PA552: Analytic Methods in Public Administration (Executive MPA)  
Winter 2014 (1/4, 1/18, 2/1)  
Location: Cramer 401

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Instructor:</th>
<th>Matthew Jones, Ph.D.</th>
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<td>Office:</td>
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**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 consumer 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 using facilitated discussions and research projects.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

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

- Employ appropriate qualitative and quantitative techniques to investigate, monitor, and manage human, fiscal, technological, information, physical, and other resource use.
- 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 the Exec. MPA requirement.
- 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:**


## COURSE SCHEDULE

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>Suggested Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/3</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>
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| 1/4  | • Introduction to class  
• Why do research?  
• Types of research  
• Overview of research process  
• Role of researchers vs. practitioner  
• Formulating a research problem. | Dane, Intro-Ch.2  
Machi & McEvoy, Intro & Ch.1 | |
| 1/5~1/17 | Research Question (interest statement) Exercise | Post your research question (D2L). |
| 1/18 | • Conceptualizing a research design  
• Literature Review | Dane, Ch. 7-8  
Skim 9-11  
Machi & McEvoy, Ch. 2-5  
Research Methods Knowledge Base/design (link on D2L) | |
| 1/20~2/1 | D2L posting 2: Find a research article for a friend | Post the exercise (D2L).  
Tentative list of literature to review |
| 2/1  | • Sampling  
• Data Collection  
• Reliability and Validity  
• Constructing an instrument for data collection  
• Writing the Research Report | Dane, Chs. 3, 5 & 6 (12, if time)  
Machi & McEvoy, Ch. 6 | |
| (2/9) | | Research proposal with literature review/pre-research |
| (2/16) | | Building Research Capacity Paper |

**NOTE:**
1. **Shaded rows** indicate activities and assignments due for dates we are not meeting face-to-face.
2. **Italicized** characters and (D2L) indicate activities and assignments to be posted on D2L.
3. **Bolded** characters indicate assignments to be placed in D2L Drop Box.
Assignments

1. Research report/article D2L postings (Two entries, 1/4 & 1/20~ 2/1, P/NP)

D2L posting #1
On or before 1/3, 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.

D2L posting #2
During 1/20~ 2/1, post one research report or article that you thought might be useful to one of your classmates’ potential research project. In order to find a research report/article for your classmate, you will have to read their research question posting (due 1/17). 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 1/19, 2/2; P/NP with suggested grade)

Research Question (Interest Statement) Exercise (Due 1/17)
For this exercise you will need to post your focused research question. You may wish to consult the Machi & McEvoy text (chapter 1 exercises). Complete the exercise and post it on D2L.

Grading: This assignment is graded as Pass/No Pass. In other words, if you have the exercises fully completed and posted by the due dates you will get a pass. If you did not post the exercises by the due dates you will get no pass. I will, however, give you some feedback on each one of the exercises with a suggested letter grade. If you get an A on these exercises that means you are on the right track towards your final research proposal paper. If you get a B or C on these exercises, that means there are things you need to think about or improve in order to get a better grade for your final research proposal paper.

3. List of possible literature to review (Due 2/1, 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 2/9, Graded, no longer than 10 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; and
vii) Implications of the research findings.

The length of the proposal should be no longer than 10 pages, double-spaced (not counting tables, graphs, reference list and other appendices). Please upload this assignment to the D2L Dropbox.

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; and
v) Writing quality.

5. Building Research Capacity (Due 2/16, Graded, no longer than 6 pages, double-spaced)

Draft a brief paper on, “Research as an Organizational Lifestyle.” Research can help guide organizations in formulating and evaluating strategy, which subsequently creates organizational knowledge. James March posits that the greatest threat organizations face is uncertainty. Uncertainty can be defined as the difference between the information the organization possesses and the information it needs. Surely, evaluating constituent needs, regularly evaluating programs, engaging in action research and planning intelligently assist in closing this gap. Yet, building this capacity and culture in an organization can be easier said than done. This is not only an issue of building technical capacity in the area of research; it is also an issue of political mastery, organizational development and leadership (all of which are certainly not mutually exclusive).

For this project, detail how you would create “Research as an Organizational Lifestyle.” Each one of you work in different organizations that serve different clients and have already implemented this lifestyle to varying degrees. This project should explicitly: state the benefits of using research in daily operations of the organization, analyze where the organization is currently at in this endeavor and draw upon material you have mastered in previous courses to formulate your plan.

Grading: Following aspects will be considered in grading your Building Research Capacity paper.

i) Depth of the analysis;
ii) Logical and coherent argument; and
iii) Organization of the paper/ Writing quality.
### Grading Breakdown

1. Research report/article D2L postings (Two entries, P/NP)  
   8 points
2. “Developing a research project” exercise (P/NP)  
   8 points
3. List of possible literatures to review (P/NP)  
   4 points
4. Research proposal  
   40 points
5. Building Research Capacity  
   40 points

**Total**  
100 points

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