Course Title: Market Research Methods (MARK 6340 90L)  
Term: Summer 1, 2017  
Instructor: Dr. Xiaojing Sheng  
Phone: 956.665.3317  
Office Hours: 3-5 p.m. Monday & Wednesday; other times by appointment

Meeting Times and Location: Online  
Office Location: ECOBE BUSA 211J  
Email: xiaojing.sheng@utrgv.edu

Course Description
This course addresses the use of market research as an aid to making decisions directly or indirectly related to marketing. This course covers quantitative and qualitative research procedures as well as techniques used in today’s businesses. In this course, you will be taken through the entire market research process from formulating research problem(s) and determining research design to analyzing and interpreting data to help you gain actionable information that will lead to intelligent decisions.

Required Textbook

Required Software
SPSS: SPSS is the abbreviation for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. SPSS is installed on computers in the labs of the College of Business and Entrepreneurship building and the Academic Services building on Edinburg campus. You can easily get access to SPSS if you work on campus. If you work off campus, you can connect to Virtual Labs to access the software. To connect to Virtual Labs, please go to this webpage and follow the instructions there:
http://www.utrgv.edu/it/how-to/vlabs-connection/index.htm

Another option is to download a 14-day trial version from IBM’s website:
You can find many SPSS tutorials on the Internet. And I highly recommend this one to you. This is a very useful and easy-to-understand tutorial that assumes you do not have any prior knowledge of how to use SPSS.

Technical Skills Required
Student must be able to use computer and Internet browser software. In addition, student must be proficient in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint Software.

Technical Resources
This course is a fully online course and will consist of readings from the textbook, viewing of slides, course discussion, assignments, and quizzes. All course content will be delivered through Blackboard. You must ensure that you have access to the Internet and Blackboard. If you need assistance, please contact the Center for Online Learning, Teaching & Technology (COLTT) Help Desk at: 956-882-6792 (Brownsville) and 956-665-5327 (Edinburg). You can also email them at: colthelp@utrgv.edu or visit the website: https://colttapps.utrgv.edu/helpme

Attendance
Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and may be dropped from the course for excessive absences. UTRGV’s attendance policy excuses students from attending class if they are participating in officially sponsored university activities, such as athletics; for observance of religious holy days; or for military service. Students should contact the instructor in advance of the excused absence and arrange to make up missed work or examinations.

Course Drops
According to UTRGV policy, students may drop any class without penalty earning a grade of DR until the official drop date. Following that date, students must be assigned a letter grade and can no longer drop the class. Students considering dropping the class should be aware of the “3-peat rule” and the “6-drop” rule so they can recognize how dropped classes may affect their academic success. The 6-drop rule refers to Texas law that dictates that undergraduate students may not drop more than six courses during their undergraduate career. Courses dropped at other Texas public higher education institutions will count toward the six-course drop limit. The 3-peat rule refers to additional fees charged to students who take the same class for the third time.

Course Learning Goals and Outcomes
- Understand the important role of marketing research in modern firms
- Understand the various elements of the marketing research system
- Be able to translate a marketing problem into a feasible research question
- Have a general understanding of the various research approaches and methodologies and how they differ in terms of the strengths, weaknesses, and domain of application
- Develop a good intuition for analyzing data and reporting the result of the analysis
- Become efficient at using SPSS, a statistical software package, to conduct basic data analysis

**Grading Components**

*i. Exams*

Five exams will be given in this course and account for 40% of your total grade. The exams will be a combination of multiple-choice, true/false, and calculations questions that are drawn from book chapters. You will be given a window of time within which you must log in to take the exam; once in, there will be a time limit for completing the exam. If you fail to complete an exam because of technical issues, you must email me at xiaojing.sheng@utrgv.edu and detail the situation. Given the specific circumstances, I may let you retake it. However, if I’m not informed in a timely manner, then there will be no possibility of retaking it. Make-up exams must be requested in writing, prior to the exam date, and must be accompanied by a profound reason as to why you cannot take the exam during its scheduled time.

*ii. Assignments*

Throughout this course you will participate in five (5) assignments that will collectively total 30% of your final grade. Details for assignments will be posted on Blackboard. Assignments will be submitted through Blackboard under the week within which the assignment is placed. No late assignments will be accepted.

*iii. Discussion*

As this course is fully online, your participation will be through discussions. Check discussion board daily and respond to discussion questions and the comments/questions from me and your classmates. This will be 30% of your grade. Although you will have the entire week to respond to each week’s discussion questions, it is my recommendation that you participate as early as possible so that you can contribute more and gain more from this online forum through the interactions and exchange of ideas and thoughts between you and me and between you and your classmates.

As for the quantity of your discussion participation, the minimum expectation is that for each discussion question you will have three (3) posts. Of these three posts, one will be your original response to the discussion question and the other two will be your thoughtful comments on or responses to other students’ posts. Your first, second, and third post on discussion board in response to a given week’s discussion question is due that week’s Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday respectively. If there are two discussion questions in a given week, then you will need to have six (6) posts. For example, week 1 (June 5 - June 11), week 2 (June 12 – June 18), and week 4 (June 26 – July 2) each has two discussion questions. Therefore, you are expected to have 6 posts for each of these three weeks.

I would strongly encourage you to participate more and contribute more than the minimum expectation. Please also keep the following rules in mind when contributing to the discussions:
• Regular and meaningful discussion postings constitute a substantial portion of your grade.
• Respect each other’s ideas, feelings, and experience.
• Be courteous and considerate. It is important to be honest and to express yourself freely, but being considerate of others is just as important and expected online, as it is in the classroom.
• Explore disagreements and support assertions with data and evidence.

Grading Policies
The grading elements are as follows:
   i. Exams                  110 points   40%
   ii. Assignments           50 points     30%
   iii. Discussion           105 points    30%

The grading scale is as follows:
• 90 and above          A
• 80-89.99              B
• 70-79.99              C
• 60-69.99              D
• Below 60             F

Please note that grades will not be curved. 89.99 is a B, not an A. Final grades are just that: Final.

Below is an estimated timeframe within which your grade for each of the above grading elements will be made available:
• Discussion grade: by Friday of the following week
• Quiz grade: available right after your submission
• Assignment grade: one week after your submission

Course Evaluation
Students are required to complete an ONLINE evaluation of this course, accessed through your UTRGV account (http://my.utrgv.edu); you will be contacted through email with further instructions. Students who complete their evaluations will have priority access to their grades.

Scholastic Integrity
As members of a community dedicated to Honesty, Integrity and Respect, students are reminded that those who engage in scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and expulsion from the University. Scholastic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, plagiarism, and collusion; submission for credit of any work or materials that are attributable in whole or in part to another person; taking an examination for another person; any act designed to give unfair advantage to a student; or the attempt to commit such acts. Since scholastic dishonesty harms the individual, all students and the integrity of the University, policies on scholastic dishonesty will be strictly enforced (Board
Email Communications
E-mail will be an integral part of this course. Make sure you:

- Include the course name in the subject line: MARK 6340-(type your subject here), e.g., MARK 6340-Meeting on Tuesday.
- Start the body text of your email with Professor’s name, e.g., Hi Professor Sheng.
- Write complete sentences. Please do not use “u” to replace “you” or “ur” to replace “your” in your email.
- Use a proper closing and sign your email messages.
- Be polite.
- Make every effort to be clear. Online communication lacks the nonverbal cues that fill in much of the meaning in face-to-face communication.
- Do not use all caps. This makes the message very hard to read and is considered "shouting." Check spelling, grammar, and punctuation (you may want to compose in a word processor, then cut and paste the message into the discussion or email).
- Break up large blocks of text into paragraphs and use a space between paragraphs.
- Never assume that your email can be read by no one except yourself; others may be able to read or access your mail. Never send or keep anything that you would not mind seeing on the evening news.
- Check your email several times per week (more often is better).
- Be patient. Don’t expect an immediate response when you send a message.
- Generally, 24 hours is considered reasonable amount of time to receive a reply.

Sexual Harassment, Discrimination, and Violence
In accordance with UT System regulations, your instructor is a “responsible employee” for reporting purposes under Title IX regulations and so must report any instance, occurring during a student’s time in college, of sexual assault, stalking, dating violence, domestic violence, or sexual harassment about which she/he becomes aware during this course through writing, discussion, or personal disclosure. More information can be found at www.utrgv.edu/equity, including confidential resources available on campus. The faculty and staff of UTRGV actively strive to provide a learning, working, and living environment that promotes personal integrity, civility, and mutual respect in an environment free from sexual misconduct and discrimination.

Students with Disabilities
If you have a documented disability (physical, psychological, learning, or other disability which affects your academic performance) and would like to receive academic accommodations, please inform your instructor and contact Student Accessibility Services to schedule an appointment to initiate services. It is recommended that you schedule an appointment with Student Accessibility Services before classes start. However, accommodations can be provided at any time.
Brownsville Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in Cortez Hall Room 129 and can be contacted by phone at (956) 882-7374 (Voice) or via email at accessibility@utrgv.edu.
Edinburg Campus: Student Accessibility Services is located in 108 University Center and can be
Tentative Course Schedule

(This syllabus and schedule may be revised and adjusted to better meet students’ learning needs.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Week 1</td>
<td>Problem formulation and types of research design</td>
<td>*Syllabus&lt;br&gt;*Read chapters 4-6 and the accompanying powerpoint slides&lt;br&gt;*Participate in week 1 discussions. For each of the two discussion questions, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; post is due Tuesday, 6/13; 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; post is due Wednesday, 6/14; 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; post is due Thursday, 6/15.&lt;br&gt;*Take exam #1 (available from 7:00 am, 6/5 to 11:59 pm, 6/11)&lt;br&gt;*Start working on assignment #1&lt;br&gt;*Try connecting to the Vlabs and make sure that you can access SPSS from your home/work computer</td>
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<td>6/5-6/11</td>
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<td>Week 2</td>
<td>Secondary data and collecting primary data</td>
<td>*Assignment #1 due Monday, 6/12&lt;br&gt;*Read chapters 7, 9, 10, and 11 and the accompanying powerpoint slides&lt;br&gt;*Participate in week 2 discussions. For each of the two discussion questions, 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; post is due Tuesday, 6/13; 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; post is due Wednesday, 6/14; 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; post is due Thursday, 6/15.&lt;br&gt;*Take exam #2 (available from 7:00 am, 6/12 to 11:59 pm, 6/18)&lt;br&gt;*Start working on assignment #2</td>
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<td>Week 3</td>
<td>Designing the questionnaire or observation form</td>
<td>*Assignment #2 due Monday, 6/19&lt;br&gt;*Read chapters 15-17 and the accompanying powerpoint slides&lt;br&gt;*Participate in week 3 discussions. This week has one discussion question only. 1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; post is due Tuesday, 6/20; 2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; post is due Wednesday, 6/21; 3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt; post is due Thursday, 6/22.&lt;br&gt;*Take exam #3 (available from 7:00 am, 6/19 to 11:59 pm, 6/25)&lt;br&gt;*Start working on assignment #3</td>
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Please note that I extended week 1’s discussion post submission deadlines to the following week to take into considerations of situations such as late arrival of the textbook and Blackboard login issues. Consequently, you will see in the schedule that week 1 and week 2 have the same due dates for submitting your discussion posts.
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<th>Class</th>
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<th>Readings/Assignments</th>
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| Week 4  | Data analysis | *Assignment #3 due Monday, 6/26  
*Read chapters 18-20 and the accompanying powerpoint slides  
*Participate in week 4 discussions. For each of the two discussion questions, 1st post is due Tuesday, 6/27; 2nd post is due Wednesday, 6/28; 3rd post is due Thursday, 6/29.  
*Take exam #4 (available from 7:00 am, 6/26 to 11:59 pm, 7/2)  
*Start working on assignments #4 and #5 |
| 6/26-7/2|               |                                                                                     |
| Week 5² | Data analysis | *Assignment #4 due Monday, 7/3  
*Assignment #5 due Thursday, 7/6  
*Read chapters 18-20 and the accompanying powerpoint slides  
*Take exam #5 (available from 7:00 am, 7/3 to 11:59 pm, 7/9) |
| 7/3-7/9 |               |                                                                                     |

² Please note that week 5 does not have discussion questions.