

**Professor Suzanne J. Piotrowski**  
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**Office: Hill Hall 718**  
**Office Hours: Mon. and Tues. 3:00 to 5:00 PM**

**Research Methods**  
**26.834.562**  
**Spring 2004**  
**Monday 5:30-8:10 PM**  
**Bradley Hall 410**

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

This is a research methods course focusing on techniques most prevalent in the public administration literature. Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methodology approaches are presented. Topics covered include how to write a research question, how to operationalize variables, data gathering, data analysis, and research writing. This is a hands-on course where active participation in assignments, exercises, and class discussion is required.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES:**

- Increase knowledge of research methods and techniques.
- Create an opportunity for students to apply research methods to relevant public administration examples.
- Create an opportunity for students to read and critique current public administration research.
- Create an opportunity for students to gain a working knowledge of the ethical responsibilities of conducting research.
- Develop an understanding of how research methods are used within the public administration field.
- Develop an understanding of how to choose and apply sound methods to research.

### **COURSE MATERIAL:**

#### **Required Material:**

*The Practice of Social Research*, 10<sup>th</sup> Edition 2004 by Earl Babbie. Thompson and Wadsworth. Belmont, California. ISBN: 0-534-62029-9

Journal articles, websites, and reports are assigned and listed on the course schedule.

#### **Useful References:**

*Applied Statistics for Public Administration* 5<sup>th</sup> edition by Kenneth J. Meier and Jeffrey L. Brudney (2002) Thomson Wadsworth Publishers ISBN: 0-15-506703-6

*Case Study Research, Design and Methods*. Second Edition. 1994. by Robert Yin. Sage Publication: Thousand Oaks, California.

*Evaluation in Practice: A Methodological Approach*, Second Edition by Richard D. Bingham and Claire L. Felbinger. 2002. Chatam House Seven Bridges Press. ISBN: 1-889119-57-1

*Handbook of Research Methods in Public Administration*, edited by Gerald J. Miller and Marcia L. Whicher. 1999. Marcel Dekker, Inc. 0-8247-0213-1

### **Useful References (continued):**

*Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data.* 1995 by Herbert Rubin and Irene Rubin. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

*Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It.* by Howard S. Becker. 1998. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

*Unobtrusive Measures*, Revised Edition. 2000. Eugene J. Webb, Donald T. Campbell, Richard D. Schwartz, and Lee Sechrest. Sage Publication: Thousand Oaks, California.

### **REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

Class Participation: 10 percent

Exams: 40 percent (20 percent each)

Assignments: 50 percent

*Class Participation:* All students are encouraged and expected to actively participate in classroom discussions. Such participation is impossible if the student is absent from class, hence, absences can affect a student's final course grade.

*Exercises:* Most weeks students will complete a short exercise related to the readings. These exercises will be assigned the week before they are due. The completion of these exercises will count toward your class participation grade.

*Exams:* There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. Both of these exams will be a combination of true-false, multiple choice, and essay questions. No makeup exams will be given. If you miss the midterm exam, the final exam will be worth the full 40 percent of your final grade.

*Assignments:* There are five written assignment due throughout the semester. These assignments are due at 5:30 PM (the beginning of class). Late assignments are marked down 1/3 of a grade for each day they are late (i.e. A- to B+). Extensions are not granted. It is your responsibility to weigh the costs (a lower grade) and the benefits (more time to work on the project).

### **COURSE READINGS AND SCHEDULE**

*Assigned readings should be completed for the class they are assigned. Depending on how the semester goes the schedule may change slightly. Any changes to the course schedule will be announced in advance. If at any point during the semester it becomes clear that students are not completing the readings, a pop quiz may be given which will count toward your class participation grade.*

January 26	<b>CLASS OVERVIEW</b>
February 2	<b>THE RESEARCH PROCESS</b> Babbie Chapters 1 and 2
February 9	<b>RESEARCH DESIGN</b> Babbie Chapter 4 <b>Research Question Assignment Due</b> <b>Presentation by Alan Zalkind on Policy Papers</b>
February 16	<b>CONCEPTUALIZATION, OPERATIONALIZATION AND MEASUREMENT</b> Babbie Chapter 5
February 23	<b>WRITING RESEARCH PAPERS &amp; INDICES, SCALES AND TYPOLOGIES</b> Babbie Chapters 6 and 17 <b>Second Research Question Assignment Due</b>
March 1	<b>SAMPLING</b> Babbie Chapter 7 <b>Presentation by Roberta Tipton, Librarian on how to use library resources</b>
March 8	<b>MIDTERM</b>
March 15	<b>SPRING BREAK</b>
March 22	<b>QUALITATIVE FIELD RESEARCH AND INTERVIEWS</b> Babbie Chapter 10  Interview Methods in Political Science Symposium in <i>PS: Political Science and Politics</i> December 2002, Vol 35, No. 4 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Asking Questions: Techniques for Semistructured Interviews</i> by Beth Leech (pg 665-668)</li> <li>• <i>Getting in the Door: Sampling and Completing Elite Interviews</i> by Kenneth Goldstein (pg 669-672)</li> <li>• <i>Conducting and Coding Elite Interview</i> by Joel D. Aberback and Bert D. Rockman (pg 673-676)</li> </ul>

March 29	<p><b>QUALITATIVE DATA—CONTINUED</b></p> <p>Babbie Chapter 13</p> <p><b>Annotated Bibliography Due</b></p>
April 5	<p><b>FOCUS GROUPS &amp; ETHICS OF SOCIAL RESEARCH</b></p> <p>Babbie Chapter 3</p> <p>Rutgers IRB policies <a href="http://orsp.rutgers.edu/human.asp">http://orsp.rutgers.edu/human.asp</a></p>
April 12	<p><b>SURVEY RESEARCH</b></p> <p>Babbie Chapters 9</p> <p><b>Interview/Focus Group Assignment Due</b></p>
April 19	<p><b>UNOBTRUSIVE RESEARCH AND CASE STUDIES</b></p> <p>Babbie Chapter 11</p> <p><b>LOCATING EXISTING STATISTICS ON THE WEB</b></p> <p>Class is held in computer lab—location TBA.</p>
April 26	<p><b>UNOBSTRUSIVE RESEARCH—CONTINUED</b></p> <p><b>Article Critique Due</b></p>
May 3	<p><b>EVALUATION RESEARCH</b></p> <p><i>Designing Evaluations.</i> United States General Accounting Office Program Evaluation and Methodology Division. March 1991. GAO/PEMD-10.1.4 (available online; a hard copy can be order at <a href="http://www.gao.gov">www.gao.gov</a>)</p> <p>Babbie Chapter 12</p>
May 10	<p><b>FINAL EXAM</b></p>