PPOLG 630 Research Methods I

Spring 2020 | Amit Patel

Course Information

Credit Hours: 3 | Online Course: NO | M03-0440 PP Conf Room | Mondays 1:00 to 3:30 pm | Blackboard

Instructor Information

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Course Overview

Public policy research is distinctive in both its choice of questions and what constitutes a satisfactory answer. Though it follows general scientific principles of social sciences, there is no single paradigm in terms of research methods for public policy. It is not merely applied economics or political science either. Effective policy research requires familiarity with a wide variety of methods and an ability to often combine them appropriately to answer specific policy relevant research questions at hand. This course will emphasize empirical research since the vast majority of policy dissertations are empirical rather than theoretical in nature. The course covers a wide range of methods that are most commonly used for public policy research and illustrates how they can be used individually and jointly in policy research.

Doctoral students can make remarkable stride at the beginning of their dissertation research if they can develop strengths and conquer weaknesses that often inhibit good research question formulation. Policy research is more than the identification of an interesting topic and the collection of a relevant data set; two of the most common starting points for many doctoral dissertations. As a new researcher, it is okay to have those two serving as starting points. However, your goal is to start your proposal with a research question that is analytically sensible, policy relevant, and grows from and contributes to a specific body of literature in your field of study. The course will then have a strong emphasis on this single but most important point: finding such a holy grail in the form of a solid research question.

The official title of this course is somewhat sketchy; it should be ‘Public Policy Research: Design and Methods’ in my opinion. I say this because even if the major goal of the course is to learn about variety of research methods, it is equally important to enhance your skills at framing a good policy research question and coming up with a rigorous strategy to answer it. This process is understood as research design and is covered in the first part of this course. Second part introduces you to a wide variety of research methods that are commonly used in public policy research. The purpose is to introduce you what exists out there, rather than taking a deep dive into a specific method. This course is more like a beer tasting flight that enables you to later chose the ones you like for your 22 Oz glass (read: dissertation research). Wait a minute, what if you liked wines and I offered you a beer flight? Well, an evening (read: a semester) is too short for both a beer flight and a wine tasting. The good news: there is a sequel to this course next semester, Research Methods II.

Finally, there are two important but unrelated cross-cutting themes that we will never lose sight of: a) developing good research habits, and b) trans-disciplinarity. There will not be separate sessions on either of these cross-cutting themes, but they will keep surfacing time and again in exercises, assignments, and everything we do in this course throughout the semester. Developing good research habits such as conquering procrastination, breaking a writing block and developing writing routines, seeking guidance from advisors, taking criticism constructively, to name a few, require practice. We will use this course to cultivate some of these habits. Second, trans-disciplinarity is strongly emerging as a preferred mode of inquiry in the research enterprise today. If you follow major research projects in public policy or read announcements of funding opportunities, you might notice that there is a clear shift towards trans-disciplinarity. Today’s policy challenges are complex, and no single discipline has policy solutions for many of these challenges. Consequently, trans-disciplinarity is increasingly getting importance in our field. Developing an aptitude for transcending your disciplinary boundaries today will better prepare you for tomorrow’s research enterprise in my opinion. This course will help you to move in that direction because such a move requires you to think about your methods differently.

Course Materials

Please purchase all three of the required textbooks listed below. You should plan to have them latest by beginning of the second week in the semester. You could get them either from the bookstore or from Amazon.

*Required Textbooks:*

1. Ragin, C and Amoroso, L (2019). Constructing Social Research, 3rd edition, ISBN: 9781483379302

2. Fowler, F (2014) Survey Research Methods, 5th edition, ISBN: 9781452259000

3. Yin, R (2018) Case Study Research & Applications, 6th edition, ISBN: 9781506336169

In addition to the chapters from these books, assigned readings for each week include a number of articles, book chapters and multimedia that may be accessed on-line, on course website, or from the library. Some of them are required, some are recommended (they are clearly marked in the syllabus as recommended). As we progress in the semester and I tailor full-length lesson plans for each session, I plan to add more materials to the current list (they will not require additional book purchases on your part, I will post them on course website). Please consider current list as a starting point only. Of course, I will be mindful of keeping overall reading load in tune with the credit hours.

Schedule at a Glance

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Session | Topic | Assignments Due |
| **Part I. Research Design** | | | |
| 01/27 | 1 | Introduction | - |
| 02/03 | 2 | Goals and Process of Research | Memo |
| 02/10 | 3 | Basics of Research Design | One Page Research Proposal, Memo |
| 02/17 | \*\*\* President’s Day – No Class \*\*\* | | |
| **Part II. Research Methods** | | | |
| 02/24 | 4 | Survey Research I | Peer Review, Memo |
| 03/02 | 5 | Survey Research II | Revised One Page Proposal, Memo |
| 03/09 | 6 | Interviewing | Research Critique (5 pm FRI, 13th Mar), Memo |
| 03/16 | \*\*\* Spring Break – No Class \*\*\* | | |
| 03/23 | 7 | Case Study Research I | Draft Proposal Stage 1, Memo |
| 03/30 | 8 | Case Study Research II | Memo |
| 04/06 | 9 | Scholarship Skills | Peer Review |
| 04/13 | 10 | Experiments | Draft Proposal Stage 2, Memo |
| 04/20 | \*\*\* Patriot Day – No Class \*\*\* | | |
| 04/27 | 11 | Focus Group Discussions +  Writing Effective Research Proposal |  |
| 05/04 | 12 | Methods Medley |  |
| **Part III. Nuts and Bolts of a Research Proposal** | | | |
| 05/11 | 13 | Proposal Defense |  |
| 05/18 | 14 | No class | Final Proposal Due |

Learning Objectives

You chose to pursue doctorate in public policy because (my best guess is that) you are interested in conducting original policy research. I hope this course will inspire you to become a policy scholar who believes in informing policy debates through rigorous and policy relevant research using sound scientific methods. Consequently, this course is organized around several core competencies that a good policy scholar must have. After successful competition of the course, you should have knowledge and understanding about:

* the basic components of the scientific method particularly in the field of public policy
* the role of theory in social science research
* what constitutes a ‘good’ policy research question
* commonly used methods used in policy research
* how policy researchers make inferences, identify biases, and distinguish causation from correlation

and, you should have skills and abilities to:

* consume policy research published in variety of forms and identify their strengths and limitations
* formulate a good research question for your own research proposals
* review the existing literature related to your research question, to identify gaps in literature, and to explain how your proposed work could add value to it
* formulate testable hypotheses and design strategies to test them
* identify ethical issues and modify your research strategy to address them in your research projects
* develop budgets both in terms of time and monetary resources required to carry out your proposed research
* communicate your research proposals to variety of audiences including internal and external academic audiences as well as funding agencies, both orally and in writing.

Teaching Style and Pedagogical Approach

I will present main themes of the week in a nutshell using interactive discussion format. I will be asking provocative questions that are meant to generate debate and discussion; consequently, the success of this course will heavily rely on your participation in the classroom. While I plan to cover all the major themes, lecturing will be minimal, and by no means it will be a replacement for readings. Rather, I will use readings as starting point to get deeper into what is involved. The interactive discussion segment can advance only through informed interactions with you. If you come unprepared, it is certain that you will not get much out of this segment. Even worse, you will find it hard to follow the next segment that requires you to put principles in practice through a guided workshop.

Your participation in interactive discussion encompasses questions and comments that demonstrate knowledge of – though not necessarily agreement with – assigned course readings or other information that sheds light on a topic relevant to the course. Remember, public policy researchers are professionals who must be able to speak effectively in small groups, to make presentations of their work and, to think on their feet. Participants are expected to contribute to discussions and will be required to present their views on each week’s assigned readings. Class participation is critical to succeed in this course.

Another important feature of this course is that we will learn from practicing the research process in a guided workshop. We will use active learning format where you will be on driving seat while I serve as a facilitator. You will use research area of your liking and put principles in practice by engaging in variety of exercises, many of them will require you to work in a pair, convene as a group to reflect, and close the loops in our understanding of the week’s theme before we depart.

In most classes, we will have short clips from popular films as a starting point for substantial discussions about the theme of that week. I will be posting relevant films and clips, add points to ponder on course website as we move along. There is a specific section on course website where you could find more information. While watching entire films are not necessary, most films that I am using for this course are very edutaining in nature. I highly recommend them when you have some free-time, now or in the summer.

I will be sharing several of the “habitus” and skills that I have observed in other researchers or practiced in my own research endeavors that could make you more productive and efficient at conducting research. They are practical tips and will be shared in the form of short videos (5 to 7 minutes) in a special online session on course website. Watching them is in class time is highly recommended but it is asynchronous session so you can choose to watch at your own flexible schedule. Skills are as important as knowledge in our profession.

All in-class exercises and assignments are primarily geared towards providing practice of research process. Some sessions will also have research from the real world as assigned readings for two purposes: first, to strengthen your ability to link abstract concepts and textbook guidance to actual practice of policy research and second, to showcase examples that you could use to model your own research strategy.

This class is a graduate seminar and takes the form of a structured discussion of the assigned readings. There are two distinct and required forms of this structured discussion, weekly memos and in-class discussion during interactive lecture. The weekly memos will prepare you for expressing your ideas and critical arguments in a written form. In-class discussions will prepare you for presenting your arguments verbally to others who may or may not agree with you. It is essential that you complete your assigned readings for each week, prepare a weekly memo, and submit it on time. While I encourage you to discuss the readings in study groups, you will submit your own memo. Both online and in-class participation are weekly assignments and carries significant weight on your final grade.

As a guiding principle, for EACH hour you spend in the classroom, please set aside TWO additional hours in your weekly schedule for reading and brainstorming about the ideas presented in your readings.

Assignments

There will be several assignments designed to assist you in attaining learning outcomes for this course and train you in becoming an effective policy scholar. In particular, they consist of weekly memos, commenting on your colleagues’ memos, critiquing published research, developing and presenting research proposal in writing and orally, and peer reviewing your colleague’s proposals at various stages. Each of these assignments are described in detail below.

*Weekly Memo and Comments:* You will post your weekly memo 24 hours before class i.e. at 1 pm on Sundays on class discussion board. Your memo could be as short as a paragraph or as long as 500 words, but it has to be directly related to the week’s theme. Most importantly, while it could include a short summary of the readings, it should move beyond summaries that contains points to ponder, thought-provoking questions, or examples or additional resources that you would like to share with your peers. You will then respond to one of your colleagues’ weekly memo any time before coming to the class. Your engagement in the online discussion will count towards your participation grade. Weekly notes and comments to your colleagues are graded on a credit/no credit basis. If you post your memo and comment on time, and if it looks like you made a good faith effort, you get credit; otherwise, you do not get credit. At the end of the semester, I will drop your two lowest weekly memos without penalty on your grade. Please use these freebies wisely: save them for illness, travel, crunch time at work or in other classes, or any other circumstances beyond your control.

*Research Critique:* You will read a published journal article and write a response paper (4-5 pages) critiquing the methodology used in the paper. Consider: a) How did the author(s) use of a particular methodology compare with the prescriptive readings for that section of the course? Was anything de-emphasized, or simply left out, of an author(s) use of a particular methodology? b) What are the implications of your critique for the paper's substantive findings? c) If you had done the study, what would you have done differently, and why?

*Research Proposal:* Developing and presenting a research proposal is a major requirement of this course. In order to make it manageable, you will develop it in small parts over the period of entire semester and revise each component at least once before finalizing it at the end of the semester. Overview of each component is described below (more specifics will be provided for each stage as we make progress in the semester):

a. One Page Proposal (Idea and Policy Context): In first stage of the proposal development, you will identify a research topic in the policy area of your interest. You will write one page that introduces the topic and establishes why it is an important policy topic. At this stage, including specific research questions and ideas for data collection and analytical strategies is optional.

b. Revised Proposal (Idea and Policy Context): Incorporate your peer reviewer’s feedback in your revised proposal. At this stage, you should have identified tentative research questions and potential analytical strategies, epistemological stance (your worldview), and start considering theories that might apply to your specific policy research context.

c. Draft Proposal Stage 1: At this stage, start from your revised proposal (b) and add concrete research question(s), Formulate a research question, describe a theoretical framework that helps to think about the question, and develop testable hypotheses. Review the relevant theoretical and empirical academic literature that bears on your research question(s), paying particular attention to any gaps in knowledge where you might be able to add value. The proposal should be 3-5 double spaced pages in length at this stage. You should state and motivate the research question(s), provide a review of the literature that’s relevant to your research question(s). While doing that, please do not just summarize papers. Integrate them into your own discussion of what is widely accepted, what is disputed, and what is still a puzzle. It should also include a discussion on general theoretical and/or epistemological framework that could define how you are looking at the policy research question at hand.

d. Draft Proposal Stage 2: At this stage, revise your draft proposal (c) incorporating peer reviewers’ comments. Major component at this stage is to develop and add a research strategy that uses a mixed method approach i.e. uses both quantitative and qualitative research method(s). Please describe your research strategy in as much detail as you can that is consistent with your research question and theoretical frameworks that you have described in earlier stages.

f. Final Proposal: At this stage, please rewrite the proposal for consistency across sections that flows well and effectively convinces your reader that your research project has higher chances of success if it follows the research design and methods describe in your final proposal and that it has potential to contribute to scholarship and practice in your policy area.

e. NOT REQUIRED as part of changes made in response to COVID-19 public health emergency

g. Oral Proposal Defense: You are required to prepare a 12-minute presentation on your research proposal and present it to the class. We will have 3 minutes for questions and answers from the audience. The goal of this presentation is to convey your research idea, design, and methods orally that is easy to understand to an audience that may be familiar with your proposed research but may not be an expert in your field or your proposed methods. In other words, try to avoid field specific jargons and focus on conveying key concepts in simplest terms possible. As a thumb rule, oral defense should be used to make a convincing case while written proposal can convey technical details of your proposal.

*Peer Review:* There are clear and mutual benefits of reviewing your peer’s work. First, it provides an alternate viewpoint to your peer and second, it makes you think critically about your own proposal. Besides, conducting and seeking peer and expert reviews are standard practices in research enterprise, whether you apply for a grant to external sponsoring organizations or write your dissertation proposal for your committee. Proposals routinely go through multiple reviews and revisions in academia. Consequently, you will conduct peer review twice for a single colleague throughout the semester: first for the one-page proposal and second for the draft proposal stage 1. Sharpening your ability to critically examine other people’s research proposals will inevitably result into writing better proposal of your own. I am your standing reviewer; you will receive my feedback at all stages in addition to reviews by your peer.

Grading Policy

The weight of each assignment on your final grade will be as follows:

1. Weekly Memo (5%) and Comments (5%) – 8 opportunities/6 required **10%**

2. Class Participation (Discussion and workshop) **10%**

3. Research Critique **15%**

4. Research Proposal and Presentation **50%**

a. One Page Proposal (5%)

b. Revised Proposal (5%)

c. Draft Proposal Stage 1 (5%)

d. Draft Proposal Stage 2 (5%)

f. Final Proposal (25%)

g. Oral Proposal Defense (5%)

5. Peer Review **15%**

a. Peer review of one-page proposal (7.5%)

b. Peer review of quantitative section (7.5%)

c. NOT REQUIRED: part of changes made in response to COVID-19 emergency

The final weighted score of assignments and class participation will be converted to a letter grade as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Letter Grade** | **Percentage** | **Quality Points** |
| A | 93-100% | 4.00 |
| A- | 90-92% | 3.75 |
| B+ | 87-89% | 3.25 |
| B | 83-86% | 3.00 |
| B- | 80-82% | 2.75 |
| C+ | 77-79% | 2.25 |
| C | 73-76% | 2.00 |
| F | 0-72% | 0.0 |
| **INC** | A grade of Incomplete (INC) is not automatically awarded when a student fails to complete a course. Incompletes are given at the discretion of the instructor. They are awarded when satisfactory work has been accomplished in the majority of the course work, but the student is unable to complete course requirements as a result of circumstances beyond his/her control. The student must negotiate with and receive the approval of the course instructor in order to receive a grade of incomplete. I will consider this grade only for medical and family emergencies. | N/A |
| IF | Received for failure to comply with contracted completion terms. | N/A |
| W | Received if withdrawal occurs before the withdrawal deadline. | N/A |
| AU | Audit (only by permission) | N/A |
| NA | Not Attending (student appeared on roster, but never attended class. Student is still responsible for tuition and fee charges unless withdrawal form is submitted before deadline. NA has no effect on cumulative GPA.) | N/A |

Code of Conduct and Academic Integrity

It is the expressed policy of the University that every aspect of academic life – not only formal coursework situations, but all relationships and interactions connected to the educational process – shall be conducted in an absolutely and uncompromisingly honest manner. The University presupposes that any submission of work for academic credit is the student’s own and is in compliance with University policies, including its policies on appropriate citation and plagiarism. These policies are spelled out in the Code of Student Conduct here: <https://www.umb.edu/life_on_campus/policies/community/code>. Students are required to adhere to the code of Student Conduct, including requirements for academic honesty, as delineated in the University of Massachusetts Graduate Catalogue and relevant program student handbook(s).

Accommodations

The University of Massachusetts Boston is committed to providing reasonable academic accommodations for all students with disabilities. This syllabus is available in alternate format upon request. If you have a disability and feel you will need accommodations in this course, please contact the Ross Center for Disability Services, Campus Center, Upper Level, Room 211 at 617.287.7430. http://www.umb.edu/academics/vpass/disability/ After registration with the Ross Center, a student can request accommodations at any time; we recommend that students inform the professor of the need for accommodations by the end of the Drop/Add period to ensure that accommodations are available for the entirety of the course.

Detailed Schedule

Part I. Research Design

Session 1, Jan 27: Introduction

Readings: None (Yay!)

In-class Activity: Almereyda, M. (Writer/Director). (2015). *The Experimenter* [motion picture]. United States: BB Film Productions, FJ Productions, Intrinsic Value Films, and Jeff Rice Films. [Trailer and discussion points posted on course website under Edutainment Section]

Condon, B. (Writer/Director). (2004). *Kinsey* [motion picture]. United States/Germany: Fox Searchlight Pictures (presents) Qwerty Films (in association with) N1 European Film Produktions GmbH & Co. KG, Pretty Pictures, American Zoetrope (uncredited), Myriad Pictures (uncredited). [Clip and discussion points posted on course website under Edutainment Section]

Spurlock, M. (Writer/Director). (2004). *Super Size Me* [motion picture]. United States: The Con (presents) (produced by), Kathbur Pictures, and Studio On Hudson (in association with). [Clip and discussion points posted on course website under Edutainment Section].

Howard, R., Goldsman, A., and Nasar, S. (Writers/Directors) (2001). *A Beautiful Mind* [motion picture]. United States: Universal Pictures, DreamWorks, and Imagine Entertainment. [Relevant scene and discussion points posted on course website under Edutainment section]

Wachowski, A., & Wachowski, L. (Writers/Directors). (1999). *The Matrix* [motion picture]. United States: Groucho II Film Partnership, Silver Pictures, Village Roadshow Pictures, and Warner Brothers Pictures. [Construct scene and discussion points posted on course website under Edutainment section]

Steven E. Landsburg, [“Attack of the Giant Shopping Carts!!!”](http://www.slate.com/articles/arts/everyday_economics/2000/04/attack_of_the_giant_shopping_carts.html) *Slate*, April 27, 2000. [A modified and printed hand-out will be distributed in class].

Session 2, Feb 3: Goals and Process of Research

Readings: Ragin, C and Amoroso, Ch. 1,2, and 3.

Brint, S. 2001. “Will and Wile: The Way of the Researcher.” *Teaching Sociology 29, 390-402.*

Elster, J (2007). *Explaining Social Behavior: More Nuts and Bolts of the Social Sciences*. Ch. 1 “Explanation” Pp. 7-31.

Ragin, C (1989). *The Comparative Method: Moving Beyond Qualitative and Quantitative Strategies*. Ch. 2 "Heterogeneity and Causal Complexity".

Recommended: Van Evera, S (1997). *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press. Ch. 1 [handout will be distributed in-class]

Crotty, M. (1998). *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process.* Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications. Ch. 1 [handout will be distributed in class]

In-class Activity: Howard, R., Goldsman, A., and Brown, D. (Writers/Directors). (2006) (Writers/Director). *The Da Vinci Code* [motion picture]. USA, Malta, France, and UK: Columbia Pictures Corporation (presents) Imagine Entertainment, Skylark Productions Government of Malta (with the support of). [Relevant scene and discussion points posted on course website under Edutainment section].

Naim, O. (Writer/Director). (2004). *The Final Cut* [motion picture]. United States, Canada and Germany: Lions Gate Entertainment (present), Cinerenta Medienbeteiligungs KG (in association with) (present) (as Cinerenta) Industry Entertainment (producer), Cinetheta (in association with), Final Cut Productions (uncredited), Milestone Entertainment (production services). [Relevant scene and discussion points posted on course website under Edutainment section].

McCarthy, T. and Singer, J. (Writers/Directors). (2015). *Spotlight* [motion picture]. United States: Participant Media (in association with), First Look Media (in association with), Anonymous Content, Rocklin/Faust,Topic Studios (as First Look Media). [Relevant scenes and discussion points posted on course website under Edutainment section].

Session 3, Feb 10: Basics of Research Design

Readings: Creswell, J. and Creswell, J. (2018). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.* 5th Edition. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications. Ch. 1

Booth, W, Gregory C, Williams, J, Bizup, J and Fitzgerald, W. (2016). *The Craft of Research*. 4th Edition. Chicago, US: University of Chicago Press. Ch. 3, 4, and 16.

Recommended: Abbott, A (2004). *Methods of Discovery Heuristics for the Social Sciences*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company. ISBN 978-0393978148. Ch. 7: “Ideas and Puzzles” [handout will be distributed in-class]

Howard, B (1998). *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You’re Doing It.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press. ISBN 978-2913264045. Ch.4 “Concepts” [handout will be distributed in-class]

In-class Activity: From Topic to Questions (Booth et al 2016, ch 3 – handout will be distributed in-class)

From Questions to a Problem (Booth et al 2016, ch 4 – handout will be distributed in-class)

Elements of Introduction (Booth et al 2016, ch 16 – handout will be distributed in-class)

Research Design in Doctoral Dissertations in Public Policy (brought to class for review)

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Part II. Research Methods

Session 4, Feb 24: Survey Research I: Designing Instruments and Sampling Strategies

Readings: Fowler, F. Ch. 1 – 7

Student Speaker: Marcia D. Mundt, PhD in Public Policy Candidate

Session 5, Mar 2: Survey Research II: Administering and Analyzing

Guest Speaker: Dr. Dragana Bolcic-Jankovic

Readings: Fowler, F. Ch. 8 - 13

Ragin and Amoroso, Ch. 7

Session 6, Mar 9: Interviewing

Guest Speaker: Prof. Amy E. Smith

Student Speaker: Tanushree Bhan, PhD Candidate

Readings: Smith, A. E., & Hatmaker, D. M. (2014). Knowing, doing, and becoming: professional identity construction among public affairs doctoral students. *Journal of Public Affairs Education*, *20*(4), 545-564.

Pratt, Michael G. "From the editors: For the lack of a boilerplate: Tips on writing up (and reviewing) qualitative research." *The Academy of Management Journal*, Vol. 52, No. 5 (2009): 856-862.

Weiss, R (1995). Learning from Strangers. The Art and Method of Qualitative Interview Studies. New York: The Free Press, Chapters 1-3: “Introduction”, “Respondents: Choosing Them and Recruiting Them”, “Preparation for Interviewing”.

Charmaz, K. “Qualitative Interviews and Grounded Theory Analysis.” In (Jaber F. Gubrium and James A. Holtein, Eds.) *Inside Interviewing. New Lenses, New Concerns.* Thousand Oaks: CA. Sage Publications.

Optional: Warren, M. (2010). *Fire in the Heart: How White Activists Embrace Racial Justice.* Ch.1, 2 and Appendix.

Session 7, Mar 23: Case Study Research I: Design and Preparation

Readings: Yin, R. Ch. 1 – 3.

Session 8, Mar 30: Case Study Research II: Collecting, Analyzing and Reporting Evidence

Guest Speaker: Prof. Michael Ahn

Readings: Yin, R. Ch. 4 – 6.

Ahn, Michael J., and Stuart Bretschneider. "Politics of e‐government: E‐government and the political control of bureaucracy." *Public Administration Review* 71.3 (2011): 414-424.

Session 9, Apr 6: Scholarship Skills

Readings: None

Topics: 1. Staying on top of your field with **Google Scholar**

2. Reference Management with **Zotero** (and Mendeley and EndNote)

3. Manage your Dissertation Files

4. Finding policy relevant data from governments, multi-lateral agencies and data repositories

5. LexisNexis (NexusUni)

6. Getting to know and getting known in your field with Professional Social Networking sites

7. How to keep research and data secure online

Session 10, Apr 13: Experimental Design

Readings: Frank, B and Peterson, L (2000). *Principles of Research Design in the Social Sciences.* Chapter 2 "Experiments" pp. 14-30.

Green, J (2010). "Points of Intersection between Randomized Experiments and Quasi-Experiments" *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Field Experiments in Comparative Politics and Policy 628: 97-111.

Tama, L and Brooks-Gunn, J (2003). "Moving to opportunity: an experimental study of neighborhood effects on mental health." *American Journal of Public Health* 93.9: 1576-1582.

Bozeman and Scott P (1992). "Laboratory Experiments in Public Policy and Management" *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 2(3):293-313

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Session 11, Apr 27: Conducting Focus Group Discussions + Writing Effective Research Proposals

Readings: Krueger, R and Mary A. (2000). *Focus Groups. A Practical Guide for Applied Research, Third Edition.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Kellogg W, O'Brien K and Toth K (2006). "The Use of Constituent Focus Groups for More Effective Program Planning and Management: A Case Study of the Clean Ohio Revitalization Fund." *Public Performance & Management Review* 30(1): 96-120.

Locke, L, Spirduso, W and Silverman, S (2007). Proposals that Work. *A Guide for Planning Dissertation and Grant Proposals*, Fifth Edition. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications. Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 9.

Session 12, May 4: Methods Medley

Topics: 1.”Big Data” aka “Large-scale Datasets” and less conventional data sources

2. Simulation Methods

3. Spatial Pattern Analysis

4. Social Network Analysis

5. Integrated Assessments

6. Congregation of outside data for content analyses

7. Turning case studies into data for quantitative simulations

Part III. Nuts and Bolts of Research Proposal

Session 13, May 11: Proposal Defense

Session 14, May 18: NO CLASS, Written Proposal Due via Blackboard