

Research Methods - Ways of Knowing!

Research Methods
POLS 4396.060

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The best way to contact is by email or Canvas messaging.

Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 11a to 2p AND by appointment.

Course Information

This is a comprehensive course on research methods for social science disciplines. The course covers various methods and approaches to study design, data collection, and analysis. Students will devote equal attention to both qualitative and quantitative methods. The central purpose of the course is to provide students with a practical, step-by-step guide through all stages of the research process. This includes formulating questions, choosing methods, recruiting participants, analyzing the data, and writing the results.

Required Textbook

Social Research Methods by Alan Bryman, Edward Bell, Jennifer Reck, and Jessica Fields

Publication Date - 03 September 2021

ISBN: 9780190853662

Course Requirements

Students are required to read and note each chapter of the text and complete a "portfolio exercise." This course uses writing as a thinking and learning tool. Each portfolio exercise is designed to guide the student through each step of devising a research project, and each portfolio prompt directs them to think and write about their chosen research topic and the chapter's concepts. The prompts are a scaffolded set of exercises that should support a student in writing a research proposal.

Successful students will complete each assigned portfolio assignment and write and submit a research proposal.

Assignments and Assessment of Learning:

Portfolio Exercise Memos: 70%

Research Topic Defined & Meeting with Professor Sterken: 10%

Final Research Proposal: 20%

Course Schedule: This is an asynchronous online course. Each assignment has due dates; late assignments will be docked one letter grade. However, you can elect to work ahead of the scheduled due dates if that works best for your schedule. The course requires much reading and writing, so please plan accordingly. I am looking forward to working with you and reading your work! Please email me with questions or concerns or meet me in my office.

Learning Outcomes

- describe the role of empirical research in the creation of knowledge;
- discuss the place of theory in social research, including theory-testing and theory-building;
- explain the value of and difference between deductive and inductive reasoning;
- explore qualitative and quantitative approaches to research;
- identify qualities of strong research questions;
- discuss the role of values, politics, and practical considerations in the research process and
- appreciate the importance of social research in making sense of the world.

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