

University of Massachusetts Amherst
School of Public Policy—Be Revolutionary

SPP 607 Policy Methods

Fall 2023 Monday 1:30 - 4:00PM

Instructor: Dr. Viviana Chiu Sik Wu

(Dr. Wu / Prof. Wu)

Email: vivianachius@umass.edu

Website: <https://connectivecommons.cc/>

Office Hours: Mon 4 - 5 pm

Course Objectives

The goal of this course is to provide rigorous training in research methods. After taking this course, you should be familiar with different qualitative and quantitative methods and how they can complement each other, and able to read and evaluate research findings. The course addresses: ethics, design, sampling, measurement, interviews, fieldwork, evaluation research, content analysis, survey research, experiments, and analyses of secondary data, as well as introductory analysis of quantitative and qualitative data. This course satisfies the **NASPAA Universal Required Competencies: (#2) the ability to participate in and contribute to the policy process, and (#3) to analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make evidence-informed decisions in a complex and dynamic environment.** After you have completed this course, you will develop research capacities and professional skills to:

- ◆ Read public policy/administration research, recognizing overall structure and arguments
- ◆ Critically discuss, analyze and critique policy research
- ◆ Design research studies that are ethical, feasible, and practical
- ◆ Identify and frame researchable questions and hypotheses
- ◆ Being familiar with the variety of available methods to conduct social and policy research
- ◆ Determine which methods best answer certain research questions
- ◆ Plan, carry out, and report interview, field observation and survey research
- ◆ Engage in scholarly collaboration in a research setting

Special Note about Learning

I am committed to ensuring your successful learning in this class. Please talk to me and ask questions during or after class time. I commit to being thoughtful and empathetic towards each of you as you navigate the current circumstances and your personal situations. I will also be open, fair, professional, and passionate in teaching this class. In turn, I ask that you exercise the same consideration and compassion towards your classmates, TAs and GAs, UMass Amherst staff, and your professors. We are all moving through this differently, but together.

Course Values

Empathy: Care and respect for each other and be empathetic and compassionate.

Openness: Be open to diverse perspectives and ask questions. Be willing to learn by trial and error.

Integrity: Take responsibilities for your own and team work. Be fair and trustworthy.

Professionalism: Have high standards and solid preparation for the class and the team.

Perseverance and passion: Actively engage and participate to strive for your own learning goals.



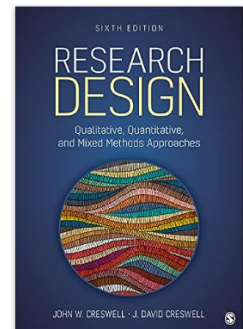
Class Participation Agreement ([Resources](#))

- Come from curiosity and generosity not judgment.
- Embrace multiple perspectives and a diversity of voices.
- Share talking time. Step Forward/Step Back.
- One person speaks at a time. Avoid interrupting and talking over others.
- Listen actively and with the intention to understand.
- Acknowledge what another person has said. Paraphrase what has been said. Ask clarifying questions.
- Challenge ideas and arguments not people.
- Agree to take a problem-solving approach when conflicts arise.
- Write down thoughts or questions if there is no time or you don't feel safe to voice them during the discussion.
- Acknowledge that stereotypes, bias, discrimination, and oppression based on race/ethnicity, social class, gender, sexuality, etc. exist and that we will actively try to combat them
- Don't interrupt people while they are speaking, and try to be active listeners.
- Embrace multiple perspectives and a diversity of voices. Every individual will have different experiences to contribute to discussions and class learning.
- Agree to practice dialogue instead of criticizing each other.
- Speak from your own experience using "I" statements, avoid generalizations.
- Appreciation and respect for diverse opinions.
- Keep comments and responses towards others judgment free
- Confidentiality, providing honest feedback in constructive/positive way

Required Readings

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2022). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches*. Sixth Edition. Sage publications.

You can buy the textbook via [eCampus](#). The book is also available on [Amazon](#) for purchase or rent. Feel free to adopt a used one or an earlier version for this textbook, but it is your responsibility to match chapters. On Canvas, you will find the following key research articles that we will return to repeatedly in class:



Howell, J., & Elliott, J. R. (2019). Damages done: The longitudinal impacts of natural hazards on wealth inequality in the United States. *Social Problems*, 66(3), 448–467.

Pennington, L., & Farrell, A. (2017). Role of voice in legal process. *Criminology*, 57(2), 343-368.

Zeynep Clulow (2019) Democracy, electoral systems and emissions: explaining when and why democratization promotes mitigation. *Climate Policy*, 19(2), 244-257,

Other readings:

Colquitt, J. A. & George, G. (2011). Publishing in AMJ –Part 1: Topic choice. *Academy of Management Journal*, 54, 432-435.

Davis, M. S. 1971. That's interesting! Toward a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. *Philosophy of the Social Sciences*, 1: 309-344.

Eagly, A. H. (2016). When passionate advocates meet research on diversity, does the honest broker stand a chance? *Journal of Social Issues*, 72, 199-222.

Rosenthal, R. (1994). Science and ethics in conducting, analyzing, and reporting psychological research. *Psychological Science*, 5(3): 127-134.

Sutton, R. I., & Staw, B. M. (1995). What theory is not. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 371-384.

How to be Successful in the Course?

1. Class Discussion and Participation (10% of grade)

The teaching format for this year will be in person with a combination of lectures, real-time and online discussion, small group exercises, and team-based research projects. Active participation and ownership of the materials remain key to grasping the conceptual and practical aspects of research methods. Because the success of collective learning relies on the contributions of you and every participant. You and your classmates will not benefit as much from the class session if you come unprepared. You are required to reflect on and post questions either about the reading or about the method we are discussing or working on in our research (not more than 200 words) – **by midnight the night before for at least 5 class sessions**. Some general questions to think about include:

- What are the central concerns, themes, and takeaways in each reading?
- How do the readings relate to each other?
- How do the readings relate to readings from prior classes?
- For empirical studies, what are the greatest strengths of this work?
- For empirical studies, what aspects of the work are less compelling to you?
- What are the implications of the readings for your own research?
- What questions do you have about the readings?

Various ways to show online and offline participation include engaging in discussions, small group discussions, participating in a research study, contributing to forum discussions on Canvas, and scheduling a group meeting with me to discuss your group's final projects. I encourage you to contribute to a collective notetaking to be shared within your group and come up with a team consensus on how to handle absence, late work, and contribution to group work assignments.

Use of digital devices is restricted to class-related activities. If you are not able to finish the class materials on time, you are responsible for catching up with the readings and lectures before the next class, such that your team participation and learning will not be affected. An exception to this principle applies if you face an unforeseen situation or other extraordinary circumstances that prevent you from continued participation. We are here for you and want to support you in ways we can, reach out to me if your circumstances require exceptions and additional support along the way.

2. Semester-long Research Project (20% grade for individual work; 40% of grade for group work)

One way to understand how to conduct research is to be actively involved in designing and executing small research projects. This includes analyzing the qualitative and quantitative data and composing concise research reports. This hands-on approach provides you with the opportunity to learn through practice and fosters insights into the intricacies of real-world research. Hence, much of the work in this class will be based on a semester-long research project comprised of multiple assignments that build on each other. You will have a choice of several topics and will then be organized into groups of three to four students. **Three** assignments will be submitted and graded individually but will inform group

work. **Four** assignments will be submitted and graded as a group. You will be given regular feedback on the initial group assignments to inform your final presentation.

Individual Assignments (20% of grade)	Group Submissions: (40%)
Literature Review (10%) Survey Questions (5%) Interview Guide (5%)	Research Purpose Statement (5%) Quantitative analysis report (15%) Qualitative analysis report (15%) Final presentation (5%)

You will also learn from your peers who will provide constructive feedback for collective learning. The final project will be accompanied by a rubric describing the allocation of points and criteria for evaluation. Each group will have a chance to review and provide feedback on the presentation and report from another group. The instructor will grade the final project. The final grade of the course will be adjusted for peer evaluation from your teammates.

3. Individual Research Proposal and Final Reflection (30% of grade)

Proposal development enables you to integrate your learning to develop a research proposal of your own based on your policy interests in response to a “Request for Proposals” (aka RFP). The proposal development should demonstrate your reflection and deep engagement of course materials and thus serves as a critical juncture to consolidate your learning journey.

The course assignments are designed to guide you through the stages of creating a strong research proposal. Based on a specific research question, you will provide (1) background/problem statement, (2) literature review, (3) propose research design and method as well as (4) articulate your expected findings and significance. You should start thinking about your research proposal and consult with me before November. The proposal must be your own independent work. It is permissible to work on a research topic that you began to develop in a prior class (but let me know).

All assignment instructions are available on Canvas, where you will submit your assignments.

Assignments will be evaluated based on the following four criteria:

1. **Theory:** How well you identify the literature gap and substantiate the contributions of the study.
2. **Method:** How well you articulate and justify the use of the proposed methods and data to answer the research questions or hypotheses.
3. **Analysis:** How well you discuss the results and implications in response to research questions.
4. **Organization:** How clear, professional and well-organized your presentation of information is.

Calculation of Grades:

Student performance in the course will be graded based on the following scale:

A 92-100%	B- 80-81%
A- 90-91%	C+ 78-79%
B+ 88-89%	C 70-77%
B 82-87%	F 69% or below

Research Topic for Fall 2023: “Establishing a Culture of Philanthropy Among Alumni”

The mission of the Alumni Philanthropy Committee (APC) at the UMass Amherst School of Public Policy (SPP) is to actively connect with SPP alumni and foster a culture of philanthropy among them. You are the research consultants to advise APC on investigating alumni giving patterns and determine the factors and strategies that motivate alumni to contribute. Your team will be working on one of the research topics below:

Topic 1: Donor Demographics and Giving Patterns

Investigate how donor demographics such as graduation year, socioeconomic background, geographic location, and engagement with the university correlate with donation preferences, amounts, and causes supported.

Topic 2: Motivations for Charitable Giving

Investigate the psychological and social factors that motivate individuals to donate to charitable causes, considering aspects like altruism, personal values, social influence, and emotional connections.

Topic 3: Donor Retention and Alumni Engagement Activities on Giving

Assess the strategies to retain donors and influence their continued support over time, including the role of effective communication, naming opportunities, personalized acknowledgment, and demonstrating the impact of donations.

Topic 4: Barriers to Alumni Giving and Effectiveness of Different Fundraising Campaigns

Investigate the obstacles that prevent some alumni from making donations. Evaluate the effectiveness of various fundraising campaign strategies, such as crowdfunding, peer-to-peer fundraising, matching gift campaigns, and major gift solicitations.

Accommodation Statement

The University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing an equal educational opportunity for all students. If you have a documented physical, psychological, or learning disability on file with Disability Services (DS), you may be eligible for reasonable academic accommodations to help you succeed in this course. If you have a documented disability that requires an accommodation, please notify me within the first two weeks of the semester so that we may make appropriate arrangements. For further information, please visit Disability Services (<https://www.umass.edu/disability/>)

Academic Honesty Statement

Since the integrity of the academic enterprise of any institution of higher education requires honesty in scholarship and research, academic honesty is required of all students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Academic dishonesty is prohibited in all programs of the University. Academic dishonesty includes but is not limited to: cheating, fabrication, plagiarism, and facilitating dishonesty. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed on any student who has committed an act of academic dishonesty. Instructors should take reasonable steps

to address academic misconduct. Any person who has reason to believe that a student has committed academic dishonesty should bring such information to the attention of the appropriate course instructor as soon as possible. Instances of academic dishonesty not related to a specific course should be brought to the attention of the appropriate department Head or Chair. Since students are expected to be familiar with this policy and the commonly accepted standards of academic integrity, ignorance of such standards is not normally sufficient evidence of lack of intent (http://www.umass.edu/dean_students/codeofconduct/acadhonesty/).

No Use of Generative AI Permitted except when Instructor said Otherwise

Intellectual integrity is vital to an academic community and for my fair evaluation of your work. All work completed and/or submitted in this course must be your own, working individually or in groups, completed in accordance with the University's Guidelines on Academic Integrity as stated above. Students should not have another person/entity do the writing of any substantive portion of an assignment for them, which includes hiring a person or a company to write assignments and using artificial intelligence tools like ChatGPT for any assignments.

Title IX Statement

In accordance with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 that prohibits gender-based discrimination in educational settings that receive federal funds, the University of Massachusetts Amherst is committed to providing a safe learning environment for all students, free from all forms of discrimination, including sexual assault, sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and retaliation. This includes interactions in person or online through digital platforms and social media. Title IX also protects against discrimination on the basis of pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, or related conditions, including recovery. There are resources here on campus to support you. A summary of the available Title IX resources (confidential and non-confidential) can be found at the following link: <https://www.umass.edu/titleix/resources>. You do not need to make a formal report to access them. If you need immediate support, you are not alone. Free and confidential support is available 24 hours a day / 7 days a week / 365 days a year at the SASA Hotline 413-545-0800.

Late Penalties and Extension Policy

All assignments are due by the start of class on date indicated. Late submissions will result in lower grades. The grade will be lowered one increment (for example, A- to B+) for each day (not class session) the paper is late. A negotiated change of due date may be possible if you notify me at least 48 hours in advance of the deadline. In the event of last-minute emergencies (loss in family, hospitalizations), please let me know as soon as possible. I expect that you will make every effort to promptly complete work for group assignments and to communicate with group members.

Attendance Policy

Class attendance is important to accomplish the objectives of this course and is counted toward the class participation grade. You are expected to be on time for class, as it is disrespectful to interrupt the collective learning experience.

No Social Loafing/Free Riding

Social loafing or free riding occurs when a group member relies on the remaining group members to complete group tasks and does not contribute to group work. To discourage free-riding, individual group member's contributions to the group project will be assessed by confidential peer evaluations at the end of the semester. If the peer evaluations you receive clearly show that you are a free rider, your individual grade on the group project will be adjusted.

Writing Support

The Writing Center provides free support on any writing you do while at UMass, whether for a course or not. Trained tutors are available to work with you (currently online only) as you plan, draft, and revise your writing. Please visit www.umass.edu/writingcenter for hours and information about making appointments. If you have questions about the UMass Writing Center, please email writingcenter@acad.umass.edu or call 413-577-1293. Please follow the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th citation guidelines for formatting, in-text citations, and references of all submissions. To learn how to use the APA citation and format style:

- <https://www.umass.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter/apa-style-citation-short-guide>

Professional Presentation

Please follow the American Psychological Association (APA) 7th citation guidelines for formatting, in-text citations and references of all submissions. These two resources will help you learn how to use the APA citation and format style:

- <https://www.umass.edu/writingprogram/writingcenter/apa-style-citation-short-guide>
- https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/apa_style/apa_formatting_and_style_guide/general_format.html

Class Schedule

Wk	Class	Topic	Textbook	Other Readings & Examples	Assignment Due
1	Sept 11	Introduction & Overview	1	Davis (1971), Eagly (2016)	
2	Sept 18	Literature Review	2	Sutton & Staw (1995); Colquitt & George (2011)	Team up
		Exercise on Google Scholar			
3	Sept 25	Theory & Conceptualization	3 & 7	Howell (1-5); Clulow (244-247)	APA 7 th citation guidelines
4	Oct 2	Writing Proposals & Research Ethics	4 & 5	IRB guidance at UMass	Literature Review (I)
5	Oct 10 (Tue)	Measurement & Surveys	8	Find 'How Tos' on Google Forms & Qualtrics Clulow (247-249); Howell (6-9)	Research Purpose Statement (G)
6	Oct 16	Quantitative Methods & Sampling	8	Skim Excel Tutorial; Howell (5-9)	Survey Questions (I)
7	Oct 23	Quantitative Analysis & Database Management	8	Howell (9-17)	Finalize Class Survey
8	Oct 30	Qualitative Methods & Sampling	9	Pennington (348-353) Ostrom's CPR as an example	
9	Nov 6	Interviews & Qualitative Analysis	9	Morris (2015) "Practical Interviewing"	
10	Nov 13	Ethics and Communicating Results	9	30 min on web – 'How Tos' on Dedoose; Sign up for trial Courtney (401-404), Pennington (354-365), Rosenthal (1994)	Interview Guide (I)
11	Nov 20	Happy Thanksgiving! No Class – Check in with Professor			
12	Nov 27	Group Check-in			Quantitative Report (G)
13	Dec 4	Group Presentations			Final Slides (G) Qualitative Report (G)
Final Proposal Due (Upload to Canvas): Friday Dec 15 by 23:59 EST					Peer Eval + Proposal (I)

Note: (I) denotes *Individual assignment*; (G) denotes *Group assignment*