

**BA 595 APPLIED BUSINESS RESEARCH  
ONLINE COURSE SYLLABUS  
Fall 2014**

**Instructor:** Dr. Jeremy St. John  
**E-Mail:** [Jeremy.StJohn@tamuc.edu](mailto:Jeremy.StJohn@tamuc.edu)  
**Office:** BA 595  
**Office Hours:** TR 11:00 to 2:00, additional tba, and by appointment.

**Welcome to Web-Based BA 595!**

I am available during office hours and by appointment. The best way to contact me is by email. This is an online course; therefore, **expect most communication to be online** as well. I generally respond to emails within a 48 hour time period. Please send emails to [Jeremy.StJohn@tamuc.edu](mailto:Jeremy.StJohn@tamuc.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 three 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, 9<sup>th</sup> edition, 2012.  
ISBN-10: 1111826927 ISBN-13: 978-1111826925

**GRADING POLICY:**

Paper #1	50 points
Journal Article Summary #1	25 points
Journal Article Summary #2	25 points

Paper #2 Reference List	25 points
Paper #2 Abstract	25 points
Paper #2 Complete Paper	150 points
Discussion Questions	50 points (5 each)
Concept quizzes	100 points (25 each)
<b>Total Points:</b>	<b>450 Points</b>

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@tamuc.edu](mailto:StudentDisabilityServices@tamuc.edu)

### **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".

### **COURSE SCHEDULE**

The tentative course schedule will be posted in ecollege. Sometimes it is necessary to extend due dates or make changes/correction to assignments. Any changes to the schedule will be announced in ecollege and reflected in the course schedule. Please check ecollege announcements regularly for changes or updates.

## **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
2. Respond to other's posted questions
3. Reply to any persons who have responded to you

Discussion questions and due dates will be posted under each week in ecollege. You will need to visit the section for the current week in ecollege for directions and due dates. Also check announcements regularly. You are to consider the question or topic and post an appropriate response. You should always support your response. Support can take the form of personal experience, examples or 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.

## **CONCEPT QUIZZES**

Concept quizzes test your knowledge of chapter concepts and industry terminology. One quiz may cover one or more chapters, detail will be given in the weekly sections of the course website. Material available in the weekly sections of ecollege including discussion topics will also be covered by the quizzes. More detail will be provided in the weekly sections of ecollege (such as "In this chapter focus on ..." or "it is not necessary to read pages ... they will not be covered by the quiz...").

### **Article Summary Assignment #1.**

Go to the library website and locate a copy of the 1999 article written by J. Kruger and D. Dunning titled "Unskilled and unaware of it: How difficulties in recognizing one's own incompetence lead to inflated self-assessments". The article appeared in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, volume 77, number 6. Download a copy of this article.

- a. Read the article and complete the "12 Steps to Understanding a Quantitative Research Report" shown below.
- b. The completed outline form cannot be more than two pages long.

### **12 Steps to Understanding a Quantitative Research Report**

Journal articles are all constructed in a similar fashion though there are numerous styles and some have features others do not. In this assignment you will be looking at the components of a research study as it is presented in a journal article.

Directions: Record notes in only enough detail to support recall in the absence of the original document. Except for Step 1, use abbreviations, diagrams, shorthand, and a careful selection of no more than what is absolutely essential to the study. Your work should be less than two pages, use the outline format below.

1. **CITATION.** What study report is this? Record a complete reference citation.
2. **PURPOSE AND GENERAL RATIONALE.** In broad terms, what was the purpose of the study, and how did the author(s) make a case for its general importance?

3. **FIT AND SPECIFIC RATIONALE.** How does the topic of the study fit into the existing research literature, and how is that provenance used to make a specific case for the investigation?
4. **PARTICIPANTS.** Describe who was studied (give number and characteristics) and how they were selected.
5. **CONTEXT.** Where did the study take place? Describe important characteristics.
6. **STEPS IN SEQUENCE.** In the order performed, what were the main procedural steps in the study? Describe or diagram in a flowchart, showing order and any important relationships among the steps.
7. **DATA.** What constituted data (e.g., test scores, questionnaire responses, frequency counts), how was it collected, and what was the role of the investigator(s) in that process?
8. **ANALYSIS.** What form of data analysis was used, and what specific questions was it designed to answer? What (if any) statistical operations and computer programs were employed?
9. **RESULTS.** What did the author(s) identify as the primary results (products or findings produced by the analysis of data)?
10. **CONCLUSIONS.** What did the author(s) assert about how the results in Step 9 responded to the purpose(s) established in Step 2, and how did the events and experiences of the entire study contribute to that conclusion?
11. **CAUTIONS.** What cautions were raised by the author(s) about the study itself or about interpreting the results? Add here any of your own reservations.
12. **DISCUSSION.** What interesting facts or ideas did you learn from reading the report? Include here anything that was of value, including results, research designs and methods, references, instruments, history, useful arguments, or personal inspiration.

Resource used for creating this assignment:

Locke, L.F., Silverman, S.J., & Spirduso, W.W. (2010) Reading and understanding research. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

### **Article Summary Assignment #2.**

#### **Journal Article Summaries**

Your assignment is to write a journal article summary for each of 8 articles you plan to use for Paper 1 & 2. Note that these summaries are in a different format than that used in the 1<sup>st</sup> summary assignment. Use A&M's online library resources to find these articles. Each article MUST be from a journal listed in the Australian Business Dean's Council (ABDC) journal list. Other journals not on the list may be used in your final reference list but not for this assignment.

While preparing to write Paper 1 & 2, you will read many journal articles, some helpful, some not helpful. In order to make the most of your time it is smart to keep track of articles that will be of use to you when you begin writing your final paper. Writing journal article summaries for articles you have read will reduce the amount of time you spend looking at the same articles and trying to remember why you kept a copy of it.

Writing a journal article summary is the process of reducing a researcher's contribution into meaningful sentences using your own words. It is helpful to know the steps you will need to follow and the format you will need to use to write a good journal article summary.

#### **The Steps**

1. Start with the abstract. The abstract sums up the entire article using only 150-200 words. You should get a good idea of what the article is about by reading the summary. If the summary does not stay focused on your topic, you may decide to quit reading and look for another article. On the other hand, if it matches your own research topic, you will want to keep reading.
2. Scan the article. Look for definitions and constructs. Researchers write for other researchers and often use their own terminology, so it will be important for you to become familiar with words and phrases you see often.
3. Look through the findings and conclusions. If the article's findings are important to your research you will want to write up a summary of the article.
4. Use your own words to describe/discuss/summarize the article. Do not have quotes longer than one sentence. When you start writing your paper, it will be easier to use your journal article summaries since they are in your own words. Your summary should follow the format described in the next section. **Use an outline format labeling each of the sections below. The only part of this assignment that must use APA style is the reference.**

**The Format of the Journal Article Summary** (use the outline format below and clearly label each component when you turn in this assignment)

Since most journal articles have similar sections, you will want to summarize each section listed below.

**Article reference** – At the top of the page, include the bibliographic information of the article you are summarizing. Use APA format.

#### **Introduction**

1. **Identify the research problem:** A research problem is an issue existing in the literature, in theory or in practice that leads to a need for the study.
2. **Identify the purpose of the research:** The purpose is the central direction for the study, the single concept or ideas to be explored or understood. It includes the goal and central idea of the study. Look for key words such as "intent", "purpose" or "objective".
3. **Identify the research question(s):** Research questions link to the purpose and focus on a single concept.
4. **Identify the variables used in the study**

**Methodology** – State the hypotheses. Procedures used? Who was involved? What did they do? Describe what was measured? How was it measured?

**Finding/conclusions** – Were the hypotheses supported? Unsupported? What does the author conclude?

**Your Comments** – Include why the article is pertinent to your research. These are notes to yourself.

#### **RESEARCH PAPER ASSIGNMENTS**

The following are the specific assignments:

##### **Paper 1: Literature Review. See Course eCollege website for due date.**

The student will select a research problem on a business/economics topic of your choice (4 to 5 pages of CONTENT: Introduction, body and conclusion) and prepare a literature review. Approval of the research topic by the instructor should be obtained by the end of the second week.

**Follow APA format.** Part of the objective of this paper is for you to learn to use the APA Manual. Use a 12 point font--double spacing. The primary objective of this paper (and the course) is to teach you how to do research. You are to assume this is the literature review for a publishable journal article and it will be graded as such. Be careful when you use direct quotes. See APA page 117. For all assignments in this class direct quotes cannot be longer than one sentence. Too many, too long, or inappropriate quotes will lose points. However, be sure and cite all your sources (give credit and reference).

### Detailed Requirements for Paper 1

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

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

**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 may lose points. A paper with a turnitin score greater than 25% may lose points or be assigned a grade of 0.**

**Note 3: The content portion of your paper (introduction, body, and conclusion) should be between four (4) and five (5) pages in length. It may be no more than five (5) pages in length.**

**Paper 2: Final Paper. See Course eCollege website for due date.**

This is a continuation of Paper 1. The main component of Paper 1 will be the introduction and literature review sections for this paper which may or may not need modification from what was turned in for paper 1. Students are allowed to choose a different topic but get the topic approved by your instructor. In this final paper indicate the background of the problem, the problem statement, the purpose of the study, the study's hypotheses, the methodology to be employed in the study and a review of the literature (this can be paper 1, as long as you use the same topic). You will develop a questionnaire to test your hypotheses. If possible use existing measurement scales as a source for your primary questions and cite the source of those questions. You will do everything EXCEPT actually collect or analyze 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; 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.**

**FINAL PAPER 2  
SPECIFIC INFORMATION FOR FINAL PAPER 2**

1. Approval of the research topic by the instructor should be obtained by the end of the third week.

2. The student should include subheadings in the table of contents for each of the following elements when preparing this paper:
  - A. Background--What led you into doing this problem--Why is this problem important for businesses or other organizations?
  - 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 necessarily mean that something is "wrong." For example 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. Hypotheses should be supported by previous studies (cite your resources) or supported by theory (cite your references).

CHAPTER 1 - is titled "Introduction." This content will come from your earlier paper but may need editing.

CHAPTER 2 - is titled "Review of Related Literature." A literature review is where you "review" published material that relate to your problem. This content will come from your earlier paper but may need editing. If you choose a different topic for this paper 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.

<b>General Rubric for Paper #2</b>			
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>1 (Unsatisfactory)</b>	<b>2 (Emerging)</b>	<b>3 (Proficient)</b>
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,	Missing review of key literature; Grammar mistakes; difficult to	Literature review supports paper, Problem, purpose and hypotheses done	Problem(s), purpose very clear and well thought-out, hypotheses clear,

<p>hypotheses, related literature, and methodology.</p>	<p>understand; poor organization; Incorrectly stated problem, purpose. Incorrect or un-testable hypotheses. Section titles or sub-headings missing.</p>	<p>correctly; General English mechanics OK with minimal wordiness</p>	<p>agree with purpose, correct terminology used; well-connected thoughts; INTERESTING</p>
<p>Students will understand the scientific method of research and be able to differentiate between descriptive, historical, correlational, and experimental research methods.</p>	<p>Major obvious flaws in validity; scientific method not followed; terminology incorrectly used; research methods incorrect or inappropriate</p>	<p>Scientific method followed;</p>	<p>Problem solving approach is most appropriate; data collection designed for appropriate data analysis; appropriate data analysis described; well organized</p>

**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 (certain exceptions, such as the use of pre-existing scales in a survey, may apply).

**Note 2:** The content portion of the paper (introduction, review of related literature, methodology, findings, and summary) may be no more than a total of ten (11) pages in length.

**Additional requirements help, and instruction will be provided on the ecollege course website.**