PUBPL 6900 – Public Policy Research – Spring 2018

Class meets: Thursday from 6pm to 9pm in BEH S 115

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.
- Develop research designs.
- Apply appropriate research literature in order to critique a research design.
- Synthesize published materials and apply basic statistics needed for replication of public policy studies.

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.
- Apply statistical methods to data sets, showing competences in using these methods.
- Create a research synthesis that utilizes components of meta-analysis.

Required Texts:

This course has three required texts, in addition to articles that can be found on Canvas:

- These books you can find 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
  - Statistical Methods for Practice and Research: A Guide to Data Analysis Using SPSS (2nd Edition), by Ajai Gaur and Sanjaya Gaur
- I'll provide a couple pdf chapters from this book:
  - 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 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	10
Assignment 1	10
Assignment 2	10
Assignment 3	10
Assignment 4	10
Research pocket guide	15
Presentations	10
Final assignment	25
Total	100

Schedule (subject to change):

Week 1: January 11   The KW in KWL, scientific method, and CRAP

Week 2: January 18   Research design

Week 3: January 25   Sampling

Week 4: February 1   Quantitative methods

Week 5: February 8   Quantitative methods, continued

Week 6: February 19   Qualitative methods

Week 7: February 22   Mixed methods; Capstone

Week 8: March 1   Lab work; SPSS application of basic statistics; Difference

Week 9: March 8   Lab work; Regression; Meta-analysis

Week 10: March 15   Lab work; ANOVA; Polling and focus groups

Week 11: March 22   ----spring break---

Week 12: March 29   Lab work; Factor and log-linear analyses

Week 13: April 5	Putting it together
Week 14: April 12	Presentations of preliminary final projects
Week 15: April 19	Anything we missed
Finals week: April 26	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.

Technology:

We will be using SPSS to explore descriptive, inferential statistics, relationship between variables, and measures of association. SPSS is available in any computer lab on campus.

You can also access SPSS from the CSBS Virtual Lab using the Citrix Receiver. This will allow you to access to SPSS and other computer software off campus using your student ID and password. You can download the Citrix Receiver here: https://support.csbs.utah.edu/get-help/self-support/virtual-lab.php

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.