

Research Methods for Public Administration

POLS 6202,
Fall 2009
R 5:30 – 8:15, TLC 1114
Political Science and Planning
University of West Georgia

Dr. Sooho Lee
Office: 136 Pafford Building
Phone: 678-839-4991
Office Hours: MW 3:15 –5:00
or by appointment
Email: slee@westga.edu

Course Descriptions:

This course offers an introduction to the application of research methods and statistical techniques used to solve problems in public affairs settings. It focuses on practical skills for designing, conducting, and evaluating empirical research. This course provides detailed discussions on models, designs, validity & reliability, sampling, surveys, data collection & cleaning, measurements, univariate & multivariate analysis, regression analysis, and other advanced techniques. Students will also learn to use at least one statistical software package (SPSS).

Learning outcomes (ΣY_i):

Students will demonstrate they have developed an understanding of designing, conducting, and evaluating the basic statistical techniques. The major outcomes includes a full understanding of

- Y₁. scientific method, causality, and logic
- Y₂. quasi-experimental designs
- Y₂. the role of models and hypotheses in guiding research
- Y₃. surveys, data collection, sampling, and sampling error
- Y₄. ethical issues and human subjects
- Y₅. creating and analyzing an SPSS data set
- Y₆. designing and creating effective tables, charts, and diagrams for supporting your research reports
- Y₇. statistical variance, measures of significance, measures of associations
- Y₈. regression analysis
- Y₉. factor analysis

Required Texts:

O’Sullivan, E., G. Rassel, and M. Berner (2008) *Research Methods for Public Administrators*, 5th Ed. New York: Longman.

SPSS 15.0 for Windows [Student version] or a higher version

Recommended Texts:

There are additional readings from the below books. However, you are not required to buy these classic books.

Levitt, Steven and Stephen Dubner (2005) *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*. William Morrow

Babbie, Earl (2006) *The Practice of Social Research*, Wadsworth Publishing Company: Albany

Cook, Thomas and Donald Campbell (1979) *Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis Issues*

for *Field Settings*, Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston

Dillman, Don A. (1999). *Mail and Internet surveys: The tailored method, Second edition*. NY: John Wiley and Sons.

Yin, Robert K. (2002) *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*, Second Edition, Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA.

Fowler, Floyd J. (1993) *Survey Research Methods*, Second Edition, Sage: Thousand Oaks, CA

Wooldridge, Jeffrey M (2005) *Introductory Econometrics: A Modern Approach*. South-Western College Publishing.

King, Gary, K. Robert, and S. Verba (1994) *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research*. Princeton University Press: Princeton.

Requirements:

1. Exams (“E”)

There will be two exams: mid-term and final. The exams evaluate your comprehensive understanding of class discussions and statistical skills. Utilize all the notes and materials that we discussed in the class. However, you may not consult your exam questions with others. The mid-term and final exams account for **25%** and **30%**, respectively, of your final grade.

2. Homework assignments (“H”)

Almost every week you will have home works that help you review the class discussions. Please return the assignments in the beginning of the next class. Homework will require normally two or three long pages of answers. All the home work assignments will account for **20%** of your final grade.

3. Research proposal (“RP”)

For the research proposal, you should clearly define research question, research hypotheses, design, data collection methods and strategy. Topics can be from current issues of public administration, public management, public policy, or non-profit management. The topic and research question should be approved by the instructor by **September 2** (Submit the topic and question with short background description by email, about 200 words). A complete paper is **due Nov 19**. The research proposal accounts for **20%** of the final grade.

* Major component of the proposal:

- I. Introduction (about 2 pages)
 - Background description
 - Proposing research question
 - Significance of the study
- II. Literature review (about 4 pages)
 - Review relevant previous studies
 - Identify the important issues, factors, findings, etc..
 - Explain how the previous studies guide your research: hypotheses, data collection strategy, modeling, etc..

- III. Modeling and Research Hypotheses (about 2 page)
 - Based on the logic of deduction and induction, a testing model should be created and also at least one or several hypotheses should be presented clearly.
- IV. Data collection methods and strategy (about 5 pages)
 - Sampling
 - Survey, interview, or case study
 - Questionnaire
- V. Data analysis plan (about 1 page)
 - What kind of statistical method will be used to analyze the data? Why?
 - Provide a realistic plan
- VI. Research schedule and cost (about 1 page)
 - Research schedule and plan
 - Cost estimation
 - Also evaluate your manageability of the proposed research
- VII. References (about 1 page)

* The total number of pages should be at least 15 pages (double-spaced)

* Writing criteria and format

- (1) Cover title page: Title, your name, this cover page is not counted toward the total page number.
- (2) Margin should be 1 inch top, bottom, left, and right.
- (3) Use New Times Roman 12 font
- (4) Start your writing from the top line of the first page: Do not write your name, course name, and the instructor name again in the first page.
- (5) Do not make any bigger space between paragraphs.
- (6) Provide accurate citations in necessary places. The Chicago Manual of Style is recommended for citation and references (See the detailed guideline, http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html)
- (7) Page number should be placed in the bottom center of each page.
- (8) References should be the last page: At least 15 references are required. Among them, at least 10 references should be from academic publications (books and journals), not from a direct website source.

* **A note on plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the use of materials by other authors and content providers without the appropriate attribution. This is a serious violation of the University Honor Code. You must use the appropriate citations and reference if you use the work of others to inform your paper (see the Student Handbook for more details).

* Some topics from the previous classes:

Different academic performance of Hispanic children in terms of income and English proficiency.

Do mandatory study halls and supervision programs improve the overall academics of collegiate athletes?

Performance evaluation of the VA

Is the UWG Zero Tolerance Alcohol Policy effective?

Distribution of federally funded community development grants between small, medium, and large cities: Are large cities given more preference?

Testing tools to prepare SAT

Biased market information for student loan shoppers

How does the percept of being treated equal affect employees ' performance?

The causes and solutions of police burnout

Effect of psychology programs on collegiate student-athlete stress

Full time students vs. students with job: The impact of having job on students ' graduation

The role of nuclear weapons in the 21st century international system

Access to healthcare: Rural vs. urban difference in terms of income level

Local orientation and contribution of community college: The case of Georgia community colleges

4. Participation and attendance (“PA”)

Class attendance is mandatory. Participation and attendance will account for **5%** of the final grade. Each absence will deduct the total grade point by three percent. Any student missing more than three times will be dropped from the course for excessive absence. No make-up exam is normally allowed.

Your final grade = f (E, H, RP, PA)

A ≥ 90%, 80% ≤ B ≤ 89%, 70% ≤ C ≤ 79%, F ≤ 69%

You need help for basic statistics and math?

Stop by my office (136 Pafford) anytime. Throughout the semester, individual help is available for students struggling to solve mathematical and statistical problems. Please bring your problems to my office or send me email. This course may take more of your time than some other courses in the MPA program. However, your extra time and effort will greatly enhance your knowledge of scientific methods, statistics, SPSS, and some other analytical skills that are essential for your graduate works. You will be confident of fuzzy math later on! Keep up with the schedule.

Course Schedule

Date	Step	Topics	Readings	Research Paper
8/13	Foundation of research methods, Research question & hypothesis	Scientific research method Step-by-step research process Theory, model, hypothesis	Chap 1&2, King et al. Chap 1	Search your topic
8/20		Internal & external validity Designs for explanation Causality	Chap 3, King et al. Chap 2& 3 Cook & Campbell	Write your abstract (200 words)
8/27	Measurement and sampling	Measuring variables Scientific sampling	Chap 4&5	Topic is due (9/2) (Submit topic and a brief abstract)
9/3	Data collection	Survey, interview, case study	Chap 6 Dillman, Yin	Start literature review
9/10		Writing questionnaires Protection of human research subjects and other ethical issues	Chap 7&8 Fowler	Literature review
9/17		Secondary data	Chap 9& 10	Write the literature review
9/24	Midterm exam			Build a testing model and hypotheses; Population, sampling methods
10/1	Analyzing data	Introduction to SPSS Univariate analysis: mean, median, standard deviation, variance, normal distribution	Chap 11	Survey questionnaire Case study
10/8		Hypothesis testing I. Z-score, confidence interval	Chap 12	
10/22		Hypothesis testing II. Tests of statistical significance Type I and II error Small sample inference T-test	Chap 12	Data analysis methods, Research schedule and cost Reference
10/29		Measures of Association ANOVA, Chi-test, F-statistics	Chap 13	Review and revised the draft
11/5		Correlations Two-way ANOVA	Chap 14	
11/12		Regression analysis I. Linear relationship Least square prediction equation Effects of outliers Inference for the slope	Chap 14 Wooldridge Chap 1-4	
11/19 12/3		Regression analysis II. Multiple regression Interpretations of coefficients Meaning of ceteris paribus Multicollinearity	Chap 15	Proposal due in class (11/19)
12/9		Final Exam Due		