RESEARCH DESIGN IN PUBLIC AFFAIRS

This course, oriented toward first-year doctoral students in Public Affairs, introduces the foundations of social science research methods and design. Covered topics include the: logic of scientific inquiry; structure of research language and thought; key components of the research enterprise; measurement methods; sampling techniques; experimental, quasi-experimental and non-experimental designs; survey methods, arts of the interview, development of scales, evaluation research, and mixed-method approaches to investigation. Along the way of discussing these themes students will learn how to define and refine research questions, assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of alternative research methods designed to answer the questions, identify appropriate tools to carry out credible studies that can yield information worthy of analysis and interpretation, and prepare a research proposal. The course is of value to students who intend to conduct research, actual and prospective administrators who may find themselves required to assess research projects done by others and, in general, to anyone interested in discovering ways to better understand why people behave and organizations function as they do.

A. Learning Outcomes: Students, through class readings and assignments, will become:
   - familiar with a broad range of methods used in Public Affairs research;
   - more able to distinguish problems that are and are not amenable to empirical research;
   - adept at recognizing strengths and weaknesses of alternative research designs;
   - proficient at critically assessing the validity of claims based on empirical research, and
   - skilled at forming good research questions and designing effective means to answer them.

B. Pre-requisite: None, but completion of a course in statistical methods can be helpful.

C. Required Texts:
   - Approaches to Social Research, 5th ed. 2009 Singleton, R., Jr., and Straits, B. London: Oxford University Press [Singleton and Straits]


**Recommended Texts:**


*Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference* 2001

*Handbook of Research Methods in Public Administration, 2nd ed.* 2007
*Miller, G.J. and Yang, K. (eds.) CRC Press*

**D. Grades:** Structure is: A(4.0), A-(3.67), B+(3.33), B(3.00), B-(2.67), C+(2.33), C(2.00), F(0)
Grading is based on performance on two class project assignments, a research project proposal, a mid-term examination, and a final examination, as follows:

- Two class assignments (at 15% each): 30 %
- Research project proposal: 30%
- Mid-term and Final examinations (at 20% each): 40%

Total: 100 %

**E. Class Schedule and Readings:**

1. **January 11: Course Overview**
   *Singleton and Straits:* Chapter 1. Introduction

2. **January 18: Scientific Inquiry**
   *Singleton and Straits:* Chapter 2. The Nature of Science
   *Bernard:* Chapter 1. Anthropology and the Social Sciences


3. **January 25: Research Language and Thought**
   *Bernard:* Chapter 2 The Foundations of Social Research
   Chapter 3. Preparing for Research
   Chapter 4. The Literature Search

   *Trochim and Donnelly:* Chapter 1. Foundations

4. **February 1: Design Components**
   *Singleton and Straits:* Chapter 4. Elements of Research Design

   *Trochim and Donnelly:* Chapter 7. Design


5. February 8: Measurement
Singleton and Straits: Chapter 5. Measurement

Trochin and Donnelly: Chapter 3. The Theory of Measurement


6. February 15: Sampling
Singleton and Straits: Chapter 6. Sampling

Bernard: Chapter 6. Sampling
Chapter 7. Sampling Theory
Chapter 8. Nonprobability Sampling and Choosing Informants

Trochin and Donnelly: Chapter 2 - Sampling


7. February 22: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs I
Singleton and Straits: Chapter 7. Experimentation
Chapter 8. Experimental Designs

Bernard: Chapter 5. Research Design: Experiments and Experimental Thinking

Trochin and Donnelly: Chapter 7. Design
Chapter 9. Experimental Design


8. March 1: Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs II
Trochin and Donnelly: Chapter 10. Quasi-Experimental Design


Burke, R.J. and Mikkelsen, A. 2004. Benefits to police officers of having a spouse or partner in the profession of police officer, *Psychological Reports*, 95 (2) pp 514-6

*Recommended*


**9. March 8: Survey Research**

Singleton and Straits: Chapter 9. Survey Research

Chapter 10. Survey Instrumentation

Bernard: Chapter 10. Structured Interviewing I: Questionnaires

Trochim and Donnelly: Chapter 4. Survey Research


*Recommended*


***Tuesday, March 15: Spring Break***
10. March 22: Interviewing
Bernard: Chapter 9. Interviewing: Unstructured and Semistructured
Chapter 11. Structured Interviewing II: Cultural Domain Analysis

11. March 29: Scaling
Bernard: Chapter 12. Scales and Scaling
Trochim and Donnelly: Chapter 5. Scales and Indexes

12. April 5: Non-Experimental Designs I
Singleton and Straits: Chapter 11. Field Research
Bernard: Chapter 13. Participant Observation
Chapter 14. Field Notes: How to Take Them, Code Them, Manage Them
Chapter 15. Direct and Indirect Observation
Trochim and Donnelly: Chapter 6. Qualitative and Unobtrusive Measures
Chapter 13. Qualitative and Mixed Methods Analysis


Recommended


13. April 12: Non-Experimental Designs II
Singleton and Straits: Chapter 12. Research Using Available Data

Bernard: Chapter 16. Introduction to Qualitative and Quantitative Analysis
Chapter 17. Qualitative Data Analysis I: Text Analysis
Chapter 18. Qualitative Data Analysis II: Models and Matrices


Recommended


14. April 19: Evaluation Research
Singleton and Straits: Chapter 14. Evaluation Research

Trochim and Donnelly: Chapter 16. Evaluation, Research Synthesis, Meta-analysis, and Evidence-Based Practice


15. April 26: Mixed-Method Designs

Singleton and Straits: Chapter 13. Multiple Methods

Trochim and Donnelly: Chapter 8. Qualitative and Mixed Methods Designs


E. Internet Data Sources Worthy of Exploration

Centre for Applied Social Surveys (UK): http://www.socstats.soton.ac.uk/CASS
FBI Uniform Crime Reports: http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/ucr.htm
Int’l Institute for Democracy & Electoral Assistance, Voter turnout data for 140 countries: http://www.idea.int/vt/index.cfm

Inter-University Consortium of Political and Social Research (ICPSR), extensive datasets from different sources: http://www.icpsr.umich.edu
International City/County Management Association: http://icma.org
State Politics and Policy Data Resources: http://www.ipsr.ku.edu/SPPQ/research.shtml
UN Development Program, Human Development Indicators: http://hdr.undp.org/statistics
World Bank, World Development Indicators: http://econ.worldbank.org
World Resources Institute, Natural resource and climate data: http://www.wri.org

To be continued.....