Course Goals and Objectives

This course provides an introduction to Institutional Research (IR). The goal of the course is to expose students to the theory, field, and practice of institutional research, which is a unique combination of higher education policy, research methodology, data analysis, and applied research.

In this class we will be examining the answers to the following four questions:
1. What is institutional research?
2. What do we know or need to know about our institutions?
3. How do we measure, determine, or judge our institutional quality?
4. How do we judge our effectiveness?

Students will be able to:
1. Identify research needs and define research questions associated with current issues in higher education.
2. Describe historical, social, political, financial, ethical, and other issues pertaining to assessment and evaluation in higher education.
3. Discuss the roles of diverse constituencies in requesting, providing, and receiving information related to assessment and evaluation.
4. Identify formal and informal sources of data and information.
5. Conduct critical reviews of existing research and identify factors influencing the application of research findings to specific problems in higher education.
6. Prepare a research plan that includes well-defined questions, research methods, a timeline for implementation, resource requirements, and procedures for communicating results.
7. Gather, organize, analyze, and synthesize data and interpret information from multiple sources.
8. Effectively communicate research findings orally and in writing to diverse constituencies.

Course Format

Multiple class formats will be used, including lectures/discussions led by the instructor, students, and guest speakers. Some activities will be completed in class, while others will be completed individually outside of the class setting. Effective contributions to in-class discussions require that readings be completed before the class for which they are assigned.

Texts (2)


Other course materials will be provided by the instructor or found on the Internet.

**Office Hours and Location**

My office is at 200 West Quad. I am normally there 8:00-5:00 every day, and you are welcome to phone or e-mail me at any time. Because I want to make sure that I am available when you come to see me, I ask that you please contact me ahead of time unless it is for something very brief. Don't hesitate to contact me!

**Requirements and Expectations**

I expect all students to attend class regularly and to be on time, to make substantial contributions to class discussions, to adhere to the Student Academic Ethics Policy¹ and its principles for the ethical treatments of human subjects in research². Please note that all written materials handed in are to be typewritten, double-spaced, and in APA format (latest edition). While students are encouraged to provide input and feedback about topics, methods, assignments, etc., the instructor holds the final responsibility for the syllabus, methods, and assignments and reserves the right to modify the syllabus as necessary.

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, please contact me as soon as possible. Ball State's Disabled Student Development office coordinates services for students with disabilities; documentation of a disability needs to be on file in that office before any accommodations can be provided. Disabled Student Development can be contacted at 765-285-5293 or dsd@bsu.edu.

¹ [http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/StudentRights/PoliciesandProcedures/StudentCode/VIIEthicsPolicy.asp](http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/StudentRights/PoliciesandProcedures/StudentCode/VIIEthicsPolicy.asp)
² [http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/researchintegrity/humansubjects](http://cms.bsu.edu/about/administrativeoffices/researchintegrity/humansubjects)
## Grade Requirements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-Assessment of Knowledge and Skills</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Sept. 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research Proposal Outline</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Sept. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 1</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Sept. 16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Critique</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>Sept. 23</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey Development Assignment</td>
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<td>Sept. 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reporting Assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Statistical Analysis Assignment</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Exam 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR Report Critique 1</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Full Research Proposal</td>
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<td>Nov. 4</td>
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<tr>
<td>IR Report Critique 2</td>
<td>5%</td>
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<td>Assessment Consultation Presentations</td>
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<td>Assessment Topics Presentation</td>
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<td>Exam 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Research Presentations and Papers</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Dec. 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentations:</td>
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<td>Dec. 11 (5:00 pm)</td>
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<td>Papers Due:</td>
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TENTATIVE COURSE OUTLINE

Students are responsible for supplying their textbooks and items in the following list where a web site has been included in the reference. The instructor will provide handouts of all other reading assignments.
Class 1 (August 19): Class Overview

Class

1. Introductions to the course and to each other
2. Discuss issues, concepts, and definitions
3. Discuss possible research projects

Class 2 (August 26): Background of Institutional Research (1)

Assignment

1. Read


24 Linear Inches: The IR Bookshelf

Class

1. Discuss readings
2. Discuss IR projects

Class 3 (September 2): Background of Institutional Research (2)

Assignment

1. Read

HBR [Chapters 2-3]


2. Prepare a 3-5 page self-assessment paper concerning your strengths and weaknesses in the three areas of organizational intelligence identified by Terenzini and include your plan of action to address your areas for further development.

Class

1. Discuss readings
2. Discuss internal resources for IR
3. Discuss class IR projects

Class 4 (September 9): Primary Institutional Data Sources for IR

Assignment

1. Read

HBR [Chapters 4-6]

American Statistical Association brochures about survey research at
http://www.amstat.org/sections/SRMS/whatsurvey.html [Skim and use for future reference]

https://www.airweb.org/EducationAndEvents/Publications/Documents/PF127.pdf


Ball State Living Learning Community (LLC) focus group script

Copies of Institutional Research printed surveys (distributed by the instructor) and Web surveys:
- http://www.bgsu.edu/offices/ir/OnlineSurvey/NewStudentTransition.htm
- https://us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9yRbf1Ycp6KdZJi&Preview=Survey&BrandID=bsuoir
- https://us2.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_9mG0bf8kzv0ycoA&Preview=Survey&BrandID=bsuoir

2. Complete research proposal outline and submit electronically as an email attachment

Class

1. Discuss HBR, Chapters 4-6
2. Discuss focus groups and survey research
3. Brief demonstration of Qualtrics web survey software and *MAP-Works*
4. Review for Exam 1

Class 5 (September 16):
IR Secondary Data Sources, General IR Internal Reporting, Effective Reporting

Assignment

1. Prepare for Exam 1

2. Read


Class
1. Exam 1
2. Discuss external resources for IR
3. Discuss general IR internal reporting (Fact Books, survey results, analytic studies, …)
4. Discuss effective reporting
5. Group un-graded IR report critique

Class 6 (September 23): External Data Sources, External Reporting, Accountability

Assignment
1. Read


2. Complete survey critique assignment

Class
1. Discuss readings
2. Discuss external data sources
3. Discuss federal and state reporting, college guidebooks
Class 7 (September 30): Quantitative and Qualitative Analysis of IR Data

Assignment

1. Read

   Ball State University. Draft Data Management Policy.

   Ball State University Female Associate and Full Professor Focus Group Protocol


2. Complete survey development assignment

Class

1. Discuss readings
2. Discuss IR data analysis methods
Class 8 (October 7): IR Support for Planning and Resource Management (1)

Assignment

1. Read


Examples of program evaluation provided by instructor

2. Complete reporting assignment

Class

1. Discuss readings

Class 9 (October 14): IR Support for Planning and Resource Management (2)

Assignment

1. Read


Examples of enrollment management research provided by instructor

2. Complete statistical analysis assignment

Class

1. Discuss readings
2. Review for Exam 2

[OCTOBER 21 NO CLASS]

Class 10 (October 28): IR Support for Planning and Resource Management (3)

Assignment

1. Prepare for Exam 2

2. Read


Examples of institutional research concerning financial issues

3. Complete IR Report Critique 1
Class

1. Exam 2
2. Discuss readings

Class 11 (November 4): Assessment of Student Learning (1)

Assignment

1. Read


2. Complete full research proposal

**Class**

1. Discuss readings

**Class 12 (November 11): Assessment of Student Learning (2)**

**Assignment**

1. Read


2. Complete IR Report Critique 2

**Class**

1. Discuss readings

**Class 13 (November 18): Assessment of Student Learning (3)**

**Assignment**

1. Read


2. Prepare for assessment consultation presentations

**Class**

1. Assessment consultation presentations
2. Discuss readings
3. Review for Exam 3

**Class 14 (November 25): Class Presentations on Assessment Topics and Some Additional Topics**

**Assignment**

1. Prepare for assessment presentation
2. Read


**Class**

1. Assessment presentations
Class 15 (December 2): Final Topics

Assignment

1. Prepare for Exam 3

2. Read

The Association for Institutional Research. (2001). *Code of ethics and suggestions for avoiding ethical dilemmas in the institutional research office*. Tallahassee, FL: Author.


Leimer, C. (n.d.). *Ways to waste your IR capacity, or make the most of it*. Unpublished manuscript.


Class

1. Exam 3

2. Discuss readings

Final Project Presentations (December 9)

Assignment

1. Prepare for IR project presentations

2. Final research project papers due December 11, at 5:00 pm

Class

1. Final research project presentations