Research Methods in Policy, Health, and Administration
10:775:395:01 & 10:775:395:02
Fall 2018

Class meetings:
Wednesdays: 9:50-12:50 (All Sections), Rutgers Academic Building, Room 1170
Mondays: Rutgers Academic Building Computer Lab 2, College Avenue Campus
9:50-11:10 (Section 1)
11:30-12:50 (Section 2)

PROFESSOR MICHAEL LAHR:
Email (best way to reach me): lahr@rutgers.edu
Voice mail: (848) 932-2372
Office hours: by appointment
M, W 1:30-3:30 pm 33 Livingston Avenue (“Civic Square”) Room 162
Teaching assistant: Maia de la Calle
maia.delacalle@rutgers.edu
Office hours: Rutgers Academic Building Computer Lab Tuesdays 1:30-3:30

Course Description (catalog)
Application of research concepts and skills applied to public health, public policy, and urban planning. Includes development of original and online data sources, coding, appropriate selection of statistical methods for analysis, and professional presentation of results.

Learning goals

1) To provide an understanding of the research process applied to current issues in public health, policy, and health administration, from conceptualization of a research question to data analysis, identification of pertinent information from other sources, and creation of a thorough, clear, well-organized research report.

2) To introduce commonly used software packages used in social science research. The emphasis will be on acquisition of computing proficiency within the broader framework of computer concepts and an understanding of how those skills can be applied to a wide range of tasks.

3) To encourage development of self-teaching skills related to computer use, to help you become prepared to keep pace with rapidly changing computer technology and software in future educational and career settings.

Grading
Individual homework assignments as marked on syllabus Total = 50%
Midterm exam 20%
Final paper 20%
Course engagement and class/lab participation 10%
More than 3 lecture or lab absences will result in a grade penalty on your engagement and participation grade.

Extra credit will be offered on some assignments as specified in the assignment instructions. Extra credit will **not** be offered after completion of assignments or in response to individual student requests.

**Required course materials**

  - **NOTES:**
    - Copies of the text are on reserve at Alexander Library.
    - Previous editions are fine; just check the chapter title and section names to make sure you read about the correct topic for each lecture.
    - An e-book version can be purchased or rented for the semester at https://www.vitalsource.com/products/making-sense-of-the-social-world-daniel-f-chambliss- v9781483380636 or a paperback can be rented on amazon.com for about $35.
  - USB stick (aka a flash drive or thumb drive).
  - Materials on the course Sakai site:
    - Additional readings as listed below
    - URLs for assigned online tutorials and resources
    - Data sets for the course research project; you **must** use one of the provided data sets.
  - SPSS is available in the computer labs and on Rutgers Scarlet apps.

**Course procedures and Classroom atmosphere**

1. Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him/her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact Maia or me as soon as possible.

2. All readings should be completed before the class date shown on the syllabus, so we can discuss them in class. At this point in your college career, you must be able to understand the material without teaching assistance. So, in class, I might NOT review assigned readings in full as you should already know it from reading it. Rather, I will guide in the synthesis of it with other assigned material or information from your experience. Naturally, I will be happy to answer any questions in class that will help you to clarify your understanding of the readings.

3. Due dates of assignments are listed on the syllabus below and on the course Sakai site. Unless otherwise specified, assignments are to be turned in on the course Sakai site by the date and time specified on that site. Late assignments will not be accepted. Alternative arrangements can be made if you confer with me sufficiently in advance of a due date. This is even the case if you have a religious or other obligation. In the case of a family or other emergency, inform your academic dean and gain an official excuse in addition to informing me. I cannot grant emergency excuse.
4. Rutgers University encourages the free exchange of ideas in a safe, supportive, and productive classroom environment. To facilitate such an environment, students and faculty must act with mutual respect and common courtesy. Thus, behavior that distracts students and faculty is not acceptable. Courteous and lawful expression of disagreement with the ideas of the instructor or fellow students is, of course, permitted. To facilitate this process and your learning, we will adhere to some basic rules:

- Class will start and end on time. Again we know emergencies do arise. Still, timely arrivals and departures are expected behavioral norms.
- Intolerable in-class behavior includes discourteous remarks, cell phone use, surfing the internet, checking email, text messaging, listening to music, reading material not designed for the course, and leaving early without permission. If a student engages in such disruptive behavior, following the University Code of Student Conduct, I may direct that student to leave class for the remainder of the class period. Serious verbal assaults, harassment, or defamation of the instructor or other students can lead to serious university disciplinary proceedings. The University Code of Student Conduct is available at http://studentconduct.rutgers.edu/disciplinary-processes/university-code-of-student-conduct/.

5. As you will be writing a good deal during the duration of this course, I feel compelled to remind you of the principles of academic integrity. They are listed on the following URL: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-at-rutgers/

Rutgers University’s sanctions for violation can get quite severe. They are listed here: http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/academic-integrity-policy/levels-of-violations-and-sanctions/

We use Turnitin software to check for liberal plagiarism. If you complete your assignments sufficiently early, you can see Turnitin results and, subsequently adjust your work as needed.

Communication policy

- When you email me with questions, please be sure the subject line states “Research Methods.”
- Either Maia or I tend to respond fairly quickly, almost assuredly within 12 hours. Still, plan to e-mail at least 24 hours before a deadline if it is for a homework or paper. Remember there are others in this class, and emergencies and other life events can intervene even for us instructors. So, while we are very likely to respond quickly, we cannot guarantee that notes sent to us within 24 hours of a due date will be answered.

Attendance and Cancellation of Classes

In accordance with Rutgers University regulations, attendance is expected at all regularly scheduled meetings of a course. I am able to set policies for a maximum set of absences. Please refer to the link below for more specific information: http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/degree-requirements/policies/attendance-and-cancellation-of-classes. More than three (3) lecture absences will result in a grade penalty on your engagement and participation grade. You will get a mid-term grade warning if you have already accumulated two absences at that juncture.

Participation in University-sponsored intercollegiate athletics is among the grounds recognized for excusing student absences from class meetings and exams pursuant to University Regulation 10.2.7. Student athletes who must be absent in conjunction with this participation are to be excused from class without penalty. All students, including student
athletes, are responsible for the timely notification of instructors regarding any expected absences resulting from any University-sponsored events, including intercollegiate athletics. They are also responsible for making up the missed work and/or exams according to an appropriate, agreed-upon schedule.

**Words to the Wise**

1. Come to class prepared! Assigned readings are to be completed **PRIOR** to the lecture for which they are listed. Do not wait until after I have lectured to read the assigned material. You and others will suffer from your lack of participation in class.

2. If you are having problems with the class material or do not understand what I am saying, please seek help as soon as possible. Don’t wait until it is too late. Come to your individual meeting prepared. Be sure you have reviewed the presentation material, read the text, attempted to complete exercises at the end of chapters in the text, completed your home works, read over comments on your graded homework assignments. If your plans change and you can’t make the appointment, please notify Maia or me, depending on who you are to meet, as soon as possible before the meeting. We both love to meet with students one-on-one. But we don’t like to be stood up, especially when we could be using our time more productively doing something else in another location. Timeliness is next to godliness.

3. If you missed any class or portion of one, get notes from classmates. Neither I nor Maia has (and, hence, will give) a condensed version of lectures or labs that you have missed.

4. Readings are **not** substitutes for the lectures nor are the lectures a substitute for the readings. Not all of the material in the lectures appears in the readings, nor is all the material in the readings covered in the lectures. You are responsible for knowing and understanding the material in the texts and in the lectures, so both will appear on exams and will required for turning in quality assignments. Class attendance is a necessary (though not sufficient) factor in performing well in the course.

5. Make it a habit to read a national newspaper daily to practice applying concepts we've learned to pertinent news stories. Articles about social and health policy are often found in the front section (daily) and the Science section (Tuesdays) of the *New York Times*. Bring up any “latest happenings” in class if you think they pertain to class material covered that day.

**Policy on Acceptable Formats for Electronically Submitted Assignments**

Due to ongoing issues with electronic submission of materials in varied format, the Bloustein School has issued the following policy about acceptable formats:

Students are responsible for assuring that all electronic submissions are readable in common formats regularly used by Rutgers University. Most frequently, these common formats are Adobe Acrobat’s PDF and Microsoft's Word and Excel.” *(For this course, you will also be submitting SPSS files, as will be explained in the instructions for selected homework assignments.)* Apple’s word processing and spreadsheet programs, Pages and Numbers, are **not** formats regularly used by the University; as such, documents created by Pages or Numbers are **not** acceptable for electronic submission. In all electronic submissions of course assignments, the **responsibility is with the student** to assure that the document or other electronic file opens and is readable as intended on commonly available operating systems and formats. Electronic submissions that fail to open (or open but display unreadable characters), and cannot be timely corrected under ordinary circumstances, are subject to a grade of **F** due to nonsubmission. If you work on an Apple computer or other device using
software other than MS Word, MS Excel, or SPSS run on Windows operating systems, please convert them to one of those programs, or create pdf versions of documents required for homework, exams, final papers, or in-class activities before submitting them.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings and homework assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>CLASSROOM</td>
<td>Introduction to social research. Overview of course research project.</td>
<td>• C&amp;S, Ch. 1 – Science, Society, and Social Research</td>
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<td>9/10</td>
<td>LAB</td>
<td>Lab overview</td>
<td>Introduction to Sakai site. <strong>Homework #1</strong>: CITI online Human Subjects Certification. <strong>Submit pdf of certificate to Sakai by 5 pm, Mon. September 17 (5%).</strong></td>
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<td>9/12</td>
<td>CLASSROOM</td>
<td>What is a research question? Formulating a hypothesis. Introduction to data sets for course research project.</td>
<td>• C&amp;S, Ch. 2 – The Process and Problems of Social Research</td>
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<td>• Sakai Resources/Data sets/Health Behavior in School-aged Children (HBSC)</td>
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<td>• School-level data documentation</td>
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<td>• Student-level data documentation</td>
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<td>9/17</td>
<td>LAB</td>
<td>Ethical issues in human subjects’ research.</td>
<td><strong>Homework #2</strong>: Research hypothesis, variables, and levels of measurement. <strong>Due 9 PM, Wed. Sept 26 (5%).</strong></td>
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<td>9/19</td>
<td>CLASSROOM</td>
<td>Conceptualizing a research question &amp; literature search. Academic integrity presentation.</td>
<td>• C&amp;S, Ch. 3 – Ethics in Research. Centers for Disease Control, U.S. Public Health Service Syphilis Study at Tuskegee.</td>
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<td>• Tuskegee Timeline. Available online at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/timeline.htm</a> or Sakai site under Resources/Readings/Ethics.</td>
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<td>• Research Implications. Available online at <a href="http://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/aftter.htm">http://www.cdc.gov/tuskegee/aftter.htm</a> or Sakai site under Resources/Readings/Ethics.</td>
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<td>9/24</td>
<td>LAB</td>
<td>Coding and codebooks; Intro to SPSS – datasets and variables</td>
<td>• Sakai/Resources/SPSS Tutorials.</td>
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<td>• Appendix C – How to Use SPSS</td>
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<td>• Introduction to SPSS datasets and variables</td>
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<td>• Writing a hypothesis</td>
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<td>9/26</td>
<td>CLASSROOM</td>
<td>Levels of measurement</td>
<td>• C&amp;S, Ch. 4 – Conceptualization and Measurement. pp. 59-75</td>
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| 10/1 | LAB | Internet resources: What is a reliable research source? On-line literature searches. | C&S, Appendix A – Finding Information

**Homework #3:** Literature review assignment. Due 9 am Mon. Oct. 15 (15%). |
| 10/3 | CLASSROOM | Reliability and validity. | C&S, Ch. 4 – Conceptualization and Measurement, pp. 75-80.

| 10/8 | LAB | Citing published sources and formatting the reference list | Sakai Resources/How to Cite Published Documents:

- APA style guide, sections on formatting and style, in-text citations and reference list, basic rules.
- Citing electronic documents |
| 10/10 | CLASSROOM | Sampling and representativeness. | C&S, Ch. 5 – Sampling and Generalizability |
| 10/15 | LAB | Downloading Census data. | Lecture notes on downloading data.

**Homework #4:** Census downloading, and sampling/representativeness assignment. Due 9 pm, Wed. October 24, (5%). |
| 10/17 | CLASSROOM | Causation and experimental design. Review for midterm exam. | C&S, Ch. 6 – Causation and Experimental Design.

**Homework #5:** Critique of research methods for a published study. Due 9 pm, Fri. Nov. 2 (5%). |
| 10/22 | NO LAB- **TAKE HOME MIDTERM EXAM** |  |  |
| 10/24 | CLASSROOM | Review of univariate and bivariate statistics. | C&S, Ch. 8 – Elementary Quantitative Data Analysis, through “reading the table” (pp. 167-181)

**Homework #6:** Descriptive statistics assignment. Due 9 pm, Friday, Nov. 16 (10%). |
| 10/29 | LAB | Excel basics | Sakai/Resources/Online tutorials/Tutorials

- Excel basics
- Excel formulae |
| 10/31 | CLASSROOM | Surveys | C&S, Ch. 7 – Survey Research |
| 11/5 | LAB | Calculations in SPSS. | Sakai/Resources/SPSS tutorials/Lecture notes on SPSS manipulation. |
| 11/7 | CLASSROOM | Inferential Statistics | C&S, Ch. 8 – Elementary Quantitative Data Analysis, pp. 181-185.

- Sakai/SPSS tutorials
- Independent samples t-test
- Chi-square test

**DON'T worry about formulae!** |
| 11/12 | LAB | Descriptive and inferential statistics in SPSS | Work on Assignment #6: Descriptive Statistics |
| 11/14 | CLASSROOM | Qualitative Methods and Data Analysis | C&S, Ch. 9 & 10

**Homework #7:** Watch a TV show and report. Due 9 am, Monday Nov. 26 (5%). |
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>11/19</td>
<td>LAB</td>
<td>Planning Tables and Charts</td>
<td>Sakai/Resources/Readings Writing about Numbers/Miller J.E., 2004. The Chicago Guide to Writing about Numbers, C&amp;S, Ch. 6, and Ch. 7, pp. 129-142, 152-166</td>
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<td>11/21</td>
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<td>No class held. It is Thanksgiving Week so you have Friday classes on this Wednesday.</td>
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<tr>
<td>11/26</td>
<td>LAB</td>
<td>More SPSS and inferential statistics</td>
<td>Guidance for the Final paper</td>
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<td>11/28</td>
<td>CLASSROOM</td>
<td>Organizing a research paper. Writing about tables and charts.</td>
<td>C&amp;S Ch. 13 – Reviewing, proposing, and Reporting Research</td>
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<td>12/3</td>
<td>LAB</td>
<td>Tables in Word.</td>
<td>• Tables in MS Word tutorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/10</td>
<td>LAB</td>
<td>Charts in Excel.</td>
<td>• Excel Chart Wizard tutorial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>CLASSROOM</td>
<td>Final paper work time. I encourage you to schedule individual appointments to discuss work on your final research papers with me or the Teaching Assistant.</td>
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<td>12/14</td>
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<td>FINAL PAPER DUE by 9 PM via Sakai</td>
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