list of parts). • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of citations in text. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.
Review of Related Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents previous research on the topic in a systematic manner (e.g., grouped by conceptual agreement, by similar methodologies, by historical development). • Presents / cites research from scholarly or peer-reviewed sources only (See Note 4 below). • Identifies relations, contradictions, gaps, and inconsistencies in previous research presented. • Begins on a new page following the Introduction. • Has an appropriate Level 1 heading to identify the chapter. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of citations in text. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.
Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a section that describes the survey. • Has a section that describes the study participants. • Has a section that describes the data collection process.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins on a new page following the Review of Related Literature. • Has an appropriate APA Level 1 heading to identify the chapter. • Has an appropriate APA Level 2 heading to identify each section. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of citations in text. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has two graphics that reflect hypothetical data for the study. • Begins on a new page following the Methodology. • Has an appropriate APA Level 1 heading to identify the chapter. • Has graphics formatted in accordance with APA guidelines.
Summary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reiterates the problem statement. • Reiterates the study methodology. • Begins on a new page following the Findings. • Has an appropriate APA Level 1 heading to identify the chapter. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of citations in text. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.
References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has an entry for each reference cited in text. • Includes entries (four or more) from scholarly or peer-reviewed sources only (See Note 4 below). • Has no entries for references not cited in text. • Begins on a new page following the Summary. • Has an appropriate Level 1 heading. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of each entry. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos),
Appendix	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has the cover letter written to accompany the study questionnaire (Appendix A). • Has the questionnaire used in data collection (Appendix B). • Has an appropriate APA Level 1 heading to identify each appendix. • Follows APA guidelines for running head, page number, paragraph indents, text alignment, and line spacing. • Follows APA guidelines for content and format of citations in text. • Is free from errors in text entry (typos), grammar, and usage.

Note 1: The overriding criterion is original work and authenticity. If it is determined that the paper is not an original work and/or the paper is not the work of the student, a grade of 0 will be assigned to the paper. Papers may be checked by submitting them to turnitin where they must have a turnitin score of 25% or less.

Note 3: The content portion of the paper (introduction, review of related literature, methodology, findings, and summary) may be no more than a total of ten (12) pages in length.

Note 4: Maintain documentation to show that each reference is from a scholarly or peer reviewed source.