1. Motivation for the Course

The purpose of this course is to give the students practice in consulting on survey design, data collection, and analysis problems. It is an applied course, with real clients from Federal statistical agencies or commercial survey organizations, who present real survey design problems to the class and seek the class’s assistance in solving the problems.

The students’ job is to carry background research on the problem, reviewing relevant empirical and theoretical literatures and then to present the client with possible solutions, evaluating the costs and benefits of each solution.

2. Organization of the Course

The students in the course are organized into a group, a consulting team that works together to study the relevant research literature in the area, invent novel solutions to the client’s problems, and then construct ways to evaluate alternative solutions.

This is a one-credit course, but will meet for up to an hour and a half each meeting. At times the schedule of a client may force us to set nontraditional meeting dates or times or to adjust the current schedule. Students in the class should plan on committing each 6:30-8:00 PM on Thursdays throughout the term, but anticipate that the class will not meet as a group all of those days. Past experience with the class has proven that the scheduled class time is a good time for the consulting team to meet and work together as a group.

For most client problems, the class will devote four weeks:

First week 6:30-7:30 Presentation of the problem by the client, questioning by consulting team

7:30-8:00 Organizational discussion with team members
Second week Unstructured work by consulting team, further email or phone consultation with client

Third week Presentation of solutions to client

Fourth week Feedback from faculty

There will be two faculty members attending each class, to hear the client problem, observe the give-and-take of the class, and to evaluate the student performance.

3. Evaluation of Performance in the Class

Students in the class will be graded for their efforts, with grades assigned by faculty in the course, with input from the students in their work group, on each exercise they perform. For each problem, each student will evaluate their own performance and that of other team members. The purpose of this grading is to insure uniform attention to the consulting tasks among students in the group.

In addition, the instructors will assign an overall grade to the group’s performance.

Class Schedule

September 5: Introductory class

First Consulting Problem

September 12: First client problem presentation (Jennifer Guarino)

September 19: Team work on first client problem (No class)

September 26: Team work on first client problem (No class)

October 3: Presentation to client

October 10: Faculty feedback

Second Consulting Problem

October 17: Second client problem presentation (Paul Lavrakas)

October 24: Team work on second client problem (No class)

October 31: Presentation to client
November 7: Faculty feedback

November 14: No class

**Third Consulting Problem**

November 21: Third client problem presentation (Bob Tortora)

November 28 : Thanksgiving (No class)

December 5: Team work on first client problem (No class)

December 12: Presentation to client

December 19: Faculty feedback