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| Semester: | Spring 2017 |
| Course Number: | 10:775:395, Sections 90 |
| Course Title: | Research Methods |
| Lecture Day and Time: | Online |
| Section 4 Lab: | Thursday, Loree Hall 013, 10:55am – 12:15pm |
| Section 3 Lab: | Tuesday, Loree Hall 013, 9:15am – 10:35pm |
| Section Online Lab: | Online, Due by Saturday @ 8pm |
| Course Instructor: | Dr. Debbie Borie-Holtz, Assistant Professor |
| Contact Information: | dbholtz@ejb.rutgers.edu |
| Office Hours and Location: | Tuesday, 1:00-2:30pm and by appointment Civic Square Building, 33 Livingston Avenue, Room 256 |
| Course Teaching Assistant: | Gayatri Gadag, PhD Candidate |
| Contact Information: | gvg12@scarletmail.rutgers.edu |
| Office Hours and Location: | Thursday, 12:00-1:30pm Civic Square Building, 33 Livingston Avenue, Room 264 |
| Course Teaching Assistant: | Himadri Kundu, MCRP Candidate |
| Contact Information: | hsk64@scarletmail.rutgers.edu |
| Office Hours and Location: | Friday, 12 Noon - 1:30pm Civic Square Building, 33 Livingston Avenue, Room 264 |

Required Text: **Chambliss & Schutt. 2015. *Making Sense of the Social World: Methods of Investigation*, 6th Edition. (5th Edition acceptable)**

Additional Materials: **Readings and datasets are on Sakai.
SPSS is available in the computer labs and on the Rutgers scarlet apps.**

Catalog Course Description

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 is designed to introduce students to research methods for public health, health administration, planning and public policy. Basically, the course is an introduction to the fundamentals of social science research. The main goal is for you to learn to design and interpret research so you can solve problems and make informed decisions. During this semester, you will learn how to ask questions, how to probe for answers and how to evaluate the answers we 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. We will cover both quantitative and qualitative methodologies, but more time will be spent on the former. You will work with datasets this semester and conduct statistical analysis using Excel and SPSS, a computer software package. Your final assessment for the course will be a team-based, data analysis paper using a dataset in SPSS.

Although we do not assume any previous work in methodology, we 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 often 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.

Class Lectures

This is a 4 credit course consisting of both a weekly class meeting and lab period. For students in both the hybrid and the online sections, the class lecture format is offered online. This means the course modality you have selected requires you to work independently to master the class lecture materials, requiring at least 3 hours of class work each week. To assist you in mastering the materials, weekly videos and/or audio clips along with Powerpoint slides highlighting the most important learning objectives from the text will be posted.

To measure your mastery of the lectures materials, there is a weekly quiz. Quiz questions are randomly drawn from a bank of questions focused on the learning objectives. Quizzes make-up 10 percent of your overall grade. Quiz feedback will be offered immediately. Quizzes are due by Saturday @8pm -- **NO EXCEPTIONS.**

If you have questions about the class materials, we encourage you to ask questions in lab or use the “Ask a question” online forum that appears on each weekly lesson page and visit us during office hours.

If the need arises from time-to-time and there is an interest from students, we will offer a group instruction period covering key learning goals and fielding questions. These sessions will be scheduled outside the standing office hours. We will try to schedule these session at a time convenient to students.

Labs

Lab work is arranged in a way that applies the class lecture -- labs are NOT intended to “teach” the class lecture materials. It is recommended that you review the class lecture activities before completing the weekly lab assignments. Lab sessions are designed to gain some hands-on practice with the concepts we learn in lecture. Labs are structured around cases, discussions and exam practice.

Students in the hybrid sections will meet in a F2F lab held at Loree 013 and attendance will be taken in accordance with University policy. Students enrolled in the online section will complete the weekly lab assignments online. Lab assignments are due by Saturday @8pm regardless of when they are started. No lab assignments will be accepted late.

Labs are worth 10 percent of the course and your lowest lab grade will be dropped. Missed labs will be graded as a “o”.

Access to Class Materials

All class materials for each week will be available by Sunday morning. We will do our very best to make resources available to you in advance of this deadline in order to allow you to navigate each module at your own pace. For example, you can find all the quizzes for Module 1 and the accompanying topics as posted on the calendar are available to you at the start of the course. However, we also will not respond to questions *IF* you have not viewed the Sakai lecture materials. A Sakai tool allows us to measure which resources you access, how often and when. Many of the questions we receive are described on the class site so this must be your first source for information. As described, a minimum of 10 hours per week from start to finish --- regardless of the modality (face-to-face, hybrid or online) is expected. You may spend less time, but it is likely to be reflected in your major exams and assignments.

Communication policy

Please reach out to us with questions! There are many opportunities to reach us.

Office hours

Office hours are posted on a Sakai link. We ask that you schedule your appointment as this helps us ensure that we are 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 we will do our best to accommodate you; however, you may need to reschedule or change the mode of the appointment to phone or Google hangout.

Office hours are available face-to-face, virtually through Google hangouts through a phone appointment. When signing up for office hours, we will expect to see you in person, unless you also indicate an alternative mode along with your contact information. For telephone meetings, please add your telephone number to the sign-up sheet. For Google hangout meetings, please add your scarlet email address.

Requesting an appointment

Under special circumstances, you may need to schedule an appointment outside of normal office hours. If you find yourself in an emergent situation, please use the [Alternate Meeting Request form](#) posted on the Sakai office hours scheduling tool. **(Please do not use email for this purpose.)**

Email requests

When sending e-mail, the subject line (re:) in the email should always state “Methods + Section No.” This will help us respond to your inquiries more quickly. We promise to always respond within 24 hours, and usually much quicker. Please copy me on your email requests to our TA. This will also help ensure that you receive a timely request and that we are all “on the same page.”

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

Additionally, we request that you send all daily emails to us by 6pm so that we can be sure they are read and responded by 8pm the following day. This does not mean we will not respond to requests sent after this deadline, but it does help guarantee you will receive a timely response!

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

Public Health Learning Goals (832 Majors)

Students Will:

- 1) Think critically in public health

- 2) Effectively communicate public health information
- 3) Develop, apply, and analyze concepts from research methods and basic statistics
- 4) Develop a research question and write a coherent research paper
- 5) Understand and apply professional ethics

Public Health Course Assessment (832 Majors)

The following assignments will assess the course learning goals. All students will meet the same Course Grading Requirements.

- 1) Think critically in public health
 - *Each student will complete weekly lab activities.*
- 2) Effectively communicate public health information
 - *Students must complete group and individual writing assignments.*
- 3) Develop, apply, and analyze concepts from research methods and basic statistics
 - *Each student will complete three module assignments and learn SPSS.*
- 4) Develop a research question and write a coherent research paper
 - *Each student will write a final research paper.*
- 5) Understand and apply professional ethics
 - *Many of the weekly topics include complex ethical considerations which we will discuss in class and students will include in their writing assignments.*
 - *Students are also required to obtain CITI Human Subjects Certification.*

Course Grading Requirements

Your grade will be based on:

45% - Module Assignments

- Module 1 Exam: Lit review, measuring concepts and hypothesis formation (15%) - Due 2/18
- Module 2 Exam: Survey design, question wording and methodology (15%) - Due 3/25

- Module 3 Exam: Design plan cross-sectional study (5%) - Due 4/8
- Module 3 Exam: Running, interpreting and analyzing data (10%) - Due 4/15

10% - Lab exercises (Due weekly - no extensions for late submissions.)

- For online labs, weekly assignments are due by Saturday @ 8pm.
- For F2F labs, all labs will be started in lab and attendance will be taken to receive credit. Any lab work not finished in lab will be due by Saturday @ 8pm.

10% - Quizzes (Due weekly - no extensions for late submissions.)

- Your lowest quiz grade will be dropped.

10% - Class participation and student engagement

- This portion of the grade will be assigned by active engagement which includes regular log-ins to the class site to review class lectures and activities, thoughtful questions or comments posted, participation in class activities and submission of extra credit activities when offered. It includes credit for all mandatory class lectures that are assigned over the course of the semester, such as the CITI certification during Week 2.
- Weekly extra credit is offered each week. Our goal is to help you apply the learning goals identified for each week's learning goals. Extra credit is offered on a weekly basis and has a weekly submission deadline of Saturday @ 8pm. No exceptions! Extra credit is calculated as a weighted average for all activities totaling 3 percentage points (3 out of 10 percent of class participation).
- Student participation and engagement will be updated twice during the semester (at spring break and at the end of the term).

25% - Final Paper

- In teams of two or three students, you will conduct original data analyses and write a paper on those results.
- Twenty percent of the final grade will be based on attendance in a mandatory meeting on the final paper and peer evaluations by teammates.

- Due date is Friday, 5/4 by 12 Noon. **No late submissions accepted.**

Gradebook

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.

Students are responsible for managing their progress in the course. To assist you with managing your course progress, we are providing a template for the weighted grades described above. You must [download the Google spreadsheet](#) or you may copy it and share it in your Scarletmail Google drive to track your own calculations. You may also schedule an appointment in office hours if you want a progress update. Due to FERPA regulations, we are not permitted to transmit or release grades via email.

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/>

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 and all online posts and emails exchanges. 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:

- All module assignments must be completed on time, typed in 12-point font, and submitted per the assignment instructions. We will be using both Sakai and Qualtrics for submissions – please pay attention to submission instructions each week. Late work will be penalized. Island Module assignments will be marked down a half letter grade per day. Final exams cannot be submitted later than one week after the due date; missed assignments will receive a “o.”
- Late submissions for quizzes, homework assignments and extra credit are **NOT** permitted as described under the **course syllabus**. 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 lecture/lab because of a religious holiday or observation, please let one of us know during the first week of the semester.
- If any questions or concerns arise, please come see one of us! Office hours are listed on the top of the syllabus. If you cannot make office hours, please request an appointment as described under our **Communication Policy**.
- This syllabus may be subject to minor revisions - please note latest revisions made in footer area.

For F2F Hybrid Lab Students Only:

- Labs will start and end on time. Although we 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 and cells may only be used in class *IF* they are being used as part of the class discussion. You will not be permitted to use personal equipment in future labs if you violate this policy.

A Few Words to the Wise

- Seek help early! Don't wait till the last minute if you are having difficulties.
- Get missed notes from a classmate! We will not hold individual meetings to provide summaries or repeat class material.

Class Outline by Week

- Posted on Sakai course calendar.
- Here is the [Google calendar link](#) to import to your personal app or calendar.