

**PADP 7110  
Research Methods  
Fall 2025**

**Department of Public Administration and Policy  
School of Public and International Affairs  
University of Georgia**

**Course Information**

Professor: Amanda J. Abraham, Ph.D.  
Contact Information: [aabraham@uga.edu](mailto:aabraham@uga.edu)  
  
Office Location: 280F Baldwin Hall, 355 South Jackson Street  
Office hours: By appointment.

**Course Meeting Time and Location**

Location: Baldwin Hall, Room 102  
Time: Tuesdays, 3:55pm-6:45pm (46687)

**Textbooks and Other Required Course Material**

**Textbook:** O'Sullivan, E., Rassel, G., Berner, M. & Taliaferro (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators*, 6<sup>th</sup> Edition. New York, NY: Taylor and Francis.

Additional required readings will be posted on eLC. **Students are responsible for checking eLC prior to each class period for assigned readings and being prepared to participate in class discussion.**

**Course Description and Objectives**

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the application of social science research methods to problems in public administration and policy. Topics include research ethics, research design, measurement, and data collection techniques. The core objectives of this course are

- 1) Developing an appreciation of the importance of research methods in contemporary public inquiry
- 2) Identifying which research designs and data collection strategies are the most appropriate for planning and conducting research studies in the areas of public administration and policy
- 3) Gaining increased sophistication as a research consumer who understands the strengths and limitations of research studies
- 4) Gaining basic knowledge of analytic techniques used in research studies

**MPA Competencies**

This course will aid students in the development of at least one MPA competency:

***To Analyze, Synthesize, Think Critically, Solve Problems and Make Decisions***

Students in the Master of Public Administration program at The University of Georgia will utilize various methods and analytical tools to analyze and interpret data to provide effective reasoning for decision-making and policy creation. Students will learn to effectively and concisely inform the public and other stakeholders of decisions and initiatives through the presentation of data and research findings. Furthermore, they will produce policy papers involving the synthesis of information, evaluation, and analysis of critical questions or problems currently facing the field of public administration and policy.

## **ASSIGNMENTS**

**Assignment 1: Complete IRB training:** Each student will complete IRB training through UGA's PEP system. Login to the PEP system (<http://pep.uga.edu>) using your UGA MyID and Password and complete the *Social & Behavioral Research* basic course. Students must upload their Completion Certificate in the IRB training assignment box to receive credit for this assignment. Note: This is an individual assignment. **(5 points)**

**Assignment 2: Class Discussion #1 (Course Topic):** Each group will be responsible for leading class discussion on one assigned course topic. Additional details of this assignment will be provided separately on eLC. **(10 points)**

**Assignment 3: Class Discussion #2 (Course Reading):** Each group will be responsible for leading class discussion on one assigned course reading. Additional details of this assignment will be provided separately on eLC. **(10 points)**

**Assignment 4: Literature Review, Conceptual Framework, and Research Questions:** Each group will conduct a literature review, identify and describe a conceptual framework, and develop research questions that will be used to guide their research proposal. Additional details of this assignment will be provided separately on eLC. **(10 points)**

**Assignment 5: Research Design and Hypotheses:** Each group will describe the research design that will be used to address their research questions, including the major strengths and weaknesses of the proposed research design. Students will also develop study hypotheses. Additional details of this assignment will be provided separately on eLC. **(10 points)**

**Assignment 6: Data Collection, Instruments, and Measurement:** Each group will describe the data collection method(s) that will be used in the proposed study. If applicable, students will also develop a draft of all instruments that will be used in the proposed research study. Each group will also specify the measurement of all variables that will be included in the proposed research study. Additional details of this assignment will be provided separately on eLC. **(10 points)**

**Assignment 7: Research Proposal Presentation:** Each group will give a presentation of their research proposal. Each group will prepare a PowerPoint presentation to help guide the presentation. Additional details of this assignment will be provided separately on eLC. **(10 points)**

**Assignment 8: Final Research Proposal:** Each group will prepare a final research proposal based on prior assignments and feedback provided by the instructor and peers throughout the semester. Additional details of this assignment will be provided separately on eLC. **(25 points)**

**Assignment 9: Group Evaluation:** Each student will evaluate the performance of their group members. Additional details of this assignment will be provided separately on eLC. Note: This is an individual assignment. **(5 points)**

## **ASSIGNMENT SUBMISSIONS**

All assignments must be submitted via eLC. Formatting requirements for each assignment will be specified in the instructions provided for each assignment.

## KEY DUE DATES

Assignment 1: IRB Training	9/2
Assignment 2: Class Discussion #1 (Course Topic)	9/2-11/4
Assignment 3: Class Discussion #2 (Course Reading)	9/9-11/4
Assignment 4: Literature Review, Conceptual Framework, and RQs	9/16
Assignment 5: Research Design and Hypotheses	10/14
Assignment 6: Data Collection, Instruments, and Measurement	11/4
Assignment 7: Research Proposal Presentation	11/11 or 11/18
Assignment 8: Final Research Proposal	12/2 (Draft) 12/9 (Final)
Assignment 9: Group Evaluation	12/9

## GRADING

Grades will be calculated based on the following:

	Points
Assignment 1: IRB Training	5
Assignment 2: Class Discussion #1 (Course Topic)	10
Assignment 3: Class Discussion #2 (Course Reading)	10
Assignment 4: Literature Review, Conceptual Model, and RQs	10
Assignment 5: Research Design and Hypotheses	10
Assignment 6: Data Collection, Instruments, and Measurement	10
Assignment 7: Research Proposal Presentation	10
Assignment 8: Final Research Proposal	25
Assignment 9: Group Evaluation	5
Class Participation	5
<b>Total Points</b>	<b>100</b>

## Class Attendance, Class Participation and Class Etiquette

### CLASS ATTENDANCE & CLASS PARTICIPATION

Students are expected to attend each scheduled class meeting, to be on time, and to be prepared for each class session. In addition, students are expected to actively participate in class. Attendance is necessary to receive full credit for class participation.

Note that students must inform the instructor **in advance** if they are unable to attend class.

### CLASS ETIQUETTE

All electronic devices and other extraneous materials must be put away before class. To make sure that all students feel comfortable, it is expected that all students will follow the following etiquette rules:

- be in your seat and ready to begin class promptly at the official start time
- refrain from talking while the instructor or other students are presenting material
- turn off or silence all electronic devices
- refrain from using cellphones or other electronic devices for any activity that is not directly related to class

**\*\*Unless specifically required for a class activity or by prior approval of the course instructor, students should not use computers, cell phones or other electronic devices during class.**

Students who violate these policies will be asked to leave class immediately. Repeat offenders may be dropped from the class.

## PROHIBITION ON RECORDING LECTURES

In the absence of written authorization from the UGA Disability Resource Center, students may not make a visual or audio recording of any aspect of this course. Students who have a recording accommodation agree in writing that they:

- Will use the records only for personal academic use during the specific course.
- Understand that faculty members have copyright interest in their class lectures and that they agree not to infringe on this right in any way.
- Understand that the faculty member and students in the class have privacy rights and agree not to violate those rights by using recordings for any reason other than their own personal study.
- Will not release, digitally upload, broadcast, transcribe, or otherwise share all or any part of the recordings. They also agree that they will not profit financially and will not allow others to benefit personally or financially from lecture recordings or other course materials.
- Will erase/delete all recordings at the end of the semester.
- Understand that violation of these terms may subject them to discipline under the Student Code of Conduct or subject them to liability under copyright laws.

## USE OF AI IN THIS COURSE

UGA's policy is that the use of AI for coursework is not permitted unless explicitly authorized by me (your course instructor) ahead of time. In this course, the use of Generative AI (GAI) tools is not permitted. If you are uncertain about using a particular tool to support your work, please consult with me before using it. Please note that you may not represent output generated by a GAI tool as your own work.

## PREFERRED NAME AND PRONOUNS

Professional courtesy and sensitivity are especially important with respect to individuals and topics dealing with differences of race, culture, religion, politics, sexual orientation, gender, gender variance, and nationalities. Class rosters are provided to the instructor with the student's legal name. I am eager to address you by your preferred name and/or gender pronoun. Please advise me of this preference early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

### Make-Up Policy

Assignments that are late without advance arrangement will not be accepted, and the student will receive 0 (zero) points for the assignment. If personal circumstances will prevent completion of an assignment as scheduled, arrangements for an alternative delivery date must be made **in advance** of the assignment due date with the instructor.

### University Honor Code and Academic Honesty Policy

All academic work must meet the standards contained in *A Culture of Honesty*. All students are responsible to inform themselves about those standards before performing any academic work. The UGA Student Honor Code includes the following statement: *"I will be academically honest in all of my academic work and will not tolerate academic dishonesty of others."*

A Culture of Honesty, the University's policy and procedures for handling cases of suspected dishonesty, can be found at [honesty.uga.edu](https://honesty.uga.edu).

Lack of knowledge of the academic honesty policy is not a reasonable explanation for a violation. Questions related to course assignments and the academic policy should be directed to the instructor. Any violation will be reported to the Office of Academic Affairs.

### Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who require accommodations to participate in course activities or meet course requirements should contact the course instructor during regular office hours or by appointment. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, you can also contact the Disability Resource Center, 114 Clark Howell Hall, 706-542-8719 (<http://drc.uga.edu>). If you have a letter from Disability Services indicating you have a documented disability that requires academic accommodations, please present the letter to me as early as possible so we can discuss the accommodations you might need for class.

### COVID-19 Protocols

Starting in 2022, UGA began to [manage COVID-19](#) the same way as other infectious diseases. UGA continues to follow Georgia Department of Public Health (GDPH) guidance on COVID-19. Self-isolation is the expectation for faculty, staff, and students who test positive for COVID-19, i.e.,

- Isolate for 7 days.
- If you have no symptoms and a negative test at the 7-day mark, you can leave isolation.
- Continue to wear a mask around others for 7 additional days.

If you have been in close contact with someone who is COVID-positive, but you are not sick, GDPH and [CDC](#) urge you “...to monitor your health for symptoms of COVID-19 during the 10 days following the last time you were in close contact with a sick person with COVID-19.”

Mask-wearing is not mandatory on campus (and we cannot require students to wear masks nor ask about vaccination status).

COVID-19 vaccines are available at the [University Health Center](#).

### Well-Being Resources

UGA Well-Being Resources promote student success by cultivating a culture that supports a more active, healthy, and engaged student community.

Anyone needing assistance is encouraged to contact Student Care & Outreach (SCO) in the Division of Student Affairs at 706-542-8479 or visit [sco.uga.edu](#). Student Care & Outreach helps students navigate difficult circumstances by connecting them with the most appropriate resources or services. They also administer the [Embark@UGA](#) program which supports students experiencing, or who have experienced, homelessness, foster care, or housing insecurity.

UGA provides both clinical and non-clinical options to support student well-being and mental health, any time, any place. Whether on campus, or studying from home or abroad, UGA Well-being Resources are here to help.

- Well-Being Resources: [well-being.uga.edu](#)
- Student Care and Outreach: [sco.uga.edu](#)
- University Health Center: [healthcenter.uga.edu](#)
- Counseling and Psychiatric Services: [caps.uga.edu](#) or CAPS 24/7 crisis support at 706- 542-2273
- Health Promotion/Fontaine Center: [healthpromotion.uga.edu](#)
- Disability Resource Center and Testing Services: [drc.uga.edu](#)

Additional information, including free digital well-being resources, can be accessed through the UGA app or by visiting <https://well-being.uga.edu>.

## Course Outline

*The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.*

Date	Topic	Readings
<b>WEEK 1</b> 8/19	Introduction to the Course	
<b>WEEK 2</b> 8/26	Introduction to Research Methods	<b>Ch. 1 O'Sullivan</b> , Beginning A Research Project <b>Goldacre, 2010</b> , <i>Bad Science</i> , Chapters 10 and 11
<b>WEEK 3</b> 9/2	Research Ethics  <b>Assignment 1 Due: IRB Training (before class)</b>	<b>Ch. 8 O'Sullivan</b> , Protection of Human Research Subjects and Other Ethical Issues  <b>Ch. 15 O'Sullivan</b> , Completing the Project and Communicating Findings (pages 495-500)
<b>WEEK 4</b> 9/9	Literature Reviews, Conceptual Models, and Research Questions	<b>Literature Reviews (UNC Writing Center)</b>  <b>See Additional Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 5</b> 9/16	Introduction to Measurement  <b>*Assignment 4 Due: Literature Review, Conceptual Model &amp; Research Questions</b>	<b>Ch. 4 O'Sullivan</b> , Measuring Variables  <b>See Additional Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 6</b> 9/23	Research Design: Experimental Designs	<b>Ch. 3 O'Sullivan</b> , Designs for Explanation (pages 58-77)  <b>See Additional Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 7</b> 9/30	Research Design: Quasi-Experimental Designs	<b>Ch.3 O'Sullivan</b> , Designs for Explanation (pages 77-87)  <b>See Additional Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 8</b> 10/7	Research Design: Non-Experimental Designs	<b>Ch. 2 O'Sullivan</b> , Designs for Description  <b>Ch. 3 O'Sullivan</b> , Designs for Explanation (pages 87-93)  <b>See Additional Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 9</b> 10/14	Review Week  <b>Assignment 5 Due: Research Design and Hypotheses</b>	  <b>See Readings on eLC.</b>

<b>WEEK 10</b> 10/21	Data Collection: Survey Research & Sampling	<b>Ch. 5 O’Sullivan, Sampling</b>  <b>See Additional Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 11</b> 10/28	Data Collection: Survey Design & Survey Instruments	<b>Ch. 6 O’Sullivan, Contacting and Talking to Subjects</b>  <b>Ch. 7 O’Sullivan, Collecting Data with Questions and Questionnaires</b>  <b>Dillman et al., 2014, Chapters 4, 5 &amp; 7</b>  <b>See Additional Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 12</b> 11/4	Survey Instruments & Measurement  <b>Assignment 6 Due: Data Collection, Instruments, &amp; Measurement</b>	<b>Ch. 4 O’Sullivan, Measuring Variables</b>  <b>See Additional Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 13</b> 11/11	<b>Assignment 7 Due: Research Proposal Presentations</b>	<b>See Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 14</b> 11/18	<b>Assignment 7 Due: Research Proposal Presentations</b>	<b>See Readings on eLC.</b>
<b>WEEK 15</b> 11/25	Course Review and Wrap Up	<b>Ch. 15 O’Sullivan, Completing the Project and Communicating Findings</b>  <b>See Additional Readings on eLC.</b>
12/2	<b>Assignment 8: Draft of Research Proposal</b>	
12/9	<b>Assignment 8 Due: Final Research Proposal</b>  <b>Assignment 9 Due: Group Evaluation</b>	