

PPPM 657 Syllabus (winter 2024)



School of Planning, Public Policy and Management



PPPM 657: Research Methods in Public Policy and Management Winter 2024 (CRN 24315)

Professor Nicole Ngo

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Office hours: Monday/Wednesday 3:30-4:30 and by appt.

(in-person only, if want to meet virtually, let me know ahead of time)

Class location: 125 LLCN

Class time: M/W 2-3:20pm

Course Description

This course is a survey of research methods used in public policy and management and builds upon Quantitative Methods. The course provides an overview of frequently applied quantitative and qualitative methods, their role in the research process, and discussion of several research studies in which they have been implemented.

Course Prerequisite

This course builds upon PPPM 656 Quantitative Methods in Planning and Public Policy. Students are required to have passed PPPM 656 prior to enrolling in PPPM 657 Research Methods in Public Policy and Management. This course is part of the MPA core curriculum and is limited to students who have been admitted to the MPA program. Other students may enroll with permission of the instructor.

Course Objectives/Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of this course students will:

1. Critically read and apply research findings
2. Understand and compare different research methods and their limitations

3. Prepare a professionally written, *concise* research report on a given topic of interest (including proper citations, grammar, appropriate consideration of the audience, etc.), including construction of a clear, logical thesis supported with proper evidence.
4. Constructively critique other peers' works.
5. Conduct a professional oral presentation of their research report (e.g., clear explanation of content, eye contact, speed of speech, etc.)

Course Website

The course website is located on the University of Oregon's Canvas system. The class syllabus, announcements and other materials will be posted on the Canvas site. Please check the course website frequently for updates. In addition, make sure that the University registrar has your correct email address. I will use this email address and Canvas to communicate with you.

Required Reading

- Remler, Dahlia K., and Gregg G. Van Ryzin. 2015 (2nd edition). *Research Methods in Practice: Strategies for Description and Causation*. Sage Publications (previous editions okay)

There is a 3rd edition of the textbook that I haven't reviewed yet, so the syllabus is based on the 2nd edition which is available on Amazon (renting the textbook is about \$20).

Assignments and Course Grades

The course grade will be based on the following components:

Equity analysis	
Final report	20%
Peer review	10%
Final oral project presentation	5%
Paper discussion	
Oral presentation	4%
Reaction paper	16%
Job talk reflection	6%
Canvas Discussion Board	9%
Midterm exam	13%
Final exam	17%

Information about assignments are on Canvas.

Grading system

A+	100%
A	93-99%
A-	90-92%
B+	87-89%
B	83-86%

B-	80-82%
C+	77-79%
C	73-76%
C-	70-72%
D+	67-69%
D	63-66%
D-	60-62%
F	< 60%

Classroom Environment

In order to create a classroom in which students are comfortable expressing their opinions and perspectives, I ask that students please approach the readings and others' contributions with both an open mind and a willingness to question one's own assumptions and biases.

Professional Practice

This course is a core course in the PPPM undergraduate pre-professional degree program. As such, students are expected to behave in a professional manner at all times.

- Students should treat each other and the instructor with the professional courtesy and respect expected in a workplace.
- All communications relating to this course and all work turned in for this course should reflect professional standards in tone, presentation, formatting, and spelling.
- The classroom is a place of focused learning. This requires that students arrive on time, stay until the end of the class period, do not disrupt the class by leaving the room temporarily, and refrain from non-learning activities. Students who fail to adhere to these guidelines will be asked to leave for the remainder of the class session.
- I expect all course assignments to be completed using a word processor.
- Some assignments will require use of a spreadsheet program for data analysis and graphing. Some familiarity with a spreadsheet program (e.g. Excel) and statistical software, specifically Stata.
- You will also be required to use PowerPoint for a presentation at the end of the term on your final project.

Course Workload

A general rule of thumb for the expected workload for a graduate level class is approximately 3-4 hours/week per credit hour. Thus, a four credit course will require approximately 12-16 hours of effort per week. Our class meets for three hours each week, so students should expect to spend an additional 9 to 13 hours per week studying for this course.

Writing Lab

This is a writing intensive course. If you struggle with writing, I strongly encourage you to use the services of the Writing Lab: The Writing Lab begins week two of the term and closes at 5:00 pm the Wednesday of finals week. Free tutors are available. Upper-division and graduate student tutors are available on a drop-in basis or by appoint. (You must come to the writing lab to schedule your appointment.) 9:00am – 5:00pm, Monday – Friday, 72 PLC (Prince Lucien Campbell).

Access and Accommodations

The University of Oregon and I are dedicated to fostering inclusive, equitable, and accessible learning environments for all students. The Accessible Education Center (AEC) assists students with disabilities in reducing barriers in the educational experience. You may be eligible for accommodations for a variety of disabilities – apparent disabilities, such as a mobility or physical disability, or non apparent disabilities, such as chronic illnesses or psychological disabilities. [If you have or think you have a disability](#) (<https://aec.uoregon.edu/content/what-disability>) and experience academic barriers, please contact the Accessible Education Center (Location: 360 Oregon Hall; 541-346-1155; uoaec@uoregon.edu (<mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu>)) to discuss appropriate accommodations or support. The details of your disability will be kept confidential with the AEC and you are not expected to share this information with others. However, I invite you to discuss any approved accommodations or access needs at any time with me.

Email

I will try to respond to all email within 48 hours of receiving them, however, I typically will not respond on weekends or after 4:30pm in weekdays

Late Assignment Policy

If you are unable to make it to class on the day an assignment is due, you may mail, email, or fax your assignment to me prior to the class time and date that assignment is due. Late assignments receive only partial credit. If an answer key is posted to the website, however, no late homework assignments are accepted (no credit).

Missed Class Policy

If you miss a class, please arrange to get class notes from a classmate. Instructor slides are available on Canvas.

Incomplete Policy

A mark of "I" represents an agreement between an instructor and a student to extend the deadline for coursework completion. Incompletes shall be granted when the instructor determines that the student meets all the following criteria. The student:

- has been active in the course;
- is unable to complete a portion of the course requirements due to extenuating circumstances beyond their control that occurred after the last day to drop a class (end of week 7 of fall/winter/spring terms; variable dates for summer courses);
- is able to independently complete the remaining requirements without attending additional classes beyond the term or receiving additional instruction; and
- requests an Incomplete by the published deadline

If additional class attendance or instruction is required to complete course requirements, the instructor shall not issue an Incomplete. Lack of engagement, poor performance, or a desire to repeat the course are unacceptable reasons for issuance of the "I" mark. Instructors shall provide to the student access to course materials necessary to complete the missing work. Incomplete grades can only be granted by instructors and instructors are under no obligation to grant students an incomplete grade if in their judgement the criteria stated above are not met. An Incomplete shall not be recorded by the instructor unless a contract between the instructor and student has been completed and filed appropriately.

Effective fall 2022 - General Process for Incompletes

- Incompletes are initiated by the student
- Student contacts instructor and requests Incomplete by 5pm on the last day of finals week (fall, winter, and spring terms)
- If the instructor agrees that the student meets the criteria, the instructor and the student complete a contract outlining how the Incomplete can be resolved, the deadline for resolving the incomplete, and the default grade should the student not complete the agreed upon work. The default grade is the grade the student would receive according to the syllabus grade guidelines with no credit for the missing work

- This form is filed
- The missing work indicated on the form must be completed by the earlier of:
 - grading deadline of the term the student applied to graduate, or
 - deadline stated on the Incomplete Request Form (can be extended at the discretion of the instructor), or
 - the day grades are due one academic year later

For students with Incomplete contracts, the instructor will record the "grade" in DuckWeb that indicates an Incomplete has been agreed to. Currently, that is an "I". The instructor will also record, in DuckWeb and/or the contract form, the grade the student would have received in the course if they received no credit for the missing work. This becomes the default grade that replaces the Incomplete mark should the student not complete the work outlined in the contract by the appropriate deadline (either the grading deadline of the term the student applied to graduate or the day grades are due one academic year later). If the student completes the work defined in the contract by the agreed upon date, the instructor calculates and updates the grade via the grade change process. This policy applies to all undergraduate and graduate courses. The Incomplete mark will roll to the default grade even if an incomplete contract is in place if the student has applied to graduate. Degree application status is not directory information; instructors do not have a way to verify. A mark of I/F will not convert to N as part of First Term Forgiveness. It will instead convert to an F.

Academic Misconduct

The University Student Conduct Code (available at [conduct.uoregon.edu \(http://conduct.uoregon.edu/\)](http://conduct.uoregon.edu/)) defines academic misconduct. Students are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. By way of example, students should not give or receive (or attempt to give or receive) unauthorized help on assignments or examinations without express permission from the instructor. Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at [https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism \(https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism\)](https://researchguides.uoregon.edu/citing-plagiarism)

Plagiarism

Students should properly acknowledge and document all sources of information (e.g. quotations, paraphrases, ideas) and use only the sources and resources authorized by the instructor. All assignments submitted onto Canvas will be run through VeriCite, a plagiarism detection tool. If there is any question about whether an act constitutes academic misconduct, it is the students' obligation to clarify the question with the instructor before committing or attempting to commit the act. Additional information about a common form of academic misconduct, plagiarism, is available at: [www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students \(http://www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students\)](http://www.libweb.uoregon.edu/guides/plagiarism/students).

Make up Exams: Final Exam

Students must take the final exam to receive a grade in the course. The date and time for the final exam will not be changed to accommodate scheduling conflicts. Final exams will not be given early under any circumstances. A make up final exam will be scheduled for students who miss the regularly scheduled final exam due to serious illness or family emergency.

Diversity Statement

In this course, class discussions, projects/activities and assignments will challenge students to think critically about and be sensitive to the impact of cultural, religious, gender, race, socioeconomic, physical and cognitive ability, and sexual differences. Students will be encouraged to develop or expand their respect and understanding of such differences.

Classroom Behavior

Maintaining a safe classroom environment where everyone feels comfortable expressing their ideas, beliefs, and values will not only be my responsibility, but the responsibility of each class member as well. Behavior that disregards or diminishes another student will not be permitted for any reason. This means that no racist, ableist, transphobic, xenophobic, chauvinistic or otherwise derogatory comments will be allowed, but it also means that students must pay attention and listen respectfully to each other's comments.


Sexual Violence, Harassment and Survivor Support

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted to completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are **not alone**. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24-hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

Tentative course schedule

Wk	Date	Topic	Readings
1	1/8	Introduction and foundations of research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 1 Can government play Moneyball? In the Atlantic. Optional: Why so many of the health articles you read are junk (at https://www.vox.com/2014/12/10/7372921/health-journalism-science)
	1/10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation by Evan Manvel from Oregon Dept. of Land Conservation and Development to discuss equity analysis report Review of quantitative methods 	Optional readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 10 Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapters 8 (start on p. 248) & 9 (p. 281-303) Berman & Wang (p. 17-42)
2	1/15	<i>No class- Martin Luther King Holiday</i>	
	1/17	Theory, research questions, and literature review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 2 Theories, models and research question Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 17 (pg. 529-545) How to find, review, and present research <i>Example paper discussion</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current event: How Natural Disasters Can Change a Politician (fivethirtyeight.com) Scientific article: Weather, salience of climate change and congressional voting

			<p>https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S009506961400via%3Dihub</p>
3	1/22	Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 4 (skip p. 121-123 and p. 131-133) Measurement • Gang stats aren't remotely reliable, but voters keep hearing them anyway ↗ (https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/gang-stats-arent-remotely-reliable-but-voters-keep-hearing-about-them-anyway/) at Fivethirtyeight.cc
	1/24	Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 5 (skip p. 166-173) Sampling • Who are the people who don't respond to polls? ↗ (https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/nonresponse-bias-ipsos-poll-findings/ fivethirtyeight.com) • Why coming up with effective interventions to address COVID-19 is hard ↗ (https://fivethirtyeight.com/features/why-coming-up-with-effective-interventions-to-address-covid-19-is-so-hard/) (at fivethirtyeight.com) <p><i>Paper discussion: Social welfare policy</i></p>
4	1/29	Secondary and administrative data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 6 Secondary data • Discuss possible secondary datasets with a partner (look at this week's Canvas Discussion Board prompt) <p><i>Paper discussion: Environmental policy</i></p>
		Causation and regression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 11 Causation • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 13 Using regression to estimate causal eff
5		Midterm Review/Reproducibility in research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How reliable are psychology studies? In The Atlantic • The replication crisis devastated psychology. This group is looking rebuild it. ↗ (https://www.vox.com/science-and-health/22360363/replication-crisis-psychological-science-accelerator) (Resnick at Vox) <p><i>Optional:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Estimating the reproducibility of psychological science" by the Open Science Collaboration (pdf in Canvas) • Listen to the podcast "Brian Nosek on the Reproducibility Project" ↗ (http://www.econtalk.org/archives/2015/11/brian_nosek_on.html) (about an hour long). There are also written highlights from the podcast students can read.

	2/7	Midterm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote exam on Canvas • Open book, open note • Must be taken <i>individually!</i> • I'll be available on Class Zoom link for questions
6	2/12	Observational studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 12 Observational studies • The one chart you need to understand any health study  (https://www.vox.com/2015/1/5/7482871/types-of-study-design) (at Vox
	2/14	Natural and Quasi experiments/Randomized experiment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 15 (p. 467-484) Natural and quasi experiments • Dominici, F., Greenstone, M., and Sunstein C.R. (2014) "Particulate matters," <i>Science</i>
7	2/19	Surveys and observation, Part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 7 Surveys and other primary data
	2/21	Surveys and observation, Part 2	<p>https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/05/12/green-is-good</p>

8	2/26	Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 3 Qualitative research • Strategies for Qualitative Interviews (Harvard Sociology)
	2/28	Focus group discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggestions for conducting focus group discussions (Jane Tucker/COAC)
9	3/4	Content analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Colorado State University Content Analysis Guide- p. 1-8, 15-20 (rest is optional)
	3/6	Research ethics- <i>Guest Lecture from UO's Research Compliance Services</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remler & Van Ryzin: Chapter 16 (p. 517-525) The politics, productions & ethics of research • Skim UO's policies on research involving human subjects (https://research.uoregon.edu/manage/research-integrity-compliance/human-subjects-research) • (optional) More information about Research Compliance Services is available here: https://research.uoregon.edu/about/administrative-units/research-compliance-services (https://research.uoregon.edu/about/administrative-units/research-compliance-services)

10	3/11	Student presentations	
	3/13	Final exam review	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bring questions!
Finals	3/21	Final exam on Thurs, 3/21 at 2:45 mm	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Open-book, open-note Final exam taken on Canvas from 10:15am to 12:15pm (exam will be taken REMOTELY)· Must be done <i>individually!</i>· I'll be available for questions via a Zoom link during this period