

The Graduate School of Political Management

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

M.P.S. in Legislative Affairs
Spring 2022 Semester

Course Name: Research Methods
Course Number: LGAF 6204.LH
3 Credits

Class Day/Time: Tuesday 6 to 8

BASIC INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

Instructor

Susan Wiley, PhD.

Contact Information

Phone Number: Home 703/280-5652

Email Address: wiley@gwu.edu

Communication

Best contact is email. My home number is above. Please do not call after 9 pm.

Blackboard Site

A Blackboard course site has been set up for this course. Each student is expected to check the site throughout the semester, as Blackboard will be the primary venue for outside classroom communications between the instructor and the students. Students can access the course site at <https://blackboard.gwu.edu>. Support for Blackboard is available at 202-994-4948 or helpdesk.gwu.edu.

Academic Integrity

All members of the university community are expected to exhibit honesty and competence in their academic work. Students have a special responsibility to acquaint themselves with, and make use of, all proper procedures for doing research, writing papers, and taking exams. Members of the community will be presumed to be familiar with the proper academic procedures and will be held responsible for applying them. Deliberate failure to act in accordance with such procedures will be considered academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty is defined as “cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one’s own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information.” Acts of academic dishonesty are a legal, moral, and intellectual offense against the community and will be prosecuted through the proper university channels. The University Code of Academic Integrity can be found at <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>.

Support for Students with Disabilities

GW’s Disability Support Services (DSS) provides and coordinates accommodations and other services for students with a wide variety of disabilities, as well as those temporarily disabled by injury or illness. Accommodations are available through DSS to facilitate academic access for students with disabilities.

Additional information is available at www.gwu.edu/~dss. If you require a DSS accommodation please let me know the first week of the semester.

Attendance Policy

I will take roll every Tuesday and I expect you to “attend” class and class attendance will count towards grades “on the margin.” If we move to a virtual format please have your cameras on during class.

Course Evaluation

At the end of the semester, students will be given the opportunity to evaluate the course through GW’s online course evaluation system. It is very important that you take the time to complete an evaluation. Students are also encouraged to provide feedback throughout the course of the semester by contacting any/both of the following:

Dr. Casey Burgat
Director, Legislative Affairs Program
e-mail: cburgat@gwu.edu

Suzanne Farrand
Director of Academic Administration, GSPM
sfarrand@gwu.edu | 202-994-9309

THE COURSE

Course Description and Overview

The primary objective of this class is to make students informed consumers of empirical research. During the course of the semester we will cover philosophy of science, research design, measurement and data collection, and introductory descriptive and inferential statistics. In terms of the statistical component, no formal mathematics training beyond high school algebra is expected. It is not my intention to train you as statisticians, but to give you a basic grounding in issues of sampling, conceptualization and measurement, experimental research designs, quasi-experimental research designs, correlational research designs, data collection methods, and basic issues in statistics.

Course Learning Objectives

1. Understand the meaning of validity in research and the four types of research validity
2. Know the components of and the uses of the three major types of research design and how and why they differ with respect to internal and external validity
3. Have a basic understanding of various types of data collection and the advantages and disadvantages of each.
4. Learn how to interpret basic univariate, bivariate, and multivariate descriptive statistics.
5. Know and be able to apply the steps and logic of hypothesis testing and learn how to construct simple confidence intervals

Course Requirements Evaluation and Grading

If you have a background in research methods and statistics there is a test-out exam available for the course. If you have completed a graduate level research methods class and earned at least a "B" you should not be in this class. It will be waived.

Grades will be determined on the following basis:

- 40% Exam I
- 40% Exam II
- 20% Homework Assignments

The exams will be in-class, closed book, timed exams. If your job or a family situation requires you to be absent on one of the exam dates please let me know and we will schedule a make-up date.

Homework assignments will include simple exercises applying the concepts we discuss in class. Assignments should be submitted in a word doc to my email wiley@gwu.edu on or before the specified due date. Homework assignments and the exams will count as the asynchronous portion of the class if we move to virtual.

CLASS POLICIES

I operate on the assumption that you have heard all announcements made in class with respect to assignments and/or changes in schedule. You do not need to contact me if you will not be in class. You do need to contact a classmate for class notes, handouts, and announcements.

I do not give extra credit assignments.

You will need an inexpensive calculator for the midterm and the final. You may not use your cell phone, an IPOD, or a PDA on the exams. Also, cell phones must be turned off in class.

If you are having a problem with either the readings or the class assignments please inform me when the problem arises, i.e., do not wait until the day of the exam. My home phone number and my E-mail address are at the top of the syllabus. Please feel free to contact me when the need arises. (Please do not call my home number after 9:00 pm).

I will send messages concerning the class schedule and exercise due dates to your GW email account through Blackboard. I cannot add your personal email account to Blackboard. Please check your GW email account. I will post a brief list of terminology and the class power points to Blackboard for each class.

Required Text and Learning Materials

There is one text available through the GW bookstore:

Chava Frankfort-Nachmias and David Nachmias, Research Methods in the Social Sciences

Note: The edition in the book store is the 7th edition. If you can find an earlier edition, that will be fine. The basic content has not changed.

Supplemental Text and Learning Materials

Additional readings are available on Blackboard

Class recordings and notes

Lecture power points will be available on Blackboard.

Tentative Course Calendar*

*The instructor reserves the right to alter course content and/or adjust the pace to accommodate class progress. Students are responsible for keeping up with all adjustments to the course calendar.

READING ASSIGNMENTS AND COURSE OUTLINE

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| January 11 | Introduction Brief Overview Science as Method Nachmias & Nachmias Chapter 1 |
| January 18 | Issues in Logic |
| January 25 | Conceptual Foundations of Research Nachmias & Nachmias Chapters 2, 3 |
| February 1 | Measurement Nachmias and Nachmias Chapter 7 |
| February 8 | Sampling Nachmias and Nachmias Chapter 8 |
| February 15 | Generalization and Explanation: Experimental, Correlational and Quasi-experimental Research Designs Nachmias and Nachmias Chapters 5, 6 |
| February 22 | Univariate Descriptive Statistics Standard Normal Curve Nachmias and Nachmias Chapter 15 Blalock: <u>Social Statistics</u> , Chapter 7 |
| March 1 | Review for exam one Start bivariate description |
| March 8 | Exam 1 (will cover material through Univariate description) |
| March 15 | Spring Break |
| March 22 | Z Distribution Bivariate Description: Contingency Tables for Nominal and Ordinal Variables Linear Regression |

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| | Nachmias and Nachmias Chapter 16 White: <u>Political Analysis</u> , Chapter 11 pages 305-324 |
| March 29 | Complete Bivariate Multivariate Analysis Nachmias and Nahmias Chapter 16 White: <u>Political Analysis</u> , Chapter 11 pages 324-332 |
| April 5 | Statistical Inference The Binomial Distribution Hypothesis testing Survey Research Blalock: <u>Social Statistics</u> , Chapter 8 White: <u>Political Analysis</u> , Chapter 12 |
| April 12 | Survey Research: Mechanics of Public Opinion Polling, Polling and the Democratic Process Data Collection: Secondary Analysis, Focus Groups, Content Analysis Ethics in Research Review for Final Nachmias and Nachmias Chapters 4, 10, 11 and 13 https://www.aapor.org/Education-Resources/Reports/An-Evaluation-of-2016-Election-Polls-in-the-U-S.aspx https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/08/05/key-things-to-know-about-election-polling-in-the-united-states/ |
| April 19 | Catch up and review for exam 2 |
| April 26 | Exam Two |

Copyright Statement

Unless explicitly allowed by the instructor, course materials, class discussions, and examinations are created for and expected to be used by class participants only. The recording and rebroadcasting of such material, by any means, is forbidden.