

**Course Syllabus**  
**Research Design in the Social and Policy Sciences**  
**Fall 2025**

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**Course** EPPS 2301.002

**Course Title** Research Design in the Social and Policy Sciences



**Instructor** Anton Sutiagin,  
Teaching Assistant and Third-Year Doctoral Student  
Public and Nonprofit Management

**Term** Fall 2025  
08/25/2025 – 12/09/2025

**Class Meetings** In-person, Mondays & Wednesdays,  
at 1:00 PM – 2:15 PM CDT/CST  
GR 3.302

**Instructor's Contact Information**

Instructor Anton Sutiagin  
Email Address [Anton.Sutiagin@utdallas.edu](mailto:Anton.Sutiagin@utdallas.edu)  
Office Location GR 3.416  
In-Office Hours Mondays, at 2:30 PM – 3:30 PM  
Wednesdays, at 4:00 PM – 5:00 PM  
You can also meet with me in MS Teams.  
Other Information Online (via MS Teams) or in-person – by appointment

In any email that you send to me, please include "EPPS 2301" and your full name in the subject line. I will do my best to respond to student UTD emails within 24 hours on weekdays. However, please note that responses may be delayed by up to 48 hours.

*Please note that the descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor.*

**Course Pre-requisites, Co-requisites, and/or Other Restrictions**

None required. All majors are welcome to take this course and no prior knowledge of course content is required.

**Course Description**

This core course introduces students to research designed to understand social, economic, and political phenomena. This course will teach students core concepts that define social and policy research, including:

- the purpose of social science and policy research;
- ethical and political challenges of conducting social science and policy research;
- the role of paradigm, theory, and prior evidence in conducting research;
- operationalization and measurement of simple and complex constructs;
- probabilistic and non-probabilistic sampling;
- empirical quantitative and qualitative research methodologies;
- data collection and analytic methods; and
- interpretation and communication of research results.

Students completing this course will develop a foundational understanding of how to conduct systematic inquiry in the social and policy sciences.

### **Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

- 1) Develop interest and curiosity in systemic social and policy science inquiry.
- 2) Define key concepts in research ethics, particularly research with human subjects, as they apply to research design, conduct, and reporting.
- 3) Compare and understand the application of paradigmatic and theoretical frameworks for social and policy science research.
- 4) Identify quantitative and qualitative research designs, methods, and their components, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each one.
- 5) Evaluate coherence of the logic, evidence, and methods of different types of research studies, and
- 6) Communicate research findings to different audiences.

### **Required Textbooks and Materials**

#### *Primary Textbook*

Trochim, W. M. K., Donnelly, J. P., & Arora, K. (2016). *Research methods: The essential knowledge base*. 2nd Edition. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning.  
ISBN: 978-1-133- 95477-4.

The primary course textbook can be ordered online or purchased at the UT Dallas Bookstore. Students can also access a physical copy of Trochim et al.'s book at the Course Reserves Desk located at the [Eugene McDermott Library](#).

#### *Other Required Readings*

Please note that on certain class topics, I will assign readings that do not come from the main course textbook. These readings, including book chapters and articles from major news outlets, will be accessible on eLearning or through the library at no cost to you. In addition, I will share digital media (e.g., YouTube videos, podcasts) to supplement textbook reading materials.

Selected chapters will be assigned from the following textbooks:

Babbie, E. R. (2017). *The Basics of Social Research* (Seventh edition). Boston, MA, USA: Cengage Learning.

Bhattacharjee, A. (2012). *Social science research: Principles, methods, and practices*. University of South Florida.

Murnane, R. J., & Willett, J. B. (2010). *Methods matter: Improving causal inference in educational and social science research*. Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

Schutt, R. K. (2018). *Investigating the social world: The process and practice of research*. Sage publications.

### **Assignments & Grading Policy**

Grades evaluating student class performance will be based on: (1) five reading quizzes, (2) a mid-term exam, (3) a final exam, (4) and a research design project. Below is information about each assessment.

*Reading Quizzes:* Students will have the opportunity to complete 5 in-class reading quizzes. Quizzes will be based on the assigned readings, media materials, and lectures, and are designed to assess and reinforce knowledge gained in the classroom. Students will be permitted to use notes/textbooks/lectures to answer quizzes. NOTE: if you are unable to attend class and do a quiz, you must contact me BEFORE the class for me to consider the possibility of a make-up test. Each quiz is worth 20 points.

*Exams:* This class will have two in-class open-note, open-book exams: a mid-term exam and a final exam. The final exam is not cumulative. I will administer both exams on eLearning. Prior to each exam, I will hold a review session that will cover material that will be tested on the exam. Note that any material covered in class is subject to testing – this includes material covered in lectures, the main and additional textbooks, as well as media materials. Each exam is worth 125 points.

*Research Design Project:* As part of this course, you will complete a research design project that allows you to apply key concepts in social and policy science research. Working individually or in small groups (we will choose the form later), you will identify a research question, conduct a literature review, and develop a detailed proposal outlining your study's methodology, data collection, and data analysis plan. This project is designed to help you think critically about how research is structured and to prepare you for future academic or professional research endeavors. The project is worth 100 points.

### **Final grades will be calculated based on the point distribution below.**

- Five reading quizzes @ 20 pts each = 100 pts
- Mid-term exam = 125 pts
- Final exam = 125 pts

- Research design project = 100 pts

**Total = 500 pts**

A+	97% - 100%	A	93% - 96%	A-	90% - 92%
B+	87% - 89%	B	83% - 86%	B-	80% - 82%
C+	77% - 79%	C	73% - 76%	C-	70% - 72%
D+	67% - 69%	D	63% - 66%	D-	60% - 62%

## Course Policies

*Email correspondence:* According to UTD policy, I can only respond to UTD email accounts since these accounts ensure the security of transmitted emails and confidence in the identity of each individual corresponding via email. UT Dallas furnishes each student with a free email account that is to be used in all communication with university personnel. The *Office of Information Technology (OIT)* provides a method for students to have their UT Dallas mail forwarded to other email accounts. To activate a student UT Dallas computer account and forward email to another account, go to <https://www.utdallas.edu/oit/netid/selfservice>.

I ask you to put “EPPS 2301” and your name in the subject line. Students who have questions about course assignments, course content, and course procedures should first consult the syllabus before contacting the instructor. If you are facing problems regarding eLearning, please contact UTD’s *Office of Information Technology (OIT)*.

*Academic Integrity:* Academic dishonesty of any kind (including, but not limited to, plagiarism, sharing, copying, or cheating on exams and assignments) will not be tolerated. In accordance with UTD’s Office of Community Standards and Conduct, misconduct may result in a failing grade for the course, suspension, or in some cases, expulsion. For more information, see: <http://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/integrity/>.

*Recording Lectures:* Students are expected to follow appropriate University policies. Recordings may not be published, reproduced, or shared with those not in the class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved *Office of Student AccessAbility* accommodation. If the instructor or a UTD school/department/office plans any other uses for the recordings, consent of the students identifiable in the recordings is required prior to such use unless an exception is allowed by law. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the of the Student Code of Conduct.

*Class Materials:* I will provide class materials that will be made available to all students registered for this class on *eLearning*. Class materials may not be reproduced or shared with those not in class, or uploaded to other online environments except to implement an approved Office of Student AccessAbility accommodation. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.

*Mental Health Services:* I recognize the fact that students may experience mental health challenges that result from life challenges. As UTD students, you can access mental

health services available to you by telephone and on campus. Student Counseling Center Phone: 972-883-2575; location: Student Services Building SSB 4.600. If you need support or are in crisis, please call 24 hours per day 972-UTD-TALK, or text "Home" to 741741. If you are facing a mental health challenge that compromises your ability to complete your coursework, please contact me so that I can provide accommodations to you.

*Office of UTD AccessAbility Accommodations:* If you need semester-long accommodations for this class, please submit required material to the Department of Student Accessibility within the Office of Student Affairs (OSA). Once OSA approves accommodations, please send me a copy of your documented approval so we may discuss how to best facilitate your success in the course. It is very important for students with OSA accommodations to give prior notice to instructors of assessment accommodations. I ask for a two-week notice in advance as a minimum so that I can make sure that you are fully accommodated. We will work together to ensure you are fully accommodated in the online asynchronous course environment.

*Digital Access and Equality:* In this course, you will need digital devices to access readings, complete and submit quizzes, exams, and assignments. I recognize that some students are unable to afford the cost of purchasing digital devices and that other students rely on older, more problem-prone devices that frequently break down or become unusable. I also recognize that those technology problems can be a significant source of stress for students. Given those challenges, I encourage students to contact me if they experience a technology-related problem that interferes with their work in this course. This will enable me to assist students in accessing support.

I also encourage students to be aware of the many technology-related resources that UTD provides:

- Free on-campus wireless internet (Wi-Fi) access through the UTD network. Free software (including Microsoft Office, Adobe Creative Suite, statistical software, etc.) for download and for cloud-based use.
- Free unlimited, secure online storage through Box (a great way to back up files).
- Free 24/7 support with issues related to UTD technology.
- Discounts on devices from leading technology companies, including Apple, Dell, and Microsoft.

*Religious Observances:* Per state and institutional policy, I will excuse a student from class or other required activities, including tests and assignments, for the observance of a religious holy day. I strongly encourage students to notify me as soon as possible regarding the absence in advance of upcoming assignment or exam that you intend to miss. Students who miss an assignment will be given a maximum of one week after their absence to complete the assignment. A student who fails to complete the exam or assignment within the prescribed period may receive a failing grade for that exam or assignment.

*eLearning:* This course will use eLearning to communicate, post quizzes, exams, and assignments, provide feedback, and post grades. All students enrolled in this course should become familiar with how to use the eLearning website. For eLearning tutorials, click on this link <https://ets.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/current/getting-started>.

*Academic Calendar:* Access the academic calendar for important drop and due dates at: <https://www.utdallas.edu/academiccalendar/>.

*Grade-Related Requests:* Students are encouraged to check their grades regularly throughout the semester and contact me with any concerns. Students are also encouraged to take advantage of extra credit opportunities throughout the semester. Students who have questions about a grade earned on a particular assignment must contact me, via email, within one week of the date on which the grade was posted. Grade adjustments will be made only in the event of a grading or calculation error.

#### *Make-up Exams*

Make-up tests and exams will be granted only for documented, excused absences. Students must notify the Instructor as soon as possible and provide appropriate documentation. The format and timing of the make-up exam will be at the instructor's discretion.

#### *Extra Credit*

Throughout the semester, you will have opportunities to earn up to 50 extra credit points toward your final grade. I will share more details about these opportunities later in the semester.

#### *Class Attendance*

Regular and punctual class attendance is required. Students who fail to attend class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. In some courses, instructors may have special attendance requirements; these should be made known to students during the first week of classes.

#### *Class Participation*

Regular class participation is expected regardless of course modality. Students who fail to participate in class regularly are inviting scholastic difficulty. A portion of the grade for this course is directly tied to your participation in this class. It also includes engaging in group or other activities during class that solicit your feedback on homework assignments, readings, or materials covered in the lectures (and/or labs). Class participation is documented by faculty. Successful participation is defined as consistently adhering to University requirements, as presented in this syllabus. Failure to comply with these University requirements is a violation of the [Student Code of Conduct](#).

Texas Senate Bill 17, the recent law that prohibits diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and activities at public universities in Texas, does not in any way apply to academic course instruction. Students should not feel the need to self-censor or limit their participation in academic courses pertaining to topics of race and racism, structural inequality, LGBTQ+ issues, or diversity, equity, and inclusion, and related topics.

#### **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.”

## **Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

Please review [the section](#) within the UT Dallas Syllabus Policies and Procedures webpage.

## **Academic Support Resources**

Please visit the [Academic Support Resources](#) page to view the University's academic support resources for all students.

## Assignments & Academic Calendar

Topics, Reading Assignments, Due Dates, Exam Dates

Please note that the course schedule is subject to change at the discretion of the Instructor. I will inform you in advance in case of any changes.

WEEK & DATE	CLASS	TOPIC & ASSIGNMENTS
Week 1 August 25, Mon	Class 1	<b>Course Introduction</b>
Week 1 August 27, Wed	Class 2	<b>What is social science research?</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Trochim et al., Chapter 1, 1.1-1.2 <u>Watch before class:</u> (1) "Truth Decay" - Jennifer Kavanaugh & Michael Rich, RAND Corporation: <a href="https://www.rand.org/pubs/presentations/PT165.html">https://www.rand.org/pubs/presentations/PT165.html</a> (2) " <a href="#">Social Experiments to Fight Poverty</a> " - Esther Duflo, MIT
Week2 September 1, Mon	<b>No Class – Labor Day</b>	
Week 2 September 3, Wed	Class 3	<b>How to think like a researcher?</b> <u>Read before class:</u> (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 1, 1.3-1.5 (2) <i>Optional Reading:</i> Bhattacharjee, Chapter 2: Thinking Like a Researcher, pp. 9-15. <a href="#">Social Science Research: Principles, Methods and Practices</a>
Week 3 September 8, Mon	Class 4 <b>Quiz #1</b>	<b>Social Science Paradigms</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Babbie, Chapter 2: Paradigms, Theory, and Research, pp. 31-42 <u>Watch before class:</u> <a href="#">Social Science Paradigms: Positivism and Interpretivism</a> <b>In-class Quiz #1 (will cover material from Classes 1-3)</b>
Week 3 September 10, Wed	Class 5	<b>Theories: Purpose, characteristics, and examples</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Bhattacharjee, Chapter 4: Theories in Scientific Research, pp. 25-34. <a href="#">Social Science Research: Principles, Methods and Practices</a> <u>Listen before class:</u> <a href="#">"Theory vs. Reality: Why our economic behavior isn't always rational" Hidden Brain</a>

WEEK & DATE	CLASS	TOPIC & ASSIGNMENTS
Week 4 September 15, Mon	Class 6	<b>Taking Stock of Prior Evidence: The Literature Review</b> <u>Read before class:</u> (1) Goertel, R. A. (2023). Literature Review. Chapter In: The Cambridge Handbook of Research Methods and Statistics for the Social and Behavioral Sciences: Volume 1: Building a Program of Research, edited by Austin Lee Nichols and John Edlund, pp. 65–84. Cambridge Handbooks in Psychology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (2) <a href="#">Ten Simple Rules for Writing a Literature Review</a> (3) <u>Optional Reading: <a href="#">The Literature Review: A Foundation for High Quality Medical Education Research</a></u>
Week 4 September 17, Wed	Class 7 <b>Quiz #2</b>	<b>Ethics and Politics of Social Science Research</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Trochim et al., Chapter 2 <u>Listen before class:</u> <a href="#">Why is there so much fraud in academia? (Freakonomics Radio)</a> <b>Quiz #2 (will cover material discussed in classes #4-#6)</b>
Week 5 September 22, Mon	Class 8	<b>Sampling</b> <u>Read before class:</u> (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 4 (2) <a href="#">Hasty Generalization from Logically Fallacious</a>
Week 5 September 24, Wed	Class 9	<b>Measurement and Operationalization</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Trochim et al., Chapter 5
Week 6 September 29, Mon	Class 10 <b>Quiz #3</b>	<b>Scales, Indices, and Tests</b> <u>Read before class:</u> (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 6 (2) <a href="#">Conley, D.T. (2007) Redefining college readiness, Volume 3</a> <b>Quiz #3 (will cover material discussed in classes #7-#9)</b>
Week 6 October 1, Wed	Class 11	<b>Open Topic Class</b> <i>Topic will be selected by class among suggested options</i> <i>Readings and materials will be suggested one week in advance</i>
Week 7 October 6, Mon	Class 12	<b>Midterm Review</b>
Week 7 October 8, Wed	<b>Midterm</b>	<b>Midterm Exam</b>
Week 8 October 13, Mon	Class 13	<b>Introduction to Quantitative Research Design: Internal Validity and Its Threats</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Trochim et al., 8.1-8.2
Week 8 October 15, Wed	Class 14	<b>Introduction to Quantitative Research Design: Notation, Types</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Trochim et al., 8.3-8.4

WEEK & DATE	CLASS	TOPIC & ASSIGNMENTS
Week 9 October 20, Mon	Class 15	<b>Experimental Research Design</b> <u>Read before class:</u> (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 9 (2) <i>Optional Reading:</i> Murname & Willett, Chapter 4: Investigator-Designed Randomized Experiments, pp. 51-66
Week 9 October 22, Wed	Class 16	<b>Quasi-Experimental Designs</b> <u>Read before class:</u> (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 10 (2) <i>Optional Reading:</i> Murname & Willett, Chapter 8: Using Natural Experiments to Provide “Arguably Exogenous” Treatment Variability, pp. 126-146 <u>Watch before class:</u> <a href="#">Mental Health and Criminal Involvement (Econimate)</a>
Week 10 October 27, Mon	Class 17	<b>Descriptive and Survey Design Methods</b> <u>Read before class:</u> (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 7 (2) <a href="#">Pew Research Center: Economic Inequality Seen as a Major Challenge Around the World</a>
Week 10 October 29, Wed	Class 18 <b>Quiz #4</b>	<b>Descriptive Quantitative Data Analysis</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Trochim et al., Chapter 11 <b>Quiz #4 (will cover material discussed in classes #13-18)</b>
Week 11 November 3, Mon	Class 19	<b>Inferential Quantitative Data Analysis</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Trochim et al., 12.1-12.5
Week 11 November 5, Wed	Class 20	<b>Practice Problems. Analyzing Quantitative Research Studies</b> <u>Read before class:</u> <i>Empirical research article will be suggested one-two weeks before class</i>
Week 12 November 10, Mon	Class 21	<b>Introduction to Qualitative Research Designs</b> <u>Read before class:</u> Trochim et al., 3.1-3.3
Week 12 November 12, Wed	Class 22	<b>Qualitative Data Collection Methods</b> <u>Read before class:</u> (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 3, 3.4 (2) <a href="#">National Science Foundation: "An overview of quantitative and qualitative data collection methods"</a> (the text will be available on eLearning)
Week 13 November 17, Mon	Class 23	<b>Qualitative Data Analytic Methods</b> <u>Read before class:</u> (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 3, 3.5-3.6 (2) Schutt, Chapter 10: Qualitative Data Analysis, pp. 321-334. <a href="https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/43454_10.pdf">https://www.sagepub.com/sites/default/files/upm-binaries/43454_10.pdf</a>

WEEK & DATE	CLASS	TOPIC & ASSIGNMENTS
Week 13 November 19, Wed	Class 24	<b>Assessing Qualitative Research. Mixed Methods</b> Read before class: (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 3, 3.6 (2) Tracy, S. J. (2010). Qualitative quality: Eight “big-tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research. <i>Qualitative inquiry</i> , 16(10), pp. 837-851.
Week 14 November 24, Mon	<b>No Classes – Fall Break and Thanksgiving</b>	
Week 14 November 26, Wed		
Week 15 December 1, Mon	Class 25 Quiz #5	<b>Open Topic Class</b> <i>Topic will be selected by class among suggested options</i> <i>Readings and materials will be suggested one week in advance</i> Quiz #5 (will cover material discussed in classes #21-24)
Week 15 December 3, Wed	Class 26	<b>Communication of Research</b> Read before class: (1) Trochim et al., Chapter 13 (2) <a href="#">NYTimes, Over 60 New York Times Graphs for Students to Analyze</a>
Week 16 December 8, Mon	Class 27	<b>Final Exam Review</b> *Submit course evaluations
Week 16 December 10, Wed	<b>No Class – Reading Day</b>	
Week 17 December 15, Mon	<b>Final Exam</b>	<b>Final Exam</b>