

MLS 5303: Applied Research Methods

Summer 2024

Instructor: Art A. Aguirre, Ph.D. (aaaguirre@utep.edu)
Office: Kelly Hall, RM 220
Online Office Hours: Wednesdays 12:00-3:00pm; Other days by appointment

Note: I have provided a Zoom link on Blackboard that you can use on Wednesdays to meet with me virtually during my office hours.

Course Description:

This course will deal with understanding the fundamental principles that guide scientific research. We will cover topics ranging from understanding and properly citing research articles, to scientific design and implementation. You will also get a foundational understanding of statistics and their role in our lives. By the end of our course, you will be able to digest complex scientific literature to draw conclusions. The ultimate goal of this course is to enable you to become a skeptical but informed consumer of scientific information.

Learning Outcomes:

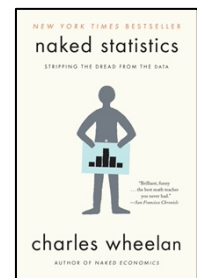
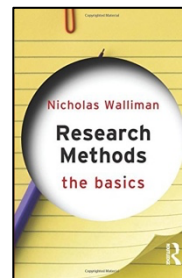
By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- Read and understand scientific literature
- Understand and explain major concepts relating to experimental design
- Talk substantively about research methodologies, findings, and applications
- Understand the foundational aspects of statistics

Required Text:

Walliman, N. (2011). *Research methods: The basics*. New York, NY. Routledge. **[AVAILABLE FREE ON BLACKBOARD]**

Wheelan, Charlie. (2013) *Naked statistics: Stripping the dread from the data*. New York, NY. W. W. Norton & Company.



Access to a computer, a printer, the internet, an active UTEP e-mail address, and an active Blackboard account are necessary. I will be posting additional course materials online for students to access.

****Please note - This syllabus is a guide and may be changed by the instructor, but notice will be provided. Guest presenters for lecture presentations may be added to the schedule and other tentative additions to the syllabus.****

Course Assignments

Blackboard Discussions [200 points (25 pts. X 8 weeks)]

I will be posting a discussion post every week to Blackboard on an issue relating to the readings and/or other relevant topics. You must post your original response by Friday at 11:59pm MT. I will be looking for you to contribute with ideas from the readings as well as your personal experience. Please keep in mind these posts should be well thought out and carefully constructed. There is no specific word limit, but because you do NOT have to respond to your classmates, I expect a substantial response for each discussion prompt as these discussion posts are meant to replace the time you would typically spend in class.

Research Article Analysis & Discussion [400 points (200 pts. X 2)]

The focus of these assignments is to begin to develop your ability to read, interpret, understand and explain academic journal articles. You will select a peer-reviewed journal article to present to the class. You will need to record yourself going over the main focus of the article, what research methods were used, the major results and discussion points, and your overall impression/opinion of the article. These videos will need to be between 10 and 12 minutes. Take your time with it, and it is up to you on how you want to present this to the class. I am grading this assignment based on the content, not quality of the video, so please don't get caught up in how you record your video. I would encourage you to upload the video to YouTube as an unlisted video and paste the link into the discussion board I've created on the Blackboard homepage.

Academic Paper Proposal (400 points)

This essay is structured as a proposal, similar to what you would present for a thesis proposal or for what faculty members have to submit when they begin a research project. You will need a cover page, introduction, literature review, methodology section, and an anticipated results section. This will need to be in APA format. You do NOT need an abstract. Keep in mind that this is only a proposal, so you can get as imaginative as you would like with the specifics in terms of sample size, demographics, methods, etc. as you will NOT have to actually complete the research project.

Requirements: 10-12 pages (does not include title page and references)

8-10 sources (at least 5 must be academic journal articles)

1-inch margins

Double spaced

Times New Roman font

Grade Structure

Blackboard Discussion Boards (8 total)	200 points
Research Analysis & Discussion (2 total)	400 points
<u>Final Research Proposal</u>	<u>400 points</u>
Total	1000 points

Instructor Policies

Coursework

All assignments and major projects are to be submitted on the due date. I understand that at times, there may be an emergency, and I will consider extreme cases, however, reasons like not being able to access internet, personal travel, or illness should not impede you from planning with me to get work done on time or to figure out what options we have. For written assignments, I expect that students will consult APA, MLA, or Chicago style manuals for the guidelines required for college-level academic writing. I expect that the course's major speaking assignments will be well researched, rehearsed, and prepared with ample time. I will provide specific guidelines for each assignment in the course.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is academic dishonesty and will likely ensure your failing the class. Plagiarism means using another person's ideas, language or other original (not common knowledge) material without proper acknowledgement of its source. This includes taking information or ideas out of books, from articles, off the Internet, your telephone, from a friend or instructor, and so on. If the ideas or words come from a source or person other than you, you must indicate it in your writing or speech. **Never use another student's work.** A plagiarized assignment will result in failure, and even further disciplinary action in accordance with UTEP policy is possible. Please become familiar with the guidelines outlined by the student handbook, and if there is any question about this topic, please contact me to schedule a meeting.

Participation Norms and Expectations

You are expected to treat the instructor and classmates with respect. This course encourages different perspectives related to such factors as gender, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and other relevant cultural identities. This course seeks to foster understanding and inclusiveness related to such diverse perspectives and ways of communicating. *If I find that you consistently disrespect anyone or any group of people in the class, I will speak with you one-on-one to discuss how to remedy the situation. If the problem persists, I will drop you from the course.*

Students Accommodations and Support Services

If you have a documented disability that may influence your performance in this class, please consult with The Center for Accommodations and Support Services. They will help determine appropriate, reasonable accommodations. Following the meeting, please make an appointment me during the first weeks of the class, in person, and provide documentation from Center. I will make any reasonable accommodations necessary to assure your success in this course.

Student-Teacher Communication

I do not use the Blackboard messaging function. I like to respond as quickly as I can to any student questions I may get, so please be sure to use my email for course messaging. And of course, you have the communication options listed above for my online office hours.

Etiquette for Online Discussions

- Always consider your audience. Remember that members of the class and the instructor will be reading any postings.
- Respect and courtesy must be provided to classmates and to instructor at all times. No harassment, flaming, or inappropriate postings will be tolerated.
- Do not use inappropriate language, all capital letters, or language short cuts. Online entries should be written in Standard English with edited spelling, grammar, and punctuation.
- When reacting to someone else's message, address the ideas, not the person. Post only what anyone would comfortably state in a face-to-face situation.
- Be sure to read everyone's responses before posting. Avoid repetition of what someone else has already said. Add something new to the discussion!
- No credit will be received for yes/no answers. Posts should justify positions and provide specific examples. Students must demonstrate that they have read the assignment and their classmates' comments carefully and thoughtfully.
- Be sure to post in a timely fashion to receive credit for participation and for the discussion. Pay close attention to the posted deadlines.

Participation/Attendance

Students who miss more than 3 deadlines during the term will earn a failure in the course. Therefore, it is imperative that you participate in the class discussions unless you are seriously ill, have a death in your family, are called for jury/military duty, or any other such event requiring your absence.

Other Policies

Students are expected to know and observe the published deadlines for (a) dropping the course and (b) withdrawing from the course. These deadlines are published on the Academic Calendar, which is available in the my.utep.edu site, the course catalogue, and is in the Dean's Office.

Academic Misconduct

The University of Texas El Paso prides itself on its standards of academic excellence and students are expected to uphold the highest standards of academic integrity. Any student who commits an act of scholastic dishonesty is subject to discipline. Scholastic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to cheating, plagiarism, collusion, submitting work for credit that is attributable in whole or in part to another person, taking an examination for another person, and any act that gives or attempts to give unfair advantage.

Grading Scale

90-100% =A
80-89% = B
70-79% = C
60-69% = D

Course Schedule

Date	Topic	Reading to be done before class	Assignments Due
Week 1 June 10	Introduction, Course Syllabus, Class Expectations	Read syllabus	Original discussion due by Friday at 11:59pm MT
Week 2 June 17	Research Basics & Theory	Walliman – Chapters 1-3 Drummond – Replicability is not Reproducibility	Original discussion due by Friday at 11:59pm MT
Week 3 June 24	Literature Review, Qualitative & Quantitative Research, and Writing the Proposal	Walliman – Chapters 5 & 9-11	Original discussion due by Friday at 11:59pm MT Research Article Analysis & Discussion Video #1 due by Sun. June 29 at 11:59pm MT
Week 4 July 1	Data & Collecting Data	Walliman – Chapter 6-8 Wheelan – Chapter 7	Original discussion due by Friday at 11:59pm MT
Week 5 July 8	Descriptive Statistics	Wheelan – Ch. 1-3	Original discussion due by Friday at 11:59pm MT
Week 6 July 15	Correlation & Basic Probability	Wheelan – Chapter 4-5 ^{1/2}	Original discussion due by Friday at 11:59pm MT Research Article Analysis & Discussion Video #2 due by Sun. July 21 at 11:59pm MT
Week 7 July 22	Polling & Regression	Wheelan – Chapters 10-12	Original discussion due by Friday at 11:59pm MT
Week 8 July 29	Program Evaluation	Wheelan – Chapter 13 & Conclusion	Original discussion due by Friday at 11:59pm MT Final Paper due by Sun. August 4th at 11:59pm MT

Basic Grading Rubric for Written Work

Grade	Content	Form	Mechanics
A	Shows outstanding comprehension of material covered; exceptional insight and originality. "This was awesome."	Superbly organized; reflects a logical, coherent flow within paragraphs and major sections. "A joy to read."	Contains no major errors in grammar and form (including spelling, punctuation, word usage, sentence structure, paragraphing).
B	Shows very good coverage of material; "competently done" but not "exceptional." "This was good."	Reflects an overall logical flow, although it could be clearer and more coherent. "A good read."	Contains few major errors in grammar and form
C	Shows adequate coverage of material. "You completed the task."	Suffers from problems in coherence and organization. "I had to work to get through it."	Contains several major errors in grammar and form.
D	Shows some knowledge of material, but coverage is inadequate (incomplete or shallow). "You put forth an effort."	Suffers from major problems in organization and coherence. "I really struggled to follow you."	Contains serious, persistent problems in grammar and form.
F	Coverage of material is unacceptable, indicating little or no comprehension of what is covered.	Problems in organization render the paper virtually incoherent.	Contains numerous major problems in grammar and form.