



**J.L. Rotman School of Management
University of Toronto
MGT 3001--Winter 2017
Research Methods in Strategic Management**

Class time: Mondays, 2-5PM
Classroom: RM 7024
Office Hours: By appointment

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Course Scope and Mission

This course is designed for doctoral students who wish to understand and publish research in scholarly journals in strategic management and organization theory. The course is organized in terms of stages in the research process beginning with how to frame research questions and the merits of alternative research methods, covering topics and providing examples in areas such as experimental design, survey design, ethnography, case studies, and archival research. By the end of the course, students will be prepared to critically evaluate research method and design choices for their own research and move on to courses in specific research techniques.

Required Texts

- Singleton, Royce A., and Bruce C. Straits. 2010. *Approaches to Social Research* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.

Course Assignments (80% of the course grade)

The course grade will consist of the six following elements plus in-class participation:

- 1. Progress Report 1: Problem Definition and Literature Search** (3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced). Describe a research problem that interests you. Describe why an understanding of this problem is relevant to scholars and practitioners in Strategy and Organization. Perform a literature search and develop a reading list of articles and books that address your research problem. Format your reading list as a list of references following the format used in *Strategic Management Journal*. **Due Session 5. 10% of course grade**
- 2. Progress Report 2: Theory and Hypotheses** (3-5 pages, typed, double-spaced). Discuss possible theoretical perspectives that address your research problem. How will the answers to your research problem add to knowledge in this area? Revise your research problem if you find that it has already been addressed in previous research. Derive two or more empirically testable hypotheses that relate to your research problem. How do these hypotheses contribute to knowledge in this area? **Due Session 8. 10% of course grade**
- 3. Presentation and Critical Commentary** Present Progress Report 2 (10-15 minutes) in class and prepare (2-3 pages, typed, double-spaced) and present (5 minutes) critical, constructive commentaries for one or two other students' Progress Report 2s. **Due Session 9. 10% of course grade; 5% of course grade**
- 4. Final Report** (10-15 pages, typed, double-spaced). Based on theory and hypotheses developed

in Progress Report 3, develop a research proposal for submission to a funding agency such as the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) for a research grant. Revise your ideas based on comments you receive from reviewers. Your proposal should include a detailed description of your research design, the data required to test your hypotheses, and methods used to collect (and analyze) the data. Provide an estimate of the costs and a time schedule for various stages of the research project. What implications does your proposed research have for future? Do you have a program of research in mind? If so, describe it. **Due one week after Session 12. 45% of the course grade.**

Participation (20% of the course grade)

You will likely get out of class discussion whatever you put in. Regular attendance and participation are critical to your successful completion of this course – we cover a great deal of material in each class and later classes build on work covered earlier in the term. You should complete the assigned readings prior to each class, and be fully prepared to discuss them. You are encouraged to prepare for class with your colleagues, however, each member of the class should be fully conversant in the material. You should be able to outline the topic that readings address, describe the core points of the reading, and, most importantly, offer your analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the reading's central argument. For example articles, you should be able to critically assess the articles' effectiveness. If for some reason you are not prepared please let me know before the start of class to save us both the embarrassment of my calling on you.

It is important to appreciate that every member of the class is a co-producer of the class discussion, listen carefully to one another, and attempt to build on or constructively critique prior comments. An effective participant:

- is a good listener
- makes points relevant to the ongoing discussion
- makes comments that add to our understanding of the reading or article
- is willing to challenge ideas that are being expressed
- integrates material from past classes, other courses

Class Schedule

Session 1. January 9, 2017

Course Overview

ASR: The Nature of Science (Chapter 2)

Session 2. January 16, 2017

Research Design

ASR: Elements of Research Design (Chap 4)

Discussion questions:

1. What are the basic choices in research design?
2. How does one go about making research design choices?
3. **What are the implications of the choices that you make?**

Session 3. January 23, 2017

Experimental Design

ASR: Experimentation (Chapter 7)

Staw, Barry M. 1974. "Attitudinal and behavioral consequences of changing a major organizational reward: A natural field experiment." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 29:742-751.

Lynne G. Zucker. 1977. "The role of institutionalization in cultural persistence." *American Sociological Review*, 42: 726-743.

Discussion questions:

1. What is the basic philosophy behind experimentation?
2. Distinguish between internal and external validity. How can you increase the external validity of an experiment?
3. What are the four main parts of an experiment? What is the purpose of manipulation checks?
4. What is the different between an "impact" and a "judgment" experiment?
5. Describe ways in which demand characteristics and experimenter effects can influence the outcome of an experiment. How can you minimize these biases?
6. **Compare the advantages and disadvantages of field and natural versus lab experiments.**

Session 4. January 30, 2017

Experimental Design

ASR: Experimental Designs (Chapter 8)

Staw, Barry M. 1974. "Attitudinal and behavioral consequences of changing a major organizational reward: A natural field experiment." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 29:742-751.

Lynne G. Zucker. 1977. "The role of institutionalization in cultural persistence." *American Sociological Review*, 42: 726-743.

Discussion questions: continued

Session 5. February 6, 2017

Measurement and Sampling

ASR: Measurement (Chapter 5)

Berk, Richard A. 1983. "An Introduction to Sample Selection Bias in Sociological Data." *American Sociological Review*, 48: 386-398.

Kalleberg, Arne L., Peter V. Marsden, Howard E. Aldrich, and James W. Cassell. 1990. "Comparing organizational sampling frames." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 35: 658-688.

McKelvey, Bill, and Howard E. Aldrich. 1983. "Populations, Natural Selection, and Applied Organizational Science." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28:101-128.

Discussion questions:

1. In general, how important is sampling?
2. Is sampling important for experiments?
3. How do you choose among the various sampling designs?
4. Why do we want to "sample" organizations?
5. How should we "sample" in strategy and organization science?

Session 6. February 13, 2017

Measurement and Sampling

ASR: Sampling (Chapter 6)

Berk, Richard A. 1983. "An Introduction to Sample Selection Bias in Sociological Data." *American Sociological Review*, 48: 386-398.

Kalleberg, Arne L., Peter V. Marsden, Howard E. Aldrich, and James W. Cassell. 1990. "Comparing organizational sampling frames." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 35: 658-688.

McKelvey, Bill, and Howard E. Aldrich. 1983. "Populations, Natural Selection, and Applied Organizational Science." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 28:101-128.

Discussion questions: continued

Session 7. February 20, 2017

Survey Research

ASR: Survey Research (Chapter 9) and Survey Instrumentation (Chap. 10).

Tomaskovic-Devey, Donald, Jeffrey Leiter, and Shealy Thompson. 1994. "Organizational survey nonresponse." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39: 439-457.

Useem, Michael, and Jerome Karabel. 1986. "Pathways to top corporate management." *American Sociological Review*, 51: 184-200.

Discussion questions:

1. What is the role of large-scale survey research?
2. Why do election polls often yield different findings?
3. **What are the advantages of person-to-person interviewing? Telephone interviewing?**

Session 8. February 27, 2017

Survey Research

ASR: Survey Instrumentation (Chap. 10).

Tomaskovic-Devey, Donald, Jeffrey Leiter, and Shealy Thompson. 1994. "Organizational survey nonresponse." *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39: 439-457.

Useem, Michael, and Jerome Karabel. 1986. "Pathways to top corporate management." *American Sociological Review*, 51: 184-200.

Discussion questions: continued

Session 9. March 6, 2017

Field Research

ASR: Field Research (Chap. 11)

Campbell, Donald T. 1975. "Degrees of freedom and the case study." *Comparative Political Studies*, 8: 178-193.

Eisenhardt, Kathleen M. 1989. "Building theories from case study research." *Academy of Management Review*, 14: 488-511.

Discussion questions:

1. How does a field researcher's approach to design differ from that of the experimenter and survey researcher?

2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of field research compared with experiments and surveys?
3. What is meant by “grounded” theory? How does this term apply to field research?
4. How can interviewing and document analysis complement field observations?
5. How do you analyze field data? How can the validity of field research findings be enhanced?
6. When is field research likely to pose ethical problems?

Session 10. March 13, 2017

Archival Research

ASR: Research Using Available Data (Chapter 12)

Baum, Joel A. C., and Stephen J. Mezas. 1992. “Localized competition and organizational failure in the Manhattan hotel industry.” *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 37: 580-604.

Fiol, C. Marlene. 1994. “Consensus, diversity, and learning in organizations.” *Organization Science*, 5: 403-420.

Discussion questions:

1. How does research using available data differ from the other three basic approaches to social research?
2. What are the advantages of research using available data?
3. What special measurement and sampling problems are presented by archival research?
4. What are the four different forms of historical analysis?
5. What is content analysis? What are the steps involved? How do you quantify data in content analysis?
6. How do you evaluate available data?

Session 11. March 20, 2017

Simulations

Bruderer, Erhard, and Jitendra V Singh. 1996. “Organizational evolution, learning, and selection: A genetic-algorithm-based model”. *Academy of Management Journal*. 39: 1322-1349.

Session 12. March 27, 2017

Theory Construction and Modeling

Guest speaker(?)

Session 13. April 4, 2017

Course review/flex day