

BUSINESS RESEARCH METHODS

Course code	<i>MNG165</i>
Compulsory in the programmes	<i>International Business and Communication, Business Management and Analytics</i>
Level of studies	<i>Undergraduate</i>
Number of credits	<i>6 ECTS (48 in-class hours + 6 consultation hours + 2 exam hours, 104 individual work hours)</i>
Course coordinator (title and name)	<i>Senior lecturer Dr. Eglé Verseckaitė-Grzeskowiak</i>
Prerequisites	<i>None</i>
Language of instruction	<i>English</i>

THE AIM OF THE COURSE:

The main goal of this course is to impart knowledge and skills necessary for conducting and evaluating business research. The course will begin with the introduction to the fundamental principles that underlie approaches to research and the practical implications of these principles, including formulation of research questions, concepts of validity and reliability, and issues of research ethics. We will then proceed to unpack the main qualitative and quantitative methods used in business research. Conducting their own research projects will help develop students' practical research skills, and analysis of published research and other students' research projects will sharpen their ability to critically evaluate the information coming from research conducted by others. Presentation of their own research findings and discussion of others' research will also serve to refine the students' presentation and communication skills. Students who have successfully completed the course and all its assignments will be able to define the research question, formulate the research design, choose the appropriate methods for data collection and analysis, present and apply their findings, and critically evaluate other researchers' output. Finally, the skills and knowledge gained in this course will also be employable during the preparation of BA theses.

MAPPING OF COURSE LEVEL LEARNING OUTCOMES (OBJECTIVES) WITH DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES (See Annex), ASSESMENT AND TEACHING METHODS

Course level learning outcomes (objectives)	Degree level learning objectives (Number of LO)	Assessment methods	Teaching methods
CLO1. The student is able to understand the purpose and scope of empirical research.	BLO1.1	Exam	Lectures, individual study based on readings
CLO2. The student can identify and understand potential ethical, empirical and analytical problems plaguing the research process and ways to overcome them.	BLO1.1, BLO1.2, BLO2.1.	Exam, paper, midterm progress report	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO3. The student is able to identify a business problem/ need, translate it into a research question, and design an appropriate way to answer it.	BLO1.1, BLO1.2	Exam, paper, midterm progress report	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO4. The student is able to formulate empirically testable hypotheses and choose the most appropriate tools for testing them.	BLO1.2, BLO3.1, BLO3.2	Exam, paper, midterm progress report	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project

CLO5. The student is able to identify and understand the main qualitative and quantitative methods of business research, their advantages and disadvantages and appropriate application areas.	BLO1.1, BLO1.2	Exam, paper, midterm progress report	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO6. The student develops skills in choosing suitable case studies, sampling, measurement, questionnaire and interview guide design, conducting interviews and surveys, leading focus groups, processing and analyzing collected data.	BLO1.1, BLO1.2, BLO3.1, BLO3.2	Exam, paper, midterm progress report	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO7. The student is able to communicate research findings and their implications in a clear and well organized way, both orally and in writing.	BLO1.2, BLO4.1, BLO4.2, BLO4.3	Exam, paper, midterm progress report, presentation	Lectures, individual study based on readings, reporting on the research project in written form and orally
CLO8. The student is able to critically evaluate the quality of own and other people's research findings and the process used to obtain them.	BLO1.1, BLO2.1	Paper, presentation, participation scorecard	Lectures, individual study based on readings, working on the research project
CLO9. The student is able to work as a member of a research team, communicate, share tasks, and keep themselves and teammates accountable for their performance throughout the process of conducting research.	BLO2.1, BLO4.1	Paper, presentation, participation scorecard	Working on the research project

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY

The ISM University of Management and Economics Code of Ethics, including cheating and plagiarism are fully applicable and will be strictly enforced in the course. Academic dishonesty and cheating can and will lead to a report to the ISM Committee of Ethics. With regard to remote learning, ISM reminds students that they are expected to adhere and maintain the same academic honesty and integrity that they would in a classroom setting.

COURSE OUTLINE

Topic	In-class hours	Readings (<i>optional additional materials are indicated in italics</i>)
1. Introduction to the course. Research question and research design. Research ethics.	4	Zikmund et al., Chs.4, 6, pp.50-74, 107-131. <i>Tharenou, Donohue, & Cooper, Ch.1, pp.3-29.</i>
2. Types of data. Literature review.	4	"Writing a Literature Review" by the Language Center, Asian Institute of Technology, February 17 th , 2005. <i>Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, Chs.3, 8, pp. 58-105, 256-287.</i>
3. Data measurement and quality.	4	Zikmund et al., Chs.13, 14, pp.291-334. <i>Tharenou, Donohue, & Cooper, Chs.8-9, pp.149-185.</i>
4. Sampling	4	Sekaran & Bougie, Ch.10, pp.261-301.

5. Data collection: Survey.	4	Babbie, Ch.9, pp.243-284.
6. Qualitative data collection methods.	4	Malhotra, Ch.5, pp.140-173.
7. Data collection: Observation.	4	Zikmund et al., Ch.11, pp.238-255.
8. Midterm evaluation	2	(Note: research project progress evaluation, not a theoretical test.)
9. Data preparation and analysis.	8	Bryman, Chs. 14, 15, pp.313-362.
10. Research report preparation.	4	Sekaran & Bougie. Ch.14, pp.389-422. <i>Tharenou, Donohue, & Cooper, Ch.13, pp.275-315.</i>
11. Research presentation.	4	(Note: split between written research report evaluation + oral presentation)
12. Review of the course.	2	
	Total: 48 hours	
CONSULTATIONS	6	
FINAL EXAM	2	

FINAL GRADE COMPOSITION

Type of assignment	%
<i>Group Components 50%</i>	
Midterm progress report	10%
Research project	30%
Presentation	10%
<i>Individual Components 50%</i>	
Participation scorecard	25%
Exam	25%
Total:	100

DESCRIPTION AND GRADING CRITERIA OF EACH ASSIGNMENT

(Provide short descriptions and grading criteria of each assignment)

1. Research project.

This is the key part of the course that helps students master the craft of researching. Research project will be conducted in teams of 5 students. The students have to be in the same small seminar group to ensure that the team can attend the seminars together.

All team members are equally responsible for each week's homework and for the whole research project. Labour division does not equal knowledge division, therefore each member of the team has to know everything about the research project, be able to explain and justify any choices of methods and information and defend any part of the research project, such as the literature

review, data measurement scales, questionnaires, choice of sampling, data collection process and data analysis results, and be competent to answer any questions the lecturer may ask. Saying things like „I don't know what this means because my teammate did this part“, or „this part is not done because my teammate was supposed to do it“, will only garner penalty points. A large part of the educational benefit of team work is learning by explaining to others and finding common ground, so make sure to plan enough time for team meetings and for checking each other's work. The most successful teams are those that meet often and work on the paper together far in advance before any deadlines. If you do not leave yourselves enough time to check each other's work, you risk submitting an internally incoherent paper, which is one of the biggest shortcomings and can bring your grade down significantly.

In order for teamwork to function properly, it is imperative that the team members follow the basic rules of teamwork, including personal responsibility, open communication, commitment to efficiency, and keeping interim deadlines.

Each team has to choose a real world case to work on, provided by a firm, a business or an organization that would have a problem/need and would give their consent to cooperate during the course of the research, turn this problem/need into a research question, formulate the research design, choose the appropriate methodology (since the purpose of this paper is to practice what you learn, it is usually required to use more than one method), gather and analyze data, and present their findings. Since most tasks are given by ISM partner companies, it is imperative for students to realize the responsibility they carry as representatives of our university and to strive to maximize the quality of their work.

The steps of the preparation of the research project will be part of the seminar homework. Please make sure that any written assignment you submit is formatted and cited according to ISM requirements, that the names of the team members are clearly indicated on the first page, and that the team number is included in the running head.

It is crucial for the students to meet the deadlines in order to get proper feedback and to not jeopardize both their participation grade and the quality of the research project. Considering the number of students that are participating in this course, any kind of delay causes a chain reaction of problems for your team and for others – be considerate!

Feedback will be provided several times during the process and must be taken into account immediately. Repeating the mistakes that have already been pointed out earlier would result in penalty points, so please pay close attention to all comments.

Keep in mind that not only the final paper, but all homework tasks, midterm and draft projects have to be properly cited and formatted according to ISM requirements (you can find them on e-learning).

At the end of the semester the students will present their research results during seminars. Afterwards students will have to submit the research report in written form with adjustments based on the commentary they receive. You will be given more detailed step-by-step guidelines for your research projects during the lectures.

Your final paper should be approximately 25000-30000 characters long (not counting visuals, spaces or the bibliography) and formatted according to the official ISM requirements. Papers that are shorter than 20000 or longer than 35000 may be downgraded based on whether they are characterized by unnecessary wordiness and repetitiveness or, conversely, are missing relevant information. Keep in mind that having a streamlined, non-repetitive, yet comprehensive text covering all necessary parts in the most efficient manner is more important than churning out a certain number of characters.

Late submissions of research reports will not get feedback and will be given a grade of 0, and will prevent those students from taking the final exam. Papers that have plagiarism issues or misrepresent the research process and data will also be given a 0 and reported to the ethics committee for disciplinary measures. The rules regarding plagiarism apply to all interim and final project submissions and include both intentional and accidental plagiarism, so make sure to always reference your sources properly.

The evaluation of the research project will count towards 30% of the final grade. However, its actual weight is greater, since your work on the research project also directly affects the midterm progress report, the participation grade, and the presentation grade. Despite the fact that it is possible to improve in the process, it is imperative to put maximum effort into the interim submissions, as their grade will be part of the final grade, so those who fail to take this work seriously starting from the first day would forfeit the possibility of achieving the maximum grade later on. The research project grade cannot be substituted with a retake.

2. Participation.

This is the key part of the course that affects other parts of evaluation. It is imperative for students to have done the readings and the assigned homework before each seminar and to actively participate in the seminar meetings. Without completing participation tasks (such as formative quizzes, homework assignments, serving as experimentation participants, in-class work and commentary on research projects), the student cannot be allowed to take the midterm and later the final exam.

All members of a research project team must come to the seminar together. The homework grade applies to the whole team, but a student must be physically present to get points for attendance and in-class work. Those who come late, leave early, or engage in unrelated activities, such as social media, will get penalty points. Smartphones must be put on silent mode and put out of sight during an on-campus class. During the online seminars, each teammate needs to be present for the whole duration of the class and actively engage in working on the research project.

The participation scorecard will include points based on attendance and active participation in class, possible exercises and quizzes, timely completion of homework tasks and their quality, as well as teammates' peer review. If there are issues with referencing in the paper during any of the several submissions, it will result in adding penalty points to the participation scorecard.

The participation grade will count towards 25% of the final grade. It is worth emphasizing that this grade greatly depends on the students work on the research project in a timely manner. It is also worth emphasizing that this is usually the highest part of the final grade, as the points are given mostly for the effort and are rather generous, so it would be quite shortsighted to waste the opportunity to gather a comfortable cushion of points by missing many seminars. Each student will have to submit peer review of his/her teammates twice during the semester, and the participation grades will be adjusted accordingly, so it is imperative to take the teamwork seriously during the course of the semester, as free-riders are likely to get their participation grade lowered to the point where it becomes unlikely to have an overall passing grade for the class (keep in mind that experience shows that students who are not responsible team members are also more likely to fail in managing their independent work, such as reviewing the theoretical material for the exams). The participation grade cannot be substituted with a retake.

3. Midterm progress report.

Instead of a midterm exam, students will have to provide an interim draft of their paper, a midterm peer review form, and the collected qualitative data in the form of interview recordings, transcriptions, informed consent forms and the Q-R matrix by a specified date during the midterm period. More detailed instructions will be provided during lectures. The grade for the midterm progress report makes up 10% of the overall grade for this course and cannot be substituted by a retake.

4. Presentation.

At the end of the semester students will prepare presentations on their research projects. The presentation is graded based on the visual quality of the slides, the quality of the speech, the precision of terminology usage, the coverage of all relevant material, the quality and legibility of the figures/ tables, the smoothness of presentation, fitting into the time limits, and the quality of the Q&A with the audience. Some presentations may take place in the partner companies' offices rather than on campus, while most of them will take place online. Please keep in mind that presentations will be grouped by topic/company, therefore, their schedule will not match the regular seminar group times. Take whatever preparations necessary to ensure that your schedule is flexible on the last weeks of the semester so you could present at any available time. The presentation grade counts for 10% of the final grade and cannot be substituted with a retake.

5. Final exam.

The final exam will count towards 25% of the final grade. If conditions permit, it will be administered on campus and will be a closed-book test comprised of multiple choice and open questions. Otherwise, it will take place online on the e-learning system. Students' answers will be evaluated based on the demonstrated comprehension of the course material and skills in applying appropriate concepts and terminology. The exam will be based on material from the whole course and both lectures and readings, and will include closed and open questions based on cumulative course material and your own research projects. It will last 2 hours. Students must have completed all participation tasks and submitted the research report on time to be allowed to take the final exam. It is the students' responsibility to keep track of their homework completion on time, the teacher calculates the results after the deadline and informs the students who are not allowed to take the exam.

RETAKE POLICY

In case of a failing final grade, students are allowed a retake exam. It will cover all course material and take place on the e-learning system (in a computer lab if conditions permit). The weight of a retake is only 25% (which means a student is quite likely to fail the class if they don't collect enough points to build a passing grade for participation and especially for the research project). The grades for the participation scorecard, the midterm progress report, the presentation and the research project are not annulled and cannot be substituted by the retake.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS

- Each week students are expected to know what was said during the lectures and what is in the mandatory readings, and may be periodically tested on that knowledge.
- This course is about learning a craft, which requires rigour and paying close attention to detail. You need to master the terminology and the methods, both the theory and the practical skills. This is a fundamental course for any person with university education and there are no unimportant parts here, you need to learn everything.
- The most important thing the students can do to succeed in this class is work during the semester and complete all assignments on time. Those who expect to only study before the exams can expect to fail, because the largest part of your grade is determined by your ongoing work on the research project and seminar participation.
- Keep in mind that it is a violation of academic ethics to pressure the teacher for a higher grade than you have earned throughout the semester. Students who try to skirt the rules and get away from doing all the work they are supposed to do will cause a tightening of the rules for everyone. You have plenty of opportunities to gather points throughout the

semester, so do not start asking for additional opportunities at the end of the class, there will be none. In contrast, those who work diligently throughout the semester can expect relatively high grades.

- Meeting deadlines is imperative. No excuses and no exceptions. Lateness will be heavily penalized – from getting a 0 for the assignment to not being allowed to take the final exam.
- The students must use their official ISM e-mail or the assigned team’s channel on ISM MS Teams to contact the lecturer and clearly indicate the course name, team number and the subject matter of the question in the subject line of the e-mail. Meanwhile, in the body of the e-mail, students should indicate what the lecture slides and the readings say about the topic they are asking about in order to substantiate their need for additional inquiry. It is very important that you respect the time of others. If you have a question, first check whether there is no answer to your question in the readings or the lecture slides, and then write: “this is what slides X and Y of the lecture say..., this is what the readings say..., this is what I don’t understand...”. The lecturer is available for feedback and comments, but it is your responsibility to maximize the efficiency of communication. If you ask for information that has already been given, this indicates that you were not paying attention, which means that you expect to be taught the same thing twice, which is an abuse of other people’s time, as thus you take up the time that could be devoted to moving forward with the research projects. The detailed slides are there for a reason. It is also crucial to pay close attention to the e-mails that come from the e-learning notification system and to check them daily. In sum, make sure that you are not being careless and asking for information that has already been provided to you, and be respectful of other’s time.
- Whenever the students have to submit their work, their surnames must be clearly indicated on the document in alphabetical order, and the document must be properly formatted according to ISM requirements. The file names of submitted documents, such as the research project, must start with the students’ team ID and may include last names. Due to the number of students the teacher has to manage, it is very important that you follow these rules so your e-mails and submissions do not get lost.
- If there are any changes to the rules, you will be informed during the lectures and through the e-learning system. Lecture attendance is highly advisable, not only because of the periodic quizzes which build into the participation scorecard, but also because it will be the main source of information and each student is expected to know everything that has been said during the lecture. Remember: *ignorantia legis non excusat*.

REQUIRED READINGS

1. Babbie, E. (2007). *The Practice of Social Research*. 11th ed. (Intl. student ed.). Thomson/ Wadsworth.
2. Bryman, A. (2008). *Social Research Methods*. 3rd ed. Oxford University Press.
3. Malhotra, N.K. (2007). *Marketing Research*. 5th ed. Pearson Education Ltd.
4. Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2009). *Research Methods for Business: A Skill-Building Approach*. 5th ed. Wiley.
5. Zikmund, W.G., Babin, B.J., Carr, C.J., & Griffin, M. (2009). *Business Research Methods*. 8th ed. South-Western College Pub.
6. “Writing a Literature Review” by the Language Center, Asian Institute of Technology, February 17th, 2005.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

1. Aaker, D.A., Kumar, V., & Day, G.S. (2009). *Marketing Research*. New York: Wiley.
2. Churchill, G.A., & Iacobucci, D. (2010). *Marketing research: methodological foundations*. 10th ed. South-Western, Cengage Learning.
3. Field, A. (2013). *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS Statistics*. 4th ed. SAGE Publications.
4. Hair, J.F., Jr., Babin, B., Money, A.H., & Samouel, P. (2003). *Essentials of Business Research Methods*. Wiley.
5. McGivern, Y. (2006). *The Practice of Market and Social Research: An Introduction*. Harlow: Financial Times Prentice Hall.
6. Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2009). *Research Methods for Business Students*. 5th Ed. Pearson Education Limited.
7. Tharenou, P., Donohue, R., & Cooper, B. (2007). *Management Research Methods*. Cambridge University Press.
8. Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. New Delhi: SAGE Publications.

DEGREE LEVEL LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Business Management

*Programmes:
International Business and Communication,
Business Management and Marketing, Finance,
Industrial Technology Management*

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	BLO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the business disciplines
	BLO1.2. Students will be able to conduct a contextual analysis to identify a problem associated with their discipline, to generate managerial options and propose viable solutions
Students will be socially responsible in their related discipline	BLO2.1. Students will be knowledgeable about ethics and social responsibility
Students will be technology agile	BLO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	BLO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	BLO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	BLO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	BLO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper

Learning objectives for the Bachelor of Social Science

*Programmes:
Economics and Data Analytics,
Economics and Politics*

Learning Goals	Learning Objectives
Students will be critical thinkers	ELO1.1. Students will be able to understand core concepts and methods in the key economics disciplines
	ELO1.2. Students will be able to identify underlying assumptions and logical consistency of causal statements
Students will have skills to employ economic thought for the common good	ELO2.1. Students will have a keen sense of ethical criteria for practical problem-solving
Students will be technology agile	ELO3.1. Students will demonstrate proficiency in common business software packages
	ELO3.2. Students will be able to make decisions using appropriate IT tools
Students will be effective communicators	ELO4.1. Students will be able to communicate reasonably in different settings according to target audience tasks and situations
	ELO4.2. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively through an oral presentation
	ELO4.3. Students will be able to convey their ideas effectively in a written paper