

**THIS IS A PROJECT-BASED CLASS. PLEASE DO NOT  
ADD THIS COURSE AFTER THE SECOND WEEK OF  
THE CLASS (9/10/16).**



## **COURSE SYLLABUS**

### **DATA & ANALYSIS FOR MARKETING DECISIONS**

#### **What is this course about?**

How does someone obtain data if it does not already exist? In this course, we will design primary data research instruments and use sophisticated statistical techniques in order to make more effective marketing decisions. It is a human-centered design approach that first dives deeply to really understand consumers' inherent needs before designing survey instruments to gather data.

For the context of this course, you are partnered with a local entrepreneur to solve an actual marketing research problem. From the classroom experience and practical exercises, you will learn research methods and analysis to answer this particular problem. But answering the marketing research problem is useless unless it informs the strategic directions of the business. This final step relies heavily on integrating your knowledge in this course with your other Wharton courses. You have the unique opportunity here to apply your learning to an actual business context – one that could dramatically impact the life of the entrepreneur and his or her particular venture.

#### **What is to be gained?**

The mission of this course is to empower you to gather your own data and apply sophisticated statistical techniques (e.g. Bayesian estimation, logistic regression, multinomial regression) to unlock consumers' hidden motivations relatively quickly and effectively. Once you believe you have discovered some aspect of human motivations, you will develop a survey to statistically test your discoveries, or in other words, your hypotheses. Even if your hypotheses are disproved, as a result of your analysis, you will discover an aspect of consumer behavior not previously known that will more than likely, significantly influence the marketing strategy of the business.

*“There is nothing like looking, if you want to find something. You certainly usually find something, if you look, but it is not always quite the something you were after.”*

## From whom will I learn?

For the purposes of this course, you will be working with a group of your *peers* and a local *entrepreneur* to make two important marketing decisions. Entrepreneurial endeavors are probably the most challenging environments in which to make marketing decisions. Thus, there is no better place to test out your new framework of discovery and no better reward.

*“Research is formalized curiosity. It is poking and prying with a purpose.”*

Zora Neale Hurston

The role of the *instructor* is to be your coach. You have a good chunk of the playbook from your previous coursework to apply to actual business practices. Your instructor’s two primary purposes are (1) to introduce you to a hypothesis driven data gathering and analytical approach and (2) to give you opportunities to practice this method. As part of your practice and training, you will have opportunities to apply what you have learned in your previous classes as well as add additional plays to the analytical portion of your playbook.

*“I’m here because, in the end, the truth is worth the risk.”*

Lt. Templeton 'Faceman' Peck, A-Team (2010)

## What will I learn?

This course has three main long-term (five years after completing this course) learning objectives:

### 1. Discover how to unearth deep consumer needs

- Learn how to engage people in discussion to understand deep human needs
- Gain the ability to ask “good” questions to generate insights

### 2. Become highly proficient at developing analytical tools that lead to actionable results

- Be able to design a survey that will test your business hypotheses
- Learn how to ask survey questions that get at deep consumers’ needs without biasing responses

### 3. Learn how to utilize primary data to develop insightful messaging

- Utilize statistical tools to test your research hypotheses
- Analyze your results and make data driven decisions to create a new venture or grow an existing business

*“I want her phones, her computers, any support packages she operates, I want to know everything! I want active intercept taps on everything she's got, I want every move monitored from this moment forwards.”*

Lynch, A-Team (2010)

## To receive these benefits how much effort will I need to expend?

This course involves a significant amount of effort outside of the regularly scheduled class time. Expect to spend 10 – 12 hours preparing for class and your course project. How is this time spent? Here is a high-level overview of how your time may be spent during the week:

- Reading and Preparing for class: 3 hours
- Group Meetings: 2 hours
- Entrepreneur Meeting: 1 hour
- Written Correspondence and Administrative Work: 1 hour
- Individual Project Work: 3 – 5 hours

## How am I to be assessed in this course?

***Mission Impossible, turned Probable:** “Probable impossibilities are to be preferred to improbable possibilities.”*

Aristotle

Most of your time in this course (50% of the course assessment), will be spent applying what you know and have learned to a local business or new venture. You have the opportunity to partner with a local entrepreneur to help him or her make critical marketing decisions. Actual projects tend to incorporate the messiness and murkiness of real life, requiring creativity and judgment. The course is quick (one semester), but in business, speed is critical. From personal experience, it can be frustrating and difficult to not have the resources and time needed to do the work well. This course teaches you how to work within these constraints with a group of your peers – using an 80/20 way of getting to the answer while cultivating greater interior business judgment as time progresses. Even if you have all the time in the world, this research approach generally allows you to effectively and efficiently navigate complex problems to obtain workable solutions. The course does not stop at the end of the term – it is the beginning of your adventure in developing good hypothesis driven solutions in real life, through an analytical approach and awareness of others.

This course is assessed on a weekly *performance->feedback->revision->new performance* cycle. The process is as follows:

1. *Performance:* You have weekly deliverables due to your instructor and entrepreneur.
2. *Feedback:* You meet weekly with your entrepreneur to present your findings, receive useful feedback, and coordinate the following weeks’ activities.
3. *Revision:* Based on the feedback, you use the collective judgment of your team to revise your work.
4. *New Performance:* Finally, you will incorporate feedback and course leanings to the next weekly deliverable.

***Get in the Game:** “Man up! Now get in there, we've gotta finish the escape! Man up and get in there!”*

Lt. Templeton 'Faceman' Peck, A-Team (2010)

**Class Contribution (20%):** For each class, we assume you have done all the readings, are prepared to discuss with your peers, and apply the materials during class learning activities. Unless otherwise stated on a particular day, there are no electronic devices allowed in class.

**Deliverables and Weekly Communications (10%):** Throughout the course, you are asked to submit specific materials directly related to solving your real world business case. Although, you may receive feedback with ways to improve your work, you will receive full credit for the assignment if you submit work that meets the set requirements. This is to keep you on track with your course project, to ensure that you are internalizing (deep learning) the course objectives, and to have the opportunity to receive valuable feedback before submitting your final project results at the end of the term. The results of your deliverables are always to be communicated to your entrepreneur during weekly meetings with him/her. This is to ensure that you all are on the same page and expectations are clear. Weekly follow-up emails directly after your entrepreneur meetings ensure that you and the entrepreneur have heard each other clearly and that there is a clear plan for how to move forward with the project. These weekly emails are to be sent within 24 hours of meeting with your entrepreneur and your instructor needs to be cc'd on this communication. If she is not be cc'd, she will assume that you have not met with the entrepreneur and are not making joint progress on the project.

**Self and Peer Evaluations (10%):** Plan to spend a significant amount of time with your team outside of class on your course project. See your peers as a valuable source of feedback for your personal development. In addition to the feedback obtained from your peers, you will have numerous opportunities to self-reflect on the learning process that you are undergoing including your interaction with your peers.

**Entrepreneur Evaluation (10%):** Through your weekly interactions with your business partner, your liaison will have the opportunity to evaluate the value that your group has brought to his or her business or new venture.

### **Where are the course materials?**

The class assignments, deliverables, and additional readings are in electronic form on CANVAS. This allows us to update the content of the course real-time as your learning needs evolve over the time of the course. Please check CANVAS for periodic announcements related to the course.

### **TIPS FOR SUCCESS** (Advice from those who have come before you)

“Work closely with your entrepreneur to develop a good relationship with him/her. You want to continually involve your entrepreneur in the process, making sure that what you are producing is of use. Determine early on with the entrepreneur what the 2-3 ‘must have’ takeaways should be from your study.”

“Split up the work as much as possible. Make sure everyone on your team has a task for the week. Ideally, you want people to ‘own’ different parts of the project.”

“Given everyone’s schedules and the time commitment of the course, it can be challenging to find times that work well for everyone, so set up two weekly group meeting times and a weekly meeting time [same time each week] with the entrepreneur at the beginning of the course. You can always cancel individual meetings later, but it will be good to have time reserved on everyone’s calendars.”