

URBAN STUDIES-315W
URBAN STUDIES RESEARCH METHODS

Prof. Paul Adams
T/Th 3:30-5:00, GRG 424

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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 introduces a range of data types relevant to urban studies, how to obtain data, and some of the most common techniques for data analysis. The class also addresses the types of questions that can be answered by quantitative and/or qualitative methods, and the suitability of different methods to particular urban studies questions. A spreadsheet program (Excel) will be used to calculate correlations and conduct ordinary least squares regression with census data, as well as performing other statistical techniques, so you will need to be comfortable using spreadsheets. It is a writing-intensive course so you will be graded on the quality of your writing and will be offered a chance to respond to critique and rewrite the research paper.

Readings:

- Required: *An Introduction to Scientific Research Methods in Geography*, Daniel Montello and Paul Sutton (Sage, 2006)
- Other readings will be available on Blackboard

Research Paper:

The research paper will assemble at least two of the analyses conducted earlier in the class and frame them in the context of related research. You will use this paper to develop your written arguments and your data presentation and analysis techniques. The paper will be at least 4000 words and will be submitted first in draft form then in a final, revised version.

Grading:

ASSIGNMENT	SPECS	POINTS
Reading Notes	10 @ 2 pts.	20
Research Questions		10
Structured Observation Study (group project)		20
Survey Study		20
Interview Study		20
Statistical Data Analysis		30
Research Paper Draft		20
Final Research Paper (must be a <i>corrected</i> version)		80
Final Exam		80
TOTAL		300

SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READING
JAN 19	Introduction to class and professor, stats pre-test	none
JAN 21	Research as a way of life	M&S Chapter 1
JAN 26	Goals and assumptions in urban studies	M&S Chapter 2
JAN 28	Causality, levels of measurement, data problems, scale Research Questions due	
FEB 2	Collection of primary data	M&S Chapter 3 Ford Hardwick
FEB 4	Behavioral observations, archives and article databases	M&S Chapter 5
FEB 9	Examples of behavioral observation William Whyte film: "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces"	Suminski et al.
FEB 11	Walking tour: observation of landscapes and behaviors	
FEB 16	The nature of surveys, developing survey and interview questions Structured Observation Analysis due	M&S pp. 81-95 M&S Chapter 8
FEB 18	Examples of survey research	Fowler
FEB 23	Developing your survey	
FEB 25	Introduction to interview methodology	
MAR 2	<i>In-class analysis of survey data</i>	Salcedo & Torres
MAR 4	Ethics of human subject research	M&S pp.284-292
MAR 9	An interview study with quantitative and qualitative analysis Survey Analysis due	Gilbert (focus on pp. 603-616)
MAR 11	An interview study with policy analysis	Mitchell & Staeheli (focus on pp. 803-811)
MAR 13-21	SPRING BREAK	
MAR 23	<i>In-class analysis of interview data</i>	Self-selected reading 1
MAR 25	Guest presentations	Self-selected reading 2
MAR 30	Introduction to focus group studies	Krueger
APR 1	Introduction to participant observation Interview Analysis due	Limb & Dwyer
APR 6	Utilizing census data	M&S pp. 95-109 Clark
APR 8	Review of correlation and regression	M&S Chapter 9
APR 13	Correlation and regression with census data	
APR 15	<i>Topic to be announced</i>	Pamuk Florida
APR 20	Maps, graphs, charts and other techniques for data display Correlation & Regression Analysis due	M&S Chapter 10
APR 22	Scholarly research and writing: style issues	Self-selected reading 3
APR 27	Paper Draft Due	
APR 29	<i>In-class collaboration and consultation</i>	
MAY 4	<i>In-class collaboration and consultation</i>	
MAY 6	Final version of Paper Due	
May 18, 9:00 am – 12:00 noon	FINAL EXAM	location to be announced

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: It will be impossible to do well in this class without attending class. The reading notes will be collected on 10 randomly selected days and must be turned in in-person on the day they are collected. They may not be submitted late. Turning in a different set of notes is not an option.

Reading Assignments: Each reading assignment must be completed before the class period in which it is scheduled and must be summarized in an organized and useful way in your reading notes. Notes must consist of more than just a list of points: they can be in outline or paragraph form.

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." The amount of citation that is appropriate depends on the project. If you use something someone says, you must also use quotations and cite the source. Projects are due at the time specified on the project handout/web-posting. Late projects will be penalized 10% per weekday (weekends count as one 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 in GRG-334 not by using the box on his office door or by slipping them under his door.

Exam: The Final Exam will include topics covered in the lecture, the readings, and the projects. It will include a mix of multiple choice, true-false, short answer, and essay questions. "Makeup" exams are not normally given in this class; if you anticipate a schedule conflict with any time in the Final Exam Period DO NOT TAKE THIS COURSE.

Computation of Grades: Grades will be computed on the following scale: A- and A = 90% and up, B-, B, and B+ = 80%-89%, C-, C and C+ = 70%-79%, D-, D and D+ = 60%-69%, F = 0%-59%. In determining grades, fractional values will be rounded to the nearest integer. Exams will not be "curved." Grades cannot be replaced or raised through "extra credit."

Honesty: All work submitted must be your own. You may discuss assignments with other students, but all that you write, map, and turn in should be entirely your own creation. If you wish to incorporate someone else's ideas, you must explicitly acknowledge your sources and *place quotation marks around anything you quote verbatim*. Altering a few words 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.

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. You are responsible for bringing any problems, concerns and/or complaints to my 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," "my car broke down," "my computer broke down," and "my dad bought my plane ticket for the day before the exam" are not acceptable excuses and will not alter the requirements in the syllabus.