

PADM 596: RESEARCH METHODS FOR PUBLIC MANAGERS
Summer 2013

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Course Description: This course teaches advanced research skills necessary to conduct and report research on governmental policies and programs, as well as to evaluate research conducted by others. Topics covered include qualitative and quantitative research methods, research design, evaluation of research reports produced by others and the use of statistical packages for processing data. Special emphasis is placed on research design and development relevant in New Mexico and the Southwest, though skills developed in the course can be applied in any setting. Additional topics covered include experimental, quasi-experimental, and small sample methodologies, survey design, and ethical/professional research standards.

Course Objectives:

By the conclusion of this course, students should be able to demonstrate at an advanced level:

1. Knowledge of advanced research methodologies.
2. Application of research skills and values to the systematic evaluation of government programs and policy alternatives.
3. Understand common uses of data by policymakers, agency administrators, policy analysts, and researchers and how to develop and present data effectively for these audiences.
4. Understand how to effectively evaluate and critique public policy research.
5. Understand appropriate use of common statistical tools.
6. Understand the benefit of clear and rigorous language to communicate research concepts and findings.
7. Knowledge of ethical and professional standards as they pertain to generation and dissemination of data as well as research methodologies.

Required Texts:

Johnson, Gail, *Research Methods for Public Administrators*, Second Edition (M.E. Sharpe 2010)

Other readings in Blackboard Learn.

Course Policies:

1. *Incompletes:* Incompletes will not be approved unless circumstances beyond the student's control prevent the completion of all the course requirements. Should such a situation arise, the student is expected to contact the instructor as soon as possible and state in writing the circumstances requiring the incomplete and a plan indicating how and when the incomplete will be completed.

2. *Academic Dishonesty:* Academic dishonesty and plagiarism will not be tolerated.
3. *“Safe Space” policy—ground rules for a positive classroom environment and experience.* All classroom discourse will exhibit respect for all other persons, not only within the confines of the classroom but also in general. There will no denigration of anyone in any context (including in relation to case materials or readings, videos, or any other point of reference), on account of race, ethnicity, gender, disability status, sexual orientation, religion, political perspective, or other personal trait. Explicit statement of this policy is necessary to ensure that everyone feels comfortable and free to articulate ideas or viewpoints. Class discussion allows for disagreement; however, comments must be sustained by evidence, in particular evidence from class materials and readings. Class comments are not to be unsupported assertions of opinion, and never *ad hominem* (personal) attacks.
4. *Policy on Late Assignments:* Assignments are due on the due date. Points will be deducted from assignments turned in late – generally a half grade for each day late.

Course Assignments.

In addition to the midterm, students will complete one research proposal which will be submitted in sections during the semester.

The major paper for the course is a **research proposal** that will be presented in six parts to provide students practical experience in conceptualization and design of a research study. If a student wants to use a qualitative methodology, these will change somewhat. I will be happy to review each part of your paper as you complete it and to work with you if you are using a non-quantitative approach. The six sections include:

- **Statement of Problem. (Due June 13)**
This would be about one page summary describing their area of research interest, based on a preliminary review of current literature. Statement of problem should include a general statement of relationships you want to explore.
- **Literature Review (Due June 20)**
This is a 5 – 15 page review of scholarly literature on the student’s topic to place the research proposal in the context of existing research (i.e. to support the selection of a hypothesis and methodology and to objectively review controversial aspects of the topic).
- **Research Design (Due June 27)**
This section should describe how the research study will be conducted. Essential elements include 1) research design, 2) identification of key variables including independent, dependent and control variables, 3) validity/reliability of proposed measures, 4) hypothesis, and 5) rationale for direction of anticipated relationships (causality). The specific contents of this section will depend on the research question and general research approach you are using.
- **Survey Design (Due July 9)**
Develop the instrument that you would use to gather data for your study.

- **Sampling Design (Due July 16)**
How large a sample would you survey? How would the sample be administered? How will you protect against sampling errors?
- **Methodology Section (Due July 23)**
Explain analytical tests you will use to determine your findings. Explain how you will interpret the results, including how you will determine the direction of the relationship, size of the relationship and whether it is statistically significant. For qualitative studies, explain how you will determine causality and generalize from your study.
- **Final Paper (Due July 25)**

Grading:

Statement of Problem	10%
Literature Review	10%
Research Design	10%
Survey Design	10%
Sampling Design	10%
Methodology	10%
Final Paper	20%
Midterm	20%

Course Outline and Class Schedule

JUNE 4	Introduction to course; In-class exercises on bad use of data
Reading	Johnson, Chapter 1
JUNE 6	Basic Research Concepts and Research Design
Reading	Johnson, Chapters 2, 4, and 5
JUNE 11	Determining the Research Question
Reading	Johnson, Chapter 3
JUNE 13	Preparing a Literature Review; Guidelines for Internet Literature Searches; Useful Internet Sites/Sources/IRB's and Research Ethics
Reading	Patten, pp. 29-42, 159-62 (e-reserve); "Evaluating Internet Sources"
Assignment Due	<u>Statement of Problem Due</u>
JUNE 18	Qualitative Research – Types, Gathering Qualitative Data
Reading	Johnson, Chapter 8 and pp. 91-95 of Chap. 7
JUNE 20	Qualitative Research – Analyzing data

Reading	Johnson, Chapter 11
Assignment Due	<u>Literature Review Due</u>
JUNE 25	Designing Surveys
Reading	Johnson, Chapter 9
JUNE 27	Sampling; Sampling Distributions and Hypothesis Testing, Sample Size and Sampling Error; Sampling Distributions and Inference;
Reading	Johnson, Chapter 10
Assignment Due	<u>Research Design Due</u>
JULY 2	<u>Midterm Exam.</u>
JULY 9	Descriptive Statistics
Reading	Johnson, Chapter 12
Assignment Due	<u>Survey Design Due</u>
JULY 11	Measures of Association
Readings	Johnson, Chapter 13
JULY 16	One Sample t-Test; Dependent t-Test; Independent t-Test; Simple Analysis of Variance; Mutiple Analysis of Variance; Nonparametric Alternatives; Chi-Square
Reading	Johnson, Chapter 15
Assignment Due	<u>Sampling Design Due</u>
JULY 18	Regression; Multiple Regression, Dichotomous Dependent Variable Analyses
Reading	Johnson, Chapter 14
JULY 23	Reporting Findings
Reading	Johnson, Chapter 16
Assignment Due	<u>Methodology Due</u>
JULY 25	Discussion of Welfare Reform Closed-Case Study, Dual Credit Case Study, Midterm
Reading	Welfare Reform Closed-Case Study; Dual Credit Case Study
Assignment Due	<u>Final Research Proposal Due</u>