

Syllabus**UST 405: Methods of Research and Evaluation****Fall 2017, Section: 1****Urban, Room 107****Tuesdays 6:00 – 8:50 pm****Deirdre M. Mageean**

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INTRODUCTION

What are methods of research and evaluation? Why is it important for urban studies professionals to understand research and evaluation? Methods of research and evaluation allows researchers to ask specific questions and effectively organize their thinking to understand the world around us. There are many methods of social research available and social scientists, students, and professionals alike should be familiar with the range of possibilities that one might consider. It is important for researchers to know which methods to use while soliciting human input because as researchers, it is our job to garner the input and tell the stories of those who are most impacted by current human service systems and policies. Research is shaped by an individual's pre-existing ideas about the world and what is important and the research process is about how to best go about studying it. A well-designed research project that is carried out with an open mind, asks the right questions, and reported accurately has the potential to shape how we think about the world.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of methods of research and evaluation for urban affairs, urban planning, urban studies, public policy, and related fields. This is a required course for all undergraduate students with majors in the college of Urban Studies. This course complements and builds upon the concepts and skills taught in UST 404, Urban Data Analysis, or Introductory Statistics, which supports learning in this course. Students will gain working knowledge and practical skills that can be used in other coursework and in their professional careers in management, leadership, and administration.

In-class lectures, discussions based on readings, and group activities will be primary means of learning. Guest speakers may join the class from time to time to augment classroom learning. Students are required to complete weekly reading assignments before the corresponding lecture. Active participation in the class and in the group activities is a key component of this course and will enhance the students' learning and peer-to-peer interactions. Homework and class assignments are designed to enhance learning by doing, and a final written research proposal will help the students apply their knowledge to topics of their interest.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This class aims to achieve the following course objectives and learning outcomes that will enable students to:

- Learn how to take an event or topic of interest and frame it into a research problem
- Be able to create a formal statement and proposal of research addressing well-formed research questions
- Understand the process of research inquiry and apply it to an appropriate research design
- Gain a practical working knowledge of a variety of research methods and analytical techniques
- Find and analyze quantitative and qualitative data to answer a particular research problem
- Find and use primary and secondary sources of information for research
- Critically analyze and evaluate existing research reports and identify the intent of the research
- Effectively communicate research findings through oral, visual and written methods

REQUIRED READING

Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, and Joseph M. Williams (2008). *The Craft of Research*, 3rd Edition. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press (*Referred to as Booth et al.*)

Colin Robson (2007). *How to Do a Research Project – A Guide for Undergraduate Students*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.

Print copies of the textbook may be available at the CSU bookstore and are also available from many of the major textbook vendor websites.

Supplementary Reading:

Other Articles may be provided via Blackboard or on Electronic Reserve in the University Library .

Technology

Most assignments will be distributed, handed in, and graded using Blackboard. This can be more involved than using paper, but it helps centralize all of student grades. In addition, other supporting materials and specific instructions for assignments will be available on Blackboard. If you have trouble obtaining and handing in assignments, or posting to discussion boards on blackboard you are encouraged to speak with me ASAP and consider taking a blackboard tutorial. For technical assistance for Blackboard, students can call 216-687-5050 or email <https://mycsu.csuohio.edu/elearning/stuhelp.html>.

If students do not already own a copy of Microsoft Excel they are encouraged to purchase one, so as to allow flexibility when completing out of class assignments. Students must also have access to the Internet, and Microsoft Word or equivalent. Microsoft Office is available at the CSU bookstore for a student rate.

PREREQUISITES AND REQUIRMENTS**Course description and prerequisites**

The CSU Undergraduate Catalog (2015-16) gives the following description and prerequisites for this class:

Prerequisite: Junior standing or permission of instructor. Introduction to basic concepts of research; examines types of research and the use of theory, hypotheses, and inquiry; develops familiarity with urban databases and other computer applications; introduces program evaluation methods and ethical considerations in research and evaluation.

UST 405 is a required class for all students pursuing a major in the College of Urban Affairs.

CLASS PREPARATION AND PARTICIPATION/SHARED LEARNING

Students are expected to be prepared to offer quality feedback in class, which can only happen if assigned readings are completed before class. Active participation in all in class activities will count towards your class participation grade.

Students may earn up to a total of 10 points per class based on the quantity and quality of their contribution, which will be the basis of the computation for their class participation grade.

The rubric for class participation is as follows:

Active Contributor and clear Familiarity with the assigned readings	10
Minimum Participation in class discussions and/or Limited ability to discuss the assigned readings	5
Little to no Participation /Little evidence of Familiarity with assigned readings	2

If a student is absent from class they will be required to submit a 1-page double spaced written summary of the assigned readings including their assessment of the value of the readings and possible application of the materials to their own research or possible future research. The assignment is due immediately upon your return to class as no additional opportunities to make up a missed class will be available. Students will only have the opportunity to complete the written class participation make up assignment **Twice** throughout the course of the semester unless prior approval is granted by the professor at least 24 hours before class and only in the case of extenuating circumstances.

HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS

Writing and analytical assignments for the class will help students master important research skills and work toward completion of the final project. This will include three assignments:

- Assignment #1 – Knowing Sources (*Due Thursday, 21st September at midnight*)
- Assignment #2 - Applying More than one Research Method (*Due Thursday, October, 19th at midnight*)
- Assignment #3 – Working with Census Data (*Due Thursday, November, 2nd at midnight*)

RESEARCH PROPOSAL PROCESS (3 Assignments)

Students also complete several assignments related to the development of a research question of) their interest. The process will help develop and prepare student topics for their senior seminar and the workplace. Given the research process is rarely, if ever, a linear or consistent progression upward, students **MUST** put in full effort early in the semester.

Assignments for the course and their weight toward the total course grade are described below. Preliminary due dates are given in the class schedule and detailed instructions for each assignment will be posted and forthcoming in Blackboard:

- The first assignment consists of **turning a topic of interest into a research problem**, i.e. something researchable with findings that have the potential for application in the field of Urban Studies. In addition to turning in the written assignment students will also meet with the professor during class to present their ideas and receive feedback. (*Due Thursday, October 12th at midnight*).
- The second assignment consists of **developing a conceptual framework** that allows the researcher the possibility of answering their research problem. While this can be either qualitative or quantitative it will be evaluated with respect to how well you use the literature to support your proposed design. (*Due Thursday, November, 9th at midnight*).

- The third assignment consists of a **final research proposal**. After delivering the research proposal students should incorporate feedback to finalize their written research proposals, which act as their final exam. These should be 8-10 pages of text in length, double-spaced, in Times New Roman 12 point font, and be cited using American Psychological Association (APA) format. These should also include at least 5 reputable works cited (a minimum of 3 peer reviewed publications and 2 others, but a high quality proposal will more than likely draw on more than 5). *(Due Thursday, December 7th at 6pm)*.

The presentation of the research proposal delivered with the help of a short but complete powerpoint. This should include around 6-8 slides depending on the complexity of the design and/or topic; a title page/introduction, research problem, background, conceptual framework, conclusion, and works cited. *(In-Class presentations of proposals November 21st and 28th and December 5th)*

Students are encouraged to look at some of the urban dissertations for structuring in their presentation and written proposal-

http://urban.csuohio.edu/academics/graduate/phd/phd_dissertation_topics.html

UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE POLICIES UNIVERSITY DEADLINES

For the current semester, the deadline for dropping a course is September 8th, 2017.

The last day to withdraw from the course is November 3rd, 2017.

GRADING POLICY

Your graded work will either be graded online with feedback in Blackboard or manually graded and returned to you by e-mail or through Blackboard. Assignment expectations and grading rubrics will generally be included in the instructions for each assignment or activity.

Grades for each activity and assignment, as well as the final course grade, will be posted in Blackboard (see "my Grades" in Blackboard). I will strive to grade and return assignments in a timely fashion. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions about the grading status of work that you have submitted.

Students will be graded according to the following framework:

- 10% - Class Participation (*in Lectures and Group Activities*)
- 30% - Homework Assignments (*3 total Assignments #1, #2, and #3*)
- 10% - Research Problem (*Due Oct. 12th*)
- 15% - Conceptual Framework (*Due Nov. 9th*)
- 10% - Presentation (*on November 21st and 28th, and December 5th*)
- 25% - Research Proposal (*Due December 7th*)

Late assignments will be accepted up to 3 days late and receive a 5 point deduction in total score. Assignments are not accepted beyond 3 days unless permission of instructor has been granted prior to the initial due date. Additional arrangements may be offered at the discretion of the instructor.

CSU uses the following letter grades with plusses and minuses. In the Levin College the letter grades follow this numeric scale:

Grading Scale (in percentages):

A	94 – 100
A-	90 – 93
B+	87 – 89
B	83 – 86
B-	80 – 82
C+	77 – 79
C	70 – 76
D	60 – 69
F	59 or less

CSU policy regarding **grades of “I” and “X”** dictates the following conditions:

“X” – The grade of “X” can be assigned by the instructor when an attending/participating student has stopped attending /participating without notification and has not completed all assignments for reasons that cannot be determined by the end of the grading period. An “X” automatically becomes an “F” if not resolved by the last day of instruction of the following semester. An “X” grade will be assigned by the University Registrar when no grade is submitted by an instructor.

“I” – An incomplete (“I”) grade may be given when the work in a course has been generally passing, but some specifically required task has not been completed through no fault of the student. An “I” grade can be assigned by the instructor when all three of the following conditions are met:

- 1) Student is regularly attending/participating in the class and has the potential to pass the course,
- 2) Student has not completed all assignments and has stopped attending/participating for reasons deemed justified by the instructor, and
- 3) Student notified the instructor prior to the end of grading period.

Students may drop or withdraw from the class by the dates stipulated in the CSU Academic Calendar. Additional information on adding, dropping, withdrawal, and incomplete grades can be found on-line at:

<http://www.csuohio.edu/enrollmentservices/registrar>

COMMUNICATING WITH THE INSTRUCTOR

Please feel free to contact the instructor in-person or by e-mail throughout the semester:

Email: a.samanta@csuohio.edu or via the email function in **Blackboard Learn**

Email is the preferred form of communication and. The instructor checks emails frequently and generally tries to reply within 24 hours on regular business weekdays. This holds for emails sent at the instructor’s regular CSU email as well as Blackboard email.

Please note that e-mail messages sometimes get missed or delayed due to “spam” filters and internet traffic, so please feel free to follow-up if you do not receive a reply within 24-48 hours. It is strongly suggested that you use your @vikes.csuohio.edu e-mail account to contact the instructor, since e-mail from other sources (such as gmail.com, yahoo.com, etc.) is often blocked by the CSU spam filter.

OTHER CLASS AND UNIVERSITY POLICIES

Changes and Reservations: Please note that the instructor reserves the right to make modifications to the course content and course requirements at any time during the semester and will promptly notify students of any changes. Please monitor your CSU e-mail and the class Blackboard site for updates and announcements.

Late assignments: Assignments submitted after their due date may be penalized and the instructor reserves the right to refuse the submission of late assignments.

Plagiarism: The CSU Student Handbook defines plagiarism as: “Stealing and/or using the ideas or writings of another in a paper or report and claiming them as your own. This includes but is not limited to the use, by paraphrase or direct quotation, of the work of another person without full and clear acknowledgment.” The penalties for plagiarism are found in the full in the Student Handbook under Academic Regulations (from the Policy on Academic Misconduct) and are available on-line at:

<http://www.csuohio.edu/studentlife/StudentCodeOfConduct.pdf>

Writing Assistance: Students with difficulty writing may contact the Writing Center for assistance with writing assignments. Information on the writing center is found at <https://www.csuohio.edu/writing-center/writing-center-2> or in Rhodes Tower Room 124.

Students should generally follow the writing guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 6th Edition (“APA style”), including the formatting of citations and references.

Disabilities and Educational Access: It is the policy of Cleveland State University that “Educational access is the provision of classroom accommodations, auxiliary aids and services to ensure equal educational opportunity for all students regardless of their disability. Any student who feels he or she may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact the Office of Disability Services at (216) 687-2015. The office is located in MC 147. Accommodations need to be requested in advance and will not be granted retroactively.” Students should notify the instructor as soon as possible if they have been granted an accommodation through the Office of Disability Services.

Academic Conduct: Please note that students are subject to all CSU student policies and academic regulations, including (but not limited to) The Code of Student Conduct and the Policy on Academic Misconduct, which can be found online at:

<http://www.csuohio.edu/studentlife/StudentCodeOfConduct.pdf>

EVALUATION OF THE INSTRUCTOR

Toward the end of the semester, every student will be given a chance to complete an evaluation of the course and the instructor. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in this important opportunity to provide input that can be used to improve future versions of the course and help identify the strengths and weaknesses of the instructor. Moreover, please feel free to contact the instructor at any time during the semester with constructive comments on how to improve to course and its instruction.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Please note that this is a tentative schedule, and is subject to change, for instance to accommodate guest speakers or to spend additional time on certain topics. The instructor, in case of any changes to the schedule, will notify students promptly. Please check your CSU email and Blackboard announcement for notification of changes and announcement of updates.

Note: Readings should be completed for the day listed

Week 1 (August 29th)

Lecture: Why Research? And Review of the Syllabus

Readings:

- Booth et al., p. 3-15;
- “The Nature of Applied Urban Research” in Doing Urban Research by G. Andranovich and G. Riposa. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1993. (on BLACKBOARD)

Sample Examples

Week 2 (September 5th)

Lecture: Types of Research and Research Design

Readings:

- Robson p.1-23
- Collier et al. - Levels of Measurement article (on BLACKBOARD)

Be prepared to discuss some of the Hot Research Topics in your Field.

Week 3 (September 12th)

Lecture: Overview of Methods of Research and Logic of Inquiry; Survey Research

Readings:

- Robson p.23-46
- Booth et al. Chapter 3
- Luton Ch. 1 (on BLACKBOARD)

Guest lecturer: Merissa Piazza, Center for Econ. Development, Levin College, on survey research

Week 4 (September 19th)

Lecture: From Questions to Knowing Sources and Engaging Sources

Readings:

- Booth et al. Chapters 5 & 6
- Adler- How to Speak, How to Listen (on BLACKBOARD)
- Mortimer Adler- How to Read Social Science (on BLACKBOARD)

Guest: Ms. Diane Kolosionek – Urban Affairs Librarian at CSU

Lecture: Moving from Research Topic to Question to Problem & Developing Ideas

Readings:

- Robson Chapter 3
- Booth et al. Chapters 3 & 4

 **Assignment #1 (Knowing Sources) Due Thursday, September 21st at midnight**

Week 5 (September 26th)

Lecture: Ethics in Research

Readings:

- “Ethics in Research” (Chapter 3) from *Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences* by F. Gravetter and L. Forzano. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing. 2003

Week 6 (October 3rd)

Lecture: The Use of G.I.S. with Social Science Data in Urban Research.

Guest Speaker: Dr. Mark Selling, Urban College

Week 7 (October 10th – Columbus Day No Class)

Research Problems Due (All Students Submit on Blackboard by October 12th, midnight)

Week 8 (October 17th)

Lecture: Program Evaluation: Conducting Evaluations and Assessment and Designing Evaluation Research

Readings:

- “Evaluation Research” introduction and topics in the Research Methods Knowledge Base:
 - <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/evaluation.php>
 - <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/intreval.php>
 - <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/pecycle.php>
 - <http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/evalcult.php>
- *Real World Evaluation: Working Under Budget, Time, Data, and Political Constraints* (Overview) by M. Bamberger, J. Rugh, and L. Mabry. Prepared for the American Evaluation Association. 2006. (on BLACKBOARD).

Guest Speaker: Dr. Cathie Clouse, Center for Economic Development, Urban College

 **Assignment #2 (Applying More than one Research Method) Due Thursday, October 19th at midnight**

Week 9 (October 24th)

Lecture: Data Collection and Sampling

Readings:

- Robson Chapters 4 & 5
- Booth et al. pages 273-6

Lecture: Strengthening Your Argument

Readings:

- Booth et al. Chapters 7, 9, & 10

Week 10 (October 31st)

Analyzing and Interpreting your Findings (Overview of Quantitative Analysis)

Readings:

- Robson Chapter 6 (p.113-129)

 **Assignment #3 (Working With Census Data) due on Thursday, November 2nd, at midnight**

Week 11 (November 7th)

Lecture: Analyzing and Interpreting your Findings (Overview of Qualitative Analysis)

Readings:

- Luton Chapters 2 & 5

Guest Speaker: Dr. Wendy Kellogg

 **Conceptual Framework Due Thursday, November 9th on Blackboard**

Week 12 (November 14th)

Communicating Findings

Readings:

- Booth et al. Chapter 15
- Robson p.130-138

Weeks 13,14 &15 (November, 21st, 28th and December 5th)

 **In Class Presentation of Research Proposals** (Submit PPT to Blackboard before Presentation and bring a copy, Please arrive early to load your PPT)

 **Written Research Proposal due Thursday, December 7th at 6PM via Blackboard**

*****Syllabus is subject to change*****