POLITICAL SCIENCE 514:
RESEARCH METHODS IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

Spring 2013
Th 5:05-7:55
Baker Center 205

David J. Houston
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M 1:30-3:30; R 2:00-4:00
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Course Description

Basic assumptions and techniques of research in public administration; measurement, analysis, and reporting of data.

Course Requirements

The grade that a student earns will be based on his/her performance on in-class exams, homework assignments, a written project, and class participation. The participation portion of a student's grade will be based on contributions to class discussions and in-class activities. The breakdown of a student's grade for the semester is given below.

- Midterm exam: 30%
- Final exam: 30%
- Homework assignments: 10%
- Research design project: 25%
- Class Participation: 5%

Students with Disability

Students who have a disability that may require individualized accommodations should inform me of these needs at the beginning of the semester. I will make every effort to accommodate your needs. Also, please take advantage of support provided by the University.
**Required Texts**


Additional readings will be placed on the class Online@UT site.

**Changes to Course Requirements and Schedule**

Any changes to course assignments, readings, or schedule will be announced in class.

**Schedule of Topics**

Course Introduction (1/10)

**Topic #1: Foundations of Social Research** (1/17)

Issues:
- Research process
- Research questions
- Types of evaluation studies
- Ethics

Required Readings:
- OBR, Ch. #1 & 8.
- Human Subjects/IRB at UTK guide for faculty, students, and staff:
  - [http://research.utk.edu/forms_docs/irb-handbook.pdf](http://research.utk.edu/forms_docs/irb-handbook.pdf) (skim)
  - [http://research.utk.edu/humansubjects/](http://research.utk.edu/humansubjects/) (all human subjects information)

**Topic #2: Measurement Issues** (1/24)

Issues:
- Program logic model
- Levels of measurement
- Measurement strategy
- Assessing measures
Required Readings:

- ORB, Ch. #4.
- Program Development and Evaluation – University of Wisconsin Extension Logic Model Templates http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/evaluation/evallogicmodelworksheets.html
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**Topic #3: Causality and Experimentation (1/31)**

Issues:
- Designs for description
- Criteria of causality
- Internal and external validity
- Experimental designs

Required Readings:
- ORB, Ch. #2 & 3 (pp. 56-77).

**Topic #4: Quasi- and Non-Experimental Designs (2/7, 14)**

Issues:
- Quasi-experimental designs
- Non-experimental designs

Required readings:
- ORB, Ch. #3 (pp. 77-100)

**Midterm Exam (2/21)**

**III. EXECUTING A RESEARCH PROJECT**

**Topic #5: Collecting Data (2/21, 28)**

Issues:
- Surveys (sampling, questionnaire construction, mode)
- Focus Groups
- Interviews
- Secondary sources

Required Readings:
- ORB, Ch. #5-7 & 9.
Topic #6: Analyzing data—Description (3/7)
Issues:
• Index construction
• Frequency distributions
• Graphs
• Central tendency and dispersion
Required Readings:
• ORB, Ch. 10-11.

Topic #7: Analyzing Data—Bivariate Hypothesis Testing (3/14, 21)
Issues:
• Hypotheses
• Crosstabs and Chi-Square
• Difference between means
• ANOVA
• Correlation and bivariate regression
Readings:
• ORB, Ch. #12-13 & 14 (pp. 430-438).

No Class—Spring Break (3/27)

Topic #8: Analyzing Data—Multivariate Hypothesis Testing (4/4, 18)
Issues:
• OLS regression
• Violation of assumptions
Required Readings:
• ORB, Ch. #14 (pp. 439-466).

No Class—IRSPM Conference (4/10)

Topic #9: Communicating Results (4/25)
Issues:
• Writing reports
Required Readings:
• ORB, Ch. #15.

Final Exam (5/2, 7:15-9:15)