Instructor: Matthew Jones, Ph.D.
Office: Urban Center 570N
Office Hours: By appointment
Phone: (360) 921-2321
E-mail: jonesma@pdx.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an overview of research methods used widely in the public sector. The course is designed to help you become an informed and critical consumers of social-science research related to public administration, and help you design and conduct effective research projects. Topics include the processes of social research, relationships between theory and research, quantitative vs. qualitative research, project-based research, data collection, data analysis, and how to read and write a research report. A major part of this course is conducted in facilitated discussions and research projects.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

By the end of the course, students will be able to:

- Formulate a clear research question, and identify the research question in reports and articles;
- Design and implement a research project using with appropriate methods;
- Understand, explain, and apply basic research concepts;
- Read, evaluate, and interpret an academic or applied research report; and
- Have a general idea for how to develop and approach “capstone” project for Exec. MPA requirement.
- Be able to apply quantitative and qualitative techniques to policy and program formulation, implementation and evaluation.
- Be able to apply quantitative and qualitative techniques to decision-making and problem solving.
- Synthesize previous material (Leadership, Org. Development, etc.) into the process of research and organizational sustainability.

Assigned Textbooks

Occasional journal articles and other reading materials will be assigned in addition to the following texts.

Required Texts:


Other Resources (not required):

# COURSE SCHEDULE

Following is the general schedule for each class session. Course content is subject to change.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Suggested Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2/10</td>
<td>D2L posting 1: “I think this is an interesting research report/article, because. . . .”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Post the report/article with comments (D2L).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/11</td>
<td>• Introduction to class</td>
<td>Kumar Ch 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Stoecker Ch 1, 2, 3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Why do research?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Types of research</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Overview of research process</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Role of researchers vs. practitioner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Formulating a research problem.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/11~2/25</td>
<td><strong>Kumar Exercise I</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>Post the exercise (D2L). Also place in Dropbox.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/25</td>
<td>• Conceptualizing a research design</td>
<td>Kumar Ch 7-11</td>
<td>List of possible literature to review (D2L)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Data Collection</td>
<td>Stoecker Ch 4, 5, 6, Appdx C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Reliability and Validity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Constructing an instrument for data collection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/25~3/10</td>
<td>D2L posting 2: “I think this is an interesting research report/article for you, because. . . .”</td>
<td></td>
<td>Post the report/article with comments (D2L).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/10</td>
<td>• Sampling</td>
<td>Kumar Ch 12-18</td>
<td><strong>Kumar Exercise 2-5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing the Research Report</td>
<td>Stoecker Ch 7, 8, Appdx B</td>
<td>Also place in Dropbox.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Displaying data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3/16)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Research Proposal Due</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**NOTE:**
1. **Shaded rows** indicate activities and assignments due for dates we are not meeting face to face.
2. **Italicized** characters and (D2L) indicates activities and assignments to be posted on D2L.
Assignments

1. Research report/article D2L postings (Two entries, 2/10 & 2/25~ 3/10, P/NP)

D2L posting #1
On or before 2/10, under the ‘discussion’ section of D2L, post one research report or article that you found interesting. The article can be on any subject matter related to public and non-profit management. The piece can be either an academic article or a research report generated by a think tank or organization (e.g. research and evaluation units/ auditor’s offices, etc.). Comment on why you thought the report/article was interesting. Please bring this article to the first day of class as well.

D2L posting #2
During 2/25~ 3/10, post one research report or article that you thought might be useful to one of your classmates’ research project. In order to find a research report/article for your classmate, you will have to read their Kumar Exercise I posting (due 2/25). Comment on why you thought the report/article might be useful to the particular classmate’s research project.

Note: You can either upload the article as an attachment, or post the link to the article.

Grading: This assignment is graded as Pass/No Pass. In other words, if you have the articles posted by the due dates you will get a pass. If you did not post the articles by the due dates you will get no pass.

2. “Developing a research project” exercise (Due 2/25, 3/10)

Exercise I (Due 2/25)
Follow instructions for Exercise I on Kumar Appendix (p. 356~364). Complete the exercise and post it on D2L. In addition, please place a copy of the assignment in Word, in the dropbox.

Exercises 2-5 (Due 3/10)
Follow the instructions for Exercises 2-5 in Kumar Appendix (p. 364 ~ 374). Complete the exercises and place a copy of the assignment in Word, in the dropbox.

3. List of possible literature to review (Due 2/25, P/NP)

Compile a list of literature (citations in APA format) you would like to review for your research project. Post it on D2L.

Grading: This assignment is graded as Pass/No Pass.

4. Research proposal (Due 3/16, Graded, no longer than 12 pages, double-spaced)

Think about the kind of research that you would be interested in conducting to address a particular issue that is relevant to your work, or your own personal interest. Write a research proposal. The proposal needs to include the following components.
   i) Review of the relevant literature/pre-research
   ii) Research problem
   iii) Significance of the research.
   iv) Data collection design
   v) Sampling method
   vi) Data analysis strategy
   vii) Implications of the research findings
The length of the proposal should be no longer than 12 pages, double-spaced (not counting tables, graphs, reference list and other appendices). Submit your proposal **electronically** to me by March 16th.

**Grading:** Following aspects will be considered in grading your research proposal.

i) Organization of the paper

ii) Logical and coherent argument

iii) Soundness of the research design, data collection, sampling method and data analysis strategy

iv) Logical presentation of the implications of the research

v) Writing quality

**Grading Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Research report/article D2L postings (Two entries, P/NP)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. “Developing a research project” exercise (Two entries, P/NP)</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. List of possible literatures to review (P/NP)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Research proposal</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A = 93%  
A- = 90%  
B+ = 87%  
B = 83%  
B- = 80%  
C+ = 77%  
C = 73%  
C- = 70%  
D+ = 67%  
D = 63%  
D- = 60%  
F WHOOPS