

Undergraduate Research Methods Course (AMST 392)
University of Southern California (USC)
Spring 2015
Tuesday, 12:30 – 1:50 p.m.
GFS 222 & HEDCO Auditorium
SYLLABUS

Instructor: Dr. Richard Andalon, Associate Dean & Director

Note: Instructor is assisted by a team of presenters including faculty, professional staff, and Ph.D. Students

Email: randalon@usc.edu

Office: GFS 315, Office Hours Tuesdays & by appointment

*Pre-requisites: Sophomore or higher standing, departmental clearance, interest in research and graduate school, participant in the Undergraduate Gateway/McNair Scholars Program.

I. COURSE OVERVIEW

This undergraduate course provides a comprehensive introduction to research methodologies, foundational research theories and protocols, and research proposal writing. Students in the course learn about the cyclical nature of applied research and the iterative process of research writing. The course teaches students how to work collaboratively and to maximize their time while in a mentor-mentee relationship with a faculty advisor and graduate student. The curriculum is sequential, helping students to identify a study topic, formulate inquiry questions, organize a literature review, and select appropriate research designs and methodologies. Students use the proposal they develop to establish the foundation of a summer project and the basis of a final research paper that will be submitted at the end of the summer once the study is completed. By the end of the course, students will complete a proposal that includes an introduction, problem statement (significance of study), literature review, methods section, references, and a project timeline. At the end of the summer students will convert this proposal into a full research that will include the following sections: findings, discussion, conclusions, and references.

The course enrolls students majoring in the social sciences, humanities, natural and physical sciences, engineering, and professional fields. Throughout the course, students will learn how research projects can emanate from specific intellectual interests, recognized knowledge gaps in existing scholarship, or from personal experiences or community-related matters that have broad societal implications. In summary, the course helps undergraduate students become novice researchers, and it encourages them to continue looking for opportunities after the spring semester to further develop their research skills. This course, which is modeled after a graduate-level introductory research methods seminar series, prepares undergraduates for future research experiences, particularly at the graduate-level. Accordingly, students will also receive advising related to and opportunities to explore postgraduate programs.

II. COURSE FORMAT, OBJECTIVES, GRADING SCALE, & REQUIREMENTS

The course takes place once per week on Tuesdays from 12:30 – 1:50 p.m. Guest lecturers in the course include faculty, advanced graduate students, staff advisors, and program administrators. Blackboard contains the course readings, lessons, and corresponding PowerPoint Presentations. Course readings are selected chapters from some of the latest introductory research methodology textbooks, research journal articles, and specialized research training guidebooks. Students are required to post assignments on Blackboard and Dropbox using the following format: *Lastname_Week#*. Course Texts (Available on Blackboard: <https://blackboard.usc.edu/>).

Learning & Course Activity Objectives for enrolled students:

- Attend and actively participate in class sessions and related activities.
- Review course readings and PowerPoint Presentations prior to each session.

- Learn about the research process, including its guiding principles, common procedures, written fundamentals, and basic phases.
- Identify a research question, engage in a literature review, and become familiar with both qualitative and quantitative methodologies.
- Complete all assignments and the required research proposal that will facilitate a summer research project and culminating final paper.
- Develop a mentor-mentee relationship with a faculty advisor/mentor that agrees to guide a research project.
- Receive preparation to engage in advanced, independent research at the undergraduate and graduate-level.

The grading and point system is as follows: A = 90 -100; B = 80 - 89; C = 70 - 79; D = 60 - 69; F = 59 and below. Students are evaluated in the following areas and points are earned accordingly based on performance. Topics, due dates, and point distribution noted. Within one week of completing assignment/activity, student will receive written and verbal feedback.

Attendance & Participation	10 points
Having done the Introduction research readings, rethink and resituate your research ideas and project (1-2 page Abstract) Due Date: 1/20/15	5
Further delineate your Research Topic, Question(s), and Project Significance (3 – 4 pages) Due Date: 1/27/15	5
Identify 3-5 Articles related to your project—half page to 1 page g summaries for Lit. Review Due Date: 2/3/15	5
Faculty Advisor/Mentor List (2 – 3 potential faculty) Due Date: 2/10/15	5
(1) 3-5 Articles related to project—half page to 1 page summaries for Literature Review; (2) Consider reviewing and completing USC’s Online <i>IRB Tutorials, Application, Certificate</i> Due Date: 2/17/15	5
(1) As necessary, rework your theoretical understanding of qualitative methods you plan to use, how will you employ them in you project? (2-4 pages); (2) Faculty Advisor/Mentor Update Due Date: 2/24/15	5
Progress Report on where you are with your Research ideas, writing, questions, mentor selection, etc. (half page -1 page) Due Date: 3/3/15	5
Literature Review Rough Draft (3 – 5 pages) Due Date: 3/10/15	5
(1) Literature Review Due (5 - 7 pages), (2) Set up Qualtrics Account & Develop Sample Survey Due Date: 3/24/15	5
Research Methodology Section (3 – 5 pages) Due Date: 3/31/15	5
Draft of Research Proposal: Introduction, Question(s), Problem Statement, Significance of Study, Literature Review, Methodology, References, & Timeline (8 – 16 pages) Due Date: 4/7/15	10
Faculty Advisor/Mentor – Scholar Agreement Due Date: 4/14/15	5
Presentation Slides (3– 6 slides) Due Date: 4/21/15 (Group A) & 4/28/15 (Group B)	5
Final Research Proposal: Introduction/Literature Review, Research Question(s)/Problem Statement, Hypotheses, Methodology, Significance of Study, References, & Timeline (12 – 16 pages) Due Date: 5/12/15	20

Total	100 Points
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III. COURSE TOPICS, SCHEDULE, READINGS, & ASSIGNMENTS

Session	Topic(s)	Date	Readings, References, & Assignments
1	Review of the Course; Pre-Test	January 13	Overview of the course, student expectations, introductions, handouts (syllabus and Bem article)
2	Overview of the Research Process; Writing the Research Proposal (PT. 1); “The So What” of Your Research	January 20	<p>Reading: Chapter 1: Investigating the Social World (Schutt) Chapter 1: Practical Research (Leedy, Ellis, Ormrod) Writing Academic Articles/Proposals/Guidelines (Bem) Writing a Research Thesis/Academic Papers/Guidelines (Nenty)</p> <p>Assignment: Having done the Introduction research readings, rethink and resituate your research ideas and project (1-2 page Abstract)</p>
3	Research Topics, Questions, & Specific Proposal Sections	January 27	<p>Reading: Chapter 3-4: Craft of Research (Booth, Colomb, & Williams) Chapter 6: Practical Research (Leedy, Ellis, Ormrod)</p> <p>Assignment: Further delineate your Research Topic, Question(s), and Project Significance (3 – 4 pages)</p>
4	Library Research & Resources	February 3	<p>Reading: Library Research & References/Guides (USC Library Handouts)</p> <p>Assignment: Identify 3-5 Articles related to your project—half page to 1 page g summaries for Lit. Review</p>
5	Literature Review, Conceptual Framework, & Research Design	February 10	<p>Reading: Chapter 2: Research Design (Creswell) Qualitative Research Design: Interactive Approach (Maxwell) Overviews on Lit. Review (PowerPoint Presentation)</p> <p>Assignment: Faculty Advisor/Mentor List (2 – 3 potential faculty)</p>
6	Research Ethics & Protocols Involving Human & Animal Subjects; Introduction to the Institutional Review Board (IRB)	February 17	<p>Reading: Chapter 3: Investigating the Social World (Schutt) Overviews on USC IRB, Protocols, etc. (PowerPoint Pres, Handouts)</p> <p>Assignment: (1) 3-5 Articles related to project—half page to 1 page summaries for Literature Review; (2) Consider reviewing and completing USC’s Online <i>IRB Tutorials, Application, Certificate</i></p>
7	Research Methods Part I: Qualitative Analysis Overview (i.e., Interviews, Focus Groups, Field Observations, Ethnography, Document & Textual Analysis, etc.)	February 24	<p>Reading: Chapter 9: Qualitative Procedures (Creswell) Chapter 9: Investigating the Social World (Schutt)</p> <p>Assignment: (1) As necessary, rework your theoretical understanding of qualitative methods you plan to use, how will you employ them in you project? (2-4 pages); (2) Faculty Advisor/Mentor Update</p>

8	Research Methods Part II: Qualitative Analysis Continued (i.e., Data Collection Procedures, Mixed Method Approaches, Creating Typologies, Mapping, etc.)	March 3	<p><u>Reading:</u> Chapter 10: Research Design (Creswell) Analytic Techniques—Analyzing & Reporting Data (Merriam)</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Progress Report on where you are with your Research ideas, writing, questions, mentor selection, etc. (half page -1 page)</p>
9	Research Methods Part III: Quantitative Analysis Overview (i.e., Statistics, Surveys, Development, Coding, and Implementation, Data Management, etc.)	March 10	<p><u>Reading:</u> Chapter 4: Surveys (Fowler) Overview of Mixed Methods, Statistical Analysis, Multiple Regression (Castellano & Sablan)</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Literature Review Rough Draft (3 – 5 pages)</p>
10	Research Methods Part IV: Quantitative Analysis Continued (i.e., Statistical Procedures and Statistical Packages, Qualtrics, etc.)	March 24	<p><u>Reading:</u> Ch 11: Practical Research, Quantitative (Leedy, Ormrod) Basic Statistics & SPSS Overview (Corsbie-Massay) Chapter 8: Quantitative Methods--Surveys Qualtrics Handout (Corsbie-Massay)</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> (1) Set up Qualtrics Account & Develop Sample Survey; (2) Literature Review Due (5 - 7 pages)</p>
11	Writing the Research Proposal (PT. 2)	March 31	<p><u>Reading:</u> Writing Academic Articles/Proposals/Guidelines (Bem) Writing a Research Thesis/Academic Papers/Guidelines (Nenty) Overviews on Academic Writing, Tips, etc. (PowerPoint Presentation)</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Research Methodology Section (3 – 5 pages)</p>
12	Presenting the Research Proposal Orally & Using PowerPoint	April 7	<p><u>Reading:</u> As assigned</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Draft of Research Proposal: Introduction, Question(s), Problem Statement, Significance of Study, Literature Review, Methodology, References, & Timeline (8 – 16 pages)</p>
13	Working with Faculty Advisors & Cultivating a Mentor-Mentee Relationship; Post-Test	April 14	<p><u>Reading:</u> Mentors, Faculty, & Advisors (University of Michigan)</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> Faculty Advisor/Mentor – Scholar Agreement</p>
14	Research Proposal Class Presentations (Group A)	April 21	<p><u>Reading:</u> As assigned</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> PowerPoint Presentation (3 – 6 slides)</p>
15	Research Proposal Class Presentations (Group B)	April 28	<p><u>Reading:</u> As assigned</p> <p><u>Assignment:</u> PowerPoint Presentation (3 – 6 slides)</p>
Final	Final Project Due	May 12	<p><u>Assignment:</u> Final Research Proposal: Introduction/Literature Review, Research Question(s)/Problem Statement, Hypotheses,</p>

			Methodology, Significance of Study, References, & Timeline (12 – 16 pages)
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Assignments and Readings

This course is meant to prepare students for research at the Graduate level; therefore, it is structured like a Graduate seminar research methods class. It is important to read the assigned chapters prior to coming to class since the lectures will assume that you are at least somewhat familiar with the day's topic. Assignments are due at the beginning of class on the day they are listed (and are often derived from the reading(s)). Assignments turned in late without prior approval will lose .5 points per day. If you anticipate the need to turn in an assignment late, it is your responsibility to contact the Instructor(s) prior to the due date.

Assignments should be typed and uploaded to Blackboard and Dropbox (see class Handout). For math problem sets, they should be typed as well and you must show your work for full credit.

Course Textbooks, Articles, and other Readings (Available on Blackboard: <https://blackboard.usc.edu/>):

Booth W.C, Colomb G.G., and Williams J.M. (2003). The Craft of Research: 2nd ed. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, IL.

Creswell, J.W. (2003). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, & Mixed Methods Approaches. Sage Publications, Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA

Fowler, F.J. (1995). Improving Survey Questions: Design & Evaluation. Sage Publications, Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA

Leedy P.D. and Ormrod J.E. (2005). Practical Research: Planning and Design—8th ed. Merrill Prentice Hall: New Jersey

Maxwell, J.A. (2005). Qualitative Research Design: An Interpretive Approach. Sage Publications, Inc.: Thousand Oaks, CA

Schutt, R.K. (2009). Investigating the Social World: The Process and Practice of Research—6th ed. Pine Forge Press: Thousand Oaks, Ca.

University of Michigan (2005). How the to get the Mentoring You Want: A Guide for Graduate Students. University of Michigan, Rackham School of Graduate Studies: Ann Arbor, MI

Wilcox, R.R. (2003). Applying Contemporary Statistical Techniques Academic Press: San Diego, Ca.

Statement for Students with Disabilities

Any student requesting academic accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please be sure the letter is delivered to me (or to TA) as early in the semester as possible. DSP is located in STU 301 and is open 8:30 a.m.–5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The phone number for DSP is (213) 740-0776.

Statement on Academic Integrity

USC seeks to maintain an optimal learning environment. General principles of academic honesty include the concept of respect for the intellectual property of others, the expectation that individual work will be submitted unless otherwise allowed by an instructor, and the obligations both to protect one's own academic work from misuse by others as well as to avoid using another's work as one's own. All students are expected to understand and abide by these principles. *Scampus*, the Student Guidebook, contains the Student Conduct Code in Section

11.00; the recommended sanctions are located in Appendix A:
<http://www.usc.edu/dept/publications/SCAMPUS/gov/>. Students will be referred to the Office of Student Judicial Affairs and Community Standards for further review, should there be any suspicion of academic dishonesty. The Review process can be found at:
<http://www.usc.edu/student-affairs/SJACS/>.