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**Office hours: Thursdays 4:00- 5:30 PM**

**Research Design**  
**26.834.562**  
**Fall 2006**  
**Thursdays 5:30-8:10 PM**  
**Bradley Hall 410**

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## **COURSE OVERVIEW**

This course is designed to examine the research techniques that are most prevalent in the public administration literature. Students will be introduced to the research process and a number of data collection strategies such as questionnaire research, focus groups, case studies, and interviewing. Required readings, classroom discussion, and assignments will emphasize how methodological tools can be applied to work-related projects and assessments with the aim of informing decisions, demonstrating performance, and/or determining program impact. Techniques for data presentation will also be addressed to equip students with the tools to effectively communicate data to various stakeholders.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

This course aims to:

- increase student knowledge of research methods.
- stimulate a critical eye among students as they assess the methodologies employed in current public administration research.
- build student awareness of the ethical responsibilities of conducting research.
- equip students to choose and apply sound methods for research in their professional or academic pursuits.

## **COURSE MATERIAL**

### Required Text

*The Practice of Social Research*, 11<sup>th</sup> Edition 2004 by Earl Babbie. Belmont, California: Thompson Wadsworth Publishers. ISBN: 0495093254

(Students may opt to purchase used versions of the 10<sup>th</sup> edition.)

### Recommended References

*Applied Statistics for Public Administration* 5<sup>th</sup> edition by Kenneth J. Meier and Jeffrey L. Brudney (2002) Belmont, California: Thomson Wadsworth Publishers

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

*Designing Evaluations*. 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 [www.gao.gov](http://www.gao.gov))

Useful References (continued)

*Evaluation, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.* 1998 by Carol H. Weiss. Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

*Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research.* 1994 by Richard A. Krueger. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications.

*Handbook of Research Methods in Public Administration*, edited by Gerald J. Miller and Marcia L. Whicher. 1999. New York, New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc.

*Making Sense of Statistics: A Conceptual Overview, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition.* 2001 by Fred Pycszak. Los Angeles, California: Pycszak Publishing.

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

*Questionnaire Research: A Practical Guide.* 1998 by Mildren L. Patton. Los Angeles, California: Pycszak Publishing.

*Research Methods for Community Change: A Project-Based Approach.* 2005 by Randy Stoecker. 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. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press.

## **REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION**

Mid-term Exam: 30 percent

Assignments: 30 percent

Final Project: 30 percent

Class Participation: 10 percent

Class Participation: All students are expected to attend class and actively participate in classroom discussions.

Mid-Term Exam: There will be a mid-term exam that is worth 30 percent of your final grade. The exam will be distributed at the end of class (10/26) and due at the beginning of class the following week.

Assignments: Two written assignments will be due during the semester (The Research Question--due 9/28 and an Annotated Bibliography--due 11/16). 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. Instructions for the assignments and the final project will be distributed in class on Thursday, 9/21.

*Final Project:* All students are required to prepare a research design. At the end of the semester, students will present to the class the research design they have developed. A written summary (8-12 pages) of the research design must be submitted the day the presentation is given. Students will be provided with project instructions early in the semester.

*Blackboard:* This course will have a Blackboard site. The course syllabus and other class materials will be available on Blackboard. For example, descriptions of assignments will be posted on Blackboard, as well as articles that may be required for the mid-term exam. Students must use their Pegasus account to access the course site and to receive e-mails from me via Blackboard.

Fall 06	Topic, Readings, and Assignments
September 7 <sup>th</sup>	Course Overview
September 14 <sup>th</sup>	The Research Process Babbie Chapters 1 and 2
September 21 <sup>st</sup>	Research Design and Evaluation Research Babbie Chapters 4 and 12  <b>*Instructions for Assignments 1 and 2 Distributed*</b>
September 28 <sup>th</sup>	Conceptualization, Operationalization, and Measurement Babbie Chapters 5 and 6  <b>Assignment 1 Due: The Research Question</b>
October 5 <sup>th</sup>	Sampling Strategies Babbie Chapter 7  <i>Presentation by Roberta Tipton, meeting in library lobby (To be confirmed)</i>
October 12 <sup>th</sup>	Experiments and Survey Research Babbie Chapters 8 and 9
October 19 <sup>th</sup>	Field Research and Interviews Babbie Chapter 10
October 26 <sup>th</sup>	Unobtrusive Research and Case Studies Babbie Chapter 11  <b>*Mid-term Exam Questions Distributed*</b>

November 2 <sup>nd</sup>	Focus Groups <b>Mid-term Exam Due by 5:30pm</b>
November 9 <sup>th</sup>	Evaluating the Research of Others and Writing the Final Paper (Handout Distributed) Babbie Chapter 17
November 16 <sup>th</sup>	Ethics Babbie Chapter 3 Rutgers IRB policies <a href="http://orsp.rutgers.edu/human.asp">http://orsp.rutgers.edu/human.asp</a> IRB Film (Part II)  <b>Assignment 2 Due: Annotated Bibliography</b>  <b>* Students will select 11/21, 11/30 or 12/1 for the final paper presentation.*</b>
November 21 <sup>st</sup> (Tuesday)	Data Presentation Techniques <b>Student Presentations</b>
November 23	No Class
November 30	<b>Student Presentations</b>
December 7	<b>Student Presentations</b>
December 14	<b>Final Paper Due: The Research Design</b>