



Syllabus

PA 3306 Advanced Research and Writing for the Policy Sciences Spring Semester 2025

Time: Monday and Wednesday 1:00 pm to 2:15 pm

Class Location: GR 3.206

Instructor: Salman Bin Habib

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Website: salmanbinhabib.org

Office: GR 3.416

Office Hours: Monday/Wednesday 2:30 pm to 4 pm [MS Teams or in-person by appointment]

IMPORTANT: Please Use your UTD email only. Per university policy, any emails from a non-UTD address will not receive a response. Communication from the instructor outside of class time will take place through email or MS TEAMS, so please check yours regularly.

GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION

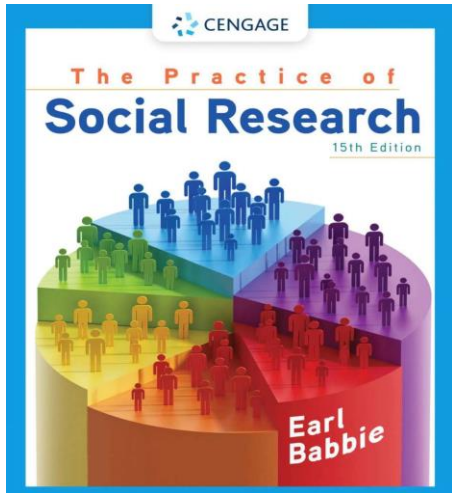
PA 3306 – Advanced Research and Writing for the Policy Sciences is an introduction to research design and data analysis methods used in social science research. It is an undergraduate-level course which will require students to learn the basics of research design and develop an independent research project, thereby improving their writing skills. Implications for public policy will be considered.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVES/OUTCOMES

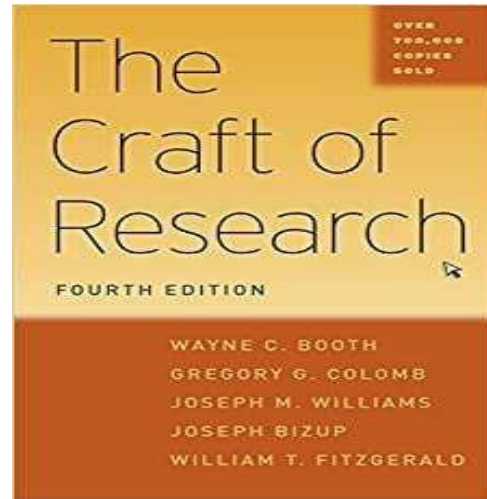
- Develop a basic understanding of research design in social science research.
- Learn to write a research paper.
- Acquire basic data analysis skills.
- Most importantly, become curious and inquisitive learners

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS AND MATERIALS

- Babbie, Earl. The Practice of Social Research. 15th Ed. Cengage Learning, 2021. (14th edition also acceptable) (Referred as PSR)
- Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams. The Craft of Research. 4th Ed. University of Chicago Press, 2016. (Referred as CR)
- Textbooks and some other bookstore materials can be ordered online through Off-Campus Books <http://www.offcampusbooks.com>, VitalSource, or the UT Dallas Bookstore <http://www.bkstr.com/texasatdallasstore/home>



[PSR]



[CR]

- (Supplementary Texts) Turabian, Kate L. A manual for writers of research papers, theses and dissertations: Chicago style for students and researchers. 9th Ed. University of Chicago Press, 2018.
- (Additional Course Materials) Additional readings will be posted on eLearning and instructors website. However, students are not required to print material available electronically.

CLASS FORMAT AND EXPECTATIONS

This is a face-to-face course, and we will meet in a designated classroom (**GR 3.206**) for each session. All assignments will be provided through UTD eLearning site <https://elearning.utdallas.edu>, using UTD Net ID account. Lecture PowerPoints will be posted each week on eLearning after each week's class. Please note that the PowerPoint presentations are designed to assist you with your textbook readings but are not to substitute them.

Students are expected to attend classes regularly, complete assignments on time, and engage with the assigned course materials. Assessments will include attendance, quizzes, a midterm exam, a final research paper and associated research assignments. Attendance will be recorded, and late submission will not be accepted, except for extenuating circumstances, and only with proper written documentation.

Please see the course access and navigation section of the site for more information <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/current/getting-started>

To become familiar with the eLearning tool, please see the Student eLearning Tutorials <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/current/tutorials>.

UT Dallas provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day/7days a week. The eLearning Support Center <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/helpdesk> services include a toll-free telephone

COURSE COMPONENTS

Attendance (20%, 200 points)

Regular and punctual class attendance is expected. Students who fail to attend class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. The instructor will notify any changes regarding in advance. If for some reason students must miss a class, please contact the instructor in advance. Failure to notify the instructor and providing valid documentation for absence will result in severe penalty upon the discretion of the instructor.

Quizzes (30%, 300 points)

There will be five (**5**) online quizzes, the best 4 of which will count towards your grade. Each quiz will cover designated chapters and include 10 multiple-choice questions. The quizzes will be held **in-person** during class time.

The quizzes will be **timed (30 minutes)**, and students will need to complete them in **one sitting**. If you exit the quiz page, you will not be able to log back in and complete it. You are advised to attempt the quiz only when you feel that you have read and understood the material and when you have no other commitments. The quizzes will be held **open book**, which means you can refer to the assigned book text and class lectures/ PowerPoint slides while completing the quiz. Use of any internet sources is prohibited.

Midterm Exam (10%, 100 points)

The midterm exam will cover the first half of the syllabus and include 30 multiple-choice questions. The midterm will be held in person during class time on e-learning platform. The exam will be held **open book**, which means you can refer to the assigned book text and class lectures/ PowerPoint slides while completing the exam. Use of any internet sources is prohibited.

The midterm exam will be **timed (60 minutes)**, and students will need to complete it in **one sitting**. If you exit the test page, you will not be able to log back in and complete it.

Research Assignments [20%, 200 points]

The research assignments are intended to facilitate an independent research paper (detailed in the **“Research Paper”** section) to be submitted towards the end of the semester. Timely completion of the research assignments will relieve students of considerable workload during the final week of classes. There are **four** research assignments worth **50 points (5%) each**:

(i) **Research Proposal (One page)**: A research proposal outlines what an individual wants to investigate, along with their motivations and their plan of operationalization. Learning to craft a concise yet substantive research proposal is crucial for academic (e.g. conferences and academic research grants) as well as non-academic (e.g. evaluation projects) scenarios. The research proposal should be no longer than **one page** (12-point font, Times New Roman, double spaced) and include,

(a) Research question (s): *What* do you intend to study/investigate?

(b) Motivation/Contribution (s): What makes you interested in your study/ what do you feel is/are the study’s primary contribution (s)? Your answer needs to be informed by

existing research. A review of scholarly literature at the research proposal stage helps one narrow down their research question by (i) identifying gaps in literature in an area where one is interested, (ii) determining whether this “gap” has already been filled by other researchers, etc. You are encouraged to leverage Google Scholar and/or other sources (UTD Library, JSTOR, among others) to discover 3-4 articles and/or theories relevant to your study. However, owing to the page limit assigned, citations are not necessary in the research proposal.

(c) Plan of operationalization: Operationalization involves specifying your dependent and independent variables and outlining how you intend to measure them using available data and methods.

(ii) *Literature Review*: Students should summarize articles and/or theories relevant to their study in the literature review assignment. A good literature review tells a naturally flowing story beginning with an introduction (*what the story is about*), followed by a motivation/ contribution section (*why you should continue to read*), and then detailing what the main characters are and whether and how they relate to each other. Therefore, the following sections are necessary for the successful completion of the literature review assignment:

- (a) introduction/background,
- (b) motivation/contribution,
- (c) sections defining and/or explaining the dependent and independent variables and how they have been explored in relation one another in the existing literature,
- (d) hypotheses (i.e. *anticipated* results), meaning, your *expectation* of how the independent variable (s) will be associated with the dependent variable (s).

The literature review should consider at least one *theory* to inform the potential relationship between the dependent and the independent variable (s). Theories can be included in any and all of the sections mentioned above (a – d); that is, a separate section for “theory” is not required but will not be penalized. The literature review should be **4-6 pages** (12-point font, Times New Roman, double spaced).

(iii) *Operationalization*: This section outlines *how* you intend to investigate your research question. Operationalization involves specifying your dependent and independent variables and outlining how you intend to measure them using available data and methods. The operationalization section should therefore include the following sections (a) Variables (b) Data, (c) Methods. Important considerations for this assignment include:

- (a) Do my variables measure what I want to measure? (Are my variables a good representation of a construct I want them to represent?)
- (b) What data sources can I utilize?
- (c) What is my sample? (How do I select within my data? Who/what do I include?)
- (d) What research method is most appropriate? (Do I include a comparison group? What am I controlling for?)
- (e) How do I conduct my data analysis? (OLS? Logit? SEM? STATA? R?)

The operationalization assignment should be **no longer than 4 pages** (12-point font, Times New Roman, double spaced).

(iv) Paper presentation: Students are required to present the progress on their research paper in the presence of the instructor and their peers. The paper presentation should include, at a minimum, (a) research question, (b) motivation/ contribution (s), (c) literature review (inclusive of at least one theory), (d) operationalization, (e) preliminary results, and (f) limitations. A “future research opportunities” section is encouraged but not necessary. This assignment is intended to improve the presentation skills of students and help them obtain valuable feedback that they can incorporate in their final research paper. The presentation should be no longer than **12-15 minutes**.

Final Research Paper (20%, 200 points)

Students will choose a single topic and write a research paper on a single topic (12-point font, Times New Roman, double spaced). The topic does not have to be the same as the proposal, but students are encouraged to study a research topic that they are already passionate about. The paper should be **no longer than 15 pages** and include the following sections:

- I. Literature Review [*see the “Literature Review” assignment*]
- II. Operationalization [*see the “Operationalization” assignment*]
- III. Findings [*describe the results of your data analysis*]
- IV. Conclusion [*summarize your research question, your findings, the limitations of your research*]

GRADING

Your final grade will be based on the scale below. Grades for all assignments and tests will be posted on eLearning under grades.

Attendance	200 points (20%)
Quizzes (5*60 points)	300 points (30%)
Midterm Exam	100 points (10%)
Research Assignments (4*50 points)	200 points (20%)
Final Research Paper	200 points (20%)
Total	1,000 points (100%)

Grading Policy Grading for this course shall be structured as follows:

A = 930 and above	A – = 900-929	
B+ = 860-899	B = 830-859	B – = 800-829
C+ = 760-799	C = 730-759	C – = 700-729
D+ = 660-699	D = 630-659	D – = 600-629
F = 0-599		

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week	Date	Topic	Reading required	Assignments (Deadlines)
1	22-Jan	Course Orientation		
2	27-Jan	Research and Public Policy (Part 1)	PSR § 1, CR § 1-2	
	29-Jan	Research and Public Policy (Part 2)	PSR § 2	
3	03-Feb	Research Ethics	PSR § 3	05 Feb, Quiz 1: Course syllabus, PSR § 1-3 (In-person)
	05-Feb	Research Design	PSR § 4	
4	10-Feb	Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement	PSR § 5	
	12-Feb	Indexes and Scales	PSR § 6, CR § 6	
5	17-Feb	Sampling and Generalizability	PSR § 7	19 Feb, Quiz 2: PSR § 4-6 (In-person)
	19-Feb	Sampling continued and Experimental Design	PSR § 7, PSR § 8	
6	24-Feb	Experimental Design continued and Survey Research	PSR § 8, PSR § 9	
	26-Feb	Survey Research Guest: Muhammad Al Hasib	PSR § 9	
7	03-Mar	Research Writing 1: Electronic Database Search		05 Mar, Quiz 3: PSR § 8-9 (In-person)
	05-Mar	Research Writing 2: Discussion of Research Proposal	CR § 3-5	
8	10-Mar	Research Writing 3: Individual Research Topics		Research Proposal (In-person)
	12-Mar	Research Writing 4: Update on Research Proposal, Analysis Exercise (Part 1) Guest: Russell Schaffner		
9	17-23 Mar	Spring Break: No Class		
10	24-Mar	Review Session on Midterm Exam	PSR § 1-9	26 Mar Midterm: PSR § 1-9 (In-person)
	26-Mar	Midterm Exam		
11	31-Mar	Qualitative Research 1	PSR § 10-11	
	02-Apr	Qualitative Research 2	PSR § 12-13	
12	07-Apr	Univariate and Bivariate Analysis	PSR § 14	09 Apr, Quiz 4: PSR § 10-14 (In-person)
	09-Apr	Research Writing 5: Theory, Literature Review, and Systematic Review	CR § 6, CR § 7, CR § 8, CR § 9	
13	14-Apr	Operationalization and Descriptive Analysis	PSR § 16	
	16-Apr	Descriptive Analysis continued and Research Writing 6: Workshop on Excel 1		

14	21-Apr	Research Writing 7: Workshop on Excel 2		Literature Review and Operationalization (Friday, Apr 25, 11:59 PM)
	23-Apr	Research Writing 8: Planning and Drafting of Your Report.	CR § 12-13	
15	28-Apr	Research Writing 9: Reading and Writing Social Research	PSR§ 17, CR § 16	30 Apr, Quiz 5 (Writing and/or Analysis) (In-person)
	30-Apr	Presentation expectations		
16	05 May	Research Presentations		
17	07-May	(Online) Quiz 6 (OPTIONAL); Research Ethics Revisited and Final Q&As		Final Research Paper (Friday, May 09, 11:59 PM)

Note: The course syllabus may be amended at any time by the instructor. If necessary, the updated syllabus will be posted on eLearning.

CLASS PARTICIPATION AND LATE WORK

Your regular course participation during in-person classes is crucial for your success. Students are required to allocate sufficient time each week to engage with the assigned readings. It is important to complete the assigned work on time as late work will not be graded. If there are any special circumstances, the student should let me know ahead of time, and we can make arrangements.

MAKEUP EXAMS AND LATE ASSIGNMENTS

The dates of exams and other assignments are indicated on the class schedule. Because you will have around one or more weeks to complete the mid-term and other works, you most likely will not need makeup. However, in the case of extenuating circumstances, make-up exams will be allowed only for legitimate reasons and with proper written documentation. If you fail to take an exam or turn in a late assignment without a reasonable excuse, you will receive a “0” for that portion of the course.

COMMUNICATION WITH INSTRUCTOR

The instructor will mainly communicate with students in the classroom. Also, we will use eLearning to communicate through the Announcements, Discussion board, and course email. Students may send personal concerns or questions to the instructor via e-mail. Please set up a prior appointment with the instructor, if you wish to meet her personally. NOTE: If you have something that needs the instructor’s immediate attention, please send him an email with URGENT – PA 3306 in the subject line. For more details, please visit the eLearning Tutorials webpage <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/current/tutorials> for video demonstrations on eLearning tools. Student emails and discussion board messages will be answered within 3 working days under normal circumstances.

Electronic Device

You will be allowed to take notes and access articles on your laptop or tablet. You are expected to use electronic devices for coursework-related activities. Please be respectful to your colleagues and resist the urge to surf the internet. Please remember to keep your cell ringer off during class time.

Policy on Server Unavailability or Other Technical Difficulties

The University is committed to providing a reliable learning management system to all users. However, in the event of any unexpected server outage or any unusual technical difficulty which prevents students from completing a time-sensitive assessment activity, the instructor will provide an appropriate accommodation based on the situation. Students should immediately report any problems to the instructor and also contact the online eLearning Help Desk <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/helpdesk>. UTD provides eLearning technical support 24 hours a day/7 days a week. Please use this link to access the UTD eLearning Support Center: <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearninghelp>, 1-866-588-3192. The instructor and the eLearning Help Desk will work with the student to resolve any issues at the earliest possible time.

Mental Health Service

This is a gentle reminder that you have mental health services available to you on campus. Students experiencing anxiety or distress, either from the topics discussed in this class or from other stressors, are encouraged to seek self-care via the on-campus services provided: Student Counseling Center Phone: 972-883-2575. Location: Student Services Building SSB 4.600. If you are having a mental health crisis you can call the 972-UTD-TALK or 911 24 hrs. a day/7 day a week

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The faculty expects from its students a high-level of responsibility and academic honesty. Because the value of an academic degree depends upon the absolute integrity of the work done by the student for that degree, it is imperative that a student demonstrates a high standard of individual honor in his or her scholastic work. See <https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/integrity/>.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty can occur in relation to any type of work submitted for academic credit or as a requirement for a class. It can include individual work or a group project. Academic dishonesty includes plagiarism, cheating, fabrication, and collaboration/collusion. In order to avoid academic dishonesty, it is important for students to fully understand the expectations of their professors. This is best accomplished through asking clarifying questions if an individual does not completely understand the requirements of an assignment.

Additional information related to academic dishonesty and tips on how to avoid dishonesty may be found here: <https://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/dishonesty/>.

COMET CREED

This creed was voted on by the UT Dallas student body in 2014. It is a standard that Comets choose to live by and encourage others to do the same: “As a Comet, I pledge honesty, integrity, and service in all that I do.”

ACADEMIC SUPPORT RESOURCES

The information contained in the following link lists the University’s academic support resources for all students. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/academic-support-resources>.

UT DALLAS SYLLABUS POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The information contained in the following link constitutes the University's policies and procedures segment of the course syllabus. Please review the sections regarding the [credit/no credit](#) grading option and withdrawal from class. Please go to <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies> for these policies.

The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the instructor.