



Oregon State University
Ecampus

Course Name: Applied Research Methods

Course Number: PPOL 524

Credits: 4

Instructor name: Ana Spalding

Instructor email: ana.spalding@oregonstate.edu

Link to instructor website: <https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/spp/sociology/ana-k-spalding>

Course Description

Application of sociological theory, concepts, and methods. Topics vary but may include program evaluation, social impact assessment, policy analysis, focus group research, survey research, among others.

Detailed Course Description

Applied social science is about putting social science methods to work collecting information about problems that people face in the everyday world and then using the resulting understanding to help ease those problems through changes in social policy or other practices. This course will explore how social science research methods can be used for effective problem solving. At the end of the course, you should be able to design a client-focused research project using multiple methods and apply those skills to many real life situations. This term you will be developing a project for an off-campus client using mostly primary data that you collect yourself although we may do some comparison with secondary data that has been collected by others.

Note: This course requires that the students come with a project idea and a potential client in week 1. Please contact the instructor in advance if there are any questions/concerns.

Communication

Please post all course-related questions in the General Discussion Forum so that the whole class may benefit from our conversation. Please contact me privately for matters of a personal nature. I will reply to course-related questions within 24-48 hours. I will strive to return your assignments and grades for course activities to you within seven days of the due date.

Course Credits

This course combines approximately 120 hours of instruction, online activities, and assignments for 4 credits.

Technical Assistance

If you experience any errors or problems while in your online course, contact 24-7 Canvas Support through the Help link within Canvas. If you experience computer difficulties, need help downloading a browser or plug-in, or need assistance logging into a course, contact the IS Service Desk for assistance. You can call (541) 737-8787 or visit the [IS Service Desk](#) online.

Learning Resources

The required text covers basic information about applied research methods; use the text as a resource for developing data collection and analysis strategies. The required readings are much more focused on the specific problem; however, they only provide a sketchy background. You are likely to be doing a lot of reading on various topics related to the problem over the course of the term. Weekly reading assignments are listed on the attached schedule.

Required Text: I highly recommend you purchase a copy of this text for your own use; it is a great resource when developing applied research. You can find an ebook version here: <https://osubeaverstore-store.vitalsource.com/products/real-world-research-colin-robson-kieran-mccartan-v9781119144854?term=978-1-118-74523-6>

Robson, C. & McCartan, K. (2016). *Real World Research (4 edition)*. Hoboken: Wiley

Required Readings: available on-line, at class Canvas site, and/or class hand-out.

- a. Edward, Mark. 2011. *Writing for Sociology*. CA: Sage.
- b. Salant, Priscilla and Don Dillman. 1994. How Large Should a Sample Be? Pp 54-58 in *How to Conduct Your Own Survey*. NY: John Wiley and Sons.
- c. Ruane, Janet. 2005. An Informative Few: Sampling. Pp 104-122 in *Essentials of Research Methods: A Guide to Social Science Research*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing.
- d. Lofland et. al. (2005). Asking Questions. Chapter 7 in *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*

Note to prospective students: Please check with the OSU Bookstore for up-to-date information for the term you enroll ([OSU Bookstore Website](#) or 800-595-0357). If you purchase course materials from other sources, be very careful to obtain the correct ISBN.

Course Structure: This course is designed to give you a taste of real life application of social science and methods. You will be working with a "client" this quarter on a project of your choosing. **Because the course lasts only 10 weeks, you will need to choose a client and project in the first week of class.**

You will work closely with your client to develop a Statement of Work (SOW), conduct proposed data collection and analysis, develop a report with your findings, and present these to the client (and other interested parties) in an oral presentation (which you will videotape so that I can grade it). You will give and receive feedback on your research design and implementation through weekly discussion posts of draft assignments. We will spend class time learning about the most popular social science research methods from a practical perspective. You will be required to maintain a weekly research journal as

you complete your project. Not only is this good practice, but it will also serve as a place for you to raise and resolve problems that arise in the project (with my input). I will provide background material as needed, and your text also provides background material if you get stuck. Most of the actual project work will take place out of class. It is up to you to organize your efforts to meet deadlines and produce strong work. It is also up to each of us to develop a good working relationship with classmates for responses to discussion posts to ensure that each student's results meet the client's expectations.

There will be no tests or exams; but there will be deadlines. If you are unable to meet a deadline, it is your responsibility to negotiate a new due date with the instructor and you may not receive feedback from your peers.

Canvas

This course is delivered via Canvas, where you will interact with your classmates and your instructor. You will access the learning materials within the course site, such as the syllabus, class discussions, assignments, projects, and quizzes. To preview how an online course works, visit the [Ecampus Course Demo](#). For technical assistance, please visit [Ecampus Technical Help](#).

Measurable Student Learning Outcomes MPP, OSU Graduate School and NASPA

MPP Learning Outcome # 1: The ability to conduct original policy research that extends the knowledge of both policy and other social science disciplines.

Aligns with:

- OSU Graduate School Learning Outcome # 1: conduct research or produce some other form of creative work.
- NASPAA Universal Required Competency # 3: to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems and make decisions.

MPP Learning Outcome # 5: Skills and experience in designing and presenting in both formal and informal venues with students, practitioners, and community members.

Aligns with:

- NASPAA Universal Required Competency # 1: to lead and manage in public governance.

MPP Learning Outcome # 6: High ethical standards in public policy research, teaching, and service.

Aligns with:

- OSU Graduate School Learning Outcome # 3: be able to conduct scholarly or professional activities in an ethical manner.
- NASPAA Universal Required Competency # 2: to participate in and contribute to the policy process.

MPP Learning Outcome # 7: The development of a public service ethic resulting in student understanding of the significance of working collectively, in collaboration with the public and prioritizing the desires of citizens, communities, and society at large.

Aligns with:

- NASPAA Universal Required Competency # 4: to articulate and apply a public service perspective.

Course Specific

By the end of the term you will be able to:

- a. Develop a statement of work describing a client-focused problem.
- b. Understand how applied researchers integrate theory, research, and practice in an applied research project and apply this learning to your own research project.
- c. Use social science research methods to collect and analyze data.
- d. Create a report and presentation based on the results of your research project to a client.
- e. Work effectively in peer groups to give and receive substantive feedback on emerging drafts.
- f. Critically reflect on the experience of real world research to better prepare for future research endeavors.

All of these objectives will be assessed through your participation in the development and implementation of a client project.

Evaluation of Student Performance

Assignments	Percentage	Points
Final Project	50	250
Journaling	20	100 (@ 10/Week)
8 Discussion, risk waiver, CITI	30	150 (@15/ week)
Total	100	500

Final Project Tasks	Points
Project Idea	20
Scope of Work (SOW)	30
Annotated Bibliography	50
Final Report (100 pts) and Presentation (50 pts)	150
Total	250

Letter Grade

Grade	Points Earned
A	465-500
A-	450-464
B+	435-449
B	415-434
B-	400-414
C+	385-399
C	365-384
C-	350-364
D+	335-349
D	315-334
D-	300-314
F	<300

Course Content

Week	Topic	Reading Assignments	Submissions Due
1	Research paradigms, goals, design strategies.	Robson, pp. 1-3, Ch. 1-2; start reading and collecting articles for annotated bibliography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday: Draft project idea discussion post • Friday: Draft project idea discussion response • Sunday: Final project idea; Weekly journal entry (Research Paradigms)
2	Project design: developing research questions & approach, budgets and timelines	Robson, Ch. 3-4, pp. 395-402; Maxwell Ch. 4 continue reading and collecting articles for annotated bibliography; OSU Rates .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday: Draft SOW discussion post • Friday: Draft SOW discussion response; Meeting with client • Sunday: Share SOW with client; Weekly journal entry (Summary of client meeting and proposed communication strategy); IRB certification; Risk waiver
3	Sampling designs and asking questions: selecting interview participants and developing protocols, sampling survey respondents and designing questionnaires; research tools.	Robson, pp 276-283, Ch. 11-15 (read carefully chapter(s) related to your project methods; skim others); Canvas Readings (not in book) b,c,d; Canvas method-specific reading suggestions from 'useful resources' page.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday: Final SOW (after client review) • Sunday: Final annotated bibliography; Weekly journal entry (SOW for your thesis/essay)
4	Data analysis: preparing, entering, cleaning the data, coding; codebooks	Robson, pp. 406-433; Ch. 17, 18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday: Draft research design discussion post • Friday: Draft research design discussion response • Sunday: Final research design; Weekly journal entry (Progress report)
5	Data analysis: Interpretation; what does it all mean?		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday: Draft questionnaire / protocol discussion post • Friday: Draft questionnaire / protocol discussion response • Sunday: Final questionnaire / protocol Weekly journal entry (progress report)

Week	Topic	Reading Assignments	Submissions Due
6	Writing up: What goes into a compelling research report and presentation	Robson, Ch. 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday: Discussion post about codebook • Friday: Response to discussion post about codebook • Sunday: Final codebook; Weekly journal entry (Progress report)
7	Continued data collection; primary findings		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday: Draft preliminary findings discussion post • Friday: Draft preliminary findings discussion response • Sunday: Final preliminary findings; Weekly journal entry (Progress report)
8	Literature reviews; methods sections; completing data collection; analysis	Canvas reading a; Examples from past reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday: Final intro and literature review; Weekly journal entry (Progress report)
9	Draft full report	Examples from past full reports on Canvas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday: Discussion post about draft final report • Friday: Response to discussion post about draft final report • Sunday: Weekly journal entry (Progress report)
10	Draft full presentation	Examples from past presentations on Canvas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wednesday: Draft presentation and video discussion post • Friday: Draft presentation and video discussion response • Sunday: Weekly journal entry (Reflection)

FINALS WEEK: FINAL REPORT AND FINAL PRESENTATION DUE

Course Policies

Peer Review:

Each week, students are expected to review the project-related draft submissions of their peers.

Discussion Participation

Students are expected to participate in all graded discussions. While there is great flexibility in online courses, this is not a self-paced course. You will need to participate in our discussions on at least two different days each week, with your first post due no later than Wednesday evening, and your second and third posts due by the end of each week.

Incompletes

Incomplete (I) grades will be granted only in emergency cases (usually only for a death in the family, major illness or injury, or birth of your child), and if the student has turned in 80% of the points possible (in other words, usually everything but the final paper). If you are having any difficulty that might prevent you completing the coursework, please don't wait until the end of the term; let me know right away.

Guidelines for a Productive and Effective Online Classroom

Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., in peer reviews discussion, email) in compliance with the university's regulations regarding civility.

Civility is an essential ingredient for academic discourse. All communications for this course should be conducted constructively, civilly, and respectfully. Differences in beliefs, opinions, and approaches are to be expected. In all you say and do for this course, be professional. Please bring any communications you believe to be in violation of this class policy to the attention of your instructor.

Active interaction with peers and your instructor is essential to success in this online course, paying particular attention to the following:

- Unless indicated otherwise, please complete the readings and view other instructional materials for each week before participating in the discussion board.
- Read your posts/peer reviews carefully before submitting them.
- Be respectful of others and their opinions, valuing diversity in backgrounds, abilities, and experiences.
- Challenging the ideas held by others is an integral aspect of critical thinking and the academic process. Please word your responses carefully, and recognize that others are expected to challenge your ideas. A positive atmosphere of healthy debate is encouraged.

Statement Regarding Students with Disabilities

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval, please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at

<http://ds.oregonstate.edu>. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

Accessibility of Course Materials

All materials used in this course are accessible. If you require accommodations please contact [Disability Access Services \(DAS\)](#).

Additionally, Canvas, the learning management system through which this course is offered, provides a [vendor statement](#) certifying how the platform is accessible to students with disabilities.

Expectations for Student Conduct

Student conduct is governed by the university's policies, as explained in the [Student Conduct Code](#). Students are expected to conduct themselves in the course (e.g., on discussiona, peer reviews, email postings) in compliance with the [university's regulations regarding civility](#).

Academic Integrity

Students are expected to comply with all regulations pertaining to academic honesty. For further information, visit [Student Conduct and Community Standards](#), or contact the office of Student Conduct and Mediation at 541-737-3656.

ORAR 576-015-0020 (2) Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty:

- a) Academic or Scholarly Dishonesty is defined as an act of deception in which a Student seeks to claim credit for the work or effort of another person, or uses unauthorized materials or fabricated information in any academic work or research, either through the Student's own efforts or the efforts of another.
- b) It includes:
 - i) CHEATING - use or attempted use of unauthorized materials, information or study aids, or an act of deceit by which a Student attempts to misrepresent mastery of academic effort or information. This includes but is not limited to unauthorized copying or collaboration on a test or assignment, using prohibited materials and texts, any misuse of an electronic device, or using any deceptive means to gain academic credit.
 - ii) FABRICATION - falsification or invention of any information including but not limited to falsifying research, inventing or exaggerating data, or listing incorrect or fictitious references.
 - iii) ASSISTING - helping another commit an act of academic dishonesty. This includes but is not limited to paying or bribing someone to acquire a test or assignment, changing someone's grades or academic records, taking a test/doing an assignment for someone else by any means, including misuse of an electronic device. It is a violation of Oregon state law to create and offer to sell part or all of an educational assignment to another person (ORS 165.114).

- iv) TAMPERING - altering or interfering with evaluation instruments or documents.
 - v) PLAGIARISM - representing the words or ideas of another person or presenting someone else's words, ideas, artistry or data as one's own, or using one's own previously submitted work. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to copying another person's work (including unpublished material) without appropriate referencing, presenting someone else's opinions and theories as one's own, or working jointly on a project and then submitting it as one's own.
- c) Academic Dishonesty cases are handled initially by the academic units, following the process outlined in the University's Academic Dishonesty Report Form, and will also be referred to SCCS for action under these rules.

Tutoring and Writing Assistance

[NetTutor](#) is a leading provider of online tutoring and learner support services fully staffed by experienced, trained and monitored tutors. Students connect to live tutors from any computer that has Internet access. NetTutor provides a virtual whiteboard that allows tutors and students to work on problems in a real time environment. They also have an online writing lab where tutors critique and return essays within 24 to 48 hours. Access NetTutor from within your Canvas class by clicking on the Tools button in your course menu.

The Oregon State [Online Writing Lab \(OWL\)](#) is also available for students enrolled in Ecampus courses.

TurnItIn

Your instructor may ask you to submit one or more of your writings to Turnitin, a plagiarism prevention service. Your assignment content will be checked for potential plagiarism against Internet sources, academic journal articles, and the papers of other OSU students, for common or borrowed content. Turnitin generates a report that highlights any potentially unoriginal text in your paper. The report may be submitted directly to your instructor or your instructor may elect to have you submit initial drafts through Turnitin, and you will receive the report allowing you the opportunity to make adjustments and ensure that all source material has been properly cited. Papers you submit through Turnitin for this or any class will be added to the OSU Turnitin database and may be checked against other OSU paper submissions. You will retain all rights to your written work. For further information, visit [Academic Integrity for Students: Turnitin – What is it?](#)

Student Evaluation of Courses

The online Student Evaluation of Teaching system opens to students the Monday of dead week and closes the Monday following the end of finals. Students receive notification, instructions and the link through their ONID. They may also log into the system via Online Services. Course evaluation results are extremely important and used to help improve courses and the online learning experience for future students. Responses are anonymous (unless a student chooses to "sign" their comments, agreeing to relinquish anonymity) and unavailable to instructors until after grades have been posted. The results of scaled questions and signed comments go to both the instructor and their unit head/supervisor. Anonymous (unsigned) comments go to the instructor only.