UST 405: Methods of Urban Research and Evaluation
Syllabus
Fall 2017, Section: 501
Credits: 3.0

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Office Hours: By appointment and/or online
Course Website on Blackboard Learn

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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. UST 405 complements UST 404 (Urban Data Analysis) or Introductory Statistics, and emphasizes a working knowledge and practical skills that can be used by students in other coursework and in their professional careers in management, leadership, and administration.

As an online e-Learning course, the class will be conducted entirely through Blackboard, e-mail, and other web-based services. The class site in Blackboard at CSU can be accessed at the following web address:

> https://bblearn.csuohio.edu/MACAuth/login.jsp

In addition to Internet access and the ability to interact through Blackboard and e-mail, students will also need to be able to have access to word processing and spreadsheet software (preferably Microsoft Office's Word and Excel programs) to complete exercises and assignments.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

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

- Learn how to identify a topic or event of interest and create a formal statement of research and evaluation addressing well-formed research questions
- Develop a practical working knowledge of relevant research methods and analytical techniques

- Identify approaches, methods, and techniques for data collection and analysis relevant to urban research
- Learn to understand and analyze quantitative and qualitative data to answer a particular research problem
- Find and use primary and secondary sources of information for research
- Utilize data sources, apply numerical and statistical methods, and interpret findings
- Effectively communicate findings through oral, written, or visual (computer generated) methods

REQUIRED TEXTBOOK

The primary textbook for this course is:

> **Organizational Research Methods: A Guide for Students and Researchers**
> (2001) by Paul Brewerton and Lynne Millward. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
> publications.

This book is also available as an e-book through the CSU Library.

If you are connecting to the CSU Library from off-campus, you will need to set up a PIN for off-campus authentication. More information on off-campus access to the CSU Library is posted at:

> http://library.csuohio.edu/services/remote.html

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: Additional reading materials for the course will be made available to students through Blackboard Learn.

PREREQUISITES AND REQUIRMENTS

Course description and prerequisites

The CSU Undergraduate Catalog providess 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.

Minimum technical skills and access for students

In general, students will need to make substantial use of computer technology in this section of the class, including:

- Reliable and consistent access to a computing device and internet access,
- Ability to use the internet to use Blackboard and to communicate effectively, and
- Access to word processing and spreadsheet software programs, especially with Microsoft Office's Word and Excel programs (preferably version 2010 or later).

Each student should ensure that they have access to the technologies listed above. Please contact the instructor immediately if you are not able to access these technologies and may not be prepared to participate in a web-based course.

Requirements for student interaction in on-line learning

Students are expected to check their **@vikes.csuohio.edu** e-mail accounts on a regular basis. Due to privacy regulations, the instructor may only send e-mail to official CSU student e-mail accounts. Students in this class will be expected to use Blackboard to facilitate class activities, including:

- Accessing on-line learning modules and activities,
- Monitoring updates to the syllabus,
- Accessing assignment instructions, work files, and web resources,
- Retrieving reading materials,
- Submitting assignments in specified electronic formats,
- Communicating with the instructor,
- Using e-mail and discussion boards to communicate with other students.

Additionally, students must be prepared to work in groups with other students using phone and electronic communications, as well as to use generally accessible web-based resources (such as Google and governmental web sites).

You are automatically given access to Blackboard using your CSU ID when you register for class. To log on to Blackboard Learn, point your web browser to the following address:

> https://bblearn.csuohio.edu/MACAuth/login.jsp

ASSIGNMENTS

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:

- **Online activities** (25 percent of class grade): Students will be expected to participate in individual and group online learning activities accompanying each module during most weeks of the course.

- **Writing and Analytical Assignments** (50 percent): Writing and analytical assignments for the class will help students master important research skills and work toward completion of the final project. These will consist of both individual and group assignments, including:

    o #1 - Using background information to develop a research topic,
    o #2 - Formulating a research design,
    o #3 – Research ethics project description, and
    o #4 - A data analysis report

- **Final Project** (25 percent): The final project is an in-depth written research proposal to be prepared by each student and will include participation in work-in progress steps including an outline, draft paper, and peer review.

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.

The letter grading scale for this class uses the following letter grades with plusses and minuses that correspond with the numeric scale given below:

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 by e-mail (s.pardee@csuohio.edu or via the email function in Blackboard Learn) and phone (216-316-0483) throughout the semester: Texting is fine.

Email is the preferred form of communication and the instructor checks emails frequently and generally tries to reply within 24-48 hours. 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.

Please note that for all forms of communication - email, phone and text messages – the instructor will reply after 5:00 PM on work days.

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 email and the class Blackboard site for updates and announcement*s.*

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" (p.18). 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:

> https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/media/writing_center/documents/StudentCodeOf Conduct.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:

> https://www.csuohio.edu/sites/default/files/Consolidated-student-code-ofconduct-8-2015.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. The instructor will notify students promptly of any changes to the schedule. <u>Please check your CSU email and Blackboard announcements for notification of changes and updates.</u>

As noted in the syllabus (page 2), the main textbook for the class, ***Organizational Research Methods (referred to in the schedule as ORM)***, is available as an e-book through the CSU Library and other reading materials will be available to students in Blackboard.

Module 1 - Week of August 28

Research Methods: Purpose and Background

- "Introduction" (Chapter 1) in Organizational Research Methods (orm).
- Sections 2.1 to 2.4 from "Applying Social Science to the Real World" (Chapter 2) in *ORM*.
- "The Nature of Applied Urban Research" in Doing Urban Research by G. Andranovich and G. Riposa. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1993. BLACKBOARD.

Module 2 - Week of September 4

The Research Process

- Sections 3.1, 3.3, and 3.4 from "Starting off the Research Process" (Chapter 3) in *ORM*.

Module 3 - Week of September 11

Research Topics, Questions, and Hypotheses

- Sections 3.2 and 3.7 from "Starting off the Research Process" (Chapter 3) in *ORM*.
- "Selecting a Topic," "From a Topic to a Research Question," and "From Research Questions to a Research Design" from Chapter 3 (pages 47-53) in How to Do a Research Project by C. Robson. London: Blackwell Publishing. 2007. BLACKBOARD.

Module 4 - Week of September 18

Finding and Using Background Literature

- Sections 3.5.3 and 3.6 from "Starting off the Research Process" (Chapter 3) in *ORM*.
- "Finding and Using Sources" from Chapter 3 (pages 54-64) of How to Do a Research Project. BLACKBOARD.

- Urban Studies Research Guide at the Cleveland State University Library
  - http://researchguides.csuohio.edu/urban

Module 5 - Week of September 25

Research Design

- Sections 5.1 to 5.5 in "Project Design" (Chapter 5) from *ORM*. Sections 2.5 and 2.6 from "Applying Social Science to the Real World" (Chapter 2) in *ORM*.
- "Research Design" (Chapter 4) in Doing Urban Research. BLACKBOARD
- "Overview of Some Different Research Traditions" and "Choosing an Approach" (pages 23- 46) of How to Do a Research Project. BLACKBOARD.

**Assignment #1 (Developing a Research Topic) due on Sunday, October 1, 11:59 PM

Module 6 - Week of October 2

Collecting Data and Sampling

- "Methods of Data Collection" (Chapter 6) from *ORM*.
- "Sampling Considerations" (Chapter 7) from *ORM*.

Module 7 - Week of October 9

Urban Research Data Sources

- "Data Collection in the Urban Setting" (Chapter 5) in Doing Urban Research. BLACKBOARD.
- "Conducting Case Studies: Collecting the Evidence" (Chapter 4) in Case Study Research (2nd Ed.) by R. Yin. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. 1994. BLACKBOARD.

**Assignment #2 (Research Design) due on Sunday, Oct. 15, 11:59 PM

Module 8 - Week of October 16

Program Evaluation I / Conducting Evaluations and Assessments

- "Obtaining and Using Access to an Organization" (Chapter 4) in *ORM*.
- "Assessing Performance in Organizations" (Chapter 8) in *ORM*.

Module 9 - Week of October 23

Program Evaluation II / Designing Evaluation Research

- "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. BLACKBOARD.

Module 10 - Week of October 30

Research Ethics

- "Ethical considerations in Organizational Research" (Chapter 5.6) in *ORM*.
- "Ethics in Research" (Chapter 3) from Research Methods for the Behavioral Sciences by F. Gravetter and L. Forzano. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing. 2003. BLACKBOARD.

**Research Ethics Project Description – Due Sunday, November 5, 11:59 PM

Module 11 - Week of November 6

Data Analysis I: Working With Descriptive Statistics and Demographic Data

- "Quantitative (Numerical) Data" in *How to a Research Project* (pages 117-129). BLACKBOARD.
- "Communicating Evidence Visually" (Chapter 15) in *The Craft of Research* by Wayne Booth, Gergory Colomb, and Joseph Williams. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2008. BLACKBOARD.
- "Using Census Data for Local Portraits" (Chapter 2) in *Analysis with Local Census Data: Portraits of Change* by Dowell Myers. New York: Academic Press. 1992. BLACKBOARD.

Module 12 - Week of November 13

Data Analysis II: Using Inferential Statistics

- Introduction and Sections 9.1 to 9.3 in "Data Analysis" (Chapter 9) from *ORM*.

**Assignment #3 (Working With Census Data) due on Sunday, Nov. 19, 11:59 PM

Module 13 - Week of November 20

Reporting Research Findings

- "Reporting Research Findings" (Chapter 10) from *ORM*.

**Written draft of Final Project is due on Sunday, November 26, 11:59 PM

Week of November 27

- Continued work on Final Project

Week of December 4

- Continued work on Final Project

FINAL EXAM WEEK - Week of December 11

**Final Project is due on <u>Wednesday</u>, December 13, 11:59 PM

GUIDELINES FOR FOCUSING ON LEARNING
IN ONLINE CLASS DISCUSSIONS

1. Release the need to be right. Welcome one another's thoughts and opinions as a way to better understand the potential limitations of your own assumptions. It is a good thing to have others think differently than you.
2. In cases where the instructor has posted multiple part questions, make sure that you respond to each part when posting your message.
3. Put yourself in the shoes of the person with whom you are communicating. Make sure that you send a message that will be understood in the manner that you intended. Remember that there is "intent" (what you intend), and "impact" (how someone else perceives what you are trying to communicate). In successful communication, the two are the same.
4. Make personal statements by using "I" rather than "you…"
5. Clarify first what was said before you challenge someone, e.g., "If I understand you correctly, you believe…"

6. Deal courageously with difficult situations, e.g., by not lapsing into pseudo-community (superficial politeness that avoids healthy conflict).
7. Think through your response before you type it on the discussion board. It may even help you to type it out in "Word" first (using spell-check when necessary!!) and then cut and paste it (avoids typos too!)
8. Remember, once you post a message, it cannot be retrieved so make sure that the language you use is appropriate.

Adapted from CIIS Intro to Transformative Leadership, Petty Perris, and by Wendy Kellogg from a CSU division of Minority Affairs and Community Relations and the Department of Human Resource Development and Labor Relations workbook.

CSU Urban Studies Computer Labs & Technology Issues
Urban Rooms 39 and 40, Lower Level.

Information
UR 40 is the primary student computer lab with 33 stations. UR 39 is a teaching lab with 16 stations and is also used when UR 40 is overloaded. Every CSU student can access these computer labs using your campus net login and password. The labs are PC based with a Windows 2000 operating system.

Students with technology-related issues including desktop support, printing, email, BLACKBOARD, software issues, etc. should call CSU's IS&T call center at 216.687.5050 or email help.desk@csuohio.edu See the IS&T website, http://www.csuohio.edu/ist-help-desk/help-desk

NEED HELP?

There are several ways you can get help with technical issues for your elearning course. Follow these easy steps whenever you have a technical problem or question.

Note: If you have a question about assignments, course content, or other course activities, you should direct those questions to your instructor. This guide is intended to provide steps to take for seeking help with technical questions only.

1. Students who need technical assistance should first consult the Ask eLearning knowledge base (http://www.csuohio.edu/elearning). Students can search the knowledge base for relevant articles and submit general technical support questions. Questions submitted to the Ask eLearning knowledge base are answered daily during normal business hours. Students can generally expect a response in less than one business day. Questions can be submitted 24 hours a day for response during the next business day.

2. For more urgent or specific problems, students who need technical support can contact the Call Center via phone (216-687-5050), the web, or email help.desk@csuohio.edu. For email submissions, please provide your CSU ID number for the fastest response. The Call Center will either resolve the problem or submit a help ticket to the Center for eLearning. eLearning students should receive a response to help tickets either next business day for items submitted after 3 pm

or the same business day for items submitted before 3 pm. Call Center hours vary during the academic year.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs):

Q.   When are assignments due?

A.   See Course Schedule in Syllabus or Assignments area of Blackboard site. Also remember to check the Announcements for weekly reminders and/or changes.

Q.   How do I check my grades?

A.   Click on My Grade. You will find it along the left hand column menu on the Blackboard course site.

Q.   Can I email you my assignments?

A.   Please submit all assignments under the appropriate section in Blackboard, NOT by email.

Q.   I cannot find someone's email address on the list in the course. What should I do?

A.   Go to the bottom right of the screen and click on the little green arrow. You will get a dropdown menu. Click on ALL and then click on the green arrow again. Your screen will refresh and you will get the whole roster of names for the course. This little green arrow also shows up on other pages in Blackboard such as under the Announcements section when the list of weekly announcements grows long.

Here are some general comments about the course that should help you navigate your way through a successful experience in UST 405 on-line:

- Check the Blackboard course site frequently to receive course updates, respond to emails, etc. The Instructor checks the course site frequently, including weekends.

- <u>Please give the Instructor a full week to grade the shorter assignments, and two weeks to grade your longer papers.</u> The Instructor will send out an Announcement or an Email in Blackboard stating that the respective grades have been posted.

- Remember that your relationship with the instructor is an Internet relationship. She cannot know what is going on in your life as it pertains to the course if you do not communicate with her. Please make every effort to convey your concerns or questions to the Instructor, and she will make every effort to address these issues in a satisfactory and timely fashion.

- There is really no excuse for missing any weekly assignments. Once something is made available, it is open 24-7 until the time it is due. Therefore, you should be able to plan around your business trip, sister's wedding, birth of your child (hopefully), etc. Things happen, but please be aware that any emergency involving a request for a time extension requires a valid written excuse (hospital notice, jury duty notice, etc.), and acceptance of such an excuse is at the discretion of the Instructor.

What Online Students Want to Tell New Online Students

Adapted from the Connecticut Distance Learning Consortium, Retrieved April 14, 2009, from
http://www.ctdlc.org/Evaluation/WhatStudentsWantToTell.html.

- Online learning is time consuming. Many students believe that online learning is more work than traditional classroom learning. It may not take more total time since you don't have to drive to class, find a place to park, and sit in class, but it should seem that you are spending more time than what you are used to in terms of "homework." Reading and writing always take longer than talking and listening.

- It helps to be clear about your technical skills. Make sure your computer, keyboarding, email, and attachment skills will support your learning online.

- Choose your professors wisely. Just like a traditional class, some professors are better than others at teaching online.

- Your ability to interact on line may be constrained by your writing and typing abilities.

- Online courses require self-discipline. Even when there are definite deadlines, you must make yourself go do the work.

- Online learning gets easier after you get used to it.

- Most online classes use a threaded discussion forum or bulletin board for class discussions. Students have differing reactions to this form of communication:

  o Some people don't like the lack of face-to-face interactions. "I'm a big people person and quite social." "The way we can see people's facial expressions and hear their voices makes a major difference." "Online classes are great, but not for me."

  o Some people like the online discussion because they allow students to think before they write rather than traditional classroom discussions which "tend to be blurts of raw, not necessarily thought out ideas."

  o People who are "shy" or don't speak up in class seem to like this format. "I felt I was more inclined to participate and express myself in the online format, as opposed to the classroom situation where I feel self-conscious about raising my hand." Because shy people "speak up," some students like the fact that they hear from all of their classmates, not just the most vocal.