

**Syllabus for PADM/HADM 503-001**  
**Research Methods**  
**Fall 2017**  
**Thursday 6:00 - 9:00 pm, Olmsted C-012**

**Professor:** Dr. Daniel J. Mallinson

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Course Webpage	<a href="https://djmallinson.wordpress.com/padmhadm-503/">https://djmallinson.wordpress.com/padmhadm-503/</a>

## Course Description

Consuming and producing research is an important component of professional work in public administration and policy. The main focus of this course is providing future administrators with a practical understanding of research design and statistical analysis. The course will emphasize the importance of quality research design and making methodological choices. Students will be introduced to both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis. They will also learn how to evaluate and critique the research designs of others.

## Learning Goals and Objectives

- Goal 1: Students will be able to conduct their own research project (producer)
  - Objective 1a: Students will walk through the steps of research design: identifying research questions, selecting the appropriate analytical framework, identifying sample sizes or secondary data, selecting appropriate quantitative tools, interpreting results correctly, making the connection between results and practice
  - Objective 1b: Students will conduct basic statistical analyses and understand the assumptions of each
- Goal 2: Students will learn to be savvy consumers of empirical research (consumer)
  - Objective 2a: Students will evaluate research ranging from peer reviewed journal articles to research posted on the Internet
  - Objective 2b: Students will assess the strengths and weaknesses of research design
  - Objective 2c: Students will assess the validity and reliability of empirical results

- Objective 2d: Students will provide suggestions for improving study design

**Methods for Learning and Teaching:** This course will contain a mix of lecture and practical exercises. It is vital for your own comprehension of the course material that you come to class prepared to discuss assigned readings.

## Reaching Our Goals

**Attendance:** Your attendance in class is always expected. It is easy to fall behind in a research methods course and attending class will go a long way to helping you keep up with the course material. Please contact me via [e-mail](#) if you are unable to attend class. I will follow the University's attendance policy when it comes to excused absences. See <https://handbook.psu.edu/content/class-attendance>.

Students also have an obligation to notify me within the first three weeks of the semester if they will miss any class session due to a religious observance. I am pleased to do this, but will need notification in order to plan make-up work.

**Preparation and Participation:** I expect you to read the assigned material before class and be able to discuss what you read. I also expect you to come to class prepared with questions regarding things in the reading that were unclear.

**Do Not Suffer in Silence:** Please do not suffer in silence throughout the course if you are struggling. Instead, let me know — as soon as possible — what things are not making sense and we can work it out. If you are having a problem of any kind in the course, please talk to me about it as soon as possible.

**Be Flexible:** While the syllabus represents an agreement between us, I reserve the right to revise and modify it throughout the course, if it is necessary to achieve our goals. Situations beyond either of our control can also emerge that require changes to the course. I will notify you right away when any changes are made.

**Cell Phones and Laptops:** Please be respectful of your fellow students and me by silencing your cell phone during class and limiting laptop use to only class-related activity.<sup>1</sup>

**E-mail Policy:** I will work to respond to e-mails by the next business day. This means that e-mails sent on the weekends will be responded to by Monday.

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<sup>1</sup>In fact, research demonstrates that students who take handwritten notes generally perform better than those that use laptops: Mueller, Pam A. and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. 2014. "The Pen Is Mightier Than the Keyboard: Advantages of Longhand Over Laptop Note Taking." *Psychological Science* 25(6): 1159-1168.

## Readings

The following book is required for the course:

O'Sullivan, Elizabethann, Gary Rassel, Maureen Berner, and Jocelyn DeVance Taliaferro. 2017. *Research Methods for Public Administrators*. Sixth Edition. New York: Routledge. ISBN 978-0-20-585625-1.

Additional required readings will be made available on Canvas.

## Lecture Slides

I will be using lecture slides throughout the course. These will be uploaded to the course website (<https://djmallinson.wordpress.com/current-courses/padmhadm-503/>) and Canvas prior to each class period.

## Assessing Your Progress Towards Our Goals

The following types of assessment will be used to track your progress towards meeting our course goals: weekly quizzes, homework assignments, research evaluation, and final research paper.

Each component represents the following percentage of your final grade:

Homework Assignments	25%
Weekly Quizzes	15%
Research Evaluations	20%
Research Proposal	30%
Poster Presentation	10%

We will use the following grade scale:

Letter	Percent
A	94 to 100
A-	90 to 93
B+	87 to 89
B	84 to 86
B-	80 to 83
C+	77 to 79
C	70 to 76
D	60 to 69
F	Below 60

**Homework Assignments:** For each chapter of our textbook, there will be a few selected homework assignments. These are due in the class where we cover the assigned material. The schedule later in this syllabus lists all of the assigned homework problems. Please print these out and bring them to class for collection and review.

**Weekly Quizzes:** Immediately after each class, a quiz will go live on Canvas for that week's material. The quizzes are short and meant to mainly determine whether everyone is keeping up with course material. The quiz needs to be completed by midnight on the Friday after class. Meaning, you should take the quiz the day after each class session, unless told otherwise in class.

**Research Evaluation:** In this course, we will not only cover how to design your own research, but also how to apply what you are learning for the purpose of evaluating research produced by academics, government, think tanks, and others. To that end, you will be asked to evaluate two pieces of published research. See Appendix [A](#) for details.

**Research Proposal:** As a culminating experience, each student will develop a research proposal that applies much of the material we learn in class. This final project is scaffolded so that you can receive feedback on pieces throughout the course. The proposal will include:

- A statement of the research question and aims of the project
- Brief literature review
- Theory
- Specific hypotheses that will be tested
- Description of sample selection process
- Description of key measures
- Research design

See Appendix [B](#) for details.

**Poster Presentation:** During our assigned final exam slot, each student will have 5 minutes to present a poster of their research proposal. We will then discuss the most successful aspects of the presented proposals and posters. See Appendix [C](#) for details.

# SARI

“The SARI@PSU program at Penn State is designed to offer Penn State researchers and scholars comprehensive, multilevel education in the responsible conduct of research, in a way that is tailored to address the issues faced by individual disciplines.” More information can be found here, <http://www.research.psu.edu/training/sari>.

The Scholarship and Research Integrity (SARI) requirements for the Master’s in Public Administration program requires students in this program to complete the following two training courses and submit the completion report to the department as a record for their graduation file. This is a graduation requirement for every student and must be completed.

1. Social and Behavioral Human Subjects Research (IRB) Course
2. Social and Behavioral Responsible Conduct of Research (RCR) Course

You will need visit this website, <http://www.research.psu.edu/training/sari/program>, to set up an account to reach the free online trainings and courses that are offered through the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) program. There are instructions available on the website in order to complete the requirement if these are needed. Students should select the two trainings listed above when prompted to do so. The average completion time of this requirement is five (5) hours, but it can be broken up and taken at students’ convenience. Once you have completed this requirement, please forward a copy of the CITI online program completion form to myself and the program support staff: Lesa Stanford [lis12@psu.edu](mailto:lis12@psu.edu), for HADM or Jordyn McCrady, [jam5497@psu.edu](mailto:jam5497@psu.edu), for PADM so we have evidence of completion for your files and for the Graduate School.

If there are any questions, please feel free to contact myself, your program Coordinator, or the support Staff.

**Make-Up Grades:** You are allowed to make-up academic work only in the case of excused absences. These absences may include missing class for a [University-sanctioned activity \(with proper documentation\)](#), [illness](#), [religious observance](#), or [family responsibilities](#). If you know in advance that you are going to miss class, please contact me before the absence to make arrangements for completing the work. If you are absent for an unexpected reason, please check in with me as soon as possible. You will have one week from the day of your return to class to make up a missed assignment.

## Academic Integrity

Academic dishonesty is not limited to simply cheating on an exam or assignment. The following is quoted directly from the *PSU Faculty Senate Policies for Students* regarding academic integrity and academic dishonesty: “Academic integrity is the pursuit of scholarly activity free from fraud and deception and is an educational objective of this institution. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating of information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students.”

All University and Penn State Harrisburg policies regarding academic integrity/academic dishonesty apply to this course and the students enrolled in this course. Refer to the following URL for further details on the academic integrity policy of Penn State Harrisburg: <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/academics/academic-guidelines-and-policies>. Each student in this course is expected to work entirely on her/his own while taking any exam, to complete assignments on her/his own effort without the assistance of others unless directed otherwise by the instructor, and to abide by University and Penn State Harrisburg policies about academic integrity and academic dishonesty. Academic dishonesty can result in an assignment of “F” or “XF” as the final grade for the student.

## Disability Access

Penn State welcomes students with disabilities into the University's educational programs. Every Penn State campus has a Student Disability Resources office. Student Disability Resources at Penn State Harrisburg is located in SEC 205. The Disability Services Coordinator, Alan Babcock, can be reached via email at [aub15@psu.edu](mailto:aub15@psu.edu) or phone 717-948-6025.

To receive consideration for accommodations, you must contact Student Disability Resources (SDR), participate in an intake interview, provide documentation of your disability, and complete a Self-Assessment. Additional information is available on the Disability Services website (<http://harrisburg.psu.edu/disability-services>). If the documentation supports requests for reasonable accommodations, SDR will provide you with an accommodations letter, which you will give to your professors. You will receive accommodations after you give your accommodations letters to your professors. You should share your accommodations letters with your professors as early in the semester as possible. Professors do not provide accommodations retroactively.

## Counseling Services

Students may face a variety of concerns over the course of their time at PSH- depressed mood, anxiety, stress, family concerns, body image, substance use, sexuality and many others- that may interfere with their ability to focus on their studies. Counseling Services provides FREE mental health and social support for all currently enrolled students. Staff follow strict legal and ethical guidelines concerning the confidentiality of counseling. Counseling services is located in SEC 205 and can be reached by phone at (717) 948-6025. You can find more information at the Counseling Services webpage, <http://harrisburg.psu.edu/counseling-services>.

## Educational Equity

Penn State takes great pride to foster a diverse and inclusive environment for students, faculty, and staff. Acts of intolerance, discrimination, harassment, and/or incivility due to age, ancestry, color, disability, gender, national origin, race, religious belief, sexual orientation, or veteran status are not tolerated and can be reported through Educational Equity at the Report Bias site: <http://equity.psu.edu/reportbias/statement>. Direct all inquiries regarding the nondiscrimination policy to our Penn State Harrisburg Office of Student Affairs at the following link <https://harrisburg.psu.edu/webform/office-student-conduct-incident-report-form>.

## Writing Tutoring and Other Academic Support

The [Russell E. Horn Sr. Learning Center](#) provides tutoring for writing assignments as well as for other aspects of the academic experience. You can make an appointment in one of the four ways listed below. An appointment is recommended, though not required.

Website	Online Scheduler	Phone	In Person
<a href="http://harrisburg.psu.edu/learning-center">harrisburg.psu.edu/learning-center</a>	<a href="http://psuh.mywconline.com">psuh.mywconline.com</a>	717-948-6475	SEC 201

### Writing

The Learning Center provides tutoring support for writing assignments in this class. Do you need help developing your thesis and ideas? Do you need objective feedback when you're drafting or revising your papers? Do you have questions about MLA, APA, or Chicago styles? Do you want to improve your academic writing skills? The writing tutors at the Learning Center are experts at helping students improve their writing. Writing handouts are available at [psu.box.com/v/WritingResources](http://psu.box.com/v/WritingResources) and in print in SEC 201.

### Other Academic Support

Is English an additional language for you and your home language is “getting in the way?”

Are you spending excessive amounts of time trying to finish your assigned readings? Are you nervous about participating in class and presenting speeches? American & Academic Literacy (AAL) appointments support international and other multilingual students with their transition to the U.S., and can help all students with their speeches. Our Academic Skills Consultants can also help with time management, organization, and study skills. Like us at [facebook.com/PSHLearningCenter](https://facebook.com/PSHLearningCenter) and follow us on Twitter @PSUHLC.

## Course Schedule

We will attempt to follow this schedule as closely as possible, but we may take more time on some concepts and less time on others. For this reason, a digital version of this syllabus can be found on [my website](#). Slides used in class will also be posted on the online syllabus and Canvas before class. All changes to the schedule will be announced in class or via e-mail and the online syllabus will be constantly up-to-date. Required course readings are listed and due dates for assignments are in bold. Links to some additional readings are included in the syllabus on my website, others will be uploaded to Canvas. If you have trouble, please do not hesitate to [e-mail](#) me.

NOTE: All homework problems come from the Problems for Homework and Discussion section of each chapter. Problems marked as WWD come from the Working With Data section.

### Week 1: Introductions (8/24)

- Introduction to the course and each other

### Week 2: Getting Started with Research (8/31)

- Chapter 1 - Beginning a Research Project
  - Homework Problems: 1 (do not do the one page write up, we will discuss in class), 2, 8a and 8b
- Chapter 8 - Protection of Human Research Subjects and Other Ethical Issues
  - Homework Problems: 2, 3, 4, 11



### **Week 3: Secondary Data (9/7)**

- Chapter 9 - Finding and Analyzing Existing Data
  - Homework Problems: 4, WWD 1
- **Research Question Due**

### **Week 4: Primary Data (9/14)**

- Chapter 2 - Designs for Description
  - Homework Problems: 2 (Use Excel), 3 (use Excel), 4a, 4b, 4c
- Chapter 3 - Designs for Explanation
  - Homework Problems: 1, 3

### **Week 5: Measurement (9/21)**

- Chapter 4 - Measuring Variables
  - Homework Problems: 1, 3, 8
- Chapter 10 - Combining Indicators: Index Construction
  - Homework Problems: 2, 3
- **Annotated Bibliography Due**

### **Week 6: Interviewing (9/28)**

- Chapter 6 - Contacting and Talking to Subjects
  - Homework Problems: 1, 3, 4a, 5

### **Week 7: Surveys (10/5)**

- Chapter 7 - Collecting Data With Questions and Questionnaires
  - Homework Problems: 1, 5, 7
- **Theory and Hypotheses Due**

### **Week 8: Sampling (10/12)**

- Chapter 5 - Sampling
  - Homework Problems: 1, 5, 7, 10

### **Week 9: Data Analysis (10/19)**

- Chapter 11 - Univariate Analysis
  - Homework Problems: 3, 6, 7
- **First Article Review Due**

### **Week 10: Data Analysis (10/26)**

- Chapter 12 - Examining Relationships Among Variables With Tests of Statistical Significance
  - Homework Problems: 1, 4, 5

### **Week 11: Data Analysis (11/2)**

- Chapter 13 - Examining Relationships among Variables: Contingency Tables with Measures of Association, ANOVA
  - Homework Problems: 1
- **Sampling and Measures Due**

## **Week 12: Regression (11/9)**

- Chapter 14 - Regression Analysis and Correlation
  - Homework Problems: 1, 4, 5

## **Week 13: Reporting Results (11/16)**

- Chapter 15 - Completing the Project and Communicating Findings
  - Homework Problems: 3
- **Second Article Review Due**

## **Week 14: Thanksgiving Break (11/23)**

- No Class

## **Week 15: Maximum Likelihood Estimation (11/30)**

- S. Purcell. “Introduction.” Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE). [http://statgen.iop.kcl.ac.uk/bgim/mle/sslike\\_2.html](http://statgen.iop.kcl.ac.uk/bgim/mle/sslike_2.html).
- S. Purcell. “Model-fitting.” Maximum Likelihood Estimation (MLE). [http://statgen.iop.kcl.ac.uk/bgim/mle/sslike\\_3.html](http://statgen.iop.kcl.ac.uk/bgim/mle/sslike_3.html).

## **Week 16: Case Studies and Multi-Method Research (12/7)**

- George, Alexander L. and Andrew Bennett. 2005. *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press. Chapters 1, 3, 4.
- **Draft Research Design Due**

## **Week 17: Finals Week**

- Poster Presentations
- **Final Research Proposal Due Thursday December 14 by 5pm**

# Appendices

## A Article Evaluation

We will model these two article evaluations on the process of scientific peer review. For this assignment, I would like you to navigate to one of two journals — [Public Administrative Review](#) or the [Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory](#) — and search the recent issues for two articles that sound interesting. If you are interested more in public policy than traditional public administration, I am also open to the selection of articles from policy-focused journals. See me before you make this choice. Ideally, these articles would also be useful as literature for your final research proposal. Download the articles (you will need to use Penn State's library or be on a Penn State computer to do so). Next, read this article on how to do a peer review by sociologist Tanya Golash-Boza: (<http://www.phd2published.com/2012/05/09/how-to-write-a-peer-review-for-an-academic-journal-six-steps-from-start-to-finish-by-tanya-golash-boza/>). Following her procedure, write a 2-3 page (single spaced) review of your article. Make sure you are applying material from our class on research design and statistics, but please also evaluate the success of the entire article (not just the methods).

**The first review is due October 19, the second is due November 16.**

## B Research Proposal

This project is meant to be the culmination of the material you learn in this course. Instead of rushing through a full research project, I am asking you to focus your energies on developing a solid research design for a topic you find interesting. I would advise overlapping this project with your article review assignments. Doing so achieves two things. First, it ensures that your research proposal is on a topic that is currently being discussed among scholars. Second, a solid design is essential for quality research output.

The final proposal should contain the following sections:

- Statement of the research question and aims of the project
- Brief literature review
- Theory
- Specific hypotheses that will be tested
- Description of sample selection process
- Description of key measures
- Research design

In an effort to spread out the work for this project, and so that I can give you feedback along the way, draft pieces of the project are due throughout the semester. See the course schedule for these due dates.

Please note that instead of a draft literature review, I am asking you to submit an annotated bibliography. I would like this to include 10 primary sources (journal articles, books, or other research papers). Here are some resources for preparing an annotated bibliography:

- Writing an Annotated Bibliography: [Purdue University's Online Writing Lab](#).
- Writing an Annotated Bibliography: [Cornell University Library](#)

## C Poster Presentation

It is common that when graduate students first present research at a conference, they do so in a poster format. One advantage of the poster is that it allows viewers more time to stop and talk to a researcher about their project. Alas, printing posters can be a bit expensive, so our final class meeting will involve a modified version of a poster presentation. You will need to find a PowerPoint poster template online (of which there are many) and create a poster for your research proposal. You will then have 5 minutes in class to present your poster on the screen. This will allow your peers to ask you questions about the design and we can then have a larger discussion about the most successful elements of a poster.

Here are some resources to get you started:

- Advice for Making Posters with PowerPoint (<http://undergraduateresearch.as.ua.edu/presenting-your-work/making-posters/>)
- Poster Creation and Presentation (<http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/c.php?g=435651&p=2970256>)
- Designing Conference Posters (<http://guides.libraries.psu.edu/c.php?g=435651&p=2970256>)