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
• Main campus HSS 238: Thursdays 3:00 - 4:00PM
E-mail: sgen@sfsu.edu
Telephone: 415-817-4458
Course website at: ileam.sfsu.edu

Reference Librarian for PA
Mira Foster, MPA
E-mail: mira@sfsu.edu
Telephone: 415-405-2590

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.

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

Course objectives

In this course, the goals are...

■ 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

Student learning outcomes

By the end of the course, students will...

■ 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A (90-100%)</td>
<td>Meets all requirements of the assignment in a sound, clear, thorough, and professionally presented manner. Research tools are applied appropriately and correctly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B (80-89%)</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C (70-79%)</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D or F (&lt;70%)</td>
<td>Less than the standard for “C”. Both of these grades are failing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Texts and Resources

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

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

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:
**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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Required Readings</th>
<th>Topics</th>
<th>© Activities, discussions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>© Assign Research Proposal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8/29</td>
<td>in-class</td>
<td></td>
<td>Course overview</td>
<td>© CSU research competitions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>© Assign Homework 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/5</td>
<td>online</td>
<td>Johnson 1, OR&amp;T,</td>
<td>What is research? Ethnics in research</td>
<td>© Johnson 1(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NIH, D&amp;A</td>
<td></td>
<td>© Ethical issues in D&amp;A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>* Homework 1 due: PHRP certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unit 1: The Research Endeavor</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/12</td>
<td>in-class</td>
<td>Johnson 2, APA, LS&amp;S 9, 12</td>
<td>What and why?</td>
<td>© PA librarian Mira Foster; <em>bring laptop</em>; searching literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Research planning</td>
<td>© Case: review on teacher attrition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Reviewing literature</td>
<td>© Assign Homework 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/19</td>
<td>online</td>
<td>Johnson 3, Patton</td>
<td>Research questions and hypotheses</td>
<td>© Annotated article</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unit 2: Designing Research</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/26</td>
<td>in-class</td>
<td>Johnson 4, P&amp;G-b</td>
<td>How?</td>
<td>© Johnson 3(1,3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Units of analysis</td>
<td>© Peer review of research questions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Variables, operational measures</td>
<td>© Grading measures of variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/3</td>
<td>online</td>
<td>Johnson 5, 6, Yin-b, G&amp;K</td>
<td>Research designs</td>
<td>© Homework 2 due: annotated bibliography and literature review outline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unit 3: Data Collection Methods</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/10</td>
<td>in-class</td>
<td>Johnson 8, Few</td>
<td>Interviews</td>
<td>© Johnson 5(3,4), 6(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Focus Groups</td>
<td>© Role plays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/17</td>
<td>online</td>
<td>Fowler-b</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>© Case: SFPUC focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/24</td>
<td>in-class</td>
<td>Johnson 9, GS&amp;N</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>© Assign Homework 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Unit 4: Understanding Data Analysis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31</td>
<td>online</td>
<td>Johnson 7, Page, Paarlberg</td>
<td>Unobtrusive methods</td>
<td>© Johnson 3(1,6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Secondary data sources</td>
<td>© Exploring secondary data sources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/7</td>
<td>in-class</td>
<td>Johnson 10, AP, E&amp;M</td>
<td>Sampling</td>
<td>© Johnson 7(2-4,6,7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1 Homework 4 due: survey instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>© Assign Homework 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/14</td>
<td>in-class</td>
<td>Johnson 11,12,13, Gen</td>
<td>Content analysis</td>
<td>© Johnson 10(1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Data descriptions</td>
<td>© Case: SFPUC focus groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Thanksgiving break</td>
<td><strong>Unit 5: Reflective Practice</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>Required Readings</td>
<td>Topics</td>
<td>© Activities, discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11/28</td>
<td>online</td>
<td>Johnson 16 G&amp;H</td>
<td>Inferential statistics</td>
<td>T Text exercises due*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Relationships and regression</td>
<td>1 Graded assignments due</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Review for exam</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/5</td>
<td>in-class</td>
<td>Johnson 14, 15 P&amp;G-a</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>online</td>
<td>Johnson 17, 18</td>
<td></td>
<td>H Examination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/19</td>
<td>in-class</td>
<td></td>
<td>Research proposals roundtables</td>
<td>I Research proposals due</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Unit 5: Putting It All Together**

**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/](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](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/finalf17.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/