

**PAD/PADX 5300: Intro to Research Methods**  
**CRN 19588**  
**Fall 2021**  
**The University of Texas at El Paso**  
**Online meeting time: Mondays 5:00-8:00 pm**

**Instructor: Dr. Sergio Peña**  
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**Office Hours: By appointment and online only**

### **Course Description**

The objective of this course is to introduce the student to the world of research methods at the graduate level. The goals of the course are: First, to establish a foundation for more advanced knowledge of research methods for both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Second, to give the student the tools and skills required to evaluate research validity, write papers or professional reports that would meet the standards of the profession and scientific community. We will first explore the utility, meaning, and process of the scientific method then proceed to issues of types of research, research validity, research design, measurement, causality, among others.

### **Learning objectives**

- To introduce the student to the scientific research process
- To familiarize the student with the vocabulary employed in the research world
- To develop skills to review and evaluate the validity of scientific claims
- To be able to undertake a research task from start to end

### **Required Text**

O'Sullivan, Elizabeth; Gary R. Rassel and Maureen Berner (2017). *Research Methods for Public Administrators*. Routledge (Sixth Edition). ISBN 978-0205-85625-1

### **Course delivery**

The course will be delivered completely online using the Blackboard (BB) platform. Due to the current pandemic of COVID-19 we need to keep in mind that perhaps some adjustments will be made along the process. I hope this will not be the case and if changes and adjustments, if needed at all, will be minimal.

## COVID-19 PRECAUTION STATEMENT

Please stay home if you have been diagnosed with COVID-19 or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms. If you are feeling unwell, please let me know as soon as possible, so that we can work on appropriate accommodations. If you have tested positive for COVID-19, you are encouraged to report your results to [covidaction@utep.edu](mailto:covidaction@utep.edu), so that the Dean of Students Office can provide you with support and help with communication with your professors. The Student Health Center is equipped to provide COVID-19 testing.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that people in areas of substantial or high COVID-19 transmission wear face masks when indoors in groups of people. The best way that Miners can take care of Miners is to get the vaccine. If you still need the vaccine, it is widely available in the El Paso area, and will be available at no charge on campus during the first week of classes. For more information about the current rates, testing, and vaccinations, please visit [epstrong.org](http://epstrong.org).

## **Course Expectations & Policies**

Because the course is online, I advise students to follow some etiquette for purpose of communication and interaction with your peers and professor. In the following link you will find some advice regarding this etiquette issue: <https://achievethevirtual.org/7-rules-for-online-etiquette/> I paste some of the advice that I expect you to follow.

“As an online student at Achieve Virtual, communication is a bit different than in a face-to-face setting. We pride ourselves in providing several opportunities for social interactions, but the difference is that most communication is via written text in an online environment. Because this means you are missing body language cues and immediate feedback from your “listener,” it is very important to understand some common rules for good online etiquette. This ensures that the message you intend to convey is received correctly.

1. Be respectful. While it is easier to say hurtful or disrespectful things without standing face-to-face with someone, it is important to remember that your classmates and teachers are real people who are affected by the words you say and write. It is essential to keep in mind the feelings and opinions of others, even if they differ from your own. If you wouldn't say it to someone's face, don't say it online either.

2. Be aware of strong language, all caps, and exclamation points. It is easy for written text to be misread and misunderstood. Have you ever sent a text message with good intent but your recipient thought you were being rude? If so, then you've experienced this firsthand. By being cognizant of strong language, you can identify potential confusions before sending messages. Tip: Read everything out loud before you send it.

3. Be careful with humor and sarcasm. Certainly, you shouldn't avoid being funny. We love to see your personality shine through in online classes. Many of our teachers are exceptionally funny too. But like mentioned in Rule #2, make sure that it is clear you are being funny and not

being rude. Emoticons and smileys can be helpful when conveying humor or sarcasm so that it is read correctly. Just remember to keep the smiley faces away from academic papers. 😊

4. Yes, grammar and spelling matter. While texting, textspeak can be great for your friends. In an educational setting (even online) however, keep it formal. Your written communication should be professional and reflect proper writing style. Save written shortcuts and less than stellar grammar for Snapchat if you must but follow grammar rules for school.

5. Cite your sources. Whenever you are sharing an idea that originated from someone else (even if it is not word for word), it is good practice to cite that source. This applies to discussion forums too. If you read a great thought in your text, share it, but be sure you let your audience know where you saw it first.

6. Don't post or share (even privately) inappropriate material. Enough said there. Nothing is truly private online.

7. Be forgiving. Remember that not everyone will know these rules before posting. Try to be understanding of others when they struggle with written communication. It is very different than simply talking to a person face-to-face."

### **Student Privacy**

Per regulations outlined in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), I will not discuss your grades, class performance, or any issues dealing with your personal circumstances as they relate to this course with another party that cannot legally access your collegiate records or legally obtain such information. I will not field phone calls from your parents concerning your performance or circumstances related to this course. Your performance may be discussed with other members of the faculty as it pertains to your progress in the program, consideration for awards/funding, and as it is relevant to other university and department-related considerations. 3

### **Student Disability Services**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the university regarding services for students with disabilities.

### **Academic Misconduct**

Any student found guilty of academic misconduct shall be subject to disciplinary action. Academic misconduct includes, but is not limited to, the following actions: 1. Cheating or knowingly assisting another student in committing an act of cheating or other forms of

academic dishonesty. 2. Plagiarism is using another person's work without acknowledgment, making it appear to be one's own. Any ideas, words, pictures, or other source must be acknowledged in a citation that gives credit to the source. This is true no matter where the material comes from, including the internet, other student's work, unpublished materials, or oral sources. Intentional and unintentional instances of plagiarism are considered instances of academic misconduct. It is the responsibility of the student submitting the work in question to know, understand, and comply with this policy. If no citation is given, then borrowing any of the following would be an example of plagiarism: a) An idea or opinion, even when put into one's own words (paraphrase); b) A few well-said words, if these are a unique insight; c) Many words, even if one changes most of them; d) Materials assembled by others, for instance quotes or a bibliography; e) An argument; f) A pattern of idea; g) Graphs, pictures, or other illustrations; h) Facts; i) All or part of an existing paper or other resource.

3. Unauthorized possession of examinations, reserve library materials, laboratory materials, or other course-related materials.

4. Unauthorized changing of grades on an examination, in an instructor's grade book, or on a grade report; or unauthorized access to academic computer records.

5. Nondisclosure or misrepresentation in filling out applications or other University records in, or for, academic departments or colleges.

The current Student Code of Conduct definition of plagiarism can be found at:

<https://www.utep.edu/student-affairs/osccr/student-conduct/academic-integrity.html>

### **Course requirements & Evaluation**

The evaluation will consist in the following:

1. Literature review (60 points or 30% of your grade): The student will conduct a literature review on the topic that is of his or her personal interest. Visit Blackboard to refer to the guidelines
2. Research Report (100 points or 50% of your grade): The student will conduct a research paper incorporating all the steps in the research process from a research question, hypothesis, research design, and results. Note: data will come from databases available, data such as statistics reports, census data, etc. Refer to Blackboard for instructions.
3. Homework (30 points or 15% of your grade): 3 total and worth 10 points each.
4. Participation (10 points or 5% of your grade): class attendance and in class participation

| <b>Grading scale</b> | <b>Points</b> |
|----------------------|---------------|
| A = 90%-100%         | (180-200)     |
| B = 80%-89.99%       | (160-179)     |
| C = 70%-79.99%       | (140-159)     |
| D = 60%-69.99%       | (120-139)     |
| F = <60%             | (<139)        |

## Course Schedule

| Date  | Topic   | Readings      | Assignment                               |
|---|---|---------------|--|
| 8/23/2021   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Course introduction</li> <li>• Introduction to sciences, research, and ethics</li> </ul>                                       |               |  |
| 8/30/2021   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research process</li> <li>• Types of research</li> </ul>   | Chapter 1     | Select research topic                    |
| 9/6/2021<br>Labor Day no class. But there will be an online class that the student can complete anytime during the week | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research design &amp; internal validity (I)</li> <li>• Experimental vs. quasi-experimental</li> </ul>                          | Chapter 3:    | Research question and hypothesis is due. |
| 9/13/2021<br><br>We will discuss the online lecture based on students' questions  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Research design &amp; internal validity (II)</li> <li>• Case study design</li> <li>• Other types of research design</li> </ul> | Chapter 2     |  |
| 9/20/2021   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Variables Measurement</li> <li>• Types of variables</li> </ul>   | Chapter 4:    | Literature review is due                 |
| 9/27/2021   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Translating concepts into variables (Construct validity)</li> </ul>  | Chapter 10:   | Select research design                   |
| 10/04/2021  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sampling &amp; external validity</li> </ul>  | Chapter 5 & 6 |  |
| 10/11/2021  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data collection and analysis</li> <li>• Professional/Academic research writing</li> </ul>                                      | Chapter 7 & 9 | Research paper is due Oct. 18 (midnight) |