URBAN STUDIES-315W, unique #37600
URBAN STUDIES RESEARCH METHODS
Prof. Paul Adams
T/Th 3:30-5:00, GAR 3.116

Office: GRG 414   Office Hours: W 1:00-3:00
Phone: 232-1599   e-mail: paul.adams@mail.utexas.edu

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 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 need to respond to the critiques by the professor and your classmates when writing and rewriting your 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
- 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

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		POINTS
Reading Notes	10 @ 2 pts.	20
Research Questions		10
Structured Observation Project (group project)		20
Survey Project		20
Interview Project		25
Secondary Data Analysis Project		25
Research Paper Draft		20
Final Research Paper (must be a *corrected* version)		80
Final Exam		80
TOTAL		**300**

SCHEDULE

DATE	TOPIC	REQUIRED READING
JAN 17	Introduction to class and professor, stats pre-test	
JAN 19	Focus on Austin	Robinson "top ten trends" Leffingwell "State of the City" 2011 (skim)
JAN 24	Challenges of doing urban studies, goals and assumptions, causality, levels of measurement, data problems, scale	M&S Chapter 1 M&S Chapter 2
JAN 26	**Research Questions due** Walking tour of campus and the drag: observation of landscapes and behaviors	M&S Chapter 3 Suminski et al.
JAN 31	William Whyte film: "The Social Life of Small Urban Spaces" Behavioral observations	M&S Chapter 5 Handy
FEB 2	Research as a way of life	Ford Hardwick
FEB 7	archives and article databases	M&S pp.284-292
FEB 9	**Structured Observation Project due** Ethics of human subject research	
FEB 14	Developing survey and interview questions	M&S pp. 81-95 M&S Chapter 8
FEB 16	Examples of survey research	Zhu & Lee
FEB 21	Developing your survey Introduction to interview methodology	Long
FEB 23	*In-class analysis of survey data*	
FEB 28	*to be announced*	Self-selected readings 1& 2
MAR 1	**Survey Project due**	
MAR 6	Issues in interview research	Herrick
MAR 8	An interview study with policy analysis	Mitchell & Staeheli (focus on pp. 803-811)
MAR 10-18	**SPRING BREAK**	
MAR 20	*In-class analysis of interview data*	Self-selected readings 3 & 4
MAR 22	Introduction to focus group studies and participant observation	Krueger Dowler
MAR 27	**Interview Project due**	
MAR 29	Utilizing census data	M&S pp. 95-109
APR 3	Maps, graphs, charts and other techniques for data display and analysis	Clark
APR 5	Review of correlation and regression	M&S Chapter 9
APR 10	Review of one and two sample tests	Nicholls and Crompton
APR 12	Further issues in secondary data analysis	M&S Chapter 10
APR 17	**Correlation & Regression Project due**	
APR 19	Scholarly research and writing: style issues	Self-selected readings 5 & 6
APR 24	**Paper Draft Due**	
APR 26	*In-class collaboration and consultation*	
MAY 1	*Review for Final Exam*	
MAY 3	**FINAL EXAM** **Final version of Paper Due**	

CLASS POLICIES

Attendance: It will be impossible to do well in this class without attending class. To receive credit, reading notes must be turned in in-person on the day they are scheduled to be discussed. 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 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 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.

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 for this class 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. There are group projects in this course. These require shared transportation, observation, data collection and data analysis. **The inclusion of team-work in this course does not in any way imply that writing can or should be shared or done collaboratively. Shared writing on team projects will be treated just like any other case of plagiarism.** If you wish to incorporate someone else's ideas in your project, you must explicitly acknowledge your sources and *place quotation marks around anything you quote verbatim*. 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," "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.