

Course Outline

Course Code	RSM 351 H1 S
Course Name	Data-Based Management Decisions
Term, Year	Winter, 2025
Course Meets	Tuesday 3 pm to 5 pm
Web page URL	https://q.utoronto.ca

Instructor Details

Name	Email	Phone	Office Hours	Virtual Office Link
First Name	david.soberman@rotman.utoronto.ca , david.soberman@utoronto.ca	416-978-5445	by appointment (online or in person)	by appointment on Zoom
Last Name				

Course Description

The goal of this course is to introduce the students to key ideas about data-intensive business decision-making. The ideas explored in the course include:

- Understanding that the questions a business needs answered precedes the collection and analysis of data
- The difference between what the data “say” and what the data “mean”
- Understanding and measuring randomness and its implications. Different sources of randomness (inherently random outcomes vs measurement errors)
- Introduction to standard questions and analyses that businesses need to address
- Understanding traps and biases in the data and their implications on the analysis
- Difference between various modelling approaches

In sum, this course is designed to get you excited about how you can use data and analysis to help a business make better decisions.

There are six lecture classes and six workshop classes. For the lecture classes, the format will be

- a) A summary of our workshop from the previous week (except the introductory class), a lecture, Q&As and an introduction to the workshop session for the following week.

For the workshop classes, the format will be

- a) We will meet in breakout rooms at the beginning of workshop classes. Your RSM 351 teams will be announced during the first class. This will also be your team for the group assignment and presentation that take place towards the end of the fall term.
- b) Each team will work independently on the class assignment. The professor and the TA will rotate amongst the groups to advise and assist the groups.

- c) Each group will submit a 2-3 slide power point presentation by the end of the class to summarize their analysis and recommendation/conclusion (Deadline 1800h)
- d) The professor will compile all the presentations and post a summary powerpoint presentation the day after the class.
- e) To reinforce the learning from each class assignment, the professor will start the following lecture class by presenting the results from the workshop and providing further insight.

Course Mission

With this course, you will understand the link between decisions and data. You will see how decisions improve substantially when data is used to better understand the situation. The essential factor is to help students understand the link between decisions that are made and “expected outcomes”.

Learning Outcomes

Students will learn how to formulate business questions such that they can be answered using data a) that the decision maker may have on hand, b) that can be gathered from secondary sources or c) that can be collected through survey or experimentation. The data will be used to determine links between outcomes and explanatory variables. The strength and reliability of these links is based on probabilistic concepts (e.g. distributions, measures of variability and co-variability, standard errors and statistical hypothesis). In this course, students will have an opportunity to apply these concepts to facilitate robust data-driven decision-making.

Course Prerequisites

RSM 250 Principles of Marketing; Completion of 9.0 credits.

Course Materials

Required Readings

Textbook: Marketing Analytics: Strategic Models and Metrics by Stephen Sorger, 2013 Admiral Press, Middletown, DE

Electronic Course Materials

Cases:

1. “A Destabilizing Situation for Binatone: The Market for 1000W Stabilizers in Nigeria (Case).” (INSEAD published case).
2. “Classic Knitwear and Guardian: A Perfect Fit?” (Harvard Business School Case)
3. “The Fashion Channel” (Harvard Business School Case)
4. Ford Ka Market Research Version (Case A) (INSEAD published case).

These materials will cost a total of \$25.76. The use of these materials complies with all University of Toronto policies which govern fees for course materials.

Evaluation and Grades

The final course grade reflects your level of demonstrated achievement of the [Course Learning Outcomes](#) listed above. Deliverables provide feedback on your progress towards the course grade. For each assignment you will receive a raw score that will be mapped to the A+ to FZ scale based on the difficulty of the assignment. Note: Deliverables that are to be submitted in class are due at the beginning of class unless otherwise noted.

Item	Weight	Due Date	Delivery (In class vs. Quercus)	Note (Individual vs. group)	Turnitin
Workshop Performance and Participation	15%	Every workshop class	In class	Individual	n/a
Individual Assignment	10%	Noon, February 14, 2025	Quercus	Individual	Yes
Group Report	20%	11 am, April 1, 2025	Quercus	Group	Yes
Group Presentation	10%	April 2-3, 2025	Online	Group	No
Final Exam	45%	April 9-30, 2025	n/a	Individual	n/a

Both the Individual Assignment and the Group Report will be submitted through Turnitin, the university's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. Further details about the university's plagiarism detection process are provided on page 10 of this syllabus.

Course Format and Expectations

Workshop Participation and Performance

You are expected to make effort to attend every workshop. Accommodations for any absence that may impact any graded deliverable must be approved by your Program Services Office as outlined in the "Academic Accommodations" section below and in the Student Handbook.

Every group will submit a short powerpoint presentation (2-3 slides) that summarizes the group's analysis of the problem at hand and their recommendation. Each student's assessment will be based on both participation and the quality of the presentations that are submitted (equal weight).

- 6 workshops weighted at 2.5 points per workshop (total 15 points)
- Equal weight for participation and presentation quality

While attendance is necessary for students to participate in the workshop, attendance on its own will not result in a high participation grade. Students must actively contribute and participate to the analysis and preparation of group's submission.

Individual Assignment

The individual assignment will be provided to you on January 28, 2025 (the day of our third class) and you are expected to work on it individually. The assignment must be submitted on Quercus by noon, February 14, 2025.

Group Report

The purpose of this project is for you to apply the knowledge learned in class to a real-world marketing management problem. When preparing your report keep in mind that both creativity and the actual problem solution matter. You will work in groups for this report.

Please note that clear, concise, and correct writing will be considered in the evaluation of the group report. That is, you may lose points for writing that impedes communication: poor organization, weak paragraph development, excessive wordiness, hard-to-follow sentence structure, spelling mistakes and grammatical errors. Students who require additional support and/or tutoring with respect to their writing skills are encouraged to read the section below titled “RC Centre for Professional Skills Writing and Presentation Support”

- Group report (in PDF file) is due by 11 am, April 1, 2025. You need to submit in Quercus (with Ouriginal). **No late submissions will be accepted.** No hard copy is required.
- Students who, for reasons beyond their control, are unable to submit the report by its deadline must obtain approval from the instructor for an extension. Supporting documentation will be required as per the policy on missed tests and assignments.

Group Presentation

Each group will present the problem, analysis and conclusions associated with the group report by Zoom to the professor and TA from April 2 to April 3, 2025. Each group member needs to participate in the presentation. The time allocation of each presentation will be announced in mid-October. Each group must submit electronic copies of their presentation—a PowerPoint file or a PDF version—via Quercus by 6 pm, April 1, 2025.

The presentation will be assessed based on 8 equally weighted criteria:

- Completeness (Problem Definition, Alternatives, Critical Analysis and Conclusion)
- Quality of slides (layout, graphics, etc.)
- Professionalism: politeness, appropriate attire, client-oriented, language
- Group participation and chemistry: working as a group, not individually, supporting each other
- Energy/enthusiasm/fun
- Answering questions: confidence, listening to questions, addressing questions properly
- Time management
- Flow: transition from one part to another, consistency between parts.

Peer Evaluation

Each student is required to email TA a peer evaluation form by end of the day after the group presentation. The peer-evaluation is conducted to ensure that all students do their fair share of the work. You need to provide a peer evaluation for every member of your group (excluding yourself), rating your peer’s contributions, using a scale of 0 (very low) to 5 (excellent). As this is a rating, not a ranking, if all members of your group have made strong contributions, you can rate them all with a 5. The ratings for other members of your team will have no impact on your grade. Note that any score of 0, 1 or 2 must be accompanied by a short written explanation of why you marked your teammate with that score. All ratings and explanations will be confidential. I and the TA will consider the evaluation when assigning final grades to group report.

Writing Assignments or Presentations

The individual assignment, group assignment and the group presentation are intended to help you develop your communication skills. How well you communicate your ideas, in writing or orally, will be considered in the evaluation of the assignment. In your written assignments, you should aim for clarity, strong organization, concision, professionalism, and correct grammar. Your presentations should reflect strong planning and organization, clarity of speech, and an engaging demeanour. Sources, whether in written or presentation assignments, should always be correctly attributed.

Support is available through the RC Centre for Professional Skills (CPS) for students who would like help or feedback on their writing or speaking (presentations). CPS offers both individual and group appointments with trained writing instructors and presentation coaches who are familiar with the RC program and common types of business assignments. You can also access your college Writing Centres for help with written assignments.

You can book an appointment with a writing or presentation coach through the RC Centre for Professional Skills Writing Centre. For more information about writing centres, student supports, and study resources, see the [Writing and Presentation Coaching academic support page](#).

Team or Group Assignments

The group assignment and presentation requires students to work in teams of 4 to 6 students. Learning to work together in teams is a crucial transferrable skill you will use not only in your coursework, but also in your future careers. Support is available if you encounter common teamwork challenges such as:

- Team members feeling left out of the team.
- Team members not responding in a timely manner to communication.
- Division or quality of work among team members being unequal or unfair.

Consult the [Centre for Professional Skills Teamwork Resources page](#) for tips, strategies, and best practices. You can also [book an appointment with a teamwork mentor](#) through the RC Centre for Professional Skills Writing Centre. Teamwork mentors can help you resolve or mitigate conflict, strategize on planning, or improve team communication.

If you are a student registered with Accessibility Services, and extensions are one of your academic accommodations, consult with your Accessibility Advisor about the teamwork in this course.

Missed Tests and Assignments

Students who miss a term test or assignment for reasons entirely beyond their control (e.g. illness) may request special consideration **within 2 business days** of the missed midterm/test/assignment due date.

In such cases, students must:

1. Complete the Request for Special Consideration form: <https://uoft.me/RSMConsideration>
2. Provide documentation to support the request, eg. Absence Declaration from [ACORN](#), medical note etc.

Please note: As of September 2023, students may use the Absence Declaration on ACORN ***one time per term*** to report an absence and request consideration. **Any subsequent absence will require a [Verification of Illness form](#) or other similar relevant documentation.**

Students who do not submit their requests and documentation within 2 days may receive a grade of 0 (zero) on the missed course deliverable.

Final Exams: If you miss the final exam in this course for a legitimate reason (illness, etc) you will need to contact your College Registrar to file a petition for a deferred exam. This deferred exam will be written at a later date as established by the Faculty of Arts & Science. Instructions can be found here: <https://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/faculty-registrar/petitions-appeals/preparing-petition>

Late Assignments

All assignments are due on the date and at the time specified in Quercus. Late submissions will normally be penalized by 10% if the assignment is not received on the specified date, at the specified time. A further penalty of 10% will be applied to each subsequent day.

Statement on Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

The University of Toronto is committed to equity, human rights and respect for diversity. All members of the learning environment in this course should strive to create an atmosphere of mutual respect where all members of our community can express themselves, engage with each other, and respect one another's differences. U of T does not condone discrimination or harassment against any persons or communities.

Commitment to Accessibility

The University is committed to inclusivity and accessibility, and strives to provide support for, and facilitate the accommodation of, individuals with disabilities so that all may share the same level of access to opportunities and activities offered at the University.

If you require accommodations for a temporary or ongoing disability or health concern, or have any accessibility concerns about the course, the classroom or course materials, please [email Accessibility Services](#) or visit the [Accessibility Services website](#) for more information as soon as possible. Obtaining your accommodation letter may take up to several weeks, so get in touch with them as soon as possible. If you have general questions or concerns about the accessibility of this course, you are encouraged to reach out to your instructor, course coordinator, or Accessibility Services.

Plagiarism Detection

Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to the University's plagiarism detection tool for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the tool's reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of this tool are described on the [University's Plagiarism Detection Tool FAQ](#) page from Centre for Teaching Support & Innovation.

Generative AI / ChatGPT

The use of generative artificial intelligence tools or apps for assignments in this course, including tools like ChatGPT and other AI writing or coding assistants, is prohibited. This course policy is designed to promote your learning and intellectual development and to help you reach course learning outcomes.

Academic Integrity

Academic Integrity is a fundamental value essential to the pursuit of learning and scholarship at the University of Toronto. Participating honestly, respectfully, responsibly, and fairly in this academic community ensures that the U of T degree that you earn will continue to be valued and respected as a true signifier of a student's individual work and academic achievement. As a result, the University treats cases of academic misconduct very seriously.

[The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#) outlines the behaviours that constitute academic misconduct, the process for addressing academic offences and the penalties that may be imposed. You are expected to be familiar with the contents of this document. Potential offences include, but are not limited to:

In papers and assignments

- Using someone else's ideas or words without appropriate acknowledgement.
- Submitting your own work in more than one course without the permission of the instructor.
- Making up sources or facts.
- Obtaining or providing unauthorized assistance on any assignment (this includes collaborating with others on assignments that are supposed to be completed individually).

On test and exams

- Using or possessing any unauthorized aid, including a cell phone.
- Looking at someone else's answers.
- Misrepresenting your identity.
- Submitting an altered test for re-grading.

Misrepresentation

- Falsifying institutional documents or grades.
- Falsifying or altering any documentation required by the University, including (but not limited to) medical notes.

All suspected cases of academic dishonesty will be investigated by the procedures outlined in the [Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters](#). If you have any questions about what is or is not permitted in the course, please do not hesitate to contact the course instructor. If you have any questions about appropriate research and citation methods, you are expected to seek out additional information from the instructor or other U of T or RC resources such as the RC Centre for Professional Skills, the College Writing Centres or the Academic Success Centre.

Email

At times, the course instructor may decide to communicate important course information by email. As such, all U of T students are required to have a valid UTmail+ email address. You are responsible for ensuring that your UTmail+ email address is set up and properly entered on ACORN. For more information visit the [Information Commons Help Desk](#).

Forwarding your utoronto.ca email to a Gmail or other type of email account is not advisable. In some cases, messages from utoronto.ca addresses sent to Gmail accounts are filtered as junk mail, which means that important messages from your course instructor may end up in your spam or junk mail folder.

Recording Lectures

Lectures and course materials prepared by the instructor are considered by the University to be an instructor's intellectual property covered by the Canadian Copyright Act. Students wishing to record a lecture or other course material in any way are required to ask the instructor's explicit permission and may not do so unless permission is granted. Students who have been previously granted permission to record lectures as an accommodation for a disability are excepted. This includes tape recording, filming, photographing PowerPoint slides, Quercus materials, etc.

If permission for recording is granted by the instructor (or via Accessibility Services), it is intended for the individual student's own study purposes and does not include permission to "publish" them in any way. It is forbidden for a student to publish an instructor's notes to a website or sell them in any other form without formal permission.

Schedule

Weekly Summary of Class Timings, Format and Location*

Class #	Day	Date	Time	Location
1	Tuesday	Jan 7, 2025	Lecture	RT
2	Tuesday	Jan 14, 2025	Workshop	BORs
3	Tuesday	Jan 21, 2025	Lecture	RT
4	Tuesday	Jan 28, 2025	Workshop	BORs
5	Tuesday	February 4, 2025	Lecture	RT
6	Tuesday	February 11, 2025	Workshop	BORs
7	Tuesday	February 18, 2025	No Class	Reading Week
8	Tuesday	February 25, 2025	Lecture	RT
9	Tuesday	March 4, 2025	Workshop	BORs
10	Tuesday	March 11, 2025	Lecture	RT
11	Tuesday	March 18, 2025	Workshop	BORs
12	Tuesday	March 25, 2025	Lecture	RT
13	Tuesday	April 1, 2025	Workshop	BORs
14	Tuesday	April 2-3, 2025	Zoom presentations	Online
Final Exam	Exam Period	April 9 to 30, 2025	2.5 hours	TBD

* 2 or 3 tutorials will be scheduled to review class materials and the assignments.

Lecture Specifics (Readings may be added. Please check Quercus.)

Class #	Date	Topic	Readings
1	Jan 7	What do I need to know and why	Textbook: Chapter 1 Introduction Textbook: Chapter 2 Market Insight
3	Jan 21	Flush out the Questions	Case: "A Destabilizing Situation for Binatone: The Market for 1000W Stabilizers in Nigeria" Textbook: Chapter 5 Business Strategy
5	Feb 4	Basics that every business must do	Case: "Classic Knitwear and Guardian: A Perfect Fit?" Textbook: Chapter 6 Business Operations Textbook: Chapter 8 Price Analytics
7	Feb 25	Getting into Marketing Data: quantitative analysis to support strategy	Case: "The Fashion Channel" Textbook: Chapter 7 Product & Service Analytics
9	March 11	Data-driven segmentation (Classification Analysis and Cross Tab Analysis)	Case: "Ford Ka Market Research Version (Case A)" Textbook: Chapter 3 Market Segmentation
11	March 25	Data Transformation, Reliability and Meaning (Perceptual mapping and Psychographic Data)	No reading

Please note that the last day you can drop this course without academic penalty is March 10, 2025.



Other Useful Links

- [Become a volunteer note taker](#)
- [Accessibility Services Note Taking Support](#)
- [Credit / No-Credit in RSM courses](#)
- [Rotman Commerce Academic Support](#)
- [Where to find teaching assistant opportunities](#)

URL links for print

- ACORN: <http://www.acorn.utoronto.ca/>
- Email Accessibility Services: accessibility.services@utoronto.ca
- Accessibility Services website: <http://studentlife.utoronto.ca/as>
- University's Plagiarism Detection Tool FAQ: <https://uoft.me/pdt-faq>
- The University of Toronto's Code of Behaviour on Academic Matters: <http://www.governingcouncil.utoronto.ca/policies/behaveac.htm>
- Information Commons Help Desk: <http://help.ic.utoronto.ca/category/3/utmail.html>
- Become a volunteer note taker: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/program/volunteer-note-taking/>
- Accessibility Services Note Taking Support: <https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/service/note-taking-support/>
- Credit / No-Credit in RSM courses: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/degree-requirements/credit-no-credit-option/>
- Rotman Commerce Academic Support: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/academic-support/>
- Book an appointment with a writing or presentation coach: <http://uoft.me/writingcentres>
- Writing and Presentation Coaching academic support page: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/current-students/academic-support/writing-and-presentation-coaching/>
- Centre for Professional Skills Teamwork Resources page: <https://rotmancommerce.utoronto.ca/teamwork-resources>
- Book an appointment with a Teamwork Mentor: <http://uoft.me/writingcentres>