

## PA/CJ 5000 Research Methods

Fall 2015

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**Class time:** M 5:00- 8:00 pm  
**Instructor:** Tatyana B. Ruseva  
**E-mail:** rusevatb@appstate.edu  
**Phone:** 828-262-8238

**Classroom:** Belk Hall 111 and 102  
**Office:** Ann Belk Hall 350E  
**Office hours:** MW 12:00 -1:30 pm  
and by appointment

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### Course Objectives

The overall goal of this course is to make you a better user and consumer of social science research, especially as it affects public policy and administration. The course has five major objectives: (1) to provide an overview of research methods and evaluation criteria; (2) to help you develop skills for collecting, organizing, and analyzing data; (3) to help you develop a critical framework for assessing evidence; (4) to provide an opportunity to design your own research project; and, (5) to enhance your ability to present research, and critique research.

### Course Format

This course will include lecture, in-class activities, lab and homework assignments, and discussion. Typically, our class will start with a readiness assessment quiz, followed by a brief lecture and discussion of the course readings. Lecture material is intended to supplement, not review, the readings. Other student assignments may also be included. Students *must* complete the assigned readings before coming to class.

### Required Texts

The main text for lecture and discussions is Nishishiba et al. (2014). For lab assignments we will use the Pace book. We will also read several articles during the semester that will be posted on AsUlearn.

1. Nishishiba, M., Jones, M., Kraner, M. 2014. Research Methods and Statistics for Public and Nonprofit Administrators. Sage.
2. Salkind, N. J. 2013. Statistics for People Who (Think They) Hate Statistics. 5th ed. Sage.
3. Readings on AsUlearn

### Course components:

Your final grade will be the weighted mean of all grades received on the following components:

Midterm Exam	20%
Final Exam	20%
Labs	20%
Research Proposal	20%
Quizzes	10%
Participation	5%
<u>Peer Assessment</u>	<u>5%</u>
Total	100%

## Class Schedule

*I reserve the right to make changes to this schedule depending on the speed with which we progress.*

Date	Topic & Readings	Labs & Assignments
<b>PART I: RESEARCH DESIGN &amp; METHODS</b>		
Aug 17	<b>Introduction to social science research</b> Syllabus, Nishishiba Ch. 1-2; Salkind Ch. 1	<i>Excel Workshop, Pre-test</i>
Aug 24	<b>Research Objectives; Research Design</b> Nishishiba Ch. 3-4; Salkind Ch. 1a-b	LAB 1: Overview of Excel
Aug. 31	<b>Measurement</b> AsULearn; Nishishiba Ch. 7, p. 122-126; Salkind Ch. 6	<i>Proposal Part 1a) due 8/31</i>
Sept. 7	Labor Day: No Class	
Sept. 14	<b>Sampling</b> Nishishiba Ch. 5; Salkind Ch.4, p.84-85, 101-115	LAB 2: Tables & Charts I
Sept. 21	<b>Surveys</b> Nishishiba Ch. 6, Salkind Ch. 21, AsULearn	<i>Proposal Part 1b) due 9/21</i>
Sept. 28	<b>Qualitative Data Collection &amp; Analysis</b> Nishishiba Ch. 14	<i>Proposal Part 2 due 9/28</i>
Oct. 5	<b>MIDTERM EXAM</b>	
<b>PART II: DATA ANALYSIS</b>		
Oct. 12	<b>Descriptive Statistics I</b> Salkind Ch. 2-3, Nishishiba Ch. 7	LAB 3: Descriptives
Oct. 19	<b>Descriptive Statistics II</b> Salkind Ch. 4, p. 84-100	LAB 4: Tables & Charts II <i>Proposal Part 3 due 10/19</i>
Oct. 26	<b>Inferential Statistics I</b> Salkind Ch. 7-8, Nishishiba Ch. 8,	LAB 5: Z-scores
Nov. 2	<b>Inferential Statistics II</b> Salkind Ch. 9-10	LAB 6: Confidence Intervals; One-sample tests
Nov. 9	<b>Comparing Two Sample Means</b> Salkind Ch. 11-12; Nishishiba Ch. 9	LAB 7: T-test; Two-sample t-test
Nov. 16	<b>In-Class Presentation of Research Proposals</b>	<i>Proposal Parts 1,2,3, and 4</i>
Nov. 23	<b>Correlation</b> Salkind Ch. 5 and Ch. 15; Nishishiba Ch. 11	LAB 8: Correlation
Nov. 30	<b>Categorical Data Analysis</b> Salkind 17; Nishishiba Ch.12	LAB 9: Chi-square test <i>Final Proposal due 11/30</i>
Dec. 7	<b>FINAL EXAM</b>	<i>Post-test; Final Proposal Due</i>

**Grading Scale:**

93 - 100 = A	90 - 92.9 = A-	87 - 89.9 = B+	83 - 86.9 = B	80 - 82.9 = B-
77 - 79.9 = C+	73 - 76.9 = C	70 - 72.9 = C-	67 - 69.9 = D+	63 - 66.9 = D
60 - 62.9 = D-	<59.9 = F			

**Exams (40%)**

Exams will ask you to demonstrate your knowledge with topics covered in lecture, as well as techniques used in lab. Each exam is 20 percent of your course grade.

**Labs (20%)**

There will be about 9-10 in-class labs during the semester that will introduce you to quantitative data analysis in *Excel*. Instructions for each lab will be posted on *AsULearn* and discussed during class.

**Research Proposal (20%)**

Students will develop a research proposal and present it at the end of the semester. The proposal will be completed in four parts:

- 1) *(a) Research objective and (b) literature review* (5%) – state your objective, situate it in the existing literature, and state the research question(s); Parts 1a) and 1b) have different due dates;
- 2) *Research design* (5%) – select, describe, and justify the type of study you will do.
- 3) *Data collection* (5%) – proposed sampling/case selection, measurement, reliability, validity issues;
- 4) *Final research proposal* (5%) – revise parts 1, 2 and 3 and add a description of planned data analysis.

Following feedback from your peers and me, you will revise your research proposal, and submit a final version at the end of the semester. Specific guidelines for each part will be provided during the semester.

**Readiness Assessment Quizzes (10%)**

Each week, we will have a readiness assessment quiz. The goal is twofold: to ensure reading and class preparation; and to help identify topics for lecture review and discussion. Some quizzes will be completed in groups, others will be individual work. The lowest grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.

**Peer Assessment & Participation (10%)**

Peer assessments will be conducted to evaluate one's contribution to the group tasks. The first assessment will be used to informally gauge your degree of participation and the second will determine the number of points earned for this grade component.

While a significant portion of your learning occurs outside our scheduled meetings, it is during class that I can observe and record your learning progress. So, please do participate and ask questions. The classroom is also the primary forum for addressing your concerns and difficulties with the material.

**Student Engagement with Courses** - Students should expect to spend two to three hours of studying for every hour of class time. Hence, a fifteen hour academic load might reasonably require between 30 and 45 hours per week of out-of-class work.

**Class Policies**

**Grading, Late Assignments & Missed Exams**

Each student is expected to read the assigned material prior to coming to class. I would strongly recommend reading it again sometime after class, prior to the next exam. You are expected to take each exam and to complete each assignment by the specified time. Otherwise a zero will be recorded for that assignment. No make-up exams will be given. For each day an assignment is late, **5 points will be deducted** from your grade for that assignment, for instance: if you scored 95 (A), you'd receive 90 (A-) if your assignment was one day

overdue; B+ if it was two days overdue, and so on. If there are extenuating circumstances prohibiting you from completing your work on time, please notify me *before the due date*.

### **Academic Integrity**

Be sure that you are familiar with and follow the University's academic integrity code. As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the *ASU Academic Integrity Code*, <http://academicaffairs.appstate.edu/resources/syllabi>.

### **Students with Disabilities Note**

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at <http://www.ods.appstate.edu> or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.