

**URBAN STUDIES RESEARCH METHODS
URB315**

unique #38040, spring 2014

Prof. Paul Adams

T/Th 2:00-3:30, CLA 1.108

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Prerequisites: Mathematics 408C or 408K with a grade of at least C; Math 316 or SSC 305 or the equivalent with a grade of at least C; and URB-301.

This class focuses on how to ask reasonable questions about urban processes and how to answer these questions. Quantitative and qualitative methods will be introduced, as well as a range of different data types relevant to urban studies, how to obtain data, and the most common techniques for data analysis. A spreadsheet program (Excel) will be used to calculate correlations and conduct statistical techniques, so you will need to be comfortable using statistics and spreadsheets.

Readings

- All readings will be accessed via Blackboard
- You will need to find and download “self-selected readings” from newspapers, magazines and journals in your area of interest from two different links on the UT Libraries website: <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/indexes/index.php>
 - Academic Search Complete
 - NexisLexis Academic

Grading

<u>ASSIGNMENT</u>		<u>POINTS</u>
Quizzes	16 @ 5 pts. each	80
Preliminary Assessment Project		40
Structured Observation Project		40
Survey/Interview Project		40
Final Report		100
TOTAL		300

DATE	DUE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READING
JAN 14		Introduction to the class and prof. Special challenges of Urban Studies	
JAN 16		goals, assumptions, causality, measurement, scale, data problems	Montello and Sutton Chapter 3: "Data Collection in Geography"
JAN 21	quiz on goals, assumptions, causality, measurement, scale & data problems three preferred topics: ranked, due at end of class	Research Topics: participate in two in- class discussion groups to "try out" topics that interest you	
JAN 23		Archives and article databases brainstorming in research groups	
JAN 28	quiz on archives and article databases	group work session group consultations—15 min. each	
JAN 30		Accessing census data	
FEB 4	quiz on accessing census data	Analyzing census data	
FEB 6	quiz on analyzing census data	review of parametric statistical tests	
FEB 11	Preliminary Assessment	Group presentations to class— 15 minutes each	
FEB 13	quiz on parametric tests	Structured observation on campus	
FEB 18	quiz on Montello & Sutton Chapter 8	William Whyte film: "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces"	Montello and Sutton Chapter 8: "Sampling"
FEB 20	quiz on Suminski et al. and William Whyte's film	group work session group consultations—15 min. each	Suminski et al.
FEB 25	quiz on Handy	techniques for displaying and analyzing primary data, nonparametric tests	Handy: "Urban Form and Pedestrian Choices"
FEB 27	quiz on techniques for displaying and analyzing primary data	nonparametric tests (cont.) group planning for presentations	
MAR 4	Structured Observation Project	Group presentations to class— 15 minutes each	
MAR 6	quiz on Montello & Sutton Chapter 6	The ethics of human subject research	Montello and Sutton Chapter 6: "Explicit Reports"
MAR 18	quiz on Fowler	The art of writing surveys and interviews	Fowler: "Improving Survey Questions"
MAR 20	quiz on Mitchell & Staeheli	group work session group consultations—15 min. each	Mitchell & Staeheli: "Permitting Protest"
MAR 25	quiz on Dowler	data handling, privacy, relations with subjects	Dowler: "Participant Observation in a Conflict Area"
MAR 27	quiz on Zhu & Lee	Lecture and discussion of examples of survey research	Zhu & Lee: "Correlates of Walking to School and Implications for Public Policies"
APR 1	quiz on Kvale	qualitative data analysis	Kvale: "Interviews"
APR 3	quiz on Krueger	Issues in interview research	Krueger: "Focus Groups"
APR 8		group planning for presentations	
APR 10		film	
APR 15	Survey/Interview Project	Group presentations to class— 15 minutes each	
APR 17		How to write the Final Report & Recommendations	
APR 22		group work session group consultations—15 min. each	
APR 24		group work session group consultations—15 min. each	
APR 29 MAY 1	Final Report & Recommendations	Group presentations to class— 30 minutes each	

RESEARCH GROUPS

1. HOUSING

- apartments
- co-ops
- single-family housing
- identity & change
- compatible land uses
- segregation & gentrification
- affordability
- crime & neighborhood safety
- other issues

2. RETAIL & SERVICES

- malls & strip malls
- retail strips
- pedestrian malls
- shopping & service districts
- convention centers
- farmer's markets
- VMU space
- other issues

3. PEDESTRIAN FACILITIES

- sidewalks
- bike routes
- route continuity
- route distribution
- accessibility
- safety
- pedestrian amenities
- B-Cycle (bikeshare)
- Cap Metro "Bike by Bus & Train"
- other issues

4. PUBLIC TRANSIT

- buses
- MetroRail (commuter rail)
- proposed light rail
- CARTS
- MetroRideShare
- MetroAccess
- B-Cycle (bikeshare)
- Car2go (carshare)
- other issues

5. GREENSPACE & RECREATION

- parks
- greenbelts
- town lake & shore
- sports & recreation facilities
- dog parks
- private greenspaces
- outdoor leisure activities
- outdoor special events
- other issues

Phase 1: Preliminary Assessment

- cartographic analysis of zoning, urban structure and census data
- statistical analysis of census data and other secondary data
- verbal description of the current state of affairs
- inventory of major planned and on-going projects
- assessment of unmet needs, problems and shortcomings

Phase 2: Structured Observation/Participant Observation

- consideration of goals
- selection of study sites
- development of research questions
- development of study schedule
- development of data coding scheme
- data gathering
- data compilation
- data analysis
- written, oral, and visual presentation of findings

Phase 3: Survey/Interview

- reconsideration of goals
- development of research questions
- consideration of formats: survey, interview, focus groups
- development of survey and interview items
- refinement of research instruments
- informed consent statement
- data gathering
- data compilation
- data analysis
- written, oral, and visual presentation of findings

Phase 4: Final Report and Recommendations

- synthesis of phases 1, 2 and 3
- integration of prior research
- ranking of priorities
- general (city-wide) recommendation
- specific proposal(s)

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: It will be impossible to do well in this class without attending class. To receive credit, quizzes must be taken on the day they are scheduled.

Reading Assignments: Each reading assignment must be completed before the class period in which it is scheduled. There will be short quizzes covering the most basic concepts in each.

Projects: Projects are small bits of independent research. They should contain citations of relevant reading material with parenthetical notes telling the reader exactly where the information comes from, as well as a list of "Works Cited." **If you use anything anyone else has said or written you must use quotations and cite your source.** Projects are due at the time specified on the project handout/web-posting. Late projects will be penalized 10% per day. Projects may be turned in early. Turn in early or late projects by handing them to Dr. Adams or dropping them off in his mailbox on the 4th floor of the CLA building.

Computation of Grades: Grades will be computed on the following scale:

A	93% and above
A-	90% to 92.99%
B+	87% to 89.99%
B	83% to 86.99%
B-	80% to 82.99%
C+	77% to 79.99%
C	73% to 76.99%
C-	70% to 72.99%
D+	67% to 69.99%
D	63% to 66.99%
D-	60% to 62.99%
F	0% to 59.99%.

The point total used for computing final grades may be lowered by a few points, at the professor's discretion, on the basis of the overall point distribution.

Honesty: There are group projects in this course. These require shared transportation, observation, data collection and data analysis. You will also contribute to group reports. **The inclusion of team-work in this course requires clear indication of what each person contributes to each project. If you turn something in as your own work but it is not your own writing this will be treated just like any other case of plagiarism.** If you wish to incorporate someone else's ideas in your own writing, you must explicitly acknowledge your sources and **place quotation marks around anything you quote verbatim from another source.** Altering a few words or changing the order of sentences does not make something yours. Plagiarism is a serious offense and may result in partial or total loss of course credit, a permanent record of the offense in your academic file, and other penalties. When in doubt, ask the professor how to cite the information you are using. For more information, refer to the Student Judicial Services statements and links on scholastic dishonesty: <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/>

Problems: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic adjustments for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact the Office of the Dean of Students at 471-6259, 471-4641 TTY (Dean of Students general contact information: SSB 4.104, A5800, 471-5017, fax 471-7833). You are responsible for bringing any problems, concerns and/or complaints to the professor's attention in sufficient time for me to try to address the concerns. Nothing can be done at the last minute. "I had to work," "I had to babysit," and "my computer broke down," are not acceptable excuses and will not alter the requirements in the syllabus.