

**THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
LONDON CANADA**

**Management and Organization Studies
BMOS 341 G (Winter 2008)
Research Methods in Human Resources**

Course Instructor	: Yinglei Wang, Ph.D. Candidate
Class Times/Location	: Mondays 2:30-5:30pm., Somerville House 2355
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Office Hours	: Tuesdays 10a.m.—12noon or by appointment
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PREREQUISITES: Enrollment in 3rd or 4th year of the BMOS program and one of: Statistical Sciences 023a/b and 024a/b, Statistical Sciences 135, Psychology 208E and 281, Psychology 282E, Psychology 283a/b, psychology284F/G, Sociology231.

Senate Regulations state, “unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your dean to enroll in it, you will be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites”.

OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course, you should be able to ...

- Develop an appreciation of the research process and a range of research approaches that can be applied to human resource management problems
- Assess and make use of research done by others
- Plan and execute your own research projects

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

Saks, A.M. (2000). Research, measurement, and evaluation of human resources. Scarborough, ON: Nelson Thomson Learning.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

Turabian, K.L. (1996). A manual for writers of term papers, theses, and dissertations. 6th ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Anderson, C., Carrell, A., & Widdifield, J.L. (2004). APA and MLA writing formats. Boston: Pearson.

EVALUATION

Your evaluation will be based on four components: your class preparation and participation, your group assignments, a midterm exam, and a research proposal.

Class Preparation and Participation	10%
Group Assignments	30%
Midterm Exam	25%
Research Proposal	35%

1. Class Preparation and Participation (10%)

Please read assigned readings PRIOR TO class, and make an active, worthwhile contribution to the class through your ideas, questions, or comments. Attendance also counts, and participation points will be deducted for excessive absence.

2. Group Assignments (30%)

This course is NOT to be viewed as a competitive activity among students. Co-operation, reinforcement, and the sharing of ideas are key to both learning and the course's success. You are expected to work in a group to accomplish three assignments. Your group needs to be made up of 3-4 members of this class. Please recognize that you will need to make a commitment to working on these group assignments (e.g., data collection, group meetings, out-of-class discussions, etc.). There will be final peer evaluations due in the end of the course. Although members will initially receive the same grade, this may change depending on peer evaluations.

3. Midterm Exam (25%)

This exam is a closed-book exam – no books, notes, calculators, electronic dictionaries, or aids of any type will be allowed. It will primarily involve short answer format questions that are based on the content covered in the first six sessions. Students will be notified of any changes/ additions to the exam format (i.e., multiple choice/ fill-ins).

4. Research Proposal (35%)

This course requires each student to choose a research question in the area of Human Resources and develop a research proposal for an empirical study accordingly. The due date for research questions is January 28, 2008. You are strongly encouraged to discuss your choice of topic with me before this date, and to consult with me about the content of your research proposal at least once prior to your final submission.

The research proposal should:

- Summarize the topic of interest (Introduction, 1-2 pages).
- Review what research has been conducted in the past, and identify a gap (Literature Review and/or Theoretical Background, 2 pages).
- Formulate one or two testable hypotheses to address the gap that has been identified (Hypotheses, 2-3 pages).
- Describe the sources of data, measures, and processes of data analysis (Methods, 2-3 pages).
- Discuss the implications and limitations of your research (1-2 pages).
- Be written in APA or MLA format.

The research proposal should be approximately 10 pages (12 point font, double-spaced) in length excluding references, tables and figures. It should be written in complete sentence and paragraph style. Point-form is not acceptable. If you have not had prior ACADEMIC writing experience, I strongly advise you to read the recommended books or take any writing and preparatory courses you can to learn to communicate in a scholarly fashion in English.

POLICIES

Classes

Material covered in classes will not always be the same as material covered in the textbook. These two sources should be viewed as complimentary and not redundant. As such students who want to do well in this course are strongly encouraged to attend classes on a regular basis.

I will make every effort to start class on time so please be punctual. I will also make every effort to end class on time. Please remain in your seat during class. It is distracting if your leave/come back. The classroom is a cell phone- and beeper-free environment, and engaging in private talking during lectures and presentations will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism and Other Academic Misconduct

Students are responsible for understanding the nature of and avoiding the occurrence of plagiarism and other academic offences. Students are urged to read the section on Scholastic Offences in the Academic Calendar. Note that such offences include plagiarism, submitting false or fraudulent assignments or credentials, or submitting for credit in any course without the knowledge and approval of the instructor to whom it is submitted, any academic work for which credit has previously been obtained or is being sought in another course in the University or elsewhere.

I require that all written assignments, papers and presentations must constitute your own work. For your information, the UWO guidelines on plagiarism state:

“Plagiarism, may be defined as "The act of appropriating the literary composition of another, or parts or passages of his writings, or the ideas or language of the same, and passing them off as the product of one's own mind." Excerpted from H.C. Black, Black's Law Dictionary, West Publishing Co., 1979, 5th Ed., p. 1035. This concept applies with equal force to all assignments including laboratory reports, diagrams, and computer projects and is considered at major Scholastic Offence.

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea, or a passage of text from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. The University of Western Ontario uses software for plagiarism checking. Students may be required to submit their written work in electronic form for plagiarism checking”.

I will ask you to submit all of your work electronically. I routinely run all student papers through plagiarism checking software. In terms of plagiarism checking:

“All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com (<http://www.turnitin.com>)”.

The penalties for a student guilty of a scholastic offence include refusal of a passing grade in the assignment, refusal of a passing grade in the course, suspension from the university, and expulsion from the university.

Deadlines

Both individual and group assignments should be turned in on time. Assignments turned in past each due date will be penalized. Late assignments will be dropped a 20% for each day late. I will not grade papers that are more than 3 days late; these will receive an automatic F.

You are entitled to an extension of deadlines for legitimate medical or compassionate reasons. However, it is your responsibility to inform me prior to the due date, and if requested, to provide acceptable documentation to support a medical or compassionate claim. In the case of final assignment in the course, you must arrange for an incomplete through the dean's office, for which you will be required to provide acceptable documentation.

If students feel that they have a medical or personal problem that is interfering with their work, they should contact me and the Faculty Academic Counseling Office as soon as possible. Problems may then be documented and possible arrangements to assist the students can be discussed at the time of occurrence rather than on a retroactive basis. In general, retroactive requests for grade revisions on medical or compassionate grounds will not be considered.

Procedures for Appealing Academic Evaluations

In the first instance, all appeals of grade must be made to the course instructor (informal consultation). If the student is not satisfied with the decision of the course instructor, a written appeal must be sent to the Program Director or Designate of the BMOS program. If the response of the director is considered unsatisfactory to the student, he/she may then appeal to the Dean of the Faculty in which the course of program was taken. Only after receiving a final decision from the Dean, may a student appeal to the Senate Review Board Academic. A Guide to Appeals is available from the Ombudsperson's office.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Class #	Date	Topic	Assignment
1	January 7	Introduction to Research Methods in Human Resources Reading: Chapter 1	
2	January 14	Research Designs and Survey Research Reading: Chapter 2 and 3	<i>Group Assignment #1: Survey Design (due on January 21)</i>
3	January 21	Experimental Research Designs Reading: Chapter 4	
4	January 28	Qualitative Research Designs Reading: Chapter 5	<i>Group Assignment #2: Interview Design (due on February 4)</i> Research Question due at noon
5	February 4	Existing research and Meta- Analysis Reading: Chapter 6	
6	February 11	Development and the Quality of Measures in Human Resources Reading: Chapter 7 and 8	
7	February 18	Midterm exam	
	February 25	No Class (Reading Week)	
8	March 3	Individual Measurement Techniques Reading: Chapter 9	<i>Group Assignment #3: Paper Review (due on March 10)</i> Introduction & Literature review due at noon
9	March 10	Group and Organizational Measurement Techniques Reading: Chapter 10	
10	March 17	Statistical Evaluation Reading: Chapter 11	Hypotheses & Methods due at noon
11	March 24	Financial Evaluation of HR Evaluation of HR systems Reading: Chapter 12 and 13	
12	March 31	Presentations of Research Proposals	
13	April 7	The Future of HR research Reading: Chapter 14	
	April 14		Research Proposal due at noon

Assignment #1:

Exercise 1 on textbook P. 90.

Design a survey based on the questions in Table 3.2 (P. 67). Your design should include two components: a questionnaire and a survey plan. In addition to the questions, the questionnaire needs to have a short cover letter that explains the purpose of the survey, describes the process, and seeks consent. The survey plan should address how you would collect data (sampling, media, etc.) and how you would analyze data.

Ask five people outside your own group to complete the survey. Be prepared to present your surveys and share your knowledge and experience in the class.

Please hand in your surveys electronically by 1 a.m., January 21.

Assignment #2– DO QUESTION 1 OR QUESTION 2 as assigned

Exercise 4 on textbook P. 90: “The following are just some of the questions a researcher interested in studying the research that is conducted by human resource departments might want to ask: Do human resource departments conduct research? What kind of research do they conduct, and what methods do they use? What major topics or issues are the foci of the research? Do they conduct survey research, and if so what is its purpose? How do they design surveys, and what kinds of variables do they measure? What do they do with the results of the research?”

In an attempt to answer these as well as related questions:

1. Design a **telephone interview** on the topic “Research in Human Resource Departments”. What are the unique benefits and challenges of this method for your work? How would you analyze your data?
2. Design a **focus group interview** on the topic “Research in Human Resource Departments”. What are the unique benefits and challenges of this method for your work? How would you analyze your data?

Create a brief (no more than 3 slides) presentation of your research design. All groups will present their answers to the assigned questions using these presentations.

Please hand in your slides electronically by 1 a.m., February 4.

Assignment #3:

Review several recent issues of the Journal of Applied Psychology, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Human Resource Management, etc. and find an empirical article that compares the mean differences between groups of individuals and one that includes measures of association. Create two overhead slides to communicate the following issues:

The (one) central hypothesis or research question

The diagram of dependent and independent variables

Measures of the variables

Research design and Statistical techniques

Findings and Implications

Strength and weaknesses of the study (What would you do similarly or differently if conduct the same study?).

All groups will present their reviews in the class.

Please hand in your slides electronically by 1 a.m., March 10.