Syllabus

School of Public Affairs     Arizona State University

PAF-501 Public Service Research Design
Day: Wednesday    Time: 5:40PM to 8:30PM    Venue: LL-106

Dr. Nicholas O. Alozie     Assistant: Charles Loftus
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Wilson Hall Office 222A
Office Hours: Mon & Wed 3:30PM to 5:30 PM or by appointment

Course Objectives:

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the fundamental theory and methods of empirical research in the social sciences. The course deals with matters concerning both qualitative and quantitative methodology that are relevant to Public Affairs/Administration. Actual topics will include problem formulation and hypothesis testing, research design, fieldwork, survey research, ethics, types, sources, and data reduction techniques. The books and materials assembled for this course are generally considered part of a graduate student’s reference portfolio and should be retained by all students after the course is completed.

Required Texts: These are the earliest suggested versions.


Course Requirements:

Readings: Students benefit more from lectures if required readings are completed prior to the session(s) where the materials are presented. Each student is expected to read accordingly.

Attendance: Class attendance is strongly recommended since exams and other requirements will be based on lecture and class discussions.

Assignments, Grading, and Exams: There will be two in-class examinations. There will be one major assignment (the preparation of a research design). Each student will formulate a problem and design an appropriate research technique for answering the
question(s) posed. There will be two minor assignments during the course of the semester. The final grade will be computed as follows: class attendance and participation, 15%; class assignments, 20%; research design, 20%; first exam, 20%; final exam, 25%.

**Honesty:** Plagiarism is the act of taking ideas and/or written statements from another and passing them off as one's own. Examples of this are failing to cite a source for statements used in a paper and failing to signify a quotation through the use of quotation marks. Anyone engaging in the intellectually dishonest practice will receive a grade of an “E” for the assignment in which it occurs. If you are uncertain of the meaning of this policy, please contact the instructor.

**Course Outline:**

August 27  General Introduction; no assignment

September 3  The Scientific Method: hypotheses, concepts, variables, theories
Assigned Reading: OR – Chapter 1; JJ – Chapters 1-3; Kuhn, all.

September 10 - 17  Research Design: Literature review, sampling, experimentation, reliability, validity
Assigned Reading: OR – Chapters 2, 3, 5; CJ – pp 1-33; JJ – Chapters 5,6,7; Campbell & Stanley, all.

September 24  Data Collection I: Secondary Data
Assigned Reading: OR – Chapter 9; JJ – Chapter 8

October 1-8  Measurement and Scaling
Assigned Reading: OR – Chapters 4, 10; JJ – Chapter 4

October 15  Midterm Examination

October 22-29  Data Collection II: Survey Research
Assigned Reading: OR – Chapters 6,7,8; JJ – Chapters 8, 10

November 5-12  Questionnaire Coding
Handouts

November 19 - 26  Qualitative Methodology: Doing fieldwork; ethnography, etc.
Assigned Reading: JJ – Chapter 9

December 3  Final Examination
Research Design Due