**PUAD 5319: Research Methods in Public Administration**

**Fall 2024: Wednesdays, 6:00 – 8:50 pm**

**Holden Hall - Room 127**

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**Office: Holden Hall 14; Office Hours: 4:00 – 5:30 pm W/Th or by appointment**

*“Eliminate all other factors, and the one which remains must be the truth."*

*-Sherlock Holmes in The Sign of Four*

**Course Description**

This course pairs with PUAD 5320 Program Evaluation and Quantitative Analysis which focuses primarily on statistical analysis and software in the set of sequence of research methods courses. This course introduces students to the basic logic, design, and conduct of applied social science research in public management and policy. PUAD 5320 will emphasize the utilization and interpretation of basic statistical techniques in public management research and policy analysis.

Specifically, this course focuses on formulating research questions, collecting data, selecting analytical methods, the logic and tools of causal inference and understanding the use of appropriate research methodologies in public policy and management. This course demonstrates the application of the following to both practical professional analysis and scholarly inquiry: the exploration of the relevant scholarly and professional literature, the design of research approaches, the utilization of various quantitative and qualitative research methods and techniques to collect data and analyze data; and the use of information thus obtained in the solution of policy problems confronting professional administrators.

**Learning Objectives**

The learning objective of this course is to develop your knowledge and skills in causal inference and designing and evaluating scientific research in public administration and policy. By the end of the course, the student should be able to:

1. Design the basic elements of a research project, including identifying research questions, locating resources, building theoretical arguments, and formulating testable hypotheses.
   * Assessed by Final Project.
2. Select appropriate methods and approaches to gather data, and develop research designs that test hypotheses and address research questions.
   * Assessed by Discussion Leading and Final Project.
3. Develop theoretically engaging and methodologically sound research proposals for professional purposes using survey or interview questionnaires.
   * Assessed by Final Project.
4. Critically evaluate the validity of research proposals, policy analysis reports, and journal articles in public administration and policy.
   * Assessed by Discussion Leading, and Participation and Peer Review.
5. Appraise the ethical issues in the process of research from methodological concerns to broader concerns of generalizations of findings.
   * Assessed by Final Project and Participation.

**NASPAA Universal Required Competencies:**

**In addition to the specific course outcomes listed above, this course also accomplishes the following MPA core curriculum outcomes. These outcomes will be assessed through exams, reaction papers, case studies & final paper.**

* Competency 1: Students will improve their ability to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment
  + Assessed by Final Project, Discussion Leading, Participation.
* Competency 2: to communicate and interact productively and in culturally responsive ways with a diverse and changing workforce and society at large.
  + Assessed by Discussion Leading, Presentation, and Participation.

**Textbook and Readings:**

I firmly believe that every professor should reduce the cost of textbooks for students, so we will be drawing on multiple textbooks throughout the semester to ensure you are not spending unnecessary money on textbooks.

We will be reading this free online textbook: Huntington-Klein, Nick (2021). *The Effect: An Introduction to Research Design and Causality.* Available at <https://theeffectbook.net/ch-ResearchQuestions.html>

We will also draw from John and David Creswell’s “Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.”

* For this book, there is a free student resources page available here: <https://edge.sagepub.com/creswellrd5e/student-resources-0>

**Class Policies:**

Students are expected to review the following links to be familiar with the university required classroom policies (regarding disability accommodations, religious holiday accommodations and academic integrity) as well as recommended policies which will apply in this course.

**--All assignments will be submitted to the instructor via e-mail unless otherwise specified.--**

*Required Syllabus Language can be found* [*here*](https://www.depts.ttu.edu/tlpdc/RequiredSyllabusStatements.php)*.*

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**AI Policy:** The use of generative AI tools (such as ChatGPT) is strictly prohibited in this course for any purpose. Information gathered from AI cannot be used even with appropriate citation. Submission of AI-generated content (i.e., information, text, or images) as your own work is a violation of academic integrity and may result in referral to the Office of Student Conduct. Please contact your instructor if you have questions regarding this course policy.

**Course Requirements and Grading:**

1. **Class Participation Policy**

**It is the student’s responsibility to complete the readings and review the lecture slides during the week for which they are assigned.** Completion of the required readings and viewing of the lectures are essential for satisfactory performance in the class. **Students are responsible for knowing the due dates of assignments (please check email frequently)** and keeping up with the course as the semester progresses. All assignments will be posted on course website.

To fully participate in the course students will be expected to have a TTU e-mail account and access to the Internet. If you do not have an active email account, please contact the instructor so that we can assist you in getting signed up.

Participation means more than just attending class. I strongly encourage you to take an active role in the classroom by sharing your comments, questions, and ideas. Because participation is essential to this class, I reserve the right to administer unannounced in-class quizzes and graded activities should your preparation fail to meet my expectations. You must attend to participate. If you need to miss classes for religious observances, please inform me of this during the first two weeks of the semester and indicate the exact dates. You are required to attend class every session (see The Student Handbook). There are appropriate reasons for missing class on occasion. A word of caution, an excused absence does not excuse you from the material covered during your absence. You will be responsible for the same material as your classmates who were in attendance.

* **If you are not excused from class and you miss an in-class activity or quiz, there are NO makeup opportunities, and you will receive an automatic zero.**

**Assignments:**

These assignments are designed to help you develop skills in designing sound scientific research on public management or policy and assess the quality of policy reports or research articles you will read in your future work. Grades will be based on the following requirements:

1. **Participation/Discussion Leader (30%):**

- Discussion Leader (15%)

- Participation, Quizzes & Class Activities (15%)

**2) Final Project: Research Design Proposal (50%):**

- Problem statement (0%; You submit it to get feedback and approval.)

- Literature review and conceptual framework (20%)

- Final Proposal (30%)

**3) Final Project Presentation & Peer Review (20%)**

- Final Project Presentation (10%)

- Final Project Peer Review (10%)

**Class Schedule**

**Week 1:** Introduction to Research Design, Research Ethics and Developing Research Questions

* [Leedy, P. and Ormrod, J., 2005. *Practical Research: Planning and Design*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall. Ch. 2, “The Problem: The Heart of the Research Process,”](https://pce-fet.com/common/library/books/51/2590_%5BPaul_D._Leedy,_Jeanne_Ellis_Ormrod%5D_Practical_Res(b-ok.org).pdf)
* [The Effect Chapter 2](https://theeffectbook.net/ch-TheDesignofResearch.html)

**Week 2:** **NO CLASS** – **Professor at APSA**

**Week 3:** Literature Review, Conceptual Frameworks, and Theoretical Hypotheses

* Creswell Chapters 2 & 3
* \*Christensen et al., “Human Capital and Administrative Burden”
* Literature Review Tutorial: [https://www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9la5ytz9MmM)/[watch?v=9la5y](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9la5ytz9MmM)tz9MmM

**Week 4:** Intro to the Toolbox of Methods, Measurement, and Sampling

* Creswell Chapter 1 - -Matching your research question and conceptual framework to a method
* Johnson, Janet and H.T. Reynolds. 2008. *Political Science Research Methods, 6th ed*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Ch. 4, “The Building Blocks of Social Scientific Research: Measurement,” pp. 88-121.
* \*Laenen et al., 2019 Why deservingness theory needs qualitative research

**Week 5:** Qualitative & Mixed Methods Designs

* Creswell Chapter 9 & 10
* \*Heinrich 2016. The Bite of Administrative Burden. (Mixed-Methods)
* \*Barnes 2021. Redemption Costs. (Qualitative)

**Week 6:** The Fundamental Problem of Causal Inference

* Shadish, Cook and Campbell Ch. 1
* The Effect Chapters 5 & 6; 8 & 9
* \*Hattke et al. “Under the Skin: Physiological Measures of Administrative Burdens”

**Week 7:** Survey Samples and Recruitment

* Dillman et al., Ch 1.
* Johnson, Janet and H.T. Reynolds. 2008. *Political Science Research Methods, 6th ed*. Washington, DC: CQ Press. Ch. 7, “Sampling,” pp. 209-242.
* \*Moynihan & Kroll 2016, supplemental material for this article here:
  + <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-13-519sp#QuestionnaireContents>
  + <https://www.gao.gov/products/gao-08-1036sp>

**Week 8:** Survey Question Writing

* Chapter 1 and Chapter 6: <https://ttu-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1j33bpi/TN_cdi_wiley_ebooks_10_1002_9781119263685_ch6_ch6>
* \*Benjamin, Por, and Budescu “Climate Change Versus Global Warming”

**Week 9:** Survey Experiments

* Jilke and Van Ryzin. Survey Experiments for Public Management Research
* Sniderman. Advancements in Survey Experiments
* Optional Supplementary Article: 10 things to know about survey experiments <https://egap.org/resource/10-things-to-know-about-survey-experiments/>
* \*Jilke and Tummers. “Which Clients are Deserving of Help?”

**Week 10:** Quantitative Survey Question Analysis

* Choi and Wehde: [Trust in Emergency Management Authorities and Individual Emergency Preparedness for Tornadoes - Choi - 2020 - Risk, Hazards & Crisis in Public Policy - Wiley Online Library](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/rhc3.12185?casa_token=C62tjaXNJwEAAAAA:zlnNlFceFEhdArFlXNcsBX1K_mEEDxDUeXjUhKsZWutk3ViPRwo5sRmV9Lm7Cwwf9gzu5a45_CN8lIyT)
* Creswell Chapter 8: Intro to Survey Design and Quant Methods
* [The Effect Chapters 3 & 4](https://theeffectbook.net/ch-DrawingCausalDiagrams.html): Describing Variables & Relationships

**Week 11:** Qualitative Survey Question Analysis

* \*Hildebrand and Wehde, <https://ttu-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1j33bpi/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2858782629>
* [**Using Iterative, Small‐Scale Quantitative and Qualitative Studies: A Review of 15 Years of Research to Redesign a Major US Federal Government Survey**](https://ttu-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/primo-explore/fulldisplay?docid=TN_cdi_wiley_ebooks_10_1002_9781119263685_ch26_ch26&context=PC&vid=01TTU&lang=en_US&search_scope=01TTU_ALL&adaptor=primo_central_multiple_fe&query=any%2Ccontains%2CTN_cdi_wiley_ebooks_10_1002_9781119263685_ch6_ch6&offset=0)

**Week 12:** Survey Grab-Bag for Discussion Leading

* \*Crabtree and Wehde: <http://lib-e2.lib.ttu.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/examining-policy-feedback-effects-covid-19-on/docview/2772409863/se-2?accountid=7098>
* \*Robinson, Pudlo and Wehde: <https://ttu-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1j33bpi/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2310632109>
* \*Bell et al: <https://ttu-primo.hosted.exlibrisgroup.com/permalink/f/1j33bpi/TN_cdi_proquest_journals_2553652662>

**Week 13: PRESENTATIONS**

**Week 14: THANKSGIVING**

**Assignment Information:**

**Deadlines:**

Proposal: Problem statement, 9/10

**Proposal: Literature review and conceptual framework, 10/8**

Final Project Presentation, 11/20

Draft of Proposal due to Another, 11/21

Peer Review of Another Proposal, 11/27

Proposal: Final draft, 12/6

*Discussion Leader*

For the week you are leading discussion, you will:

* Email at least 3 discussion questions for the class that week to the instructor.
* Prepare a 30-45 minute discussion on one of the example articles listed with “\*” in the reading list. Research articles are the articles with “\*” in your readings, which are published in top public policy/public administration journals (or other social sciences journals). You will need to use all the key concepts and criteria you learn in the week’s readings to assess the published research article.
  + In this discussion, you are expected to discuss how the authors designed their research and evaluate how well they did based on the criteria we have learned in the class. In addition, you also want to provide constructive suggestions to the paper if possible.

I use these published research articles as examples to learn how to design each step in a research project, **but each person is welcome to select other peer-reviewed articles that are good examples in policy areas of interest to them**. Detailed instructions and grading rubric for this assignment are provided on Blackboard.

*Participation/Contribution to seminar*

A successful course requires meaningful contributions from every student each week of the course. These contributions will take different forms, and over the course of the semester will include contributing to the discussion each week, talking about your research during the time set aside for doing so, and providing useful feedback to others when they talk about their research. I will be recording contributions to class discussions for a random set of dates throughout the semester and will give each student a holistic score that they can check in on at the middle of the semester. Students’ overall contributions will be assessed according to the rubric posted on Blackboard.

*In-Class Activities/Participation/Pop-Quizzes*

I will check to make sure students have done the readings with pop-quizzes and will also check to make sure you’re understanding the material with in-class activities and discussion boards periodically.

**Final Project: Research Design Proposal (50%)**

The major project in this class is a research design proposal for a topic you want to do research on in the future (e.g., your seminar paper or Action Report). Students will complete this assignment individually

Since this class focuses on explanation of social phenomena related to public administration, your research design should be for explanatory research, which attempts to collect data to explain a social phenomenon related to public administration or policy. The final research proposal is similar to a research paper, which includes introduction, literature review, conceptual framework, data collection plan, and data analysis plan. Your final research proposal will be built upon following steps throughout the semester: 1) problem statement, 2) literature review and conceptual framework, and 3) final proposal. I will provide you with feedback for each draft so that you can improve step by step. In this way, I can answer any questions you have regarding each assignment and discuss future steps to help you move forward. Further instructions for each step will be posted on Canvas.

**Final Project Presentation and Peer Review (20%)**

Each student will present their research proposal on the last day of class. Being able to write a proposal is one key skill you need to develop, but another is being able to distill complex research topics into a digestible presentation for an informed but non-expert audience. Therefore, each student will be responsible for a 5-10 minute presentation of their proposal with time for questions following the presentation.

To encourage joint-learning, I will assign each student to review another student’s research design proposal and provide feedback to them in the last two weeks. The review criteria are similar to the criteria we use to evaluate example research articles in the online discussions.

**Grading/Late Assignments:** Late assignments will not be accepted unless there are extenuating circumstances. If there are extenuating circumstances, assignments will be dropped to the next letter grade in the course grading scale. Letter grades will be assigned according to the following point totals: A=94 or higher; A- =90-93.99; B+=87-89.99; B=84-86.99; B- =80-83.99; C+=77-79.99; C=74-76.99; C- =70- 73.99; D+=67-69.99; D=64-66.99; D- =60-63.99; F= less than 60.