RESEARCH DESIGN (10:834:562)

INSTRUCTOR

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OVERVIEW

Building on the skills of data analysis and statistical inference learned in Analytical Methods (20:834:561), this course exposes students to issues central to understanding and applying modern research to public affairs and administration, including global affairs. These issues include the use of theory or models, measurement concepts and methods, qualitative and quantitative modes of observation, identifying causes, the logic of control variables, and the design of experiments and quasi-experiments. The emphasis is on learning these ideas through practice with many different examples of real-world research and empirical evidence.

REQUIREMENTS

Students are expected to attend class regularly, keep up with assigned readings, and participate in class discussions. There will be four major assignments, weekly reading quizzes, and a final exam. Grades will be based on the following:

- 60% Assignments (4 assignments x 15%)
- 15% Reading quizzes / attendance
- 25% Final exam

Each of these requirements is explained in more detail below.

ASSIGNMENTS (60%). Students must complete and turn in four major assignments (each worth 15% of your total grade). The assignments involve the following: 1) developing a logic model of a program, 2) designing a survey, 3) estimating a causal effect using regression analysis; and 4) writing a comparative critique of two published studies in your field or area of interest.

READING QUIZZES AND ATTENDANCE (15%). Brief quizzes will be given in class on days when published studies or reports are assigned for reading before class as preparation for discussion. Also, attendance and general participation in class discussions will be considered in the grade.

EXAMINATION (25%). There will be one final exam for the course containing a balance of multiple choice and short answer questions. Class time will be reserved for review and practice before the exam.
WEEKLY SCHEDULE

1. Introduction and overview
2. Theory and models
3. Qualitative research
4. Measurement
5. Sampling
6. Survey research
7. Secondary data
8. Causation
9. Observational studies
10. Computer lab
11. Randomized experiments
12. Natural and quasi experiments
13. Research, policy and administration
14. Wrap-up and review
15. Final exam

BOOKS AND MATERIALS

- Various policy research articles to read each week (available on Blackboard)
- Software: Excel