Objective

This course is designed as a supplement to PAF600 and all other courses at its level. Its purpose is to provide a closer, more solid, grounding of some key factors and methodologies necessary for becoming a successful social science researcher today. As a supplement to PAF600 and other courses at its level, it is largely a hands-on, how-to-do, course. Thus, while the PAF600 level material essentially taught students how to gather information, this course teaches students how to organize and analyze that information. Ultimately, the instructor hopes the course will give doctoral students the kind of grounding that makes dissertation writing a meaningful, happier, faster, and more rewarding exercise.

Course Requirements

There are no formal requirements for this course. Final grades are awarded based on attendance (to be very closely monitored) and students’ progress on work-along projects/exercises with the instructor.

Readings: Students are expected to complete any assigned readings relevant to their roles as lead discussants.

Attendance: Class attendance is strongly recommended.

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 using quotation marks. Anyone engaging in this intellectually dishonest practice will receive a grade of "F" for the assignment in which it occurs. If you are uncertain of the meaning of this policy, please contact the instructor.
Materials

- The materials that students have accumulated in previous research methods courses will become reference materials throughout the course.

Material to be purchased:

- One blank floppy disc to be used daily in class.

The following reference materials will be particularly helpful: Newer editions may be available and are encouraged.

- SPSS Base System Guide. (We will be using version 11 of SPSS)
- Samuel Green, Neil Salkind, Theresa Akey, Using SPSS for Windows. Analyzing and Understanding Data. Second edition or later
Lecture Schedule

June 2.  **Becoming a Researcher of Substance**  
Lecture Objectives:  
- taking the fear out of research  
- laying out a research project  
- asking the right question (s)  
- thinking about causal relationships (hypotheses)  
- thinking about evidence  
- seeking the appropriate research design  

June 7.  **Data Collection And Handling**  
Lecture Objectives:  
- quantitative and qualitative data  
- time-series/cross-sectional data  
- original versus secondary data  
- designing data for computer analysis (also time-series)  
- units of analysis and ecological fallacy  
- data and the nature of scientific generalizations  

June 9.  **Telling a Story From Data**  
Lecture Objectives:  
- using descriptive/summary statistics  
- the perils of descriptive/summary statistics  

June 14-16, 21.  **Regression Analysis**  
Lecture Objectives:  
- ols/maximum likelihood estimation  
- hypotheses testing with slopes and R-squares/F-ratio  
- simple regression/multivariate regression  
- regression on paper/regression using the computer  
- simple/partial correlations (also Pearsons)  
- interpretation and use of the intercept  
- interpretation of probabilities  
- the f-ratio  
- levels of significance (one or two-tailed test)  
- the R-square, adjusted R-square, Pseudo R-square  
- the standard error  
- t-statistics  
- interpreting regression coefficients (measurement)  
- comparing the effects of variables directly/standardization  
- degrees of freedom and the intercept  
- creating and using dummy variables (dichotomous, etc)
-using contextual variables
-interaction effects and their interpretation
-using scatter plots
-linear/curve linear computation
-forecasting with regression models
-trouble-shooting/diagnoses (collinearity, etc)

June 23.  **Tabular Presentation of Regression Outcomes**
Lecture Objectives:
-putting tables together
-going from a computer printout to a readable table

June 28  **Questionnaire Preparation And Coding**
Lecture Objectives:
-lying out a questionnaire
-length of the questionnaire
-sequencing questions
-nature of questions themselves

June 30-.  **Thinking About Causal Modeling**
(Last Class)
Lecture Objectives:
-seeking direct, indirect, and total effects
-estimating causal models (path analysis)