

**COMM 498.3: Evidence-Based Strategy and Decision Making
Course Syllabus
2017/18 Spring Term**

The Edwards School of Business develops business professionals to build nations.

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CLASS TIME & LOCATION	Various, see schedule

When we gather at the University of Saskatchewan Saskatoon campus, we acknowledge that we are on Treaty 6 Territory and the Homeland of the Métis. We pay our respect to the First Nations and Métis ancestors of this place and reaffirm our relationship with one another.

Course Description

Market insights are critical for strategic decision-making; broadly, companies need to keenly understand their environments and key stakeholders to ensure successful outcomes. Market insights are, at their core, generated through research and science. Students in this course will learn about how companies collect data and generate knowledge about key stakeholders and business environments, translate this knowledge and disseminate it throughout the company, and then integrate this information in strategy and decision making. More specifically, students in this course will learn about:

- The relationship between research, market insights, and strategic decision making;
- The factors that strengthen the quality of research conducted for business purposes;
- The factors that increase the credibility and comprehensibility of applied research; and
- The factors that impact ultimate use of research and its application in company decision making.

The course will be delivered in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and Stuttgart, Germany. This course will benefit from a partnership with the Centre for Empirical Research (Zentrum für Empirische Forschung, or ZEF), which is part of the Centre of Applied Sciences (CASE) of the Business Faculty of the Baden-Wuerttemberg Cooperative State University (DHBW) Stuttgart. This Centre implements cooperative and applied research projects with enterprises and organizations throughout Germany.

B.Comm. Program Learning Goals

The icons below represent the goals we expect all students who graduate from the Bachelor of Commerce program to achieve. The learning outcomes for this course are connected to these broader goals.

	Disciplinary Knowledge <i>Be competent in a discipline specific area.</i>		Teamwork skills <i>Be effective contributors to team performance.</i>		Discovery <i>Be effective decision makers and problem solvers.</i>
	General Business Knowledge <i>Be competent in the general field of business.</i>		Integrity <i>Incorporate ethical considerations into decision making and intended actions.</i>		Citizenship <i>Be engaged contributors to society.</i>
	Communication skills <i>Be effective written and oral communicators.</i>				

Course Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be expected to:	
1. understand how businesses in Saskatchewan and Germany use research (evidence, data, science) for strategy and decision making, and provide suggestions to Saskatchewan business for improved research use;	
2. be able to design and execute a research project using qualitative methods;	
3. communicate research results and lessons learned to diverse audiences through various media;	
4. engage in inquiry-based learning and critical thinking to achieve project outcomes;	
5. possess a heightened cultural awareness; and	
6. engage in professional skill development.	

Grade Distribution

		Course Learning Outcomes	Program Learning Goals
Learning log	30%	1,2,3,4,5,6	
Research project	50%	1,2,3,4,5,6	
Quiz	10%	1,2,5	
Participation and professionalism	10%	1,2,3,4,5,6	

A passing grade on every component is required in order to pass the class.

Prerequisite(s)	Undergraduate student in the Edwards School of Business; minimum 60 credit units completed by April 2018
Required Textbook and/or Materials	Readings package to be provided
Class Preparation & Blackboard (Course Tools)	<p><i>Students are expected to attend all pre-travel sessions and to come to these sessions fully prepared. Students are expected to participate in all scheduled sessions in Stuttgart, Germany and to be fully prepared for these sessions as well.</i></p> <p>www.paws.usask.ca</p> <p>Log in and look for the Course Tools icon on the top right side of the screen (near Email icon).</p> 
	<p>Important information for COMM 498.3 is posted in Course Tools (Blackboard) in PAWS. Students are expected to check the Announcements section of Blackboard for updates.</p> <p><i>Your instructor may not necessarily cover all of the materials in the readings, but it is the responsibility of the student to understand the concepts presented in the readings, lectures, and presentations. If you are unsure of any of the concepts, please take the initiative to ask the instructor during class.</i></p>
Contacting Your Instructor	Students requiring assistance are encouraged to speak to their instructor during class or outside of class. Should you wish to meet with the instructor outside of office hours, please phone or email the instructor to make an appointment. Students should get into the habit of making and keeping business appointments.
Proper Business Use of Email	Email is commonly used by students to communicate with their instructor. Always use your PAWS/University of Saskatchewan email account (abc123@mail.usask.ca) to send e-mails to faculty members as external accounts will be automatically quarantined by the University's system.
Use of Internet and Electronic Devices in the Classroom	Electronic devices may be used during class, but only for class purposes. When we are meeting with business professionals and other mentors, either in Saskatoon or in Germany, cell phones and laptops/tablets must be out of sight (except for photography) as a signal of respect.
Assignments	<p>Learning Log</p> <p>You will be required to reflect daily on the value that you have added (what you have contributed to the team, to German businesses, to the Centre for Empirical Research that we will visit in Germany) as well as the value you have taken away (what you have learned from each other, from German businesses, from the Centre for Empirical Research, and from the process). You may also consider how this relates back to what we read and heard from our speakers in Saskatchewan. On the last day of the trip, you will be required to condense your daily reflections into a modified Pecha Kucha presentation (15 slides/images x 20 seconds, or 5 minutes total) and you will be required to present to an audience that includes our team (as well as possible guests from the Centre for Empirical Research and from the local business community). The Pecha Kucha slides will be made available afterwards to any interested individuals or groups.</p>

Group Project

Research Project

As an experiential course *about* applied research, it is meaningful for you to engage in your own applied research. You will work in teams of two to identify one key question about gathering, using, and applying data and evidence for strategic decision-making that you believe is important to Saskatchewan enterprise. (An example question might be: “How do companies in Germany estimate market potential?”) We will visit several companies on this trip; as we do, each visit will include a substantial Q&A portion where the teams of students can pose *their* questions to the local businesses. You will take notes (and photos or other forms of data collection) throughout the trip. You will analyze your (qualitative) data and will then apply what you have learned in the course to determine how to best translate and disseminate the knowledge you have gained about your topic to Saskatchewan enterprise. You will be required to implement your plan and actually translate and disseminate that knowledge to Saskatchewan business (e.g., options could range from a formal presentation at the North Saskatoon Business Association breakfast, to an active and extensive social media campaign).

You will also submit a written report in two parts. Part I will document your research question and why it is important, the process you used to answer that research question, your findings, and the anticipated implications (i.e., how will this change business practice). Part II will document your dissemination strategy: who, what, when, where, how, and why.

Suggested length is 8-10 pages, single spaced (not including references or appendices). It will be uploaded to Course Tools.

Quiz

Before departure to Germany, there will be a quiz based on the assigned readings materials. The quiz will be open book and involve short answer questions. Questions will be provided ahead of time. The quiz response will be uploaded to Course Tools.

Participation and Professionalism

Every student in this class is expected to fully engage in all aspects of this course. This course is truly a team effort, and its success will rely on full contributions from everyone on of our team members.

As ambassadors of Edwards School of Business, the University of Saskatchewan, and the Saskatchewan business community, professionalism is of utmost importance.

Ten percent (10%) of your grade is based on your participation and professionalism before, during, and after the trip. You will be asked to provide input toward the assessment of your participation and professionalism.

Policy regarding Late Assignments, Project and Midterm Exam(s)

The Learning Log cannot be late, because its presentation must be delivered on the last day of our trip.

If the Group Project must be late for reasons beyond the group's control, arrangements must be made with the professor and accommodations will be granted on a case-by-case basis.

If the quiz is missed due to illness, it can be uploaded from home. Late quizzes will be penalized 25% per day they are late.

Grading System

The Edwards School of Business endeavours to ensure consistency of final grades across courses and sections. Variations in distribution will always be considered by the instructor where called for by the performance in each individual class. The student does not have any 'right' to a certain grade, but is responsible for earning grades. The instructor has unfettered discretion to evaluate student performance and assign all grades.

For more information on how to understand your grades visit:

<http://students.usask.ca/academics/grading/grading-system.php>

Appealing a Grade

As the grading of exams and submission of final grades can be subject to human error, a student who has a concern with the evaluation of his or her performance shall consult with the instructor as soon as possible, but, in any event, not later than 30 days after the grades become available in PAWS.

Recording of Lectures

The classroom is considered to be a private space accessible only by members of a class, where student and instructor alike can expect to interact in a safe and supportive environment. Recording of lectures or other classroom activities must be approved in advance by the course instructor and must not infringe on privacy rights of individuals. Any approved class recordings become the intellectual property of the person who has made the presentation in the class. Copyright provides presenters with the legal right to control the use of their own creations. Class recordings may not be copied, reproduced, redistributed, or edited by anyone without permission of the presenter except as allowed under law.

UNIVERSITY REGULATIONS**Academic Accommodation**

Disability Services for Students (DSS) offers services to students with documented disabilities ranging from learning deficit, learning disabilities, chronic health issues, hearing and visual impairment, disabilities and temporary impairment due to accident, illness or injury. It is the student's responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodation and have not registered with DSS, please contact their office at 966-7273. Students who have not registered with DSS are not eligible for formal academic accommodation.

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is the cornerstone in the development of knowledge. A single offence of cheating, plagiarism or other academic misconduct on term work, tests or final examinations or assignments can lead to disciplinary probation, suspension or expulsion from the university.

Every student who is registered in this class is expected to have read and understood the rules regarding student academic dishonesty available at: <http://www.usask.ca/honesty>

Each student is expected to know the rules regarding academic dishonesty.

Plagiarism

This course uses a plagiarism detection software called SafeAssign to evaluate student's submitted work for the following reasons:

- *Prevention* – to prevent students from using improper citation methods and from knowingly copying information from any source without giving proper credit;
- *Protection* of honest students and their work;
- *Detection* – with the type of technology in common use today, it is necessary to use a detection tool which checks academic work against the Internet;

Any student's work submitted to SafeAssign remains the sole property of the student. Students do not relinquish their intellectual property rights. To the extent that the student authorizes the inclusion of his/her written work in the global Blackboard database, the student and the university agree that Blackboard may maintain a copy of this work indefinitely and may use the work for the purpose of plagiarism and prevention for others using the system.

Students who do not wish to give permission for the use the Safe Assign plagiarism software must provide a written request to their instructor asking them to opt out. Students who request to opt out will be subject to other plagiarism detection techniques.

Other Information:

Counselling Services:

Dealing with stress, loneliness or anxiety can be challenging for students. Professionally trained counselors with backgrounds in clinical psychology and social work are available in Student Health & Counselling Services to provide advice, counseling and consultation at no cost to registered students. Any personal information shared with these professionals is treated with great care and utmost confidentiality. <http://students.usask.ca/current/life/health/> 966-4920

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

For information on the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act please visit http://www.usask.ca/corporate_admin/privacy/

University Learning Charter:

While specific learning outcomes will vary, there is a set of core learning goals to which the University aspires for all graduates, to the extent feasible and appropriate within each program of studies. These are of five main types: Discovery, Knowledge, Integrity, Skills, and Citizenship. More information is available at: http://www.usask.ca/learning_charter/

Class Schedule & Topics:

Important dates can be found at the following web site:

<http://www.usask.ca/events/month.php?cal=Academic+Calendar>

The following is a tentative schedule for the course. Students should come to class prepared by reading the assigned materials and staying informed on current business issues.

COURSE SCHEDULE – Research-Based Strategy & Decision Making		
DATE	TOPIC	PREP & READINGS
May 1 (5-8 pm)	Intro, Speaker #1, SSRL Tour	TBD
May 3 (5-8 pm)	Trip and travel logistics, Qualitative research, Evidence-based decision making	TBD
May 8 (5-8 pm)	Speaker #2, Speaker #3, Quiz	TBD
	QUIZ	
May 11-20, 2018	Data collection in the field: Stuttgart, Germany	TBD
	LEARNING LOG	
May 21-June 22, 2018	Project Dissemination	
June 22, 2018	RESEARCH PROJECT DUE	
Please note: Two weeks before the end of term, there will be a SEEQ (Student Evaluation of Educational Quality) available on PAWS. This is your opportunity to provide feedback on teaching quality and course effectiveness, and helps faculty gain insight into their instructional methods and practices, providing them with guidance for improvement.		