PPA 696: Research Methods in Public Administration
Fall 2014
Tuesday: 7:00PM – 9:45PM
Location: SPA-112
Instructor: Dr. Adam M. Butz
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Office Location: SSPA-234
Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00 – 4:00PM or by appointment

Course Description:
This is a required course in the MPA program and covers the application of relevant research techniques in public sector management and program evaluation. The course is centered around the tools and techniques of research and their application in the development of a formal research design and program evaluation applications. Topics covered in this course include fundamentals of research design, program evaluation and performance measurement, levels of measurement and sampling techniques, hypothesis construction and testing, interviews and survey research, statistical techniques and analysis, and the presentation of research results and policy implications. This course does involve substantial review and application of quantitative analytical techniques. While there is no assumption of prior statistical training, students should be able to perform basic mathematical and computer operations.

Course Learning Objectives:
This course is designed to emphasize several of the learning objectives of the CSULB MPA Program. By the conclusion of the course, students should be able to do the following:
1. Identify and conceptualize the problems and challenges inherent with public programs.
2. Correctly and comprehensively assess the environment and stakeholders that surround a public program.
3. Develop the performance and effectiveness metrics necessary for comprehensive program evaluation.
4. Select an appropriate methodology to analyze the effectiveness of a public program.
5. Apply the proper methodology to the program evaluation and generate valid, communicable evaluation findings that are capable of effecting programmatic change.
Course Learning Objectives (cont.):
Upon completion of the course, students should be able to:

6. Understand the major theoretical and philosophical approaches to research in public administration, including program evaluation and policy research.
7. Become familiar with the major techniques in research in public policy and administration and become able to apply them.
8. Acquire the ability to select the proper skills for application to practical research, and to identify strategies for dealing with problems, obstacles, and ethical concerns.
9. Learn how to discriminate among and interpret commonly used statistics, and to select the appropriate statistical tests for a given research problem.
10. Develop the ability to make written and oral presentations of research results.

Course Expectations:
- **Preparation** - Assigned readings should be completed before the class period in which they are assigned. The more prepared you are, the better able you are to develop connections between the readings and the lecture. Statistics is like learning a language and takes substantial effort and repetition.
- **Respect** - Many of you will have strong opinions about the topics we will be discussing in this course, and I hope this enthusiasm will transform into active participation in the class. However, it goes without saying that it is important to respect your fellow classmates’ positions and to express a willingness to be open to opposing viewpoints. Strive to be fair-minded in evaluating all points of view.
- **Active Participant** - The expectation in a graduate seminar is that you come to lecture to learn and participate actively in class discussions. If you use your laptop during class to take notes (which I think is great), please do not use this time to chat online or browse the internet. If you do not want to pay attention, you do not need to come. However, there is a strong correlation between attendance and final grade.
- **Punctuality** - This means to be on time for lecture as well as turning in your assignments and taking examinations. If you need to arrive late or leave early, please let me know ahead of time.
- **Electronic Devices** - Please turn off your cell phone prior to the start of class, including any texting features.

Required Materials:
Course Requirements:
- Pre-Instructional Assignment: Program Background Paper (15% of grade)
- Literature Review Assignment (15% of grade)
- Post-Instructional Assignment: Evaluation Design Project (30% of grade)
- Project Presentation (5% of grade)
- Final Examination (25% of grade)
- Attendance, Preparation and Participation (10% of grade)

Grading Policy:
Each assignment and final grades will be assessed on a standard grading scale:
A= 100-90%, B= 89-80%, C= 79-70%, D= 69%-60%, E= 59% and below.

Examinations and Assignments:

Pre-Instructional Assignment: Program Background Paper (15% of final grade)
[Background, Problem Statement, Program Description and Stakeholders] – Students are required to develop a 5-7 page paper (Times New Roman; 12pt font; double-spaced). The paper can be no more than 8 pages in length (not counting cover page and references). Remember the value of parsimony or efficiency in writing, saying the most with the least. The paper must contain the following information:
- Describe the program to be evaluated. This description should include the program’s purpose, objectives, core activities and budget. What societal problems or issues are seeking to be solved?
- Description of the public agency or nonprofit organizational body responsible for administration of the program.
- Description of the various program stakeholders and external environment(s) in which program implementation takes place.
- Description of the salient issues surrounding the adoption of evaluation processes for the program, including a discussion of performance measurement. How can we conceptualize and measure program effectiveness or performance?

Literature Review Assignment (15% of final grade) - Students will be required to develop a summary of their literature review with a focus on previous evaluations of similar programs. The purpose of the literature review is to discuss how similar public programs have been (successfully or unsuccessfully) evaluated in the past, and to justify your selection of techniques to be applied in the analysis sections of your research design project. Discuss the evaluation methods utilized in previous studies, summarize the core findings, and talk about how the literature can inform your upcoming research design project. This assignment will be written in a modified annotated bibliography style, containing a minimum of eight (8) references – at least three (3) of which must be from the academic literature. You should provide at least a half-page summary review for each of your 8 sources. The assignment should be around 6-7 pages total and no more than 8 pages total (APA 6th Edition; Times New Roman; 12 pt. font; double spaced).
Post-Instructional Assignment: Evaluation Design Project (30% of final grade) –
You will also be responsible for an original evaluation design or policy research design of approximately 20 pages (APA 6th Edition Formatting; Times New Roman; 12pt font; double-spaced). The paper can be no more than 25 pages (not including title page, abstract, and references). This assignment will allow you to explore the dynamics of public policy adoption or effectiveness of a public program administration in more depth than is otherwise possible. The project will also help you hone your research skills as you move from a passive consumer to active producer of knowledge. Try to think of the evaluation project not as just another written assignment, but as an opportunity to make the course more relevant to your policy and administrative interests. The project will be very similar to a typical academic journal article or professional program evaluation report and should consist of core components, including but not limited to:

- Title Page
- Executive Summary or Abstract
- Introduction/Statement of The Research Question
- Program Background and Literature Review
- Research Hypothesis and Null Hypothesis
- Research Design and Strategy
- Threats to Internal and External Validity
- Data Collection Methodology
- Data Analysis and Statistical Tests
- Conclusions and Potential Policy Implications
- References

Project Presentation (5% of final grade) - Students are required to develop a 5-10 minute presentation of their program evaluation design project. The presentation should be no more than 10 minutes in length. The presentation should include but not limited to:

- Brief description of the program or policy
- Research design selected and justification of the chosen design
- Strengths and limitations of the chosen design
- Selected data collection strategy and statistical techniques
- Potential implications for policymakers and program administrators

Final Examination (25% of final grade) – A final examination will be administered in this course. You will be assessed on your knowledge of the material presented in the readings and lecture. Examinations will consist of a mix of identification, short answer and statistical evaluation problems. More details will be discussed in class.

Attendance, Preparation and Participation (10% of final grade) - Attendance is mandatory and being a graduate seminar class participation is necessary to have an enjoyable, productive and memorable class. All classes will include student discussion to some degree, thus you are expected to come to class prepared and able to make meaningful and insightful contributions to the class. Unexcused absences will negatively affect your participation grade. After one (1) unexcused absence, you will be docked five (5) points for every additional unexcused absence.
Attendance Policy:
Students must have a valid reason to miss a class. When any of the following reasons directly conflict with class meeting times, students are responsible for informing faculty members of the reason for the absence and for arranging to make up missed class work insofar as this is possible. As per the CSULB policy, excused absences include:

1. Illness or injury to the student
2. Death, injury, or serious illness of an immediate family member or the like
3. Religious reasons (California Education Code section 89320)
4. Jury duty or government obligation
5. University sanctioned or approved activities (examples include: artistic performances, forensics presentations, participation in research conferences, intercollegiate athletic activities, student government, required class field trips, etc.)
6. Work obligations such as travel, meetings, or unanticipated tasks required by your supervisor.

Faculty members are not obligated to consider other absences as excused, but may choose to at their discretion. (http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/grad_undergrad/senate/documents/policy/2001/01/)

Note on APA Style:
In the MPA program at CSULB, students should learn how to use the APA (American Psychological Association) 6th edition style for formatting references. Information on the APA Manual of Style 6th edition is available on the CSULB Library website (http://www.csulb.edu/library/eref/vref/style.html#APA) and/or can be purchased from any online bookseller.

- You can find additional information about APA formatting from the Purdue University Online Writing Lab website found at: (https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/). You will be using this same APA system for all written work in all your courses in the MPA program at CSULB, so it is important to learn it correctly early on.
- Additionally, there are two very useful YouTube videos that clearly explain APA 6th edition formatting: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dGUfeM91mW8) and (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pbUoNa5tyY)

Late Assignments:
A 10% (10 point) penalty will be assessed for assignments immediately upon lateness and for every 24-hours the paper remains late.

Academic Dishonesty:
Students should familiarize themselves with the University’s policy on academic dishonesty and abide by it (http://www.csulb.edu/divisions/aa/grad_undergrad/senate/documents/policy/2008/02/). Remember to cite all references properly and create original work on all assignments. Cheating and plagiarism are violations of University Policy and may result in a grade of “F” for the course. If in doubt, ask or cite!
Tentative Course Schedule:

**Week 1 (August 26): Course Introduction and Overview**
*Activities and Assignments:*
Course Introductions and Syllabus Review

**Week 2 (September 2): Foundations of Public Administration Research**
*Activities and Assignments:*
Lecture and Discussion

*Assigned Readings:*
ORB – Chapter 1
BeachBoard – Leddy and Ormrod, “What is Research?”

*Suggested Reading:*
Oliver, “The Incomplete Guide to the Art of Discovery”

**Week 3 (September 9): Research Design I: An Overview**
*Activities and Assignments:*
Lecture and Discussion
Paper Topics Due (email professor by class time)

*Assigned Readings:*
ORB – Chapters 2 & 3

**Week 4 (September 16): Research Design II: Program Evaluation and Performance Measurement**
*Activities and Assignments:*
Lecture and Discussion

*Assigned Readings:*
Berman and Wang – Chapters 2, 4, & 9
BeachBoard – Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, “An Overview of Program Evaluation”
BeachBoard – Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman, “Measuring and Monitoring Program Outcomes”

*Suggested Reading:*
BeachBoard – Jackson, William, and Elliot, “Program Evaluation Overview”

**Week 5 (September 23): Measurement and Sampling Techniques**
*Activities and Assignments:*
Lecture and Discussion

*Assigned Readings:*
ORB – Chapters 4, 5, & 10
Berman & Wang – Chapter 3 (skim)
Week 6 (September 30): Data Collection – Interviews, Surveys, Secondary Data Sources, and Ethical Issues

*Activities and Assignments:*
Lecture and Discussion

*Assigned Readings:*
ORB – Chapters 6-9
Berman & Wang – Chapter 5

Week 7 (October 7): Special Topics in Public Administration Research - Cost/Benefit and Cost/Effectiveness Analysis

*Activities and Assignments:*
Program Background Paper Due by Class Time – 7:00PM, Tuesday, October 7
Dr. Butz Cost/Benefit Analysis Presentation

*Assigned Readings:*

*Suggested Readings:*
BeachBoard – Roberts, “Discount Rates: A Boring Thing You Should Know About”
BeachBoard – Heinzerling and Ackerman, “Pricing the Priceless: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Environmental Protection”

Week 8 (Tuesday, October 14): Descriptive Statistics - Central Tendency and Variability

*Activities and Assignments:*
Meet in Computer Lab – College of Business Administration (CBA) Room 240
  - Berman & Wang Workbook – SPSS evaluation exercises Chapters 1, 6, and 7
Lecture and Discussion

*Assigned Readings:*
ORB – Chapter 11
Berman & Wang – Chapters 6 & 7

Week 9 (Tuesday, October 21): No Class – Professor out of town

Week 10 (October 28): Inferential Statistics: Hypothesis Testing, Chi-Square Statistic and Additional Measures of Association

*Activities and Assignments:*
Lecture and Discussion
Literature Review Assignment Due by Class Time – 7:00PM, Tuesday, October 28

*Assigned Readings:*
ORB – Chapter 12
Berman & Wang – Chapters 10 & 11
Week 11 (November 4): Difference-of-Means Testing
Activities and Assignments:
Meet in Computer Lab – College of Business Administration (CBA) Room 240
  • Berman & Wang Workbook – SPSS evaluation exercises Chapters 10 – 12
Lecture and Discussion

Assigned Readings:
Berman & Wang - Chapter 12

Week 12 (November 11): NO CLASS – Veterans Day

Week 13 (November 18): Correlation and Regression Analysis
Activities and Assignments:
Lecture and Discussion
Rough Draft of Research Design Project Due by Midnight (optional submission)

Assigned Readings:
ORB – Chapter 14
Berman & Wang – Chapters 14 & 15

Week 14 (November 25): Logistic Regression and Overview of Additional Statistical Techniques – Time Series and Factor Analysis
Activities and Assignments:
Meet in Computer Lab – College of Business Administration (CBA) Room 240
  • Berman & Wang Workbook – SPSS evaluation exercises Chapters 14 – 16
Lecture and Discussion

Assigned Readings:
Berman & Wang – Chapters 16 – 18 (skim Ch. 18)

Week 15 (December 2): Research Presentations I
Activities and Assignments:
Attendance is required and participatory discussion with presenters is expected

Week 16 (December 9): Research Presentations II
Activities and Assignments:
Attendance is required and participatory discussion with presenters is expected
Final Examination Review

Final Examination (December 16, 7:15pm – 9:15pm)
Research Design Project Due by Midnight – Tuesday, December 16

Disclaimer:
The instructor of this course reserves the right to alter the contents, requirements, grading and/or scheduling of this course as he sees fit in order to best fulfill the objectives of the course. Any changes to the syllabus will be announced in class. It is your responsibility to be in class to hear of any changes.