

MLS 5303: Applied Research Methods Course Syllabus

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Contacting Me:

You are welcome to e-mail, text, or call me with any questions or comments about the course. I will always try to return any e-mails within 24 hours. *But Please Note:* I am mostly unavailable by e-mail Monday-Friday between 6:30am and 5:30pm because I do not have access to my UTEP e-mail account during this time. If you have an urgent issue during these times, please text me, and I will respond as soon as I can.

Course Description:

During our 8 weeks together, we will focus on the “research loop” and the basic steps in the social science research process: developing the research question, conducting the literature review, establishing research design, collecting the data, analyzing the data, and drawing conclusions.

Expected Outcomes:

This course is intended to an overview of several key components of the research process. Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- 1) Understand the scientific process and the steps of the research loop.
- 2) Use and understand the key terms associated with the research loop.
- 3) State a research question and develop specific hypotheses.
- 4) Define the variables associated with the research hypothesis.
- 5) Conduct a literature search to embed a research question in what has already been done.
- 6) Identify appropriate methods to analyze a research question:
 - Measurement of Variables
 - Research Design
 - Sampling
 - Data Collection
- 7) Present a research idea and project proposal in writing.
- 8) Identify methodological weaknesses in other research (i.e., identify statistical lies).
- 9) Communicate and cooperate with colleagues regarding research issues.

Required Textbooks:

Bhattacharjee, A., *Social Science Research: Principles, Methods, and Practices (2012)*.
USF Tampa Bay Open Access Textbook Collection. Book 3.
http://scholarcommons.usf.edu/oa_textbook/3

Note: This is a free e-book. The pdf is posted on Blackboard.

Darrell Huff, *How to Lie with Statistics (any edition)*. Various locations: various publishers, various dates, ISBN: various.

Note: Both the paper copy and e-book are available through places like Amazon, or a free pdf version is available at <https://archive.org> and posted on Blackboard.

Mode of Delivery:

This course is 100% online. Although it is self-paced in that you are able to complete the readings and lectures at your convenience, I expect that you will complete the lectures and readings within a specific timeline in order to meet the specific due dates given for the major course assignments.

The course is made up of 7 separate units. In most cases, each unit is scheduled to take 1 week to complete. The exception is unit 6, which is scheduled to take 2 weeks to complete. Each unit includes readings and lecture materials. Assigned readings should be completed prior to the corresponding lecture. Assignments are due at the end of each unit. Please refer to the course schedule for more information on specific due dates.

In Case of Technical Difficulties / What to Do If Blackboard is Down

Let me know if you run into any technical difficulties, and I'll do my best to help.

I hope that we won't run into any major technical difficulties, but I have had the online platform go down for a couple days before during one of my courses. If this should happen, I will give extensions for assignments. If you cannot get something to upload, you can e-mail it to me directly. If you need access to course materials, I can e-mail you copies. Please notify me by e-mail or text if you run into any issues. Technical difficulties are just part of an online course, and we'll work through them together.

Assignments:

There are three types of assignments you'll complete as part of this course.

Discussion Board Posts: You will be asked to complete 6 discussion board posts. I encourage you to post regularly and to interact with one another through this course component. The first Discussion Board post is an opportunity to introduce yourself to the class. The other 5 Discussion Board posts will be your thoughts and reactions to the readings assigned for Units 2 through 6. More information will be provided along with each assignment. Discussion Board posts must be completed by the last day of each unit (although I encourage you to post earlier in the unit so that we can get a true discussion going).

Article Matrix: The article matrix is intended to give you practice reading, interpreting, and abstracting key pieces of information from research articles. More information will be provided along with the assignment. This assignment also allows for the possibility of extra credit.

Exercises: There are 6 required exercises (due dates are listed on the course schedule). The first 5 exercises build upon each other to help you practice some of the most important aspects of preparing and writing a research proposal. The final exercise puts all of these pieces together into a final project proposal. More information on each exercise will be provided along with the assignment.

Assessment:

These assignments account for the following amount of your final grade. Please note that it is necessary to turn in all exercises to get an "A" in this course.

Exercise 1:	10%
Exercise 2:	10%
Exercise 3:	10%
Exercise 4:	10%
Exercise 5:	10%
Exercise 6:	20%
Discussion Posts:	20%
Article Matrix:	10% (with possibility for up to 7.5 extra credit points)

ADA Statement:

UTEP seeks to maintain an inclusive environment. If you have a disability or suspect that you may have a disability and would like reasonable accommodation, please 1) let me know at the beginning of the course and 2) contact the UTEP Disabled Student Services Office (DSSO) at 915-747-5148.