

School of Public Administration

University of New Mexico

PADM 552: Designing Applied Research

Spring 2015

Professor: Stephanie Smith, Ph.D.
Email: Use UNM Learn Messages (internal) for class communications.
Email: slsmith@unm.edu
Office: 3rd Floor Social Sciences Building, #3008
Office hours: Wednesdays 2:00 to 4:00 PM and by appointment
Office phone: 505-277-0382 (use messages/email outside office hours)
Course meetings: Thursdays, 7-9:30 (ITV)

Course Description

This is a seminar course in which participants discuss, analyze, design and write up components of a public policy and/or administrative research proposal. The final proposal may feed into the professional paper culminating experience project for the Master of Public Administration degree. Course readings, discussions and activities focus upon: development of an answerable public administration or policy research question; searching for and how to write about published research and theory; research methodology, including ethics and data collection; and developing a research and writing timeline for completion. Students will develop an independent research proposal and presentation during the course of the semester. Students will also be introduced to case analysis, another culminating experience option in the MPA degree program, during the course.

Participants are expected to actively engage in all components of the course. We will work from the premise that all participants bring important knowledge, skills, experiences and insights to the course that we can draw upon to create a productive collaborative learning experience.

By the end of the course participants will have:

- Developed an appropriate, meaningful and answerable public administration and/or policy focused research question to investigate;
- Conducted a literature search and written a literature review that is directly applicable to answering the research question;
- Drafted a research methodology and identified data appropriate to answering the research question with empirical evidence;

- Developed in-depth understanding of an issue that is of great interest to them and demonstrated mastery of a public administration and/or policy topic through research and presentation.

In addition, the following MPA core learning outcomes will be addressed in this course. Students will:

- Demonstrate knowledge of comparative case analysis;
- Analyze policies and programs by applying appropriate ethical research standards;
- Demonstrate excellent verbal communication ability.

Course Requirements, Grading and Readings

Class participation & attendance

Participation & attendance

This course relies heavily upon the participation of everyone involved. The instructor will present some material, but learning occurs primarily through active engagement with topics, including discussion of concepts, evaluation and analysis of materials, and application in cooperation with your colleagues. For this reason, your attendance and active participation is expected at all class sessions. **Each class session will begin promptly at the scheduled time. You are expected to be ready to engage fully in the course at that time.**

In order to encourage full participation and reward those that make strong contributions to the quality of the learning environment in the course, class participation forms a substantial portion of the grade. A grade of "A" on class participation may be earned by attending all class sessions in their entirety and consistently contributing to class discussions, online discussions and other activities in a way that demonstrates thoughtful consideration of the readings and assignments.

Participation grades will be negatively affected by missing more than one class session, being disengaged during class, returning late from breaks, lack of participation in class or online discussions, coming to class late or without having prepared course readings (read and considered). Please notify the instructor of medical or family emergencies in a timely fashion so that these will not adversely affect the participation and attendance grade. It is your responsibility to communicate with the instructor about these matters.

Please note that class participation involves active engagement with course material as described above, as well as respect and consideration for the views of other members of the class.

Assignments

Research proposal

You will develop a substantial portion of an empirically based and analytic research proposal examining a public administration and/or policy issue of your choice (with instructor approval). Your final proposal should include the following sections and content (note that you will need to elaborate the contents):

Introduction (guideline: 2-2 ½ pages)

- Grab the reader's attention in the opening sentences
 - What is the problem? Why is this an important topic? Why should your committee members read this paper?
- Clearly state the research question(s) – in question form.
- What will this study contribute to our understanding of the topic?
- Include a paragraph that briefly describes your research methodology
- Include a bullet point that you will later replace with a paragraph previewing your findings and conclusions if the project is completed
- Conclude with a brief paragraph outlining the contents of the paper (a road map – tell the reader where you are going)
- Note: It may be appropriate to include a brief background section outlining history of the issue you have selected (or other contextual or background information) following the introduction, literature review or methodology. For many papers, this can be sufficiently addressed in the introduction section in 1-3 paragraphs, but some papers will require elaboration to help readers become more familiar with the issue. Consult with the instructor and/or your professional paper chair to help determine what is appropriate for your paper.

Literature review (guideline: 6-8 pages)

- Give a descriptive title to the section. For example: Emotional intelligence and disaster response leaders
- Include an introductory paragraph
- Synthesize and analyze published empirical and theoretical scholarship (focusing on academic peer-reviewed journals and books) with direct application to answering your research question
 - Organize contents thematically. For example:
 - Independent and dependent variables
 - Key historical developments (of legislation, for instance)
 - Other thematic organization. Do not write as an annotated bibliography!
- Summary paragraph
- Note: There is a general preference for current references (research and theorizing of the past 10-15 years); however, it is appropriate to include seminal works and significant historical contributions.

Methodology (guideline: 1-2 pages)

- Introduce the study methodology in a way that your MPA colleagues could understand if they were to read your paper
- Data & analytical strategy
 - Describe data sources and how you will collect data
 - Describe your strategy for analyzing data
- Ethics
 - Write at least one sentence (a paragraph may be more appropriate) concerning ethical considerations of your proposed research project, including that there are no concerns if this is the case (e.g. you plan to use publicly available and de-identified U.S. Census data versus a project in which you collect data directly from human subjects [a.k.a. people]).
- Limitations of the study
 - All studies are limited in the extent to which we can form conclusions about a given phenomenon. Write a paragraph about your study's limitations and potential contributions.

References, to be formatted in APA style (guideline: pages needed)

Timeline for completion

- Outline major steps in the research process and deadlines for writing and submission that you will aim to meet along the way (guideline: 1 page)
 - If planning to take the case analysis capstone course, note that and still complete this step

This is to be an original research paper. It may not be an extension or revision of work you have done in a previous or are doing in a concurrent course.

Format & submission

- The paper should be 12-14 pages in length (excluding title page, references and timeline)
- The paper should be double-spaced
- Use 12 point Cambria or Times New Roman font
- Use 1" margins
- Name the document as follows: first name_two or three key words_PADM552
- **Submit the proposal as a Word document to the Assignments folder in UNM Learn by 9 AM on Monday, April 27th.**

Research proposal presentation

You will present your research proposal, including introduction, literature review and methodology at a class meeting in the final weeks of the semester. Requirements for the presentation will be posted in an announcement on UNM Learn later in the semester.

Slide and presentation tips: Font should be large enough to read from a distance. Use no more than 35 words per slide. Don't use animation. Cite references in parentheses on the relevant slide (e.g. Smith 2013) and include full references on a final slide at the end of the presentation. Read as little as possible – focus on engaging the audience (making eye contact, using gestures to emphasize points). If at a distance site, look at the camera. Show the audience your expertise on the topic. Rehearse beforehand to get timing and transitions down.

Assignments supporting development of the research proposal

Discussion posts

The instructor will initiate discussion threads with relevance to class meeting topics in UNM Learn. You are expected to post at least one question and/or thoughtful/thought-provoking comment to each online discussion thread as assigned (see weekly schedule of class meetings, readings and assignments later in the syllabus). Post your questions/comments for regular discussion threads **by 9 AM on Wednesdays (the day before the relevant class meeting)** so that classmates and/or the instructor may address them in the discussion string or during class. All required discussion posts will be recorded for credit, no credit, late (only if posted before the relevant class meeting begins) or partial credit. Keep track of these carefully as your participation in online discussions contributes to the final course evaluation. Please note that you are also encouraged to post constructive comments and questions in response to your classmates' discussion posts.

- Tip: Draft responses in a word processing program and copy/paste into the discussion string. Do not attach documents with your comments.

You will have opportunities to submit other supporting assignments and smaller portions of the research proposal for review and instructor feedback, as well as feedback from your colleagues, during the semester. These are required assignments. Due dates are as follows:

Published research paper analysis

- You will be assigned one of two articles to analyze. Post responses to at least 5 of the 8 questions in the relevant UNM Learn discussion string **by 9 AM on January 21st**. Post responses in the thread established for each question (all responses to question 1 belong in one thread, and so on). This is a credit/no credit/late assignment. Note: you will learn more by analyzing both papers.

Draft introduction (guideline: 1 ½ to 2 pages)

- Draw the reader's interest, justify the project and present a clear research question in 3-4 narrative paragraphs (see intro guidelines above for more detail). Include bullet points marking where you will briefly describe your research methodology, preview your findings and conclusions, and outline the contents of the paper in future drafts.

- Name the document as follows: your first name_two or three key words_PADM552.
- Submit as a Word document in the relevant Assignments folder in UNM Learn **by 9 AM on the day of your group meeting** and bring 4 printed copies for small group discussion. This is a credit/no credit/late assignment.

Draft introduction and literature review outline (guideline: up to 5 pages)

- This should include a revised draft of the introduction assignment, as well as an outline in paragraph or bulleted format of the contents of the literature review section by paragraph. I am not looking for a summary of each article, book or study report you are referencing, but an outline of how you plan to write about (synthesize and highlight) relevant points (factors and causal relationships).
- Include a list of all references in APA format.
- Name the document as follows: your first name_two or three key words_PADM552
- Submit as a Word document to the relevant Assignments folder in UNM Learn **by 9 AM on Monday, March 16th.**

Certificate of completion online Human Research Protections training (CITI).

- Find the link at:
http://research.unm.edu/IRBmaincampus/irb_training_outreach.cfm
- Complete registration (select UNM Main Campus as affiliate, enroll as a student conducting no more than minimal risk research).
 - You will complete 3 modules.
- Submit certificate of completion (a PDF with your name on it) to the relevant Assignments folder in UNM Learn. **Due by 9 AM on March 4th.**
- Name the document as follows: your first name_CITI certificate_PADM552

Case analysis

Teaching cases engage students in analyzing real-life (or potentially real-life) situations/problems/circumstances encountered by public administrators. In case analysis, students are asked to consider options for addressing a problem (and possibly suggest solutions) within the safe confines of the classroom (or a written assignment). In the case analysis capstone course, you will be asked to examine cases through various lenses of analysis (such as stakeholder and network) and drawing upon your MPA course of study, particularly the major sub-disciplines (human resource management, public management, fiscal and budgetary administration and accountable management as addressed in courses like program evaluation and intergovernmental administrative problems).

Come to our class meeting on March 26th prepared to discuss and analyze the following case: Improving decision making and patron service in the King County Library System (A). You should also read the UMass Boston College of Management

“Framework for Case Analysis” document posted to UNM Learn. We will discuss both of these and case analysis as a culminating experience option for the MPA program. You will work on the case in the second half of the class meeting.

***Note: Case analysis is to be distinguished from case study research as conducted by social scientists (see Yin, 2014, Chapter 1, p. 5).

Optional exercises

Some exercises from the optional Patten workbook are suggested. These will not be formally graded, but may be used as bases for discussion and learning during class meetings. You should primarily work through the exercises for what they can help you to learn as you work through the process of developing your research proposal.

Grading

Class attendance & participation	20%
Credit/no credit/late credit assignments	20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discussion posts• Draft introduction• Certificate of completion, Human Research Protection	
Introduction & literature review outline	10%
Research proposal & presentation	50%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Research proposal 40%• Presentation 10%	
<hr/>	
Total	100%

Assignments will be penalized a third of a grade for each day they are late. For example, one day late reduces from A to A-; two days late from A to B+; and so on. Penalties will not be applied in cases of medical and family emergencies, but cases of poor planning will not be excused.

Academic Integrity

The University of New Mexico believes that academic honesty is a foundation principle for personal and academic development. All University policies regarding academic honesty apply to this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating or copying, plagiarism (claiming credit for the words or works of another from any type of source such as print, Internet or electronic database, or failing to cite the source), fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. The University's full statement on academic honesty and the consequences for failure to comply is available in the college catalog and in the *Pathfinder*.

Accommodation Statement

Accessibility Services (Mesa Vista Hall 2021, 277-3506) provides academic support to students who have disabilities. If you think you need alternative accessible formats for undertaking and completing coursework, you should contact this service right away to assure your needs are met in a timely manner. If you need local assistance in contacting Accessibility Services, see the Bachelor and Graduate Programs office.

Readings

The required textbook is:

- *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project, 2nd Edition* (2014) by Zina O'Leary

The book will be available through the university bookstore and is also available from online retailers. Other required readings, including articles and chapters, will be posted as PDF files for you to access at your convenience on our UNM Learn course page. Please do not leave these to the last minute, as technical glitches are not an excuse for being unprepared to discuss readings and participate in class discussion.

Optional and highly recommended texts for those who might appreciate a step-by-step walk through research proposal development and case study research are:

- *Proposing Empirical Research: A Guide to the Fundamentals, 4th Edition (or later)*, by Mildred L. Patten
- Yin, R. K. (2014). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Other optional and highly recommended texts to support quality writing are:

- For direction on APA style, *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, 6th Edition*.
- For direction on word usage and essential grammar, *The Elements of Style* by Strunk and White. Get the original (such as the 4th edition), not the recent Kindle edition.

Reading tip

Make a habit of noting key points and questions about assigned readings and bringing them with you to class for discussion. This will not be formally graded, but it is likely to affect the quality of your participation during class, your performance on assignments and what you take away from the course.

Supporting resources

You may find the following resources, in addition to many identified over the course of the semester useful for proposal development and case analysis:

Public Administration Library Guide

- URL: <http://libguides.unm.edu/publicadmin>

Major scholarly public administration journals, including nonprofit studies

- *Administration and Society**
- *Administrative Theory & Praxis*
- *American Review of Public Administration**
- *Governance*
- *International Journal of Public Administration*
- *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*
- *Journal of Public Affairs Education*
- *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*
- *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*
- *Nonprofit Quarterly*
- *Policy Studies Journal*
- *Public Administration Quarterly*
- *Public Administration Review**
- *Public Budgeting & Finance*
- *Publius (focus on federalism)*
- *Review of Public Personnel Administration (human res. focus)*
- *State & Local Government Review*

*Stars indicate general PA journals that offer good starting points for literature searches

Schedule of Class Meetings, Topics, Readings & Assignments

<p>Week 1</p> <p>Jan. 15</p>	<p>Course introduction</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O’Leary chapters 1 & 2 • Meilleur Graduate Level Writing Rubric • Optional: Read and work through Patten Part A exercises <p>Exercise</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start published research paper analysis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ You will be assigned Riccucci <i>et al.</i> 2004 or Smith & Neupane 2011. Available on UNM Learn & in class. Analysis due to UNM Learn in a series of discussion posts (respond to at least 5 questions in the designated thread) <i>by 9 AM on January 21st.</i>
<p>Week 2</p> <p>Jan. 22</p>	<p>The introduction & research question(s)</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O’Leary chapters 3 & 5 • Yin chapter 1 • Read on your own in PA journals and other resources to help inform your research question(s) and literature review <p>Assignments due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post initial research question(s) to UNM Learn discussion <i>by 9 AM on January 21st.</i> Bring a copy to class for discussion. • Post published research paper analysis to UNM Learn discussion <i>by 9 AM on January 21st</i> (see Week 1).
<p>Week 3</p> <p>Jan. 29</p>	<p>Research workshop: Accessing resources to inform your study</p> <p>SPA’s library ambassador, Todd Quinn, will introduce and walk us through how to use several UNM Libraries resources and tools. This will help you to locate, access and document resources needed to develop and support your research proposal.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If possible, please bring a laptop that can access the Internet to class so that you can use the tools Mr. Quinn covers during the class meeting. <p>Assignment due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow any posted (see Announcements) library account registration and practice search instructions prior to the class meeting. This is <i>very important</i> to get what you out of this class meeting.

<p>Week 4</p> <p>Feb. 5</p>	<p>The research question(s) & literature review</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O’Leary chapter 6 • Galvan chapters 4-7 of <i>Writing Literature Reviews: A Guide for Students of the Social and Behavioral Sciences</i> (2009) • Read on your own in PA journals and other resources to help inform your research question(s) and literature review • Optional: Read & work through Patten Parts B & D exercises <p>Assignments due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post revised research question(s) to UNM Learn discussion <i>by 9 AM on Feb. 4th</i>. Bring a copy to class for discussion. • Post at least one question and/or comment concerning research questions and/or literature reviews to UNM Learn discussion <i>by 9 AM on Feb. 4th</i>.
<p>Week 5</p> <p>Feb. 12</p>	<p>Research workshop: Accessing resources to inform your study</p> <p>On February 12th, meet with Dr. Smith and Mr. Quinn in Zimmerman Library Room 254 (computer lab) to consult on your individual literature review and search during the scheduled class meeting time.</p> <p>If you are not able to meet during this time, please make an individual appointment to speak with Dr. Smith or Mr. Quinn about your literature review and search between February 6th and February 13th.</p>
<p>Week 6</p> <p>Feb. 19</p>	<p>Culminating experience project Q & A with Gene Henley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Tip: look ahead to future assignments & readings</i>
<p>Week 7</p> <p>Feb. 26</p>	<p>Research workshop: Drafting the introduction & literature review</p> <p>Use draft introductions to discuss next steps in developing the introduction and literature review sections. We will meet in small groups for discussion and feedback this week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Groups and meeting times will be posted to UNM Learn Announcements prior to the class meeting. Some meetings will be held during office hours. <p>Assignment due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft introduction. Post in the relevant Assignments folder in UNM Learn <i>by 9 AM on the day of your group meeting</i> and bring 4 printed copies for discussion in your small group.

<p>Week 8</p> <p>March 5</p>	<p>Methodology: answering your research question & doing so ethically</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • O’Leary chapter 4 and chapters 7-14 • Optional: Read & work through Patten Part C <p>Assignments due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post at least one question and/or comment concerning research methodology to UNM Learn discussion <i>by 9 AM on March 4th.</i> • Certificate of completion, online CITI training, due <i>by 9 AM on March 4th.</i>
<p>Week 9</p> <p>March 12</p>	<p>Spring break</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No class meeting <p>Assignment due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft introduction and literature review outline due to the relevant Assignments folder in UNM Learn <i>by 9 AM on Monday, March 16th.</i>
<p>Week 10</p> <p>March 19</p>	<p>Writing it all up: process, analysis, findings, discussion & conclusion</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review O’Leary chapter 15 • Optional: Read & work through Patten Part J <p>Assignment due</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post at least one question and/or comment concerning process, analysis, findings, discussions & conclusion sections to UNM Learn discussion <i>by 9 AM on March 18th.</i>
<p>Week 11</p> <p>March 26</p>	<p>Case analysis: an introduction</p> <p>Readings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UMass Boston College of Management “Framework for Case Analysis” • Case: Improving decision making and patron service in the King County Library System (A) • Optional: Read Professor Rivera’s case analysis capstone course syllabus

Week 12 April 2	To be announced <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check UNM Learn for an announcement concerning plans for this class meeting date
Week 13 April 9	Individual meetings with Dr. Smith to discuss proposal drafts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be scheduled
Week 14 April 16	Individual meetings with Dr. Smith to discuss proposal drafts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To be scheduled
Week 15 April 23	Research proposal presentations Assignment due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In class presentations (group 1: to be announced); slides <i>due by 9 AM on presentation day</i> to the relevant Assignments folder in UNM Learn
Week 16 April 30	Research proposal presentations Assignments due <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final research proposal due by 9 AM on Monday, April 27th to the relevant Assignments folder in UNM Learn • In class presentations (group 2: to be announced); slides <i>due by 9 AM on presentation day</i> to the relevant Assignments folder in UNM Learn
Final exam week May 7	Class wrap up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete research proposal presentations (if needed); slides <i>due by 9 AM on presentation day</i> to the relevant Assignments folder in UNM Learn <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wrap up questions and comments; course evaluations

The schedule of activities is subject to change. Minor changes will be announced in class, major ones provided in writing.