

SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND ADMINISTRATION
RUTGERS UNIVERSITY – NEWARK

Applied Research Design (20:834:562)

Fall 2020

This is an asynchronous online course on Blackboard

DRAFT: This syllabus is subject to change

Instructor Information

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Virtual office hours by appointment only

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Building on the skills of data analysis and statistical inference learned in Applied Statistics (561), this course exposes students to issues central to understanding and applying research-based evidence to public affairs and administration. These issues include the use of theory or models, measurement concepts and methods, qualitative and quantitative modes of observation, identifying causes, the logic of control variables, and the design of experiments and quasi-experiments. The emphasis is on learning these ideas through practice with many different examples of real-world research and empirical evidence.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK AND MATERIALS

Dahlia K. Remler & Gregg G. Van Ryzin. Research methods in practice: Strategies for description and causation, second edition. Sage Publications.

In addition to the lecture notes and textbook readings, a few supplementary readings will be assigned. These readings will be available on Blackboard.

We will mostly rely on Excel for the statistical part of the course. Students can also use MYSTAT (SYSTAT), Stata, SPSS, or another more specialized statistical software package if they prefer. You can download software packages at <https://software.rutgers.edu/>

COURSE EVALUATION

Students are expected to keep up with assigned readings, view the lectures and other videos, and to participate actively in online discussions. There will be three projects, weekly reading quizzes, online discussions on readings and exercises. Grades will be based on the following:

Class Discussions	20%
Discussion Leader	10%
Quizzes	10%
Project 1: Logic Model	15%
Project 2: Survey Design	20%
Project 3: Research Proposal	25%

Each of these requirements is explained in more detail below.

CLASS DISCUSSIONS (20%). Students are expected to participate actively in online discussions, which are an important part of the class each week, and their participation will be evaluated and graded.

DISCUSSION LEADER (10%). This is a group assignment. Each week, two students will pair up and serve as the discussion leaders. Discussion leaders are expected to lead an exercise forum for classmates. In the forum, leaders provide a real-world case, ask questions based on the module content, keep the conversation going on effectively and write a summary report.

READING QUIZZES (10%). Brief quizzes will be given to assess your comprehension of the assigned readings for each week. It is important to read the materials for class carefully and on time. There will be 11 quizzes throughout the semester. Students will be able to drop the lowest quiz grade.

PROJECTS (60%). Students must complete and submit three projects over the semester. The instructions for each project can be found on Blackboard. Be sure to read all instructions carefully, and complete all parts of the project. Projects will be graded according to their presentation quality as well as its analytical substance. Students may consult with each other on assignments, but the work handed in must be the student's own, original work. Late assignments will be downgraded.

Grading

Final grades in this course will be assessed using the following breakdown:

Letter Grade	Definition	Numerical Equivalent
A	Outstanding	89.5-100
B+	Very Good	84.5-89.49

B	Good	79.5-84.49
C+	Intermediate	74.5-79.49
C	Satisfactory	69.5-74.49
F	Failing	<69.5

COURSE POLICIES

The syllabus serves as a general outline. I reserve the right to deviate from any part of the plan as necessary. Students will be notified of any such modifications.

GENERAL EXPECTATIONS. This a graduate-level course and so students are expected to be motivated to read and study the assigned textbooks and other materials carefully before class. This includes doing exercises from the textbook on your own to test your understanding of key concepts and methods. Regular participation in discussions and keeping up with all readings and assignments is essential to doing well in this course.

COMMUNICATION. Communication about class schedules, requirements, and assignments or readings may be made via e-mail or Blackboard, so it is expected that students will check their accounts regularly.

SUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS. Assignments should be submitted to the Blackboard rather than e-mailed. Be sure your name and the submission date are on the assignment (and do not backdate).

LATE ASSIGNMENTS. Assignments are generally due at 11:59 pm of the due date. Except for significant extenuating circumstances (e.g., medical, family, etc.), late assignments will be downgraded by 10% the first day and 5% each additional day thereafter. If you know in advance that you have a serious conflict in your schedule, you are encouraged to contact the professor before the assignment is due to discuss any plan to hand in the work late.

REVISING AND RESUBMITTING ASSIGNMENTS. Students who receive a grade of less than a B (3.0) for an assignment AND who hand in the original assignment ON TIME will be given an opportunity to revise and resubmit the assignment. A change of grade will be made only for assignments that demonstrate a significant improvement through the student's own effort (making only minor corrections or edits in response to the professor's written feedback on the initial assignment will not be sufficient for a change of grade). This policy does not apply to the final assignment. Resubmissions must be made through Blackboard within one week after the initial graded assignment has been returned to the student. The maximum grade possible for resubmission is a B (3.0).

GRADE DISPUTE. Grade disputes will be handled according to the SPAA MPA Student Handbook. If you think you have been graded unfairly or in error, you are encouraged to discuss it with the professor before initiating any sort of formal dispute process. I don't "negotiate" grades, but misunderstandings and mistakes do happen occasionally.

WRITING STYLE. In terms of the writing style of your assignments, you may use either APA or Chicago style, but please be consistent within the document. In-text citations are preferred to footnotes or endnotes. Writing clarity and quality are considered in grading. Please use a standard font such as Arial, Calibri, or Times New Roman. Pages should use 1-inch margins, double-spaced, with 12 point fonts. If you think you need help with your writing, talk to the professor. There are resources on campus to help you. Also feel free to contact SPAA's writing coach, Terry Hall, at tlh135@scarletmail.rutgers.edu.

INCOMPLETES AND GRADE CHANGES. Students are expected to complete all of their assignments and other requirements by the official end of the term. Grades will be based on work received by the professor at this time. A grade of incomplete (IN) will only be given to students with legitimate medical or family emergencies who have discussed their situation with the professor prior to the end of the term. Incomplete work submitted for a change of grade after the term will be accepted at the discretion of the professor and only with prior arrangement and agreement.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY. Students must follow the school's integrity policy: <http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu> Please be aware that plagiarism and any forms of cheating will never be excused under any circumstances – I check assignments for originality using plagiarism detection software. Violation of these policies leads to immediate failure of the course.

ACCOMMODATIONS AND SUPPORT

Rutgers University Newark (RU-N) is committed to the creation of an inclusive and safe learning environment for all students and the university as a whole. RU-N has identified the following resources to further the mission of access and support:

For Individuals with Disabilities: The Office of Disability Services (ODS) is responsible for the determination of appropriate accommodations for students who encounter barriers due to disability. Once a student has completed the ODS process (registration, initial appointment, and submitted documentation) and reasonable accommodations are determined to be necessary and appropriate, a Letter of Accommodation (LOA) will be provided. The LOA must be given to each course instructor by the student and followed up with a discussion. This should be done as early in the semester as possible as accommodations are not retroactive. More information can be found at ods.rutgers.edu. Contact ODS at (973)353-5375 or ods@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals who are Pregnant: The Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance is available to assist with any concerns or potential accommodations related to pregnancy. You may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973)353-1906 or TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals seeking Religious Accommodations: The Office of the Dean of Students is available to verify absences for religious observance, as needed. Contact the Dean of Students at (973)353-5063 or via email at DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For Individuals with temporary conditions/injuries: Students who have experienced a temporary condition or injury that is adversely affecting their ability to fully participate should submit a request via <https://temporaryconditions.rutgers.edu>.

Absences: Per University Policy 10.2.7, you are responsible for communicating with your instructors regarding absences. The Office of the Dean of Students is available to verify extended absences. Contact the Dean of Students at (973)353-5063 or via email at

DeanofStudents@newark.rutgers.edu.

For English as a second language (ESL): Students experiencing difficulty in courses due to English as a second language (ESL) should contact the Program in American Language Studies via email at PALs@newark.rutgers.edu to discuss potential supports.

For Gender or Sex-Based Discrimination or Harassment: If you have experienced any form of gender or sex-based discrimination or harassment, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, relationship violence, or stalking, know that help and support are available. If you wish to report an incident, you may contact the Office of Title IX and ADA Compliance at (973)353-1906 or via email at TitleIX@newark.rutgers.edu. You may also submit an incident report using the following link: tinyurl.com/RUNReportingForm. If you wish to speak with a staff member who is confidential and does **not** have a reporting responsibility, you may contact the Office for Violence Prevention and Victim Assistance at (973)353-1918 or via email at run.vpva@rutgers.edu.

NETIQUETTE

- In all of your interactions, remember there is a person behind the written post.
- Pause and reflect on a post that is uncomfortable before responding. Consider the root of your emotional reaction.
- Remember, we are discussing ideas and disagreements that are not personal in nature. Take care in crafting your response to demonstrate your disagreement with the idea, not the person.
- Do not participate in "flaming." Flaming is inflammatory comments that are hostile and insulting and do not contribute to the learning process. Choose not to respond to "flames" to support a better learning experience for everyone.
- Be careful with humor and sarcasm. Because the visual cues are absent, many people cannot tell if your comments are meant seriously or facetiously.
- Contribute to a meaningful discussion by presenting your "best self" in the course environment: Take the time to explain your ideas respectfully and completely. However, also keep brevity in mind. You want to make your point clearly, but also make it concisely.
- If a peer misinterprets your meaning, acknowledge this without being rude or defensive. It can be challenging to communicate some ideas in writing. This is your opportunity to practice clarifying your ideas to others.
- Do not post in all caps. This is the equivalent of SHOUTING at someone and is not acceptable.

SCHEDULE

Week 1: Introduction and Overview		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
9/1 - 9/6	Review Syllabus	Sep 1
	Zoom Live Session: Course Launch	Sep 1 10:00 AM
	Module 1 Readings and Resources	Sep 2
	Module 1 Lectures (Supplementary)	Sep 2
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Syllabus ● Self Introduction ● Readings and Resources 1 	Initial Post: Sep 2 Final Post: Sep 4
Week 2: Theory and Models		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
9/7 - 9/13	Module 2 Readings and Resources	Sep 8
	Module 2 Lectures (Supplementary)	Sep 8
	Quiz: Module 2 Readings	Sep 9
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings and Resources 2 ● Logic Model Exercise (by professor) 	Initial Post: Sep 8 Final Post: Sep 10 Leader Summary: Sep 11
	Project 1: Logic Model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Read Project 1 Instructions ● Post Questions in Project 1 Class Discussion 	Project 1 Due: Sep 27
Week 3: Qualitative Research		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
9/14 - 9/20	Module 3 Readings and Resources	Sep 15
	Module 3 Lectures (Supplementary)	Sep 15
	Quiz: Module 3 Readings	Sep 16
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Readings and Resources 3 ● Qualitative Analysis Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Sep 15 Final Post: Sep 17 Leader Summary: Sep 18

Week 4: Measurement		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
9/21 - 9/27	Module 4 Readings and Resources	Sep 22
	Module 4 Lectures (Supplementary)	Sep 22
	Quiz: Module 4 Readings	Sep 23
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lectures, Reading and Resources 4 • Measurement Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Sep 22 Final Post: Sep 24 Leader Summary: Sep 25
	Project 1 Logic Model Due	Project 1 Due: Sep 27
Week 5: Sampling in the Real World		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
9/28 - 10/4	Module 5 Readings and Resources	Sep 29
	Module 5 Lectures (Supplementary)	Sep 29
	Quiz: Module 5 Readings	Sep 30
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and Resources 5 • Sampling Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Sep 29 Final Post: Oct 1 Leader Summary: Oct 2
	Project 2: Survey Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Project 2 Instructions • Post Questions in Project 2 Class Discussion 	Project 2 Due: Oct 25
Week 6: Primary Data and Survey Research		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
10/5 - 10/11	Module 6 Readings and Resources	Oct 6
	Module 6 Lectures (Supplementary)	Oct 6
	Quiz: Module 6 Readings	Oct 7
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and Resources 6 • Survey Research Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Oct 6 Final Post: Oct 8 Leader Summary: Oct 9
Week 7: Secondary Data		
Dates	Activity	Due Date

10/12 - 10/18	Module 7 Readings and Resources	Oct 13
	Module 7 Lectures (Supplementary)	Oct 13
	Quiz: Module 7 Readings	Oct 14
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and Resources 7 • Secondary Data Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Oct 13 Final Post: Oct 15 Leader Summary: Oct 16
Week 8: Causation		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
10/19 - 10/25	Module 8 Readings and Resources	Oct 20
	Module 8 Lecture (Supplementary)	Oct 20
	Quiz: Module 8 Readings	Oct 21
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and Resources 8 • Causation Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Oct 20 Final Post: Oct 22 Leader Summary: Oct 23
	Project 2 Survey Design Due	Project 2 Due: Oct 25
Week 9: Observational Studies		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
10/26 - 11/1	Module 9 Readings and Resources	Oct 27
	Module 9 Lectures (Supplementary)	Oct 27
	Quiz: Module 9 Readings	Oct 28
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and Resources 9 • Observational Studies Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Oct 27 Final Post: Oct 29 Leader Summary: Oct 30
	Project 3: Research Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read Project 3 Instructions • Post Questions in Project 3 Class Discussion 	Project 3 Due: Dec 11
Week 10: Regression Analysis of Causal Effects		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
11/2 - 11/8	Module 10 Readings and Resources	Nov 3

	Module 10 Lectures (Supplementary)	Nov 3
	Quiz: Module 10 Readings	Nov 4
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and Resources 10 • Regression Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Nov 3 Final Post: Nov 5 Leader Summary: Nov 6
Week 11: Randomized Experiments		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
11/9 - 11/15	Module 11 Readings and Resources	Nov 10
	Module 11 Lectures (Supplementary)	Nov 10
	Quiz: Module 11 Readings	Nov 11
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and Resources 11 • Randomized Experiments Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Nov 10 Final Post: Nov 12 Leader Summary: Nov 13
Week 12: Natural and Quasi Experiments		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
11/16 - 11/22	Module 12 Readings and Resources	Nov 17
	Module 12 Lectures (Supplementary)	Nov 17
	Quiz: Module 12 Readings	Nov 18
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and Resources 12 • Natural and Quasi Experiments Exercise (by discussion leaders) 	Initial Post: Nov 17 Final Post: Nov 19 Leader Summary: Nov 20
Week 13: 11/23 - 11/29 Thanksgiving Holiday		
Week 14: Research, Policy and Administration		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
11/30 - 12/6	Module 13 Readings and Resources	Dec 1
	Quiz: Module 13 Readings	Dec 2
	Class Discussions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings and Resources 13 	Initial Post: Dec 1 Final Post: Dec 3

	Extra Credit: CITI Training	Dec 11
Week 15: Wrap-up and Supplementary Resources		
Dates	Activity	Due Date
12/7 -12/11	Wrap-up and Supplementary Resources	N/A
	Project 3 Research Design Due	Project 3 Due: Dec 11