

Louisiana State University  
Political Science  
POLI-7964 ▪ Spring 2021  
T 4:30-7:30 ▪ Online

## Research Design

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**Course Description:** The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the processes and techniques necessary to conduct social science research. Specifically, students will learn how to frame a research question, assess methods best suited to research questions, measure concepts, understand data collection strategies, and analyze data.

**Course Objectives:** The major objectives of the course are as follows:

1. To introduce students to research methods used in the social sciences.
2. To enable students to efficiently locate, understand, and evaluate social science research reported in both scholarly publications and in more mainstream outlets (e.g., newspapers).
3. To enable students to critically analyze published research and identify flaws and limitations of previously conducted research.
4. To help students design and conduct research by providing the tools to formulate research questions and develop the appropriate study design and methods (both qualitative and quantitative) needed to generate the data necessary for answering those questions.
5. To encourage students to work with others to both enhance understanding of the materials and to optimize the creativity and fun involved in the research process.
6. To provide students with the knowledge and the ability to conduct and evaluate research in their respective discipline.
7. Demonstrate analytical, verbal, and written skills.

### Course Methods:

To reach these goals, you will:

- Read and discuss weekly assignments;
- Apply a research method by carrying out a short study; and  
Write and present your findings

### Basic Expectations:

You can expect me (the professor) to:

- Arrive on time and be prepared for class;
- Follow the syllabus and alert you in advance of any changes;
- Respond as quickly and as thoroughly as possible to your work and concerns; and
- Evaluate your work fairly according to clearly communicated expectations.

I expect you (the student) to:

- Be both prompt and prepared for class;
- Place all cell-phones, CD players, and MP3 players in your book-bag;
- Read and follow the written syllabus and ask any clarifying questions in advance;
- Take the initiative in communicating with me before problems get out of control; and
- Evaluate your own work according to the expectations of the course.

I'm happy to email with you about problems, questions, confusions or concerns about the class. Remember, this course is 100 percent synchronous online, and therefore, the primary mode of communication is email and Zoom office hours.

### **Policies & Procedures:**

Missing an Examination- In the event of an in-class missed exam the student should contact the instructor as soon as possible. It is your responsibility to find me; do not expect me to track you down. You must take exams when they are scheduled. If you miss an examination due to an emergency (car accident, emergency room visit, sick child, or death in the family) you must: (1) contact me within 24 hours of your absence, and (2) provide written documentation of your absence.

Attendance & Participation- Class attendance is regarded as an obligation as well as a privilege, and all students are expected to attend regularly and punctually to all classes. Failure to do so may jeopardize your grade. Absences of military personnel are reported in accordance with university rules. These guidelines follow University policy as described in the general catalog. I encourage meaningful and positive class participation. Participation will heavily be considered at the end of the semester. Meaningful and positive class participation needs to be done in an organized matter. Please raise your hand to be acknowledged. Talking out of turn will not be tolerated. Please respect me and your colleagues when they are speaking.

Student Code of Conduct- Chatting (side conversations), reading the paper, sleeping, wearing personal stereos, playing with cell-phone, and generally not paying attention during lecture can be distracting not only to me but to your fellow classmates. Students who must leave earlier than the end of the class period should inform me before lecture begins; otherwise they will be "absent." Please do not pack-up before I indicate that class has been dismissed. Please turn off cell-phones before coming into class. I expect that you will maintain the highest standards of intellectual honesty in this class. Anyone involved in any act of academic dishonesty as outlined by the University's Student Conduct Code will be referred to the Dean of Students.

Students with disabilities: If you are seeking classroom accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act, you are required to register with the Office of Disability Services (ODS). The ODS is located in 112 Johnston Hall. Phone is 225/ 578-5919. To receive academic accommodations for this class, please obtain the proper ODS forms and meet with me at the beginning of the semester.

Copyright Statement- Students shall adhere to the laws governing the use of copyrighted materials. They must ensure that their activities comply with fair use and in no way infringe on the copyright or other proprietary rights of others and that the materials used and developed at Louisiana State University contain nothing unlawful, unethical, or libelous, and do not constitute any violation of any right of privacy.

### **Required Texts:**

- Neuman, W. Lawrence. 2009. Understanding Research. (New York: New York, Pearson Education Inc.).
- Additional readings posted on Moodle [Denoted as **M** on reading schedule].

**Evaluation:**

Participation (110 Points): Your grade will be based on your attentiveness, involvement, and attitude. I expect everyone to attend all classes via online. There is no distinction between an “excused” or “unexcused” absence, and you don’t need to tell me when or why you’ll be absent. If you miss class for any reason, you are expected to obtain any missed material from other students in the class. I will not provide a summary of the class during my office hours. In order to obtain participation points, you have to be present in class, and you must have read the material before class and add your voice to the classroom discussion. I will at random ask you to answer questions and share your input, and consistently not having a response will greatly affect your participation points. There will be 11 class periods in which you can earn 10 points for participation (totaling 110 points). In order to receive participation points, you are to attend class via Zoom the entire class time by being visible on the computer screen and participate.

Assignments (65 Points):

1. **Literature Review Assignment** (25 points): You are to submit a draft of the literature review and be prepared to present. This assignment is due on Moodle by Tuesday, March 2. The literature review must be at least 5 pages with citations. It will be due on Moodle by Tuesday, March 2, by 11pm.
2. **Submit Revised Literature Review with Research Question and Analysis Section** (15 points): Please submit a revised literature review with a question and analysis (i.e., how you plan on analyze your data). It will be due on Moodle by Tuesday, March 16, by 11pm.
3. **Research Findings Presentation** (25 Points): You will present using PowerPoint. This includes the: research question, methods, analysis, and results. These presentations will be due on Tuesday, April 20, and you must **submit your research presentation on Moodle by 11pm.**

Final Research Paper (100 Points): Please submit your final research by Tuesday, April 27 by 11pm on Moodle.

**Grading Scale:** In order to calculate your grade, you will divide your total points earned by the total points allowed--which is 275 points.

- The following grading scale will be used to determine the letter grade for the course:

The grading scale is as follows:

97-100 A+  
 93-96.99 A  
 90-92.99 A-  
 87-89.99 B+  
 83-86.99 B  
 80-82.99 B-  
 77-79.99 C+

73-76.99 C  
 70-72.99 C-  
 67-69.99 D+  
 63-66.99 D  
 60-62.99 D-  
 0-59.99 F

**Course Schedule:**

<b>Class Meetings:</b>	<b>Readings Due:</b>
Tuesday, Jan. 12	Introductions -Discussion of Syllabus ✓ Research Proposal Guidelines [M] ✓ Sample Research Proposal [M]
<b>Section 1: Defining Research, Research Errors &amp; Ethics</b>	
Tuesday, Jan. 19	<b>Topic 1:</b> What is Research? <b>Topic 2:</b> Errors in Research <b>Topic 3:</b> Research Ethics <b>Readings:</b> <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 1:</u> “Why do Research” (pg. 1-22). <b>Topic 3:</b> Ethics in Research <b>Readings:</b> <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 3:</u> “Becoming an Ethical Researcher” (pg. 60-84). <u>Article:</u> Brandt, Allan M. Racism and Research: The Case of the Tuskegee Syphilis Study [M] <u>Human Subjects Document:</u> <i>The Nuremberg Code (1949)</i> [M]
<b>Section 2: The Research Process</b>	
Tuesday, Jan. 26	<b>Topic 1:</b> Decide The Following: Topic, Problem, Purpose, & Questions <b>Topic 2:</b> Conduct A Literature Review <b>Topic 3:</b> Develop a Hypothesis <b>Topic 4</b> Conceptualize & Operationalize <b>Readings:</b> <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 2:</u> “Planning a Study” (pg. 24-54). <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 4:</u> “Sampling: How to Select a Few to Represent the Many” (pg. 86-109). <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 5:</u> “Measuring Social Life” (pg. 112-139).
Tuesday, Feb. 2	<b>Topic 1:</b> Decide The Following: Topic, Problem, Purpose, & Questions <b>Topic 2:</b> Conduct A Literature Review <b>Topic 3:</b> Develop a Hypothesis

	<p><b>Topic 4</b> Conceptualize &amp; Operationalize</p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 2:</u> “Planning a Study” (pg. 24-54).  <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 4:</u> “Sampling: How to Select a Few to Represent the Many” (pg. 86-109).  <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 5:</u> “Measuring Social Life” (pg. 112-139).</p>
<p><b>Section 3: Modes of Observation</b></p>	
Tuesday, Feb. 9	<p><b>Topic<sub>1</sub>:</b> Survey Method</p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 6:</u> “The Survey: Asking People” (pg. 142-176).  <b><u>In-Class Article Analysis Activity:</u></b>  <u>Article 9:</u> Today’s Husband More Involved in Household Duties Than Post-WW II (Moore, pg. 73-76). [M]</p> <p><b>Expectations of Methods and Analysis Section Discussion</b></p>
Tuesday, Feb. 23	<p><b>Topic<sub>2</sub>:</b> Experimental Method</p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 7:</u> “The Experiment” (pg. 178-202).  <b><u>In-Class Article Analysis Activity:</u></b>  <u>Article 14:</u> The Role of Peer Conformity in the Decision to Ride with an Intoxicated Driver (Powell and Drucker, pg. 97-100). [M]</p>
Tuesday, March 2	<p><b>Literature Review Due</b>  -5-page write-up due on March 2</p> <p><b>Presentation of Literature Review</b></p>
Tuesday, March 9	<p><b>Topic<sub>3</sub>:</b> Focus Group Method</p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  <u>Article:</u> “Focus Group Fundamentals” [M]  <u>Article:</u> Simon, Judith. “How To Conduct a Focus Group.” [M]</p> <p><b><u>In-Class Article Analysis Activity:</u></b>  <u>Article 2:</u> Psychological and Spiritual Growth in Women Living with HIV (Dunbar et al. pg. 10-17). [M]</p>
Tuesday, March 16	<p><b>Topic<sub>4</sub>:</b> Content Analysis Method</p> <p><b>Readings:</b>  <u>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 8:</u> “Research with Nonreactive Measures” (pg. 204-228).  <b><u>In-Class Article Analysis Activity:</u></b>  <u>Article 5:</u> Racial and Gender Biases in Magazine Advertising: A Content-Analytic Study (Plous and Neptune, pg. 38-46). [M]</p> <p><b>Submit Revised Literature Review with Research Question and Analysis Section</b></p>
Tuesday, March 23	<p><b>Topic<sub>5</sub>:</b> Naturalistic Observation Method</p> <p><b>Readings:</b></p>

	<p>Neuman, W. Lawrence Chapter 10: “Observing People in Natural Settings” (pg. 262-290).</p> <p><i>Article</i>: “Qualitative Research Methods: A Data Collector’s Field Guide.” [M]</p> <p><i>Article</i>: E. Scott Geller, Nason W. Russ, and Mark G. Altomari. 1986. “Naturalistic Observations of Beer Drinking Among College Students.” <i>Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis</i>: 19: 391-396. [M]</p> <p><b><u>In-Class Article Analysis Activity:</u></b></p> <p><i>Article 12</i>: An Unobtrusive Measure of Racial Behavior in a University Cafeteria (Page, pg. 89-91). [M]</p>
Tuesday, March 30	<b>Topic: Discussion of Results Section</b>
Tuesday, April 6	Work on paper
Tuesday, April 13	Work on paper
Tuesday, April 20	Findings Presentations Due (via PowerPoint) Due by 11pm on Moodle
Tuesday, April 27	Paper Due Moodle by 11pm