

Applied Research Methods and Statistics II

PMAP 8131

Spring 2009

Professor: Shena Ashley

Office Phone: 404-413-0139

Email: sashley@gsu.edu

Office Hours: Thursdays, 2:00-4:00pm, or by appointment

Office: Andrew Young School Building, 3rd Floor

Class Meetings: Thursdays 4:30-7:00

Class Location: Classroom South 210

Course Description

This course concerns the methods of social inquiry in the context of social science research. We will survey major research designs and research techniques that provide the core of contemporary empirical inquiry into social phenomena and discuss their relative strengths and weaknesses. Through this course, students will be equipped with tools for conducting “good” research and will also become critical consumers of empirical claims.

Course Objectives

Objective 1: Students understand the principle of multiple linear regression and logistic regression techniques and are able to interpret the coefficients on interval and dummy variables in a multivariate context

Objective 2: Students demonstrate facility in the development of research design and data collection strategies that are most appropriate to the planning and evaluation of social policy and interventions.

Objective 3: Students can critically evaluate the quality of research designs and empirical claims in scholarly publications and public media

Upon completion of this course:

- Students will be familiar with a range of experimental and quasi-experimental research design techniques
- Students will be able to perform multiple regression, logistic regression and time series analyses using SPSS software and interpret results
- Students will be able to think critically about the possibilities and limitations of social science research
- Students will be exposed to exemplary research studies

Course Requirements

- Each student must complete the assigned readings as scheduled and on time.
- Each student must actively participate in class discussions.
- Each student must complete the assignments and submit them on time.

Assignments (assignments will be described in greater detail in class)

Assignment I: Review of Empirical Claims in Newspaper Article (2 pages double-spaced max)

Assignment II: Critique of Research Article (2 pages double-spaced max)

Assignment III: Research Brief using multiple or logistic regression (5 pages double-spaced max)

Grade Weights

<i>Assignment I</i>	10%
<i>Assignment II</i>	10%
<i>Assignment III</i>	25%
<i>Exam I</i>	25%
<i>Exam II</i>	30%
<hr/> <i>TOTAL</i>	100%

Grade Calculations

The final grade will be calculated as follows:

Grade	Overall score
A	95.00-100.00
A-	90.00-94.99
B+	87.00-89.99
B	83.00-86.99
B-	80.00-82.99
C+	77.00-79.99
C	73.00-76.99
C-	70.00-72.99
D	60.00-69.99
F	<60.00

Students with Disabilities

If you have a condition that makes it difficult to complete the work described in this syllabus, please notify the Disabled Student services Office and the instructor within the first two weeks of class in order to develop alternative arrangements. All information and documentation of the disability will be confidential.

Plagiarism and Academic Honesty

Established rules covering plagiarism and academic honesty must be followed at all times. It is the student's responsibility to know the meaning of plagiarism and when it occurs. If you have questions about these rules as they apply to written assignments, consult the GSU Graduate Catalogue, section 1344 pages 53-56.

University, School, and Department policies require that I inform you that plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will result in a grade of "F" on the assignment and likely in the course as well. You should be aware that academic dishonesty may also result in your dismissal from the University.

Policy on Absences and Late Assignments

Attendance is strongly recommended. The quality of this class is contingent on the diversity of ideas and perspectives shared in class so please try to minimize absences. Absences can negatively impact your grade. Students are responsible for getting class notes from classmates when absent.

Please promptly turn in your assignments. You will lose a letter grade for every 24 hours that an assignment is late. This late policy includes Saturdays and Sundays.

There are no make-up exams

Course Schedule and Assignments

- 1/8/2009 Introduction to Social Inquiry
Workshop: Review of Constructing Causal Explanations
Reading: Meier, Brudney, Bohte Chapter 3
- 1/15/2009 Research in the Public Sphere: The Use and Misuse of Data
Readings:
Wheeler, Michael (1976). Lies, Damn Lies and Statistics Chp. 7
Shafer, Jack (2005). *Weasel Words Rip My Flesh*. Slate
Workshop: Simple Regression Review
- 1/22/2009 Introduction to Research Design
Readings:
O'Sullivan, Rassel and Berner Chapters 2 and 3
Workshop: Multiple Regression
(Assignment I due)
- 1/29/2009 Measurement, Validity and Reliability in Social Research
Readings:
Berk, Richard & Peter Rossi (1999) Thinking about Program Evaluation Chp. 2
**Ainley, John (2005) *Evaluating Literacy Advance in the Early Years of School* in Research Methods in the Social Sciences. Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin eds. Chp. 31
Workshop: Multiple Regression Application
- 2/05/2009 Sampling, survey research and questionnaire design
Readings:
Sampling and survey readings TBD

Tourangeau, Roger and Tom Smith (1996). *Asking Sensitive Questions: The Impact of Data Collection Mode, Question Format, and Question Context*. Public Opinion Quarterly 60(2):275-304.

Workshop: Introduction to Logistic Regression

(Plan for Assignment III due)

2/12/2009 Strategies for Impact Assessment: An Overview

Readings:

Rossi, Peter, Howard Freeman and Mark Lipsey (1999) Evaluation 6, Chp. 7

Workshop: Logistic Regression Application

2/19/2009 Developing Experimental designs

Readings:

Burtless, G (1995). The Case for Randomized Field Trials in Economic and Policy Research. Journal of Economic Perspectives 9(2) 85-110.

**Manning, Willard et al. (1987). Health Insurance and the Demand for Medical Care: Evidence from a Randomized Experiment. American Economic Review 77(3): 251-277

Workshop: Using Statistics to analyze data from experimental design

(Assignment II due)

2/26/2009 Exam (in class)

3/05/2009 Spring Break (No Class)

3/12/2009 Developing Quasi-experimental designs

Readings:

Shadish, William, Thomas Cook and Donald Campbell (2002). Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference. Chapter 6

**Ballart, X. and C. Riba (1995). *Impact of Legislation Required Moped and Motorbike Riders to Wear Helmets*. Evaluation and Program Planning 18:311-320.

Workshop: Introduction to Time Series Regression

3/19/2009 Qualitative Research Designs

Readings:

King, Gary, Robert Keohane, and Sidney Verba (1994). *Designing Social Inference in Qualitative Research*. Chp. 3

**Lauderdale, Diane (2006). *Birth Outcomes for Arabic-Named Women in California Before and After September 11*. *Demography* 43(1) 185-201.

Workshop: Coding Qualitative Data

3/26/2009 Case Study: Observation, Ethnography and Indirect Methods

Readings:

David Morgan (1996). *Focus Groups*

Dorsten, Linda and Lawrence Hotchkiss (2005). *Research Methods and Society* Chp.6

Workshop: Statistical techniques for Qualitative Research Analysis

(Assignment III draft due)

4/02/2009 Mixed-methods Approaches to Social Inquiry

Readings:

Greene, Jennifer, Holly Kreider and Ellen Mayer (2005) *Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Social Inquiry* in *Research Methods in the Social Sciences*. Bridget Somekh and Cathy Lewin eds. Chp. 33

**Li, S., Marquart, J.M. and Zercher, C. (2000). *Conceptual Issues and analytic strategies in mixed-method studies of preschool inclusion*. *Journal of Early Intervention* 23:116-32

Workshop: Qualitative data analysis application

4/09/2009 Values in Social Science Research

(Assignment III due)

Readings:

House, Ernest and Kenneth Howe (1999). *Values in Evaluation and Social Research* Chp. 2

Workshop: Review of Statistical Methods

4/16/2009 The Social Context and Ethical Issues in Evaluation and Research

Readings:

Bozeman, Barry and Paul Hirsch (2006) *Science Ethics as a Bureaucratic Problem: IRBS, Rules, and Failures of control*. Policy Sciences 38:269-291

Workshop: Review of Statistical Methods

4/23/2009 Exam

4/30/2009 Exam and Final Paper Review/Discussion

** Readings with two stars are exemplary, practical examples of the topic for that class. We will discuss them extensively.

This Syllabus is Subject to Change