Course Syllabus

This course builds on an earlier prerequisite course, PMAP 8121, which introduced students to measurement and statistics in public administration and policy. PMAP 8131 is intended to expand student’s understanding and skills in the application of social science research methods and statistical techniques to the kinds of policy, program, and managerial issues that are of concern to public and nonprofit managers, analysts, funding agencies, and other interested stakeholders. Specifically, this course will focus on:

- Problem Formulation
- Research Design
- Sampling Strategies
- Measurement & Survey Research
- Regression & Correlation Analysis
- Further Use of SPSS to Analyze Data

Textbooks and Assigned Readings

Two books will be used as resource materials for this course, including one that was also used for PMAP8121 this past fall semester. These books are:


Resources for using SPSS to conduct simple and multiple regression analyses will be discussed in the first class session. The book used in your section of PMAP8121 may be all that is required.

Classrooms

This class will meet in Room 210 Classroom South.

Office Hours

Regular office hours are from 1:30 to 3:30 PM on Mondays and Tuesdays in Room 358 of the Andrew Young SPS Building, but appointments can be made for other times. Dr. Poister’s telephone number is 404-413-0129 and his e-mail address is tpoister@gsu.edu.
Course Objectives for PMAP 8131

The major course objectives for this class include the following:

- Students will demonstrate understanding of principles of research design methods appropriate to public and nonprofit administration and policy.

- Students will be able to interpret regression coefficients on interval level and dummy independent variables as well as other statistics in multiple regression models.

- Students will demonstrate an ability to analyze problems and develop solutions using written, analytical or quantitative skills.

- Students will demonstrate graduate-level writing skills in policy-relevant research that requires interpretation of statistical data.

- Students will demonstrate an ability to effectively communicate verbally or through writing about public or nonprofit policy and management issues and problems.

SPSS Assignments

This course will require completion of four problem-solving assignments utilizing SPSS, each due two weeks after it is assigned in class. The first of these exercises will largely review statistical procedures covered in PMAP8121 and relate them to the topic of research design, while the second, third, and fourth exercises will utilize multiple regression models, all within the context of various research designs. These exercises will utilize the SPSS software package, with the necessary data sets available on the D2L/Brightspace page for this course.

Examination, Course Requirements, and Due Dates

There will be a midterm exam in this course scheduled for two weeks preceding the Spring Break. The grade weights and due dates of SPSS assignments are as follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Grade Weight</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 30</td>
<td>Responsible Conduct of Research</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 14</td>
<td>SPSS #1: Simple Program Analysis</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 6</td>
<td>Midterm Exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>SPSS #2: Cost Function Analysis</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>SPSS #3: Advanced Program Evaluation</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 28</td>
<td>SPSS #4: Final Assignment</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Course Grades**

Overall course grades will be determined according to the following criteria:

- 98-100: A+
- 90-97:  A
- 88-89:   B+
- 80-87:   B
- 78-79:  C+
- 70-77:  C
- 60-69:  D
- < 60:  F

Numerical grades will not necessarily be rounded in converting to letter grades.

**Training on the Responsible Conduct of Research**

The final 5% of the course grade is based on completion of the CITI training program on the responsible conduct of research, which is required to graduate from the MPA and MPP programs. This fulfills a federal mandate that requires all graduate students at research universities to be trained in the responsible conduct of research. In addition to counting for 5% of your course grade, this training shows up on your academic evaluation toward degree completion. Click on the following link to access the instructions for logging into this training program and selecting the appropriate courses.

![https://www.citiprogram.org](https://www.citiprogram.org)

As per these instructions, you must complete two CITI training courses, Group 2 – Social Behavioral, and Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research Course 1 – Basic Course, each of which consist of several modules. You should plan to spend 4-7 hours to complete this online responsible conduct of research training. Note, however, it does not have to be completed in one sitting. You will be able to save your completed modules and continue at your own pace and discretion. Upon completion of these courses, you need to print the Completion Report for each course to a PDF document and submit both reports to the AYSPS through GSU’s online submission form:

1. [https://aysps.wufoo.com/forms/online-citi-training-submission-form/](https://aysps.wufoo.com/forms/online-citi-training-submission-form/)

If you have any questions about this training or submission process, contact Michelle Lacoss, Graduate Advisor in the AYSPS Office of Academic Assistance at mlacoss@gsu.edu.

**Attendance Policy**

Given the technical nature of this course, attendance at every class meeting is particularly important. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain complete information on that class from another student in the course. The midterm exam must be taken on the evening it is scheduled. If you must miss the exam due to a personal, family, or work related crisis, notify
the instructor as soon as possible. Hard copies of the four SPSS assignments must all be submitted in class on the due dates given above, and electronic copies in the form of PDFs must be uploaded to the dropbox on the D2/Brightspace page for the course as well. Again, if you are unable to submit any of these assignments when they are due to extreme emergencies, notify the instructor as soon as possible.

**Academic Honesty**

Georgia State University assumes as a basic standard of academic honesty that students be honest in all aspects of the participation in course and that they submit for credit only the products of their own efforts. Violations of academic honesty included plagiarism, cheating on exams, unauthorized collaboration on assignments, submission of work for credit for more than one course, and falsification, misrepresentation, or fabrication of information used in assignments. (Check section 409 of the Faculty Handbook for the policy on academic honesty and definitions and examples of violations. Go to [http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/fhb.html](http://www2.gsu.edu/~wwwfhb/fhb.html).)

Students in this class are encouraged to form informal study groups for the purpose of reviewing class notes, discussing assigned readings, studying for the midterm exam, and making SPSS runs on data sets used in the four assigned SPSS exercises. However, the products submitted for these assignments must be solely your own work.

Any instance of academic honesty in this course at a minimum will result in a grade of F for that particular course requirement in which the violation is committed. **If you are not sure you understand exactly what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or other forms of academic dishonesty check with the instructor because you are responsible for adhering to this policy.**

**Accommodation for Disabilities**

Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which accommodation is sought.

**Course Evaluation**

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State University. Upon completing this course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation.

**Note:** This syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may become necessary as the semester progresses.
Class Schedule

Monday, January 9  
Introduction to Research Methods
O'Sullivan et al: Chapter 1, “Beginning a Research Project”
Chapter 2, “Designs for Description”

Monday, January 16  
No Class – Martin Luther King Day

Monday, January 23  
Nonexperimental Designs & Threats to Validity

Monday, January 30  
Principles of Experimental Design

*** Responsible Conduct of Research CITI training to be Completed by this Date.

Monday, February 6  
Quasi-Experimental Designs

Monday, February 13  
Sampling Strategies
O’Sullivan et al: Chapter 5: “Sampling”

SPSS #1 Due: Quality Teams Evaluation

Monday, February 20  
Measurement & Survey Research Methods
O’Sullivan et al: Chapter 4: “Measuring Variables”
Chapter 6: “Contacting and Talking to Subjects.”
Chapter 7: “Collecting Data with Questions and Questionnaires.”
Monday, February 27  Review: Research Design & Statistics

Monday, March 6  Midterm Exam

Monday, March 13  No Class – Spring Break

Monday, March 20  Review of Simple Regression Analysis

Meier, Brudney, and Bohte, Chapter 17: “Introduction to Regression Analysis”
Chapter 18: “The Assumptions of Linear Regression”

Monday, March 27  Introduction to Multiple Regression Analysis

Meier, Brudney, and Bohte, Chapter 20: “Multiple Regression”
O’Sullivan et al.  Chapter 14: “Regression Analysis …” pp. 452-462

Monday, April 3  Multiple Regression Applications Continued

Meier, Brudney, and Bohte, Chapter 21: “Regression Output & Data Management”

SPSS Exercise #2 Due: A Cost Function Analysis

Monday, April 10  Multiple Regression Applications Continued

Monday, April 17  Multiple Regression Applications Continued

Monday, April 24  Multiple Regression Applications Continued

SPSS Exercise #3 Due: An Advanced Program Evaluation

Friday, April 28

SPSS Exercise #4 Due: Final Assignment