Course Description
One increasingly important task for public administrators and nonprofit managers is the ability to gather and thoughtfully analyze information and data. *Research Methods in Public Administration* offers an introduction to some of the key practices and principles associated with conducting research. This course will describe the research design process and challenges students to be better connoisseurs of information so that they can make better decisions in the workplace. Topics will range from research design, interview and survey techniques to qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Students throughout the semester will need to practice good information analysis by being comfortable with SPSS and dataset analysis.

Learning Objectives
The overarching goal of this course is to help students understand the concepts behind the construction and analysis of research. The main purposes and objectives of this course are the following:

- To explore the process of research design and analysis;
- To be able to construct research designs applicable for the workplace;
- Better understand the role and relationship between theory and method
- To discuss the nature of quantitative and qualitative data analysis;
- To be able to critically analyze and communicate research findings, and when needed, improve upon faulty research and analysis;
- To become proficient in using SPSS statistical software.

Course Requirements
Students are required to be active participants in all aspects of this course

- Class attendance and participation are required to be successful in this course. **Office hours ≠ make-up sessions.**
- Students should have read all material prior to class in order to be ready to engage in class discussion and group work
- All assignments are due in class the day indicated in the assignment handout. **Late assignments will receive a full letter grade deduction for every day that they are late: after the second day you will receive an F for that assignment** if you have not previously cleared this with the instructor.

Course Assignments

Homework Assignments (20%) 
There will be routine homework assignments throughout the semester. During the first half of the semester the assignments will focus on your ability to search, analyze and synthesize information from scholarly articles. During the second half of the semester the assignments will focus on your ability to apply and understand the outcomes of statistical analysis. Each homework assignment is graded on a PASS/FAIL basis. If you receive a FAIL grade you will have the opportunity to do the assignment one more time. You must receive a pass for all homework assignments except one to complete this section of the course assignment. In other words, each student will be allowed one “get out of jail”-pass i.e. you are only allowed to have ONE and only one failed homework assignment but still receive full credit for this section.
Research Design Project (20%)

You will create a viable research design for a project that you would be able to carry out in either your current workplace or a future workplace. You will identify the research question(s) that you intend to answer, the methods that you would apply in order to answer the question(s), and a projected plan for analysis of the data. This project will be 8 to 12 pages in length. More information about the project will be posted on BlackBoard.

Survey Practicum (15%)

One technique that you are most likely to use in the workplace is a survey. The practicum will be a group project where you set the select a topic of interest, set the sampling frame, and construct a survey instrument.

Mid-Term Exam (15%)

The take-home exam will cover the first half of the semester and focus on questions about research design, theory and qualitative methods.

Final Exam (20%)

The take-home final exam will cover the entire semester, but with particular emphasis on the major concepts and statistical analysis learned in the second half of the semester.

Course Participation (10%)

This course depends on the active participation of the students. Participation means having read all material prior to coming to class and being prepared to share your own insights with your classmates. Integration of the material with personal experience and insight is particularly encouraged.

Grading:

Homework Assignments: 20% total
Research Design Project: 20%
Survey Practicum: 15%
Mid-Term Exam: 15%
Final Exam: 20%
Course Participation: 10%

Grading Scale:

A: 94% - 100%
A-: 90% - 93%
B+: 87% - 89%
B: 84% - 86%
B-: 80% - 83%
C+: 77% - 79%
C: 74% - 76%
C-: 70% - 73%
D+: 67% - 69%
D: 64% - 66%
D-: 60% - 63%
F: Below 60%
Grades will not be rounded up.

There are frequently questions about what certain grades “mean”. In the context of this class, an “A” is reserved for a student who has mastered the material to the point that he/she could be an expert at applied research design and analysis. A “B” represents broad competence in the basic concepts of the course material, whereby with further study a student could be the “go to” research person in his/her organization. A “C” represents a failure to understand the basic concepts of the course material.

Course Policies

1. Readings should be completed prior to class.
2. Class participation is an important part of the learning process and therefore students are expected to attend class. Your class participation grade will be based on the quality of your contribution to class discussions, your ability to listen and constructively respond to points made by others, and your participation during in-class exercises.
3. Late assignments will receive a full letter grade deduction for every day late; after two days, the student will receive an F unless previously cleared by the instructor.
4. All course withdrawals must be initiated in the Bloch School Student Services Office, room 115, and completed through the Registration Center in the UMKC Administrative Center. Students intending to withdraw from the course after the fourth week of class are required to obtain a signature of both the instructor and an academic advisor before the course withdrawal is official. Neither telling the instructor that you intend to withdraw from the course nor ceasing to attend class constitutes an official withdrawal. The academic calendar in the class schedule/registration guide provided on the UMKC web site (www.umkc.edu) lists the official class withdrawal dates.
5. Students may be required to use the services of the Bloch School Communications Center in order to improve written-communication skills.
6. A student enrolling in any UMKC course is expected to exhibit high standards of academic honesty. Cheating and plagiarism will not be tolerated. In the case of academic misconduct, the instructor will assess the affected work and report the incident to Bloch School administration according to the guidelines posted in the University catalog. Plagiarism of assignments and papers is unacceptable, and a grade of zero will be assigned on any such item where plagiarism has been detected. See student conduct policies at: http://www.umkc.edu/umke/catalog/html/append/policy/0020.html
   Instances of academic dishonesty will be immediately reported to the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and may incur further university sanctions.
7. The syllabus is subject to change throughout the semester with adequate notice given to students.

Accommodation Statement: Students with disabilities who wish to obtain accommodations and/or auxiliary aids must contact the Offices of Services for Students with Disabilities at 816-235-5696 as soon as possible, if they have not already done so.

Required Texts


+ ALL articles outlined in the course schedule. Accessible via BlackBoard

* This course addresses NASPAA competency 3: To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.