

PUBPL 6900 – Public Policy Research – Spring 2019

Class meets: Thursday from 6pm to 9pm in GC 4680

Office hours: By appointment

Course Summary:

This course is designed to provide students with the skills needed to interpret and synthesize published research materials for the purpose of guiding public policy. An emphasis is placed on critiquing the research designs and statistical approaches used in public policy.

Course Objectives:

By the end of the semester, students will be able to:

- Critique research designs used in published studies.
- Fully understand and be able to differentiate between types of research design.
- Develop research designs.
- Synthesize the elements of a public policy study.

Learning Outcomes and Evaluation:

Students will be evaluated using assignments that require the student to:

- Examine published research for its validity and research design.
- Create a sound research design when given a set of research study parameters.
- Create a full research proposal.

Required Texts:

This course uses numerous articles that can be found on Canvas. In addition, it has three required texts:

- You can find this book online for 10-20 bucks from places like Abe Books and elsewhere (you may use different editions, but there are some differences between editions):
 - Research Methods for Public Administrators: 3rd Edition, by Gail Johnson
- I'll provide a couple pdf chapters from these books:
 - An Applied Reference Guide to Research Designs, by W. Alex Edmonds and Tom D. Kennedy
 - Making Sense of Multivariate Data Analysis, by John Spicer

Teaching and Learning Methods:

- Each class will include a lecture, group discussion, and in-class projects. Students are expected to complete the readings so they can engage in group discussions. The readings will be available on Canvas.
- Students will also help teach the class. Students will be assigned to present articles, topics and lead class discussions. Details will be provided.

Assignments and Grading:

This is a brief overview of the assignments for this class. The grade allocation for the assignments and other work is as follows:

	Percent
In-class participation	15
Assignment 1	10
Assignment 2	10
Assignment 3	10
Research pocket guide	15
In-class presentations	10
Proposal presentation	10
Final assignment (15-page research proposal)	20
Total	100

Schedule (subject to change):

Week 1: January 10	The KW in KWL, scientific method, and CRAP. And you.
Week 2: January 17	Research design: Basics, questions and measures.
Week 3: January 24	Xs and Os. And quantitative methods.
Week 4: January 31	More quantitative methods.
Week 5: February 7	Other quant research, content analysis (Pew and movies).
Week 6: February 14	Data collection, Census.
Week 7: February 21	Data collection and interviews, and more Census (PUMS).
Week 8: February 28	Data collection and surveys, and more Census (maps).
Week 9: March 7	Qualitative methods.
Week 10: March 14	---spring break---
Week 11: March 21	More qual. Lit review as research design? And data analysis.
Week 12: March 28	More lit review as research design. And data analysis.

Week 13: April 4	Putting it together (and communication).
Week 14: April 11	Presentations of preliminary final projects.
Week 15: April 18	Anything we missed.
Finals week: April 25	Final project due.

Attendance & Punctuality:

I expect you to attend class every week. If you need to miss class, please email me so that I know you will not be there. I would prefer you come 30 minutes late or leave 30 minutes early than to miss class altogether.

Food & Drink:

Eat and drink with wild abandon. But please clean up after yourself.

Cell Phones & Computers:

Please silence your phones before class begins. And here is where you will hate me: please leave your computers in your bags. We'll only be using computers during class for presentations and for statistical analysis on the lab computers.

Communication:

Please use Canvas for most communications.

If you need something that I won't need to remember more than a few hours you can text me at 801.755.2636.

Academic Topics:

We will discuss ideas and issues in this class that may express ideas that conflict with the core beliefs of some students. Public policy covers issues such as abortion, drugs, immigration, and climate change. Be emotionally prepared for these and/or other issue discussions.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Statement:

The University of Utah seeks to provide equal access to its programs, services and activities for people with disabilities. If you will need accommodations in the class, reasonable prior notice needs to be given to the Center for Disability Services, 162 Olpin Union Building, 581-5020 (V/TDD). CDS will work with you and the instructor to make arrangements for accommodations. All information in this course can be made available in alternative format with prior notification to the Center for Disability Services.

Wellness Statement:

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationship difficulties, depression, cross-cultural differences, etc., can interfere with a student's ability to succeed and thrive at the University of Utah. For helpful resources contact the Center for Student Wellness - www.wellness.utah.edu; 801-581-7776.

Veterans Center:

If you are a student veteran, I want you to know that the U of Utah has a Veterans Support Center on campus. They are located in Room 161 in the Olpin Union Building. Hours: M-F 8-5pm. Please visit their website for more information about what support they offer, a list of ongoing events and links to outside resources: <http://veteranscenter.utah.edu/>. Please also let me know if you need any additional support in this class for any reason.