

EPPS 2301.001

Research Design in the Social and Policy Sciences



Term: Spring 2020
Day & Time: Tuesdays & Thursdays, 11:30am – 12:45pm
Location: FN 2.104
Instructor: D.A. Hicks
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Please include "EPPS 2301.001" in the subjectline of any email.
Office/Hours: GR 3.804, Tues/Thurs 1:15-3:30 pm
by appointment
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Note: This version of our course Syllabus reflects revisions to accommodate the transition from in-person to online class sessions and the one-week extension of Spring Break. All revisions are highlighted for easy reference.

Course Description

This course prepares students to enter and navigate through the world of science. Students completing this course will understand systematic inquiry and its capacity to yield useful information and insight. The course introduces students to the special logic and language of scientific inquiry used by scientists generally, with explicit focus on their application in the social and policy sciences.

The social and policy sciences have developed a rich portfolio of methodologies designed to handle the unique challenges in understanding social and political, demographic and economic, and cultural and institutional dynamics. In this course, students will develop a basic understanding of a variety of research approaches designed to help us test hypotheses about what influences what. Course topics include: the philosophy of science, the logic of causal inquiry, research ethics, the role of theory in research, research design structures...their relative strengths and limitations, and qualitative research techniques. Students will learn how to recast their inquiries from words to numbers...from abstract concepts to varieties of metrics and their operationalizations. Since measurement is the hallmark of excellent science, students will learn how to judge the quality of data developed and used in research and the validity of conclusions drawn from that data. Students will exercise these new skills by hands-on activities that include learning how to explore published research literature, evaluating the comparative research designs used in the studies of the same research question, and communicating the results of research to relevant audiences.

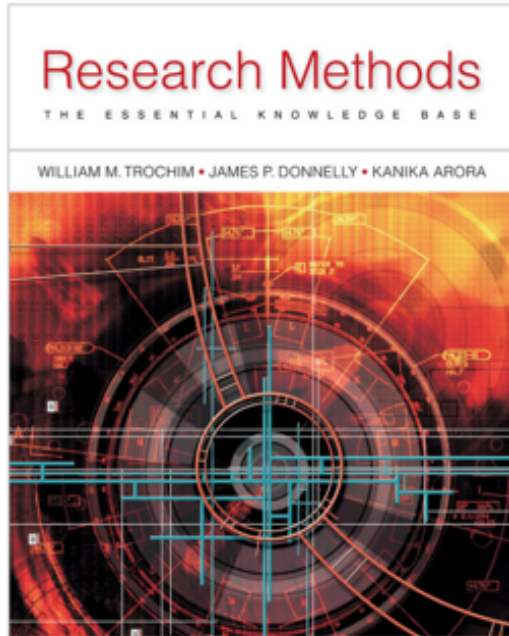
Student Learning Objectives/Outcomes

- Become familiar with the broad range of research design methods used in social sciences
- Learn how to locate and critically summarize the existing literature
- Recognize the strengths and weaknesses of alternative research designs
- Compare and contrast the different designs employed in existing research
- Develop the skills to implement sound research designs

Required Course Resources

Course Textbook: Trochim, William M., James P. Donnelly, and Kanika Arora (2016) *Research Methods: The Essential Knowledge Base*. 2nd Edition. Boston, MA: Cengage Learning, ISBN: 978-1-133-95477-4. This textbook is available at the UT-D Bookstore, Off Campus Books and online:

<https://www.cengage.com/c/research-methods-the-essential-knowledge-base-2e-trochim>



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1. CENGAGE LEARNING SYSTEMS

Course Key: MTPNL5XNS8BV

MindTap Resources: An Introduction

[Fall 2019 EPPS 2301-1](#) ([Print Student Instructions](#)) [MindTap Video "Getting Started"](#)

[Fall 2019 EPPS 2301-2](#) ([Print Student Instructions](#))

2. TOP HAT (<https://tophat.com>)

Course Code: 299291

You will need to purchase a subscription to the Top Hat classroom response system. (~\$26 for 4 months is the least expensive option). This will be used for attendance and class participation (~15% of your grade). ***You must have this by January 23, 2020.***

Additional readings may be assigned during class. Students are not required to print materials that can be accessed electronically.

COURSE ADMINISTRATION

I. Attendance & Participation

Attendance & Participation will count for (tentatively) **10% of your final grade**. How will these be determined? Students are responsible for *reading the assigned materials before each class*. You will be expected to discuss the readings and *participate in class activities using the Top Hat software*. Several short, unannounced assignments will be given in class to gauge participation. Lecture notes *will not be available online*, so please attend every class and be prepared to take good notes and ask good questions.

II. Annotated Bibliography (AB): **Due Date: February 27th**

Each of you will select a topic and create an annotated bibliography (AB) of published scholarly (peer-reviewed) research focused on it. All the studies included in your AB should have essentially the same basic underlying concept or dependent variable (DV) that the research is seeking to explore. For each article include a copy of the title page that provides full citation information...and maybe an abstract of the article. Your AB should include the correct and complete citation for each article. Annotations: You will provide a very brief (thumbnail) description for each article, sufficient to help a reader understand its defining features. Prepare to include three (or more) articles in your AB. More information and requirements will be provided in class. Style requirements for all writing assignments appear in this Syllabus (page 4). A printed hardcopy of this assignment will be turned in before class on **February 27th** and will count for approximately **15% of your final grade**. Please also email a soft copy of your AB (without article title pages) to Mr. Iftekhairul Islam (TA) for our files. ***No electronic submissions will be accepted in lieu of a hard copy version.*¹**

III. Online Exams

There will be no final exam in the course. There will be **3 exams** which taken together will count for approximately **55-65% of your final grade**. They will be posted on eLearning and administered through the Testing Center on campus. Details for registering for a seat on test days are found in the Syllabus on page 5. Each exam is closed-book; no class notes may be brought into an exam. You may sit for an exam on a scheduled date any time after **8:30am** and begin an exam no later than **4:30pm**. You will only have 1 hour and 15 minutes to complete an exam once you begin.

UT-Dallas Testing Center

Each of you need to go the Testing Center's website to reserve a seat **for each exam** via this link: <https://ets.utdallas.edu/testing-center>. **Reservations for each exam must be made at least 72 hours before a scheduled exam.**

- _NO** walk-ins will be allowed.
- _** Cut-off time for reserving a seat is **72 hours** prior to the scheduled exam end time.
- _** Students **will not** be admitted without an appointment.
- _** Students **will not** be admitted without a **PHYSICAL Comet ID Card**.
- _** In the event that a student **cannot** take an exam in the designated time window, he/she will need to contact their instructor directly to make other arrangements.

Make-up exams will not be given without advanced notification and documentation and only for unforeseen, serious and verifiable circumstances (see below).

Skipped exams will receive a zero

¹ You may also find helpful the Library Guide prepared by the University of Southern California Libraries: <https://libguides.usc.edu/writingguide/introduction/researchproblem>

IV. Comparative Research Design Analysis (CRDA) Paper: Due Date: April 21st

Students will prepare a CDRA (not including title page and reference list) comparing *three or four peer-reviewed articles* chosen from your AB. This assignment will determine approximately **20% of your final grade**. Students will identify and discuss the purpose of the research, the research design, sampling, data, and methodological issues for all of the articles. Further requirements of this paper will be discussed in class. Protocols and style requirements for all writing assignments appear on *pages 5-6*.

Students must submit a soft copy of their CRDA – together with complete copies of the articles they are evaluating – by 12:00 noon on Tuesday April 21st. No print (hard) submissions will be accepted.

Unexcused late papers will receive a zero.

Grading Policy

Final course grades will be based on the total points earned throughout the course.

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%

Assignments & Academic Calendar

A tentative topic schedule appears on page 7. As the sessions proceed, some topics may be expanded, or shortened. Topics may also be added, altered or deleted to accommodate student learning. Changes will be announced either in class, on eLearning, or by e-mail.

Course & Instructor Policies:

Academic Honesty

Academic honesty is taken very seriously at UTD because it impacts the value of your degree. The student is expected to know the rules. Please see: <http://www.utdallas.edu/conduct/integrity/>.

Classroom Citizenship

Like academic integrity, debate about opposing views is a cornerstone of higher education. Your opinions matter as well as those of others. Please feel free to express yourself, but with courtesy and respect to all.

Large classes can make participation difficult, but it is still the student's responsibility to engage with the material. This means paying attention and not texting, web surfing, having loud conversations or other disruptive behaviors. These activities will impact your participation grade.

Class Attendance

Students are expected to attend every class having read the assigned material. They are expected to arrive on time and to stay for the whole class. The Instructor will use TopHat to take attendance sometime early in each class session. Excused absences will be allowed if the instructor is informed in advance, but the student is responsible for any missed material and all assignments are due on or before their published due dates.

Late Assignments & Make-up Work (Extreme Conditions)

Late assignments will not be accepted, and make-up tests will not be given except under extreme conditions such as a failed Internet connection (*1 time*), serious illness, death in the family, required university-sponsored event, or if the student contacts the instructor prior to the scheduled time and is faced with a situation beyond their control. Documentation is required.

Extra Credit

Extra credit opportunities will be available in class throughout the semester. Extra credit is only given to the class as a whole. ***No individual extra credit will be given.***

Electronic Device Policy

Electronic devices are allowed provided that they are used for class business only. Recording devices may not be used during class.

HELP

A variety of help is available to all students. EPPS supplies writing information at <https://www.utdallas.edu/epps/resources/writing-resources.html>. Also please explore the [Student Success Center](#), which can provide help with writing, tutoring and group study. If you need help with eLearning look in <http://www.utdallas.edu/elearning/students/>.

Office Hours & Appointments

One of my favorite aspects of this – or any course I teach – is meeting with students individually. So do plan to schedule a meeting with me sometime early in the semester just to get to know one another. I set aside the afternoons following our class meetings for office hours. If you wish to set a meeting please contact me for an appointment so that I can reserve the date/time for you. I do not recommend that you simply drop in with the expectation that I will be free. Also, when you contact me for an appointment, **please include a mobile number** so that I can call if necessary to identify a mutually agreeable date/time quickly and efficiently. Playing e-mail tag across several days is woefully inefficient and frustrating for all involved.

Written Work Protocols

The quality of written work that you submit is very important to your success as a student. Please make every effort to present your ideas clearly and concisely. Academic writing is more complicated than everyday speech but writing “like you talk” is a good place to start. Very few people produce quality work on the first try. It is a good idea to get used to writing a first draft and then editing it. You will also be expected to cite the sources of the major ideas that you incorporate, as well as any quotations. Plagiarism detection tools such as *Turnitin* will be used. Finally, check and double check your spelling and grammar (*spell check is not sufficient*).

For full credit, use the following style for all written submissions:

- 12 pt. Times New Roman font
- Single-spaced with paragraphs (single line between paragraphs).
- 1-inch margins on all sides
- Aligned left
- Standard paragraph indentation (one tab or 1/2 inch)
- Number each page (centered on the bottom of the page)
- Use citations using Turabian or Chicago style guidelines
- Staple all papers in the upper left corner
- Include your name, course name and your email address on a separate cover page

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. It also provides information about your rights and links for a variety of services available to students: <http://go.utdallas.edu/syllabus-policies>.

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

Topic Agenda & Reading Assignments

Week	Date	Topic	Reading Assignment
1	Jan. 14	Introduction: Course Rationale, Activities & Expectations	
	Jan. 16	The Research Enterprise: Language & Logic	1.1 & 1.2
2	Jan. 21	The Structure of Research: Dimensions of Validity	1.3 - 1.5
3	Jan. 23	Ethics in Research: Foundations. (TopHat activated)	2.1 – 2.4
	Jan. 28		2.1 – 2.4
4	Jan. 30	Qualitative Research: Theories, Hypotheses & Methods	3.1 - 3.3
	Feb. 4		3.4 - 3.6
5	Feb. 6	Locating Published Research: Sources & Strategies [Guest]	
	Feb. 11	Reading Day – No Class	
	Feb. 13	Exam 1 @ Testing Center	[Reserve seat by February 6 th]
6	Feb. 18	Sampling: Theory, Nonprobability Models & Methods	4.1 - 4.5
	Feb. 20	Sampling: External Validity, Probability Models & Methods	4.6 – 4.8
7	Feb. 25	Measurement: : Mind ⇒ Metric ⇒ Method ⇒ Measure	5.1 – 5.3
	Feb. 27	Measurement & Metrics: Items, Indices & Scales	TBD
Annotated Bibliography Due – February 27th			
8	Mar. 3	Metrics: Items, Indices & Scales	TBD
	Mar. 5	Metrics: Items, Indices & Scales	TBD
	Mar. 10	Designs to Test for Cause & Effect Relationships	8.1 – 8.4
9	Mar. 12	Designs to Test for Cause & Effect Relationships, cont'd.	8.1 – 8.4
Spring Break March 16-27, 2020			
11	Mar. 31	Designs to Test for Cause & Effect Relationships, cont'd.	8.1 – 8.4
	April 2	Survey Research: Types, Methods & Design	7.1 - 7.4
12	April 7	Survey Research: Types, Methods & Design	7.1 - 7.4
	April 9	Exam 2 @ eLearning via Blackboard Collaborate	
13	April 14	Experimental Design: Logic, Types & Limitations	9.1 – 9.3
	April 16	Experimental Design: Logic, Types & Limitations, con'td.	
14	April 21	Quasi-Experimental Design:.... [--- CRDA Due ---]	10.1 – 10.3
	April 23	Quasi-Experimental Design: Logic, Types & Limitations	
15	April 28	Descriptive Data: Development & Analysis	11.1 – 11.4
	April 30	Descriptive Data: Development & Analysis, cont'd.	
	May 2-5	Exam 3 @ eLearning via Blackboard Collaborate	