

Research Design
20:834:562–H6
Summer 2007
T/Th 5:30-8:10 P.M.
Classroom: Hill 204

Instructor: Weiwei Lin
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Office: Hill Hall 419
Office Hours: Tuesday 4:00-5:15 P.M.

Research Design
– *Research Methods in Public & Nonprofit Administration*

MPA Program, School of Public Affairs & Administration
Rutgers University – Newark

Course Description & Objectives

This course offers an introduction to the process of research in public and nonprofit administration and other related fields of study. The course is designed to examine the research techniques that are most prevalent in the public and nonprofit administration literature. Topics covered include how to identify research topics and write research questions, determine and implement research methods, analyze data, present research results, and write research papers. This is a hands-on course where active participation in assignments, exercises, and class discussion is required.

The objectives of the course are to:

- Increase student knowledge of research methods.
- Stimulate a critical eye among students as they assess the methodologies employed in current public and nonprofit administration research.
- Build student awareness of the ethical responsibilities of conducting research.
- Equip students to choose and apply sound methods for research in their professional or academic pursuits.

Course Material

➤ **Required Text**

Babbie, Earl. 2008. *The Basics of Social Research* 4th edition. Thomson Wadsworth.
(ISBN: 978-0-495-10034-8)

(Placed at NJ Bookstore.)

(Students may opt to purchase used versions of the 3rd edition.)

➤ **Recommended References**

Trochim, William M.K. 2007. *The Research Methods Knowledge Base* 3rd edition. Atomic Dog Publishing. (ISBN: 0-13-187439-X)

Nardi, Peter M. 2006. *Doing Survey Research: A Guide to Quantitative Methods* 2nd edition. Pearson. (ISBN: 0-205-44609-4)

Yin, Robert. 2003. *Case Study Research, Design and Methods* 3rd edition. SAGE Publications. (ISBN: 0-7619-2553-8)

McNabb, David E. 2002. *Research Methods in Public Administration and Nonprofit Management: Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. M.E. Sharpe. (ISBN: 0-7656-0957-6)

Meier, Kenneth J., Jeffrey L. Brudney, and John Bohte. 2006. *Applied Statistics for Public And Nonprofit Administration* 6th edition. Thomson. (ISBN: 0-534-60268-1)

Requirements and Evaluation

Class Attendance & Participation: All students are expected to attend class regularly, complete assigned readings before class and actively participate in classroom discussions (Yes, participation, I mean it). A couple of journal articles will be used in class to illustrate the points raised in the textbook. I will post the articles on blackboard by the end of the first week and please print and read them because they will be used for our class discussions.

Assignments: You should type all of your homework unless directed otherwise. Late homework will receive a half-point letter grade reduction for each day that it is late.

➤ **Observation/Interview:** Students need to practice one of the two major research skills by conducting either an observation or an interview, and a written assignment with minimum 1,200 words is to be submitted. Please come to me with your tentative topic no later than Class 4 (July 19th) for instructor approval.

➤ **Group Project:** The class will be divided into groups of 4-5 students. Each group will review and present a research paper assigned. The group presentation needs to address: research questions, purpose and significance of the research study, literature cited, sample, research instrument, data collection, data analysis/analytical methods used, conclusion, limitation of the study, etc. A written report including all above

mentioned elements of the presentation must be turned the day the presentation is given.

- *Critique of a Research Article*: Besides being able to summarize research papers, students should also be able to evaluate research papers, particularly in terms of the methodology adopted by the researchers. Each student who chooses to do a critique in stead of statistical work will select one from about 5 research articles provided by the instructor to critique with no less than 500 words. Although group study is encouraged, **this is an individual assignment**.

- *Statistical Analysis Homework*: A data set as well as a couple of research questions/hypotheses will be provided to those students who choose to do a little bit “statistics.” Students will answer the research questions by running statistical tests on SPSS/STATA or any other statistical packages they prefer. Save the procedures you run on the statistical package and show them together with the statistical output and your answer. Again, students can discuss with and help each other, but **you must finish the work individually**.

- *Final Project*: All students are required to prepare a research proposal they have developed over the course of the semester. At the end of the semester, students will present to the class the research proposal. A written summary (8-12 pages) of the proposal must be submitted on the last class session.

Grading:

Element of Grade	Weight
Class Attendance & Participation	15%
Assignment 1: Observation OR Interview	15%
Assignment 2: Group Project	20%
Assignment 3: Critique of Research Article OR Statistical Homework	20%
Final Project	30%
Total	100%

Academic Dishonesty: Policies regarding academic integrity are available in the current *Rutgers-Newark Graduate School Policy on Academic Integrity* (found at <http://gsn.newark.rutgers.edu/integrity.html>). “Cheating” and “plagiarism” will result in

severe disciplinary action on the part of the instructor. Either offense will be grounds for receiving an “F” on the assignment or exam and possibly an “F” for the course, depending on the severity of the offense.

Course Schedule, Reading & Assignments

The schedule may change slightly depending on how the semester goes. Any changes to the course schedule will be announced in advance.

1	July 10 th	Explanation of Syllabus and Course Overview The Research Process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapters 1 & 2</i>
2	July 12 th	Designing Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapter 4</i> <p>***Instructions on Assignments 1 & 2 Distributed*** ***Groups Formed***</p>
3	July 17 th	Operationalization & Measurement of Variables <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapter 5</i>
4	July 19 th	Sampling & Experiments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapters 7 & 8</i> <p>***Observation/Interview Topic Due ***</p>
5	July 24 th	Ethics of Social Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapter 3</i> Rutgers IRB policies http://orsp.rutgers.edu/human.asp Qualitative Field Research (Observation & Interviewing) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapter 10</i>
6	July 26 th	Unobtrusive & Evaluation Research <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapters 11 & 12</i>

7	July 31 st	<p>Survey Research</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapter 9</i> <p>Observation/Interview Due</p> <p>***Instructions on Assignment 3 (critique) Distributed***</p>
8	Aug. 2 nd	<p>Group Presentations</p> <p>Group Project Written Report Due</p> <p>***Instructions on Final Project Distributed***</p>
9	Aug. 7 th	<p>Data Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapters 13 & 14</i> <p>***Final Project Topic Due ***</p> <p>***Assignment 3 (statistics homework) Distributed***</p>
10	Aug. 9 th	<p>Computer Session</p> <p>Inferential statistics, confidence level, t-score, z-score, correlation, regression,</p> <p>Critique of Research Paper Due</p>
11	Aug. 14 th	<p>Writing Research Papers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Babbie Chapter 15</i> <p>Student Presentations</p>
12	Aug. 16 th	<p>Student Presentations</p> <p>Final Project Due</p> <p>Statistics Homework Due</p>