

Research Methods II

Rhode Island College, Spring 2017

Section 404-01

Tuesdays and Thursdays 4:00-5:50 PM, Craig-Lee 131

Prerequisite: Soc 302, Pol 300, or consent of instructor; Mathematics general education requirement

Instructor Information

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Office: Craig Lee Hall room 451

Drop-In Availability: Wednesdays 3-4:30 pm most weeks; Thursdays 2-3 pm; immediately after class most days

This course uses Blackboard.

Course Description

This course is a continuation of Research Methods I. This semester, we will shift our focus from the design of research and the collection of data to the analysis and presentation of data. We will spend time on both qualitative and quantitative analytical strategies, with a particular focus on the use of computer technology in data analysis. Students will gain skills including the use of SPSS statistical processing software to conduct data analysis, the use and management of large datasets, the construction and analysis of tables, and the analysis and description of qualitative data.

Course Materials

Morgan *et al.* 2012. *IBM SPSS for Introductory Statistics*, 5th edition. Routledge. List price \$45. ISBN 978-1-84872-982-7. Ebook available.

Flash drive, which you must bring to class every class session, or cloud file storage account.
Computer-compatible headphones, which you must bring to class every session.

OPTIONAL: This course requires homework and paper assignments to be completed using the SPSS software. You can access SPSS for free in the on-campus computer labs (as far as I know, SPSS is not available in the library). However, I would encourage you to rent the SPSS software for your home computer—past students strongly recommend that you do this unless you spend many hours working on campus already. You can do this at <http://www.onthehub.com> for as little as \$45 (for a 6-month license; Mac & PC versions available).

Additional readings and datasets will be distributed electronically; students must validate their RIC IDs at the library ASAP and ensure that they have access to the Blackboard system

NOTE THAT THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.

Course Requirements

This course incorporates a variety of ways for you to demonstrate your engagement, learning, and competency regarding the course material. You will have some flexibility in choosing how and where to deploy your efforts; if you were to successfully complete all possible course assignments, you could earn 110+ points (the cutoff for an A grade being roughly 95 points).

1. **PARTICIPATION & ATTENDANCE.** You are expected to come on time for every class meeting; excessive absences will severely imperil your ability to succeed in this course. There is a participation rubric available in Blackboard that will be used to assess this portion of the grade. Remember that there are very few stupid questions, but that all questions and comments should be made in a spirit of respect for other students and their contributions to the class. (5 points)
2. **LABS & EXERCISES.** Throughout the semester, there will be various in-class exercises and out-of-class homework assignments. These may include group activities, short writing assignments, in-class quizzes, Blackboard quizzes, and exercises using the Dedoose or SPSS software. Some assignments will be posted only in Blackboard and not announced in the syllabus, so please be sure to keep track of them there. If you will not be able to use the SPSS software at home, please be sure to schedule time to come to campus to complete your homework. These assignments, with exceptions that will be noted, cannot be made up. (1-3 points each)
3. **MIDTERM QUALITATIVE RESEARCH EXERCISE.** The first portion of the course will be spent studying qualitative analytical strategies. At the end of this portion of the course, you will complete an exercise and short paper in which you develop a research question, perform your own qualitative analysis, and present the results. (20 points)
4. **FINAL QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH PAPER.** You will write a final research paper on the model of a sociological journal article. This paper will require you to identify a theory to be tested, conduct a short literature review on the topic, perform a quantitative analysis using a pre-existing data set, and explain your results. (20 points)
5. **FINAL EXAM.** There will be an open-book and open-notes final exam during the regular exam period. The exam will test your ability to create and analyze quantitative research results as well as your knowledge of the terms and concepts we will have covered during the semester. (20 points)
6. **READING & VIEWING.** You are expected to complete all assigned course readings prior to the date for which they are assigned. Remember that normal expectations for a college course are that you should do two to three hours of work outside class for every one hour in class—since you are spending four hours a week in this class, that means you should expect to work on reading, writing, video viewing, homework assignments, and studying for this class for eight or more hours a week outside of class. While reading & videos do not count for a separate percentage of your grade, students who do not complete the reading or watch the videos will find that they are not able complete assigned work satisfactorily. You are additionally encouraged to complete the study questions at the end of each chapter of the Morgan text.

Note: federal guidelines (<http://ifap.ed.gov/dpclatters/attachments/GEN1106.pdf>) expect students to complete two hours of work out of class for every one hour of in-class time.

Course Schedule: Readings and assignments are due on the *first day* under which they are listed, unless a specific alternative date and time are given. Readings are available electronically unless they come from the Morgan text. Videos are available via Blackboard. We will devote class time to any assignments indicated with the symbol ☞, so you don't need to start them ahead of time, but you may still need to finish them on your own, especially if you've missed class.

Tuesday, January 17

First Day of Class

- Read entire syllabus

Thursday, January 19

Introduction to Data Analysis

- Dedoose, "Intro to Qualitative & Mixed Methods Research"
- Pearce, "Mixed Methods Inquiry in Sociology," *ABS* 56: 829-48
- Schwartz, "The Importance of Stupidity in Scientific Research"
- Getting to Know You Survey due 9:30 am on January 20th
- ☞ Qualitative data survey due at end of class today

Tuesday, January 24

Introduction to Qualitative Research

- Methods I review quiz due at 3:30 pm today
- Marvasti, "What is Qualitative Research?" *Qualitative Research in Sociology* pp. 1-13
- Marvasti, "Data Analysis" *Qualitative Research in Sociology* pp. 81-118

Thursday, January 26

Qualitative Coding

- Saldaña, "An Introduction to Codes and Coding"
- Dedoose, "What is Dedoose?" and "Research Basics"
- Video: "Orientation"
- Video: "Code Setup"

January 30 is the Drop/Add deadline

Tuesday, January 31

Using Documents in Coding and Analysis

- Video: "Document Excerpting"
- Video: "Documents"
- Dedoose, "Getting Started" and "Coding & Excerpting"
- Transcription assignment due at 3:30 pm today

Thursday, February 2

Qualitative Analysis

- Video: "Analysis"
- Video: "Descriptors"
- Dedoose, "Working with Descriptors," "Analysis and Filtering," and "Inter-Rater Reliability"
- ☞ Coding test due at 9 am February 3

Tuesday, February 7

Analysis and Writeup

- Berg, Excerpts from *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*
- Miles & Huberman, "Making Good Sense" from *Qualitative Data Analysis*, pp. 245-87
- Marvasti, "Writing" *Qualitative Research in Sociology* pp. 119-32
- Oregon State Sociology Writing Guide, pp. 46-72 ONLY
- ☞ In-class analysis practice due at end of class today

Thursday, February 9

Writing the Qualitative Paper/Practice Lab

- Trautner, Mary. "Tort Reform and Access to Justice," *Qualitative Sociology* 34: 523-38
- Quiz on the Trautner article due at 3:30 pm today
- Select texts for your paper at the end of the day today

Tuesday, February 14

Summing Up Qualitative/Lab Time

- Morgan**, "Variables, Research Problems, & Questions," (1-14)
- Morgan**, "Getting Started," (207-212 ONLY)
- ☞ Qualitative Practice Lab Assignment due at 3:30 pm today

Thursday, February 16

Introduction to Quantitative Approaches

- Morgan**, "Data Coding, Entry, and Checking," (15-36)
- Video: "Intro to SPSS"
- Video: "Importing & Editing Data in SPSS"
- ☞ SPSS & datasets exploration assignment due Feb. 20, 9:30 am

Tuesday, February 21

Descriptive Statistics

- Morgan**, "Measurement & Descriptive Statistics" (37-53)
- Morgan**, "Understanding your Data..." (54-73)
- Video: "Understanding Descriptive Statistics"
- Video: "Descriptive Statistics in SPSS"
- Video: "Graphs in SPSS"
- ☞ Descriptive Statistics Lab due February 28 at 3:30 pm
- Qualitative Paper due February 27 at 9:30 am**

Thursday, February 23

Introduction to Explanatory Statistics

- Morgan**, "Interpreting the Results..." (99-109)
- Video: "Statistical Significance"
- Video: "Crosstabs in SPSS"
- Johnson, "Inferential Statistics" from *Educational Research*
- ☞ Crosstabs lab due March 3 at 9:30 am

Tuesday, February 28

Testing Relationships

- Video: "Multivariate Crosstabs in SPSS"
- Wagner, "Cross-Tabulation," *Using IBM SPSS Statistics* (80-84)

Thursday, March 2

Makeup Day/Lab Time

- Hypothesis assignment due today at 3:30 pm

March 7 & 9: Spring Break (No Class Meetings)

Tuesday, March 14

Measures of Association

- Morgan**, “Cross-tabulation...” (136-48)
- Video: “Measures of Association”
- Video: “Measures of Association in SPSS”
- Variables assignment due today at 3:30 pm
- ☞ Association lab due March 17 at 9:30 am

Thursday, March 16

Association & Correlation

- Morgan**, “Bivariate Pearson & Spearman Correlations” (155-60)
- Partial Correlation Handout
- Video: “Correlation & Pearson’s R in SPSS”
- Video: “Partial Correlation in SPSS”
- ☞ Correlation lab due March 22 at 9:30 am

Tuesday, March 21

Data Management & Manipulation

- Video: “Changing Variables in SPSS”
- Video: “Making an Index in SPSS”
- Morgan**, “Getting Started,” (212-216 ONLY)
- Morgan**, “Data File Management,” (74-90)
- Video: “Sorting and Selecting Data in SPSS”
- ☞ Data manipulation lab due March 27 at 9:30 am

Thursday, March 23

Introduction to Regression

- Morgan**, “Correlation & Regression” (149-70)
- Video: “Scatterplots & Basic Regression in SPSS”
- ☞ Regression lab 1 due March 31 at 9:30 am

March 24: Withdrawal Deadline

Tuesday, March 28

Regression

- Marsh**, “Causal Explanations,” From *Exploring Data* (235-53)
- Video: “Bivariate Regression in SPSS”
- Video: “Multivariate Regression in SPSS”

Thursday, March 30

Complex Regression

- Morgan**, “Comparing Two Groups...” (171-77; 179-82)
- Video: “T-Tests in SPSS”
- Video: “Creating Dummy Variables in SPSS”
- Video: “Regression with Dummy Variables in SPSS”
- ☞ Regression lab 2 due April 14 at 9 am

Tuesday, April 4

Makeup Day/Lab Time

- Morgan**, “Writing Research Problems and Questions” (217-20)
- Video: “Making Tables in Microsoft Word”

Thursday, April 6

Writing the Research Report

- Oregon State Sociology Writing Guide, pp. 1-33 and 70-72
- Klass, "Tabulating the Display & Writing about the Numbers." *Just Plain Data Analysis* 61-78
- Paper proposal due today in class

Tuesday, April 11

Online Class: Why Statistics Matter

Class will not meet today due to the Passover holiday

- Watch *Joy of Stats*
- Complete quiz, due by 9:30 am Thursday, April 13

Thursday, April 13

Understanding & Interpreting Research Results

- Interpretation Quick Guide
- Nivette *et al.* "The Social and Developmental Antecedents of Legal Cynicism," *J. of Research on Crime & Delinquency* 52(2): 270-98
- Quiz on the Nivette article due at 3:30 pm today

Tuesday, April 18

Lab time for final papers

- Paper template & conferences with me due no later than today
- You should have a draft of your literature review done this week

Thursday, April 20

Review of SPSS Techniques

- Review SPSS Procedures Quick Guide, prior labs, & exam review sheet and come to class with questions
- You should have all descriptive statistics and preliminary analysis for your paper done at the end of class today
- ☞ Slides for presentation due at 7 pm today

Tuesday, April 25

Presentations/work time

- In-class Presentations today

Thursday, April 27

Final Class/Exam Review

- ASA, "Sociology Majors: Before Graduation in 2012"
- ☞ **Optional** Make-up Lab due Monday, May 1 at 9:30 am

Finals Week

- Quantitative Research Paper Due Friday, April 28th at noon
- Final examination will be made available no later than mid-day April 28th and will be due Wednesday, May 3rd at 10 am.

Course Policies

Academic Honesty

All students enrolling in this course are expected to abide at the Rhode Island College guidelines on academic honesty, which can be located in the Student Handbook and other official documents. Examples of academic dishonesty include, but are not limited to:

- Plagiarizing written work, including copying some or all of your work from a book, a website, or another student's paper. Think about how you would feel if someone passed off your hard work as their own.
- Using sources without proper attribution. Remember that all claims in a paper that did not spring fully formed from your own head need attribution, regardless of whether or not they are paraphrased, and all direct quotes should appear in quotation marks. If you are unsure how to document sources, please see me or reference the sociology department term paper guide, available at <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/termpaperguide.php>.
- Turning in work completed for other classes without prior permission.
- Working together with another student on an assignment, or seeking assistance with the content of your work from professionals, parents, or peers, without prior permission. (The exception to this policy is proofreading or use of OASIS/writing center services.)
- Copying off of another student or off of materials you have brought without permission during an exam. This includes text messaging and use of the internet during exams.
- Destroying course materials or otherwise preventing other students from achieving fully in this course.
- Fabricating data or analysis.

If you feel the urge to engage in academic dishonesty, stop and think about what you are doing, and then come see me so we can work out a plan together to ensure your success in the course. Cheating successfully is often harder than you think, and you might as well just put your effort into doing the assignment legitimately. The penalties for academic dishonesty are severe, and include receiving a 0 on the assignment for the first minor offense, receiving an F for the class for a repeated offense, and report to the Vice President for Academic Affairs at RIC.

Extensions, Absences, and Attendance

You are expected to attend class regularly. While I am aware that emergencies do come up and that this class is not the only priority in your life, you should know that this is a challenging and fast-paced course and that you are likely to fall behind if you miss class. It is your responsibility to get notes from a classmate (I do not provide notes to students), to seek tutoring assistance from OASIS if necessary, and to meet with me to clarify what you have missed. If you must be late to a class or if you must leave early, be sure not to disturb other students with your comings and goings. Be aware that repeated absences, even if excused, may imperil your ability to do well in the course, and that you cannot earn participation points if you are not present. Because of the type and quantity of material covered in this course, absences will put you at an extreme disadvantage.

All assignments are due at the start of class unless otherwise noted, and if you skip class to finish your work or work on late assignments during class time that will be counted against you. All assignments in this course should be submitted via Blackboard unless otherwise noted and they must be submitted in *.rtf, *.doc, *.docx, *.pdf, or *.html format (try "Save As" to select one of these formats). If I do not receive it or cannot open it, it does not count as having been submitted.

If unavoidable circumstances require you to seek an extension on your work, I am generally open to providing one. However, you will need to request the extension via email at least 24 hours prior to the due date unless the extension is due to a major emergency (health crisis, death in the family, etc.) – so plan ahead.

Course Technology

Students are expected to check their RIC email addresses and Blackboard frequently, at a minimum twice a week before each class meeting. If you primarily use another email account, I would suggest you arrange for your RIC email to be forwarded, as I do use email to disseminate important information about the course. Students are also responsible for being able to access the Blackboard site for this course, as crucial documents and information will be made available only there. If you are not able to access email or Blackboard, you should seek assistance from User Support Services (<http://www.ric.edu/uss/> or 456-8803) right away so that you do not fall behind in the course.

Students with Disabilities

If you have a disability that might interfere with your ability to perform at your best in this course, it is your responsibility to come and speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can develop a plan together. All reasonable accommodations will be made. Students with disabilities should be sure that they are registered with Disability Services in order to ensure access to the full range of services available at Rhode Island College. Information about these services and about registration is available at <http://www.ric.edu/disabilityservices/>.

Supplemental Services

Writing Center: <http://www.ric.edu/writingcenter/>

OASIS (tutoring, academic support, time management, ESL, etc.): <http://www.ric.edu/oasis>

→ Find contact information for the course tutor in Blackboard.

Counseling Center (confidential & free services): <http://www.ric.edu/counselingctr/>

Course Learning Outcomes

This course is designed to meet these learning outcomes of the Sociology and Justice Studies programs:

- ♦ An understanding of the relations between theory and research;
- ♦ An appreciation of the research process;
- ♦ An ability to do sociological research;
- ♦ An ability to articulate sociological analyses in oral and written form;
- ♦ An understanding of statistical methods in social research as well as an ability to use computers appropriately in sociological work;
- ♦ To emphasize the relevance of literature and research to practice in the field.

For more information on program learning goals, see <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/degreeList.php> and <http://www.ric.edu/sociology/programJSTD.php>.