

San Francisco State University
Fall 2017

PA 705-01

DESIGN & CONSUMPTION OF RESEARCH

Hybrid format

Select Tuesdays 6:00 - 8:45 PM: 8/29, 9/12, 9/26, 10/10, 10/24, 11/7, 11/14, 12/5, 12/19
Downtown Center, room 677
with significant distance learning

Instructor

Sheldon Gen, Ph.D.

Hours:

- Downtown Center 679: Tuesdays 4:00 - 5:50PM
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Introduction

How is research related to public administration? Consider these recent claims made in various fields of public administration:

“...the percentage of teens and young adults who have jobs is now at its lowest level since the end of World War II. This has dire implications, because employment in the teen and young adult years can have such a positive impact on future prospects for employment and earnings”¹

“The science [of crime prediction] isn’t quite up to the level of ‘Minority Report,’ the movie in which officers from the ‘Department of Pre-crimes’ know exactly where to be, and at what time, in order to knock the knife out of a stabber’s hand. But it is advanced enough to help police departments prevent crime by stationing cops where it is most likely to occur.”²

“LGBTQ foster youth are twice as likely to report poor treatment and more likely to live in group homes and to have more foster care placements” than their straight peers.³

Each of these claims is based on empirical evidence gathered by accepted methods of research. Countless other claims fill journals, government reports, nonprofits’ whitepapers, and news media. Increasingly, public services and policies are driven by knowledge obtained through empirical research. Such knowledge informs important decisions such as: which programs to cut, or which taxes to raise, during a budget crisis; where to focus limited resources; how to alleviate social problems like homelessness; etc. Institutions and entire markets have evolved to meet the demand for such knowledge (e.g., Congressional Research Service, General Accounting Office, Rand Corporation, Brookings Institute, Cato Institute, university research organizations, etc.), and consumers of such knowledge range from world leaders to the general public.

This course is the **first** in a two-part series on the conduct and consumption of empirical research in public administration. The goal of the series is to build and hone your research skills toward the production of knowledge relevant to the administration of public agencies and non-profit organizations. This first course focuses on fundamental concepts in research, designs for empirical research, data collection, and qualitative analysis. The second course, PA 706, focuses primarily on quantitative analysis.

¹ American Society for Public Administration (2011). Report calls for national effort to get young Americans on realistic path to employability. *PA Times*, 34(2): 29.

² Perlman E. (2008). Policing by the odds: new tools help police departments prevent crime by predicting where it will occur. *Governing*, 22(3): 42-44.

³ Wilson, B., Cooper, K., Kastanis, A., & Nezhad, S. (2014). Sexual and gender minority youth in foster care: assessing disproportionality and disparities in Los Angeles. Los Angeles: The Williams Institute, UCLA.

Also, this course will devote a significant amount of time to the important managerial skills of understanding and judging empirical research. Public administrators (and even professors) spend far more time reading research than producing it. We read research to help us make decisions in our jobs. But we must know how to tell “good” research from “bad”. Thus, while we will certainly hone our skills in conducting research, we will also develop ones in judging the research we read.

Objectives

<i>Course objectives</i>	<i>Student learning outcomes</i>
In this course, the goals are... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to understand the concepts, methods, and practices in empirical research applied to public administration ■ to be able to critically judge empirical research designs done by others 	By the end of the course, students will... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ demonstrate fundamental skills in the phases of research planning ■ plan and design an original empirical research project ■ critically review research done by others

Procedure

The objectives will be met through reading assignments, class discussions and activities, homework assignments, and a research project. Assigned readings and homework should be completed prior to the class meetings in which they are listed. This will facilitate class discussions and activities. Lectures and readings will reinforce each other. Thus, class attendance and participation is critical to your success in this course. Specifics elements of these procedures are as follows:

Grading

Your final grade in the class will be based upon four types of activities described below. Details on these will be discussed in class.

- *Class participation (10%)*: You are expected to participate in class and online discussions and activities. You are also required to answer assigned problems from the text, and be prepared to demonstrate your solutions and discuss your answers in class.
- *Homework (35% total)* : Five assignments will provide practical experience in major stages of research production, and the evaluation of existing research.
- *Research proposal (30%)* : You will develop and propose your own empirical research project relevant to public administration. You will also present this proposal to classmates in a table discussion.
- *Examination (25% total)*: One test at the end of the semester will cover the major concepts in the course.

In general, your grade for each assignment will follow these guidelines:

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Standard</i>
A (90-100%)	Meets all requirements of the assignment in a sound, clear, thorough, and professionally presented manner. Research tools are applied appropriately and correctly.
B (80-89%)	Meets almost all of the requirements in a sound, clear, thorough, and professionally presented manner; or meets all of the requirements but lacks soundness, clarity, thoroughness, or professional presentation. Research tools are mostly applied appropriately and correctly.
C (70-79%)	Meets some of the requirements in a sound, clear, thorough, and professionally presented manner; or meets all of the requirements but lacks a combination of soundness, clarity, thoroughness, or professional presentation. Research tools are not applied appropriately, or not correctly.
D or F (<70%)	Less than the standard for “C”. Both of these grades are failing.

Texts and Resources

There is one **required text** for this course:

- **(Johnson)** Johnson, Gail. (2014). *Research Methods for Public Administrators*. 3rd edition. Annonk, NY : M.E. Sharpe.

There are two other **optional texts** that you might want to purchase, depending upon your academic and professional needs:

- **(Fowler-a)** Fowler, F.J. Jr. (2013). *Sun 'ey Research Methods*, 5th edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage: While we will read two chapters from this text, if you anticipate having to conduct a survey during your career you should purchase this concise guide (just 184 pages).
- **(Yin-a)** Yin, R.K. (2013). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 5th edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage: We will read an abridged version of this text to understand the method. But nothing beats this full-length text if you plan to conduct research using the case study method.

Additionally, there are several **articles** and **references** that will enhance our understanding of research and research methods. These articles are available on the course website:

- **(AP)** Associated Press (2005). Report outlines exit poll problems. *USA Today*. Retrieved on January 19, 2005, at http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/2005-01-19-exit-polls_x.htm.
- **(APA)** Hacker, D. (2015). APA Style: Social Sciences. Retrieved on January 12, 2015, at http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch09_o.html. A complete guide to citing sources in the APA format.
- **(D&A)** Dellasega, C. & Adamshick, P. (2009). Evaluation of a program designed to reduce relational aggression in middle school girls. In T.C. Lomand (Ed.), *Social Science Research* (6th ed.) (pp. 127-132). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.
- **(E&M)** Edison Media Research & Mitofsky International (2005). Evaluation of Edison/Mitofsky election system 2004. Report to the National Election Pool.
- **(Few)** Few, A. (2009). The voices of Black and White rural battered women in domestic violence shelters. In T.C. Lomand (Ed.), *Social Science Research* (6th ed.) (pp. 204-215). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing.
- **(Fowler-b)** Fowler, F.J. Jr. (2002). *Survey Research Methods*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage. Chapters 5, 6.
- **(Gen)** Gen, S. (2010). Public knowledge and wastewater management: a case in San Francisco. *Environmental Practice*, 12(4): 328-341.
- **(G&H)** Gen, S., & Hansen, T. (2012). *Evaluation of CCSF's Writing Success Project: Academic Year 2010-2011*. San Francisco State University, C A. 21 pages.
- **(G&K)** Gen, S., & Kingsley, G. (2007) Effects of contracting out engineering services over time in a state department of transportation. *Public Works Management & Policy Journal*. 12(1): 331-343.
- **(GS&N)** Gen, S., Shafer, H., & Nakagawa, M. (2012). Perceptions of environmental justice: the case of a U.S. urban wastewater system. *Sustainable Development*. 20: 239-250.
- **(LS&S)** Locke, L., Silverman, S., & Spirduso, W. (2010). *Reading and Understanding Research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks: Sage. Chapters 9, 12.
- **(NIH)** National Institutes of Health's online human subjects protections course and certification at <http://phrp.nihtraining.com/users/login.php>.
- **(OR&T)** O'Sullivan, E., Rassel, G., & Taliaferro, J.D. (2011). *Practical Research Methods for Nonprofit and Public Administrators*. San Francisco: Longman. Chapter 3.
- **(Paarlberg)** Paarlberg, L. & Gen, S. (2009). Exploring the determinants of nonprofit coproduction of public service delivery: the case of k-12 public education. *American Review of Public Administration*. 39(4): 391-408.
- **(Page)** Page, S. (2009). An unobtrusive measure of racial behavior in a university cafeteria. In T.C. Lomand (Ed.), *Social Science Research* (6th ed.) (pp. 50-53). Los Angeles: Pyrczak Publishing.
- **(Patton)** Patton. M. (2014). *Understanding Research Methods: An Overview of the Essentials*. (9th ed.). Glendale, CA: Pyrczak Publishing. Part B Reviewing Literature, APA.
- **(P&G-a)** Pendola, R. & Gen, S. (2007). BMI, auto use, and the urban environment in San Francisco. *Health and Place*. 13(2): 551-556.
- **(P&G-b)** Pendola, R. & Gen, S. (2008). Does 'main street' promote a sense of community? A comparison of San Francisco neighborhoods. *Environment & Behavior*. 40(4): 545-574.
- **(Yin-b)** Yin, R. (1997). The Abridged Version of Case Study Research: Design and Methods. In L. Bickman & D. Rog (Eds.), *Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods* (pp. 229-259). Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Schedule

* Text exercises coded by chapter number and exercise number. For example, “Johnson 3(2,4)” means chapter 3, exercises 2 and 4. You are responsible for completing all assigned chapter exercises, and you will share at least one of your responses during the semester. You will also provide peer-review of at least one classmate’s response. There are no class meeting on shaded dates. See website for details of activities.

Date Mode	Required Readings	Topics	© Activities, discussions T Text exercises due* 1 Graded assignments due
Unit 1: The Research Endeavor			
8/29 in-class		Course overview	© Assign Research Proposal © CSU research competitions © Assign Homework 1
9/5 online	Johnson 1, OR&T, NIH, D&A	What is research? Etines in research	T Johnson 1(1) © Ethical issues in D&A III Homework 1 due: PHRP certificate
Unit 2: Designing Research			
9/12 in-class	Johnson 2, APA, LS&S 9, 12	What and why? • Research planning • Reviewing literatme • Research questions and hypotheses	© PA librarian Mira Foster; bring lantern: searching literatme © Case: review on teacher attrition © Assign Homework 2
9/19 online	Johnson 3, Patton		Y Johnson 2(2,3,5) © Annotated article
9/26 in-class	Johnson 4, P&G-b	How? • Units of analysis • Variables, operational measures • Research designs	Y Johnson 3(1,3) © Peer review of research questions © Grading measures of variables
10/3 online	Johnson 5, 6, Yin-b, G&K		Y Johnson 4(1-4); research topic and question 1 Homework 2 due: annotated bibliography and literature review outline
Unit 3: Data Collection Methods			
10/10 in-class	Johnson 8, Few	Interviews Focus Groups	Y Johnson 5(3,4); 6(1) © Role plays © Case: SFPUC focus groups © Assign Homework 3
10/17 online	Fowler-b		Y Johnson 8(1,2,4)
10/24 in-class	Johnson 9, GS&N	Surveys	1 Homework 3 due: interview protocol © Critiquing surveys © Assign Homework 4
10/31 online	Johnson 7, Page, Paarlberg	Unobtrusive methods Secondary data sources	Y Johnson 9(1,6) © Exploring secondary data somces
11/7 in-class	Johnson 10, AP, E&M	Sampling	Y Johnson 7(2-4,6,7) 1 Homework 4 due: survey instrument © Assign Homework 5
Unit 4: Understanding Data Analysis			
11/14 in-class	Johnson 11,12,13, Gen	Content analysis Data descriptions	Y Johnson 10(1) © Case: SFPUC focus groups
11/21		Thanksgiving break	

Date Mode	Required Readings	Topics	© Activities, discussions T Text exercises due* 1 Graded assignments due
11/28 online	Johnson 16 G&H	Inferential statistics Relationships and regression Review for exam	T Johnson 11(1); 12(2,4); 13(2) 1 Homework 5 due: sampling plan
12/5 in-class	Johnson 14, 15 P&G-a		Y Johnson 16(1,5,6) Y Johnson 14(2,4); 15(2)
Unit 5: Putting It All Together			
12/12 online	Johnson 17, 18		H Examination
12/19 in-class		Research proposals roundtables	1 Research proposals due

Class policies

The overwhelming majority of students in our MPA program need no reminder of these policies. To the very few that do, they are simply incentives to put forth your very best professional effort in all your work in this course.

Class attendance

Absences will reduce your grade. Class time will include lectures and several learning activities that cannot be gained by other means. Students are expected to attend all classes, be on time for class and stay for the entire length of class unless cleared with the professor in advance.

Submission of assignments

Written assignments should be submitted in hardcopy to the instructor, unless otherwise noted. Assignments turned in after the due dates will be accepted, but *severely* marked down. Assignments submitted by the next class meeting after the due dates will be marked down 10%; thereafter, 20%.

Changes to syllabus

This syllabus is subject to change, depending upon the circumstances and needs of the class.

Professor's obligations to you

To complement your best efforts in this class, I am obligated to give you my best efforts in honing your knowledge and skills in research methods and data analysis. This includes the academic and pedagogic structure for learning, accessibility, and constructive feedback.

College of Health and Social Sciences (CHSS) Policies

Syllabi are to incorporate the Academic Senate Policy regarding finals week, the deadlines or withdrawals, late adds, CR/NC option and information related to course registration and Disability Programs and Resource Center. A sample listing of the required College policies are shown below:

Welcome to the College of Health & Social Sciences,

This section is to inform you of the College and University policies that may affect you. Knowledge of these deadlines (viewed at <http://registrar.sfsu.edu/>) and policies will help you to navigate the bureaucracy of the University while helping you succeed and graduate in a timely manner. Policies can be intimidating sometimes, but they ensure an equitable, consistent and reliable process for each student. Please review this information and refer to <http://chss.sfsu.edu/content/petitions-information> for more detail on these policies. Approval of a petition from the instructor and/or Department Chair does not constitute automatic approval from the Associate Dean so please continue attending class until a decision is made. If you have

any questions about how these policies specifically apply to your situation, please contact the Associate Dean's Office at assocdean@sfsu.edu or in HSS 239.

When is the deadline to drop a class?

The last day to drop a class without a W grade is September 13, 2017 by 11:59 PM.

What if I wish to withdraw from a course after the drop deadline?

Withdrawal from a course is allowed from September 14, 2017 until November 17, 2017 only if you have **serious and compelling reasons with current, relevant supporting documentation.** The following are examples of **non-serious and non-compelling reasons** and would be denied:

- Changing major
- Poor academic performance in class
- Course no longer needed
- Missing pre-requisite(s)
- Instructor forgot to drop
- More time needed for other classes

Unexpected changes in work schedule or serious accident, protracted illness, or family emergencies may be considered serious and compelling if appropriate supporting documentation is attached. The petition must be submitted within a reasonable timeframe (e.g., within 2 weeks of an illness or change in work hours) and must include your unofficial transcripts. From November 18, 2017 until December 12, 2017, you may not withdraw from a class or the University, except only in the case of a **documented** serious illness or verified accident.

Withdrawals cannot be initiated electronically and must be submitted using a paper application. A maximum of 18 units can be withdrawn, and a course can only be repeated once with a failing grade.

How do I take a course for Credit or No Credit (CR/NC) Grade?

Please check the course description in the Bulletin to determine if the class can be taken CR/NC. If it is permitted, then you may change your grading option via your SF State Gateway until October 18, 2017 by 11:59 PM. The Associate Dean will not approve requests for changes if you miss this deadline.

What if I want to add a class after registration closes?

The period to add classes via permission numbers is August 23, 2017 through September 13, 2017 until 11:59 PM. It is your responsibility to obtain a late permission number from your instructor and add the class. Faculty cannot add you into a class. Starting September 14, 2017, a Waiver of College Regulations form must be submitted. This will only be approved if there was an administrative error.

How do I know if any changes in my registration went through?

Always check your registration on your SF State Gateway after making any changes and before deadlines to ensure you are registered properly for your classes. It is always your responsibility to ensure your schedule is correct, even if the instructor indicates they will drop you. All deadlines will be strictly adhered to by the instructor, the Department Chair, and the CHSS Associate Dean.

When are finals?

According to Academic Senate policy F76-12 a time period is set aside at the end of each semester for a formal examination period. All classes are expected to meet during the final examination period whether an examination is given or not. The final examination schedule is:

[http://www.sfsu.edu/~acadres/final exams/final 17 .htm](http://www.sfsu.edu/~acadres/final%20exams/final%2017.htm)

What resources are available to me on campus?

Disability Programs and Resource Center: Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC, located in SSB 110, can be reached by telephone at 415-338-2472 (voice/TTY) or by e-mail at dprc@sfsu.edu.

Student Disclosures of Sexual Violence: SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/

Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; <http://psyservs.sfsu.edu/>

For more information on your rights and available resources: <http://titleix.sfsu.edu>

CHSS Student Resource Center (HSS 254): Provides academic advising and support to all students with a CHSS major. For more information and to book advising appointment: <http://chss.sfsu.edu/src> or call (415)405-3740.

Undergraduate Advising Center (ADM 212): Provides academic advising and support to all students. For more information: <https://advising.sfsu.edu/>