

PADM 596: Research Methods for Public Managers Fall 2014

Instructor: Shane Day

Time: Mondays, 4:00pm - 6:30pm

Location: Dane Smith Hall 134

Office: Social Sciences 3006

Phone: (505) 277-0418

Email: shaneday@unm.edu

Office Hours: Wednesdays, 2:00pm – 5:00pm

Course Description and Goals:

This course serves as an introduction to the art of research design in the social sciences, and policy analysis in particular. We will examine various ontological and epistemological debates concerning knowledge generation in the social sciences, ranging from nomothetic orientations to completely context-specific approaches. Over the course of this discussion, we will examine the implicit hierarchy of “good” methods, identifying principles of scientific research design that apply to all approaches to research. While we will examine a variety of experimental, quantitative, and qualitative approaches to research, the majority of our attention will be paid to the theory and mechanics of quantitative methods, given their relative technical complexity. The goals of this course are to provide you with enough theory and practical experience to intelligently use real world data to support your research, to enable you to critique the research of others, and to prepare you for advanced methods courses, which may be necessary depending upon the nature of the research questions you will pursue in the future. Special emphasis will be placed on helping students identify relevant potential research subjects which may ultimately develop into projects which could fulfill the thesis or professional paper requirements of the MPA program.

Therefore, you should view this course as an introduction to the building blocks of research design, and we will just be scratching the surface of what is out there. We will sometimes move slowly, in order to ensure that you have a clear understanding of the material, since comprehension of the fundamental concepts we will be covering will be of utmost importance in both future coursework and in gaining a clear understanding of basic methods. In order to grasp this material, you will need (and be expected) to attend class regularly, read the course materials, and spend a good amount of time with the class exercises and with practicing problems independently. **DO NOT GET BEHIND ON THE COURSE MATERIAL!**

In addition, we will be using computers for a fair amount of the course, and you will come away with a good amount of practical computing skills pertaining to statistical analysis and graphical presentation of results. Students are expected to purchase a license for SPSS, one of the most widely used statistical software packages on the market, and we will be using it frequently during lecture. Please come see me *early* if you have any apprehensions.

By the end of the course students will have gained experience in:

- 1) Analyzing policies and programs by applying appropriate information technology and data management tools

- 2) Analyzing policies and programs by applying appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative analysis methods
- 3) Using statistical analysis and data management software
- 4) Developing sound research questions
- 5) Working with different types of data
- 6) Assessing the pros and cons of different research techniques

Course Requirements and Grading:

As a research methods course, the daily format will consist of a mix of lectures addressing core conceptual issues, applied demonstration of research techniques, and frequent group and individual exercises in class. Therefore, I expect frequent attendance and ample preparation before class – this assumes that students will have read the readings for any particular week *before* class is held. The overarching emphasis of this course is to introduce several research methodologies that students may choose to employ within the context of their Professional Paper or Thesis. Therefore, the requirements for this course will emphasize reading and applied exercises that will serve as practice for performing and interpreting data analysis.

Evaluation of student performance and assignment of final grades will be based upon the following breakdown:

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| Homework Assignments (total of 8, 5% each): | 40% |
| Final Examination: | 25% |
| Research Proposal: | 20% |
| Participation: | 15% |

Homework: Your homework assignments collectively represent the largest single factor in your final grade. They are designed to provide practice for key concepts learned in class, and assignments will consist of either hand-written or computer-assisted exercises. Due dates will be strictly enforced: a 1/3 grade penalty per day will be assessed for late assignments, and *absolutely* no late assignments will be accepted after graded exercises are returned in class.

Final Examination: The final exam will be cumulative, and it is important to realize that much of the earlier material is foundational and important for understanding later units. The exam will consist of several exercises that will require you to analyze a problem, and will also include essay type questions that aim to evaluate your understanding of key theoretical concepts. The exam will be open book/open note, and calculators/necessary statistical tables will be allowed in class.

Participation: Students are expected to come to class having read *in advance* the readings assigned for that week, and prepared to participate in in-class exercises both in small groups and with the class as a whole. Attendance (or lack thereof) will be noted and used in the calculation of the participation portion of your grade.

Research Proposal: Each student will produce a preliminary research proposal in which they identify a tractable research question, develop a research design, identify the types of data that will be employed, specify the research methods that will be employed, and justify why the research design and methods identified are preferable to alternative approaches. It will be advantageous to students to start thinking about their research proposal early on, and there will

be many opportunities to work on components of the paper as we work our way through the semester. More information regarding the research proposal will be handed out at a later date.

Grading Appeals: If you have any questions pertaining to your grade for a particular assignment, you should take the matter up with me after waiting *at least* 24 hours.

Key Dates:

9/1: Labor Day: No class session held

9/13: Assignment One due

9/27: Assignment Two due

10/4: Assignment Three due

10/11: Assignment Four due

10/25: Assignment Five due

11/8: Assignment Six due

11/22: Assignment Seven due

11/26: Research Proposal due, 5pm via email

12/1: Assignment Eight due

12/8: Final Examination, 5:30pm – 7:00pm

Required Materials:

There are two required textbooks for this course:

Berman, Evan M. and XiaoHu Wang. 2012. *Essential Statistics for Public Managers and Policy Analysts*. 3rd Edition. Washington, DC: CQ Press.

Frankfort-Nachmias, Chava and David Nachmias. 2008. *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. 7th Edition. New York: Worth Publishers.

In addition, students will need a computer (laptop recommended) with SPSS installed. Discounted student licenses are available through the University Bookstore. If you do not wish to purchase SPSS, you will have to work from an on-campus computer lab that has computers with SPSS installed.

Additional readings will be available online through UNM Learn. Students should regularly consult UNM Learn through the University of New Mexico Homepage, as I will post the syllabus, course announcements, and other course materials throughout the semester.

Communication:

The easiest way to get a hold of me is through email at shaneday@unm.edu. I will check my email regularly and will respond as soon as I am able (*nota bene:* my availability over the weekend will often be limited). I will also be maintaining regular office hours, and am happy to meet with you in my office outside of established hours if I am available – arranging an appointment beforehand is helpful but not essential. I will also be using UNM Learn for posting course announcements – again, be sure to check it regularly. Furthermore, as of this semester, all students are REQUIRED to use their UNM email accounts for all electronic communications. This includes using only your UNM email account and Banner ID in the UNM Learn system. No communication will be conducted with outside (e.g. Gmail, Yahoo, etc.) email accounts.

Course Schedule and Outline:

The following is a tentative schedule of weekly topics. Note: the schedule is subject to change. I reserve the right to make revisions to the syllabus and to make adjustments to the reading assignments. I will announce such changes in class and through UNM Learn.

Week One – 8/18: Introductions

Assignment (credit/no credit): Complete IRB Training via CITI. Go to the following link: <http://hsc.unm.edu/som/research/hrrc/training.shtml>, and click on "CITI" and follow the link. After completing all required modules and quizzes for Social and Behavioral Research, print out your Curriculum Completion Report and bring to class next week.

Note: Chapter 4 in Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias is useful optional reading that students may wish to read in advance of doing the CITI training.

Week Two – 8/25: Principles of Scientific Inquiry

Readings:

- 1) Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapters 1-3
- 2) Gerring, "Causation: A Unified Framework for the Social Sciences", *Journal of Theoretical Politics*
- 3) King, Keohane, and Verba, Chapter 1 from *Designing Social Inquiry*

Week Three – 9/1: Labor Day (No Class Session Held)

Week Four – 9/8: Issues of Data and Measurement

Read:

- 1) Berman and Wang, Chapters 3 and 5
 - 2) Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapters 7-8
- Assignment One distributed in class: due 9/13*

Week Five – 9/15: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Research Designs

Read:

- 1) Berman and Wang, Chapter 2
- 2) Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapters 5 and 6
- 3) Dunning, "Improving Causal Inference: Strengths and Limitations of Natural Experiments." *Political Research Quarterly*

Week Six – 9/22: Descriptive Statistics

Read:

- 1) Berman and Wang, Chapters 6-8
 - 2) Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapter 15
- Assignment Two distributed in class: due 9/27*

Week Seven – 9/29: Hypothesis Testing

Read:

- 1) Berman and Wang, Chapters 10-12
 - 2) Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapter 19
- Assignment Three distributed in class: due 10/4*

Week Eight – 10/6: Analysis of Variance and Basic Regression

Read:

- 1) Berman and Wang, Chapters 13 and 14
- 2) Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapter 16

Assignment Four distributed in class: due 10/11

Week Nine – 10/13: Intro to Multiple Regression

Read:

- 1) Berman and Wang, Chapter 15
- 2) Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapter 17

Week Ten – 10/20: Regression (cont.)

- 1) Berman and Wang, Chapter 16

Assignment Five distributed in class: due 10/25

Week Eleven – 10/27: Advanced Forms of Regression

Read:

- 1) Berman and Wang, Chapter 17
- 2) Readings TBA

Week Twelve – 11/3: Dealing with Qualitative Data

Read:

- 1) Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapters 9, 12, and 14
- 2) Leech, et al. "Symposium: Interview Methods in Political Science." *PS: Political Science and Politics*.
- 3) Weston, et al., "Analyzing Interview Data: The Development and Evolution of a Coding System." *Qualitative Sociology*.

Assignment Six, Due 11/8 in class.

Week Thirteen – 11/10: Comparative Method

Read:

- 1) George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences.*, Chapter 1
- 2) Lijphart, "Comparative Politics and the Comparative Method", *American Political Science Review*
- 3) Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*, Chapters 3-4
- 4) Fearon, "Counterfactuals and Hypothesis Testing in Political Science", *World Politics*

Week Fourteen – 11/17: Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Read:

- 1) Ragin, *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*, Chapters 6-8
- 2) Rihoux, "Case-Oriented Configurational Research: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA), Fuzzy Sets, and Related Techniques", in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Methodology*
- 3) Excerpts from Rihoux and Ragin, *Configurational Comparative Methods: Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) and Related Techniques*

Assignment Seven distributed in class: due 11/22

Week Fifteen – 11/24: Single Case Studies

Read:

- 1) Collier, "Understanding Process Tracing", *PS: Political Science and Politics*.
- 2) George and Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*, Chapters, 3,4, and 6
- 3) Gerring, "What is a Case Study and What is it Good for?" *American Political Science Review*.
11/26: Research Proposal due 5:00 pm, submitted via email

Week Sixteen – 12/1: Survey Research and Q Methodology

Read:

- 1) Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, Chapters 10-11
- 2) Watts and Stenner, *Doing Q Methodological Research*, Chapters 3, 4, and 7
Assignment Eight distributed in class: due 12/6

Finals Week:

12/8: Final Exam, 5:30pm-7:30pm

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. It is also the prerogative of the instructor to assign failing grades, either to a particular assignment or for the final course grade, to students who violate academic conduct standards.

Students with Disabilities:

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.

Library and Tutorial Services:

UNM-Main campus provides many library services and some tutorial services for both on-campus and distance students. For library services, go to <http://www.unm.edu/libraries/> to link to a specific library or to contact a librarian. For tutorial services, go to <http://caps.unm.edu/online> to explore UNM's online services.