

Research Methods in Public Administration

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Thursdays 5:30pm–8:10pm.

Office Hours: By appointment.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Decision-making supported by quantitative analysis is becoming increasingly important in the public and non-profit sectors. As a result, managers are expected to be fluent in quantitative analytical skills. This course is a graduate level, introductory statistics and research methodology course. It will focus on applied quantitative analysis for public management and policy. The goal of the course is to train you to apply the concepts presented and use them to inform real world decision-making in the public and non-profit sectors.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Upon successful completion of this course, students should be able to:

1. Identify and define key theories and concepts of research design, descriptive and inferential statistics, multiple regression.
2. Design and execute an analytical research project.
3. Demonstrate proficiency regarding data collection, analysis, and evaluation.
4. Critically evaluate research designs and methods presented in applied and academic sources.
5. Correctly select and apply the appropriate analytical tool for the problem and data at hand.
6. Understand and evaluate the ethical issues surrounding data collection, analysis, and evaluation.

Student progress on these learning objectives will be measured through a combination of examinations, homework assignments, and class discussion.

REQUIREMENTS

ATTENDANCE

Attendance is not mandatory; however, it is strongly recommended. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to obtain the information you missed from a classmate. **I do not have a policy to take roll, but your absence from class will noted. It will be difficult to achieve above a C in this course if you miss**

more than 2 classes. I expect everyone to be on time and ready to being class at 5:30pm. There are important announcements made at the beginning of each class, and a late arrival is disruptive to the class. Do not be late.

HOMEWORK

Homework will consist of conceptual and data-based exercises assigned from the Berman & Wang exercise book. While not graded, homework is essential to success on the quizzes. Additionally, the homework will form the conceptual basis for the two examinations. Homework will be posted to [Blackboard](#), and I will take *specific* questions regarding the homework at the end of each lecture. It is encouraged that you work on these exercises in groups.

QUIZZES – 30%

Three (3) “pop” quizzes will be assigned at random throughout the semester. Each quiz will require you to respond to combination of true/false, multiple choice, and fill-in-the-blank questions. You may refer to your **personal notes**—but not the text—when taking each quiz. I will drop your lowest quiz grade, including a zero for a missed quiz. Please note that I will not drop more than one score; no exceptions will be made.

MID-TERM EXAM – 30%

You will sit for a closed-note/closed-book mid-term exam. The exam will consist of problems requiring calculation and interpretation as well as true/false, multiple-choice, and fill-in questions. **You may bring to the exam your calculator and one 4-by-6-inch index card of notes – but you may not share them.** I will collect your notecard with your completed exam.

FINAL EXAM – 40%

You will sit for a non-cumulative, closed-note/closed-book final exam. Due to the nature of this topic, knowledge from prior to the midterm will be essential to success on the final. The exam will consist of problems requiring calculation and interpretation as well as true/false, multiple-choice, and fill-in questions. **You may bring to the exam your calculator and one 4-by-6-inch index card of notes – but you may not share them.**

READINGS

The main texts of this course are available at the bookstore. The first two books are sold is a package at the bookstore. However, these books likely can be obtained cheaper elsewhere (primarily online).

Berman, Evan M. and Xiaohu Wang. 2012. *Essential Statistics for Public Managers and Policy Analysts*, Third Edition. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1608716777.

Berman, Evan M. and Xiaohu Wang. 2012. *Exercising Essential Statistics*, Third Edition. CQ Press. ISBN: 978-1608716760.

Clark, Lawrence P. 1979. *PS 11 - Designs for Evaluating Social Programs*, First Edition. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. ISBN: 978-0936826004.

COURSE METHODOLOGY & POLICIES

Class presentations will be conducted through a combination of lecture, class discussion, and demonstration. Students are strongly encouraged to participate in class discussion and to ask questions. Everyone in class brings a unique perspective, and I believe that perspective is a valuable addition to the course. Please come to class prepared and ready to participate.

I will be teaching this course as an introductory graduate course in statistics and research methodology that combines theoretical and conceptual topics with practical application. It is my assumption that students have limited undergraduate or graduate exposure to the topics covered in this course. As such, there is a large amount of material to cover in this course, and we will be moving quickly. The lectures I will present in class are not directly from the assigned reading and often contain information supplemental to the readings. Do not fall behind in the reading. It will be difficult to catch up.

COMMUNICATIONS

Course announcements will be made via email so it is imperative that you check your e-mail daily. "I didn't get the email" is never a valid excuse. The most effect method of communicating with me is using email; however, you are also encouraged to schedule office hours or a phone call.

LAPTOP COMPUTER USE

The use of laptop computers in my classroom is a privilege and not a right. Laptop computers may not be used at any time in my classroom to check email, surf the Internet, instant message with friends, update your Facebook status, post to Twitter, read the newspaper, or for any other purpose not explicitly related to course material. ANY instance of unapproved use of your laptop computer in my classroom will result in your laptop privileges being revoked for the remainder of the semester. There are NO EXCEPTIONS to this policy.

CALCULATORS

It is **required** that you have a calculator with square root functionality for this class. **You may not use a graphing calculator, cell phone, PDA, portable PC, or laptop computer.** We will likely not use a calculator in every class; however, it is difficult to predict when you might need to use it. As such, please plan on bringing a calculator to each class. You will be able to use a calculator on the exam(s).

MAKEUP WORK

Late assignments **WILL NOT** be accepted without a valid UNO excuse. If you have a schedule conflict on any day an assignment is due , please see me beforehand to make arrangements for turning in your assignment early.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have or believe you have a disability that may impede your learning, please contact the Disability Services Office. I will make every effort to accommodate you in accordance with UNO policy, procedures, and recommendations. Additional information can be found at <http://www.unomaha.edu/student-life/inclusion/disability-services/students/where-to-begin.php>.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

All students at the UNO are expected to conduct their academic affairs in an honest and responsible manner. Any student found guilty of dishonesty in academic work shall be subject to disciplinary actions. Acts of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- plagiarism, i.e., the intentional appropriation of the work, be it ideas or phrasing of words, of another without crediting the source;
- cheating, i.e, unauthorized collaboration or use of external information during examinations; assisting fellow students in committing an act of cheating;
- falsely obtaining, distributing, using or receiving test materials or academic research materials; submitting examinations, themes, reports, drawings, laboratory notes, research papers or other work as one's own when such work has been prepared by another person or copied from another person (by placing his/her own name on a paper, the student is certifying that it is his/her own work); or
- improperly altering and/or inducing another to improperly alter any academic record.

Additionally, graduate students are more likely to assume roles as active scholars. With these roles come added responsibilities for academic honesty. For such individuals academic honesty requires an active pursuit of truth not just an avoidance of falsehood. This pursuit includes but is not limited to:

- providing a full and complete representation of any scholarly find, be it experimental data or information retrieved from archives;
- taking care that the resources of the University (e.g., library materials, computer, or laboratory equipment) are used for their intended academic purposes and they are used in a manner that minimizes the likelihood of damage or unnecessary wear;
- assuring that one's co-workers are given due credit for their contributions to any scholarly endeavor; respecting a diversity of opinion and defending one's colleagues as well as one's own academic freedom; respecting the rights of other students who may come under the tutelage of the graduate student and being fair
- and impartial in grading and other forms of evaluation; and seeking permission from an instructor when submitting to that instructor work which the student has submitted for a course taken in the past or intends to submit for another course currently being taken.

In cases of alleged academic dishonesty, the instructor shall attempt to discuss the matter with the student and explain the sanction(s) which he/she plans to impose. In the event that the student challenges the allegation of academic dishonesty, or is not satisfied with the sanctions(s) imposed by the instructor, the student may file an appeal according to the approved appeal policies of the University of Nebraska Graduate College.

Course Outline

Date	Topic	Reading
January 15	Introduction & Research Design	B&W 1& 2, Clark
January 22	Design, Conceptualization & Measurement	B&W 3, Clark
January 29	Data Collection	B&W 5
February 5	Central Tendency & Dispersion	B&W 6 & 7
February 12	Contingency Tables	B&W 8
February 19	Lab Session	
February 26	<i>Mid-Term Exam</i>	
March 5	Hypothesis Testing with Chi-Square (χ^2)	B&W 10
March 12	The T-Test	B&W 12
March 19	ANOVA	B&W 13
March 26	<i>No Class. Spring Break.</i>	
April 2	Simple Regression	B&W 14
April 9	Simple & Multiple Regression	B&W 14 & 15
April 16	Multiple Regression	B&W 15
April 23	Lab Session	
April 30	Advanced Topics in Public Policy Analysis	B&W 16, 17, 18
May 7	<i>Final Exam</i>	

Quizzes will be assigned at random throughout the semester. However, it will be almost assured that one quiz will fall before the midterm and two will fall after the midterm.