Course Description (catalog)

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

Course Overview

This course introduces students to research methods for public health, planning, and public policy. Essentially, it is a guide to the fundamentals of social science research. You will learn to design and interpret research so you can solve problems and make informed decisions. During this semester, you will ask questions, probe for answers, and evaluate the answers you get as a result of research. The emphasis of the class is on gaining the ability to think logically and critically about social science research and its wider impact in the world. We will cover both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, but more time will be spent on the former. You will work with a dataset this semester, conducting statistical analysis using SPSS, a computer...
software package.

Although I do not assume any previous work in research, I do expect that you have successfully completed the statistics course required for Bloustein majors. The goal of this class is NOT to make you into expert statisticians or quantitative researchers, but into educated consumers and critics of the research of others. Equally important, this class should give you a firm foundation upon which to stand as you complete your internship and/or senior seminar requirements for your major.

The class is comprised of a weekly lecture and a weekly lab session. Readings must be completed prior to the lecture. Attendance will be taken in both lectures and labs. The lab session provides some hands-on practice with the concepts learned in lecture, and is structured around software use, cases, discussions, and assignment preparation. All lab work (not completed in the lab session) must be submitted by Monday at 10AM. There will also be weekly quizzes that you will need to submit by Wednesday night (11:55PM cutoff). You will draft a research proposal as your midterm assignment, and your final assignment for the course will be a team-based, data analysis paper using the class dataset.

Course Learning Goals

1) An understanding of the logic of scientific inquiry and how to measure concepts
2) An ability to develop a research hypothesis and a complementary research design
3) An awareness of different types of data collection and analyses – both qualitative and quantitative
4) An introduction to analyzing quantitative data to test your own ideas about relationships between concepts

Course Grading

Your grade will be based on:

10% - Course Participation
Considers attendance at lectures/labs, and the extent to which you are an active participant in the course, such as through answering questions and being a good group member

30% - Module Assignments
Module 1 Ethics Assignment (5%)
Module 1 Final (10%)
Module 2 Final (10%)
Module 3 Final (5%)
25% - Lab exercises and quizzes
   Lab exercises are worth 15% in total and will be started in lab.
   Quizzes will be given over the course of the semester and are worth 10% in total.
15% - Midterm exam
   We will have one take home exam in which you write a research proposal
20% - Final Paper
   In teams of two or three students, you will conduct original data analyses and
   write a paper on those results. No late submissions accepted.

Letter grades will be assigned as follows:
A=90-100; B+=87-89; B=80-86; C+=77-79; C=70-76; D=60-69; F=59 and lower

**Academic Integrity**

Academic Integrity is vital to the mission of Rutgers, to education at Rutgers and membership in
the Rutgers community. It is a core value that supports trust among students, and between
students and teachers. It is also a shared value; administration, faculty and students each play a
vital part in promoting, securing and nurturing it.

Academic dishonesty is not an individual act that affects only the students involved. It violates
communal trust, impacts other members of the community, and is an offense against
scholarship. For this reason, any instance of cheating or plagiarism will be dealt with harshly.

Honesty matters. As a shared value, administration, faculty and students each play a vital part
in promoting, securing and nurturing it. See the Rutgers Academic Code and Academic Oath at:

[http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/](http://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/)

**Communication policy**

*Office hours*

You may sign up for office hours on Sakai. I do request that you **schedule** your appointment as
this helps ensure that I am available at the time you requested.

If you need to cancel your appointment, please remove your name from the scheduling block so
that another student may take advantage of this time block. If you are running late, please
update the scheduling block as well. While I will do our best to accommodate you, you may need to reschedule or change the mode of the appointment to phone or Google hangouts.

Office hours are available face-to-face, virtually through Google hangouts and via the phone. When signing up for office hours, I will expect to see you in person, unless you also indicate the mode. For telephone meetings, please add your telephone number to the sign-up sheet. For Google hangout meetings, please add your gmail address. (Your scarletmail email address is a Google-based account so you may use this address and you do not need to have a private gmail account.)

Email requests

In order to guarantee a response, you should always plan to e-mail at least 24 hours before a deadline. Notes sent less than 24 hours before an assignment due date may not be answered.

Requesting an appointment

Under special circumstances, you may need to schedule an appointment outside of normal office hours. Please email to request a special meeting.

Attendance and Cancellation of Classes

In accordance with Rutgers University regulations, attendance is expected at all regularly scheduled meetings of a course and individual courses may set policies for maximum absences. Please refer to the link below for more specific information:

http://sasundergrad.rutgers.edu/academics/courses/registration-and-course-policies/attendance-and-cancellation-of-class

Ground Rules

Collegial and respectful conduct is expected in class. Class members should consider themselves colleagues who will collaborate to help each other develop a solid understanding of materials and concepts. To facilitate this process and your learning, we will adhere to some basic rules:

- Class will start and end on time. Although I understand emergencies occur, timely arrivals and departures should be the norm.
- Please turn off (or silence and refrain from using) your cell phones and other electronic devices during class.
• Laptops may only be used in class IF they are being used as part of the class discussion. You will not be permitted to use your laptop in future classes if you violate this policy.
• All assignments must be completed on time, typed in 12-point font, and submitted per the assignment instructions. I will be using both Sakai and Qualtrics for submissions – please pay attention to submission instructions each week. Late work will be penalized. Assignments will be marked down a half letter grade per day. Assignments cannot be submitted later than one week after the due date; missed assignments will receive a “0.”
• All quizzes, homeworks and extra credit will be submitted through Sakai or Qualtrics – please pay attention to submission instructions each week.
• Any student in this course who has a disability that may prevent him or her from fully demonstrating his or her abilities should contact me as soon as possible.
• If you will be missing a lab because of a religious holiday or observation, please let me know during the first week of the semester.
• If any questions or concerns arise, please come see me. Office hours are listed on the top of the syllabus. If you cannot make office hours, please request an appointment as described under the Communication Policy.
• This syllabus is subject to minor revisions - please note the date of latest revisions in the footer of this document.

A Few Words to the Wise

• Come to class prepared! Complete readings prior to lecture.
• Seek help early! Don’t wait till the last minute if you are having difficulties.
• Get missed notes from a classmate! I will not hold individual meetings to provide summaries or repeat class material.

Weekly outline is available on Sakai