

Syllabus for MSMGT 720 Applied Research and the Triple Bottom Line

Course Description

In this course, students will learn how qualitative and quantitative research methods are applied to making decisions involving contemporary sustainability issues. This course provides a hands-on approach to understanding alternative strategies available to collect and analyze data in researching environmental, social, and ethical dimensions of sustainability. The interrelationship between applied research and the triple bottom line is investigated. Students will gain first-hand knowledge of how research techniques can be used to identify, understand, and assist in finding solutions to a range of sustainability concerns and challenges faced by business organizations.

Course Objectives

The primary goal of this course is for students to gain an understanding of how the practical application of business research methods can be beneficial to all stakeholders in making decisions concerning the natural environment, social and political systems, and the economy. Throughout the course, the process of collecting and analyzing data in support of sustainable decisions, programs, and strategies will be explored.

By the end of this course, you should be able to do the following:

1. Describe the key terms, definitions, and concepts useful when researching sustainability issues.
2. Investigate the body of scholarly research currently being undertaken in the field of sustainable management.
3. Review sources of secondary data relating to sustainability issues for relevancy and accuracy.
4. Identify, understand, and apply business research methods to sustainable decision making.
5. Understand the relationship between applied research and meeting organizational sustainability goals.
6. Determine which applied research techniques will be most useful in meeting organizational goals.
7. Communicate and convey outcomes of sustainability research findings.

Course Requirements

Quizzes

There are five quizzes total. They all have a similar format—a combination of multiple-choice questions and true/false statements. Of the five quiz scores, the four highest will be used to determine your overall quiz grade.

Discussions

There are seven discussion assignments total. You are expected to post an initial response and respond to the posts of at least two other students. Of the seven discussion scores, the six highest will be used to determine your overall grade for discussion assignments.

Research Paper

The paper should be an application of research methods and business sustainability concepts that you will learn in this course. You are free to choose any topic related to the Triple Bottom Line for this paper. You are expected to collect longitudinal, time-series, and/or cross-sectional quantitative data from secondary sources to perform a proper data analysis that supports sustainable decision making. I strongly advise that you use *actual data sources* rather than articles or papers (e.g., literature reviews) as your secondary data sources. You will need to submit two items, both of which will be subject to originality checking.

- Proposal: Your proposal should consist of two or three PowerPoint slides. These slides should include your motivation, research question(s) and objective(s), potential sources of secondary quantitative data, and at least one relevant, detailed citation. Once I have approved your proposal, you can begin work on the research paper.
- Paper: Your research paper should consist of 10 to 12 typed pages in Microsoft Word. These pages should include a title page, an abstract, an introduction, a literature review, a methodology section, a findings/results section, a discussion section, a conclusion, a reference page, and an appendix if needed. You must use appropriate graphs/charts/tables to display your data/findings. I strongly recommend that you use headings and sub-headings to organize the content.

Exam

There will be one exam during the semester. The midterm exam uses an essay question format. You may not take the exam late without prior permission from the instructor.

Due Dates and Deadlines

It is your responsibility to know and meet all due dates and deadlines associated with the various assignments in this course. The course calendar provides all relevant dates and deadlines and should be a key reference source in terms of your time management strategy. Please refer to the details provided for each type of assignment—quiz, discussion, exam, and research paper. You may want to refer back to this information as you approach each of the individual assignments throughout the semester. Policies regarding assignment deadlines and related penalties for missing these deadlines are clearly specified for each type of assignment within the Course Introduction module.

Grading Policy

The course grading breakdown (as a percent of the total grade) is as follows:

Discussion Assignments (top six of seven scores)	20%
Quizzes (top four of five scores)	25%
Exam	30%
Research Proposal (5%) Research Paper (20%)	25%
Total	100%

All assignments are assigned a percentage score, with 100 being the highest score possible.

Letter grades are assigned as follows:

	92.5 to 100.0 = A	90.0 to 92.49 = A-
87.5 to 89.9 = B+	82.5 to 87.49 = B	80.0 to 82.49 = B-
77.5 to 79.9 = C+	72.5 to 77.49 = C	70.0 to 72.49 = C-
67.5 to 69.9 = D+	62.5 to 67.49 = D	60.0 to 62.49 = D-
Below 60.0 = F		

Your final grade for the course will be a weighted average following the course breakdown shown above.