Instructor: Dr. Eric Rasmussen, Associate Professor, Public Relations
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Office hours: by appointment

Course Catalog Description:
Rotating research methods course focusing on experimental, survey, content analysis or others. May be repeated twice when topics vary.

Course Overview:
This course will prepare students to be able to critically evaluate social science research that uses survey methodology for data collection, and to design and conduct their own original survey research. The course will cover all aspects of survey research, from design through analysis.

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<th>Expected Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Methods of assessment</th>
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<td>Students will understand the processes of conducting a reliable and valid survey instrument.</td>
<td>Literature review and methods assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to create a literature-based survey instrument to help answer research questions.</td>
<td>Literature review and methods assignment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Students will be able to critically evaluate the quality of research that uses survey methodology as a primary means of data gathering.</td>
<td>Critiques of classmates’ surveys</td>
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Required Course Materials:
Course Requirements

A total of 120 points are possible in this course, broken down as described below.

1. **Term Paper (100 points, broken down as described below):** Each student will draft a research study proposal as the main assignment for this course. The study proposal will be divided into several parts that will build on each other and that will be due in order as the semester progresses. While the study proposal will include an abbreviated literature review (see below), the focus on this class, and therefore, the study proposal, will be on drafting the method section of a paper that can be used as part of a conference paper or journal article submission. For MA students, the study proposal can be either thesis-research-related or can focus on answering an industry-related question. The study proposal will consist of the following parts:
   
a. **Literature Review (10 points):** The literature review should be no longer than two pages (double-spaced, 12-pt, Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins), and should begin with a general research question. Following the research question, the literature review should include a synthesis of the academic research related to the main independent and dependent variables in your research question. The literature review should end with at least one hypothesis or specific research question (if the literature does not lead to a hypothesis).

   b. **Method Section (80 points total, broken down as described below):** The method section is the main focus of the study proposal. If you err on the side of spending too much time on one part of the study proposal, choose the method section. This section should be no longer than 8 double-spaced pages (12-pt, Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins). The method section should contain each of the following sub-sections:
      
      i. **Participants:** This sub-section should describe the participants in detail, including demographic characteristics (such as age, gender, ethnicity, income, education, etc.). These demographics will likely vary by study. This section should detail why you wish to use these participants in your study (are they part of a specific group, why this age range, why this gender, etc.).
      
      ii. **Procedures:** This sub-section should describe everything that happened that involved study participants, including how they were recruited, consent/assent provided, and exactly what participants did as part of the study.

      iii. **Measures:** This sub-section should describe each measure in your survey.

      iv. **Survey/Questionnaire:** This sub-section will include all the questions in your survey.

   c. **Preliminary Analysis (5 points):** You will conduct basic preliminary analyses of your dataset. At this point, it is unlikely that your data will provide anything meaningful, but you’ll get started on cleaning, editing, and coding your data, and then running and understanding basic descriptive statistics. This section should be no longer than two pages (double-spaced, 12-pt, Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins), and will include both a report of your preliminary analyses as well as a brief discussion of potential implications of the data.
d. **References section:** This section should include all references cited in the previous sections.

2. **Survey critique (20 points):** The instructor will divide you into pairs at some point during the semester. You will share your survey instrument with your assigned partner and will each critically evaluate each other’s survey instruments. You will pay special attention to question wording, question order, and other sources of potential error as you make suggestions for improvement.

**Grading Scale:**

The following grading scale is used for determination of final letter grades in the course and as a general rubric for how student assignments are evaluated. I do not round up.

- **A = 90 - 100** *Excellent.* Mastery of the assignment/concepts at the highest level of attainment.
- **B = 80 - 89.9** *Good.* Strong performance demonstrating a high level of attainment.
- **C = 70 - 79.9** *Average.* An acceptable performance demonstrating an adequate level of attainment.
- **D = 60 - 69.9** *Inferior.* A marginal performance; a minimal passing level of attainment.
- **F = 0 - 59.9** *Failure.* Unacceptable performance revealing almost no understanding of content.

**Graded Assignments:**

Late assignments will not be accepted (and will receive a score of zero), and incompletes will not be granted except under extreme circumstances.

**Special Grading Policies (please take note):**

1. No extra credit is available.
2. Grades are not rounded up.
3. No special assignments are available to “boost” a student’s grade.
4. There is no curve.

**Questions about your grades:**

I am more than happy to talk with you about your grade and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of your graded work. That said, I require a 24-hour “cool off” period. We will not discuss your grade until we both have time to gather our thoughts and have a productive conversation. After the initial 24 hours, students have one week to meet with the instructor to discuss the grade. If the student does not meet with the instructor within a week, then the instructor considers the matter closed.

**No Make-ups:**

Students will not be allowed to make up missed assignments. Weddings, family vacations, commitments related to other classes, etc. don’t count. No exceptions, so please don’t ask.

**Expectations for Class Participation/Conduct:**
The Student Code of Conduct applies to all work related to this class (available online at http://www.depts.ttu.edu/studentaffairs/). All students are expected to be honorable and to observe standards of conduct appropriate to a community of scholars and professionals. Please reference OP 34.12 regarding Academic Integrity.

I reserve the right to remove you from the class should it become necessary to maintain a civil and constructive classroom environment.

**Students with Challenges:**

Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as soon as possible to make any necessary arrangements. Students should present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services during the instructor’s office hours. Please note instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodations to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, you may contact the Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or 806-742-2405. Please reference OP 34.22 for additional information.

**Observance of Religious Holidays:**

A student who intends to observe a religious holy day should make that intention known in writing to the instructor prior to the absence. A student who is absent for the observance of a religious holy day shall be allowed to take an exam or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. Please reference OP 34.19 for additional information.

**TTU Resources for Discrimination, Harassment, and Sexual Violence**

Texas Tech University is committed to providing and strengthening an educational, working, and living environment where students, faculty, staff, and visitors are free from gender and/or sex discrimination of any kind. Sexual assault, discrimination, harassment, and other Title IX violations are not tolerated by the University. Report any incidents to the Office for Student Rights & Resolution, (806)-742-SAFE (7233) or file a report online at titleix.ttu.edu/students. Faculty and staff members at TTU are committed to connecting you to resources on campus. Some of these available resources are: TTU Student Counseling Center, 806-742-3674, https://www.depts.ttu.edu/scc/ (Provides confidential support on campus.) TTU Student Counseling Center 24-hour Helpline, 806-742-5555, (Assists students who are experiencing a mental health or interpersonal violence crisis. If you call the helpline, you will speak with a mental health counselor.) Voice of Hope Lubbock Rape Crisis Center, 806-763-7273, voiceofhope lubbock.org (24-hour hotline that provides support for survivors of sexual violence.) The Risk, Intervention, Safety and Education (RISE) Office, 806-742-2110, rise.ttu.edu (Provides a range of resources and support options focused on prevention education and student wellness.) Texas Tech Police Department, 806-742-3931, http://www.depts.ttu.edu/tpd/ (To report criminal activity that occurs on or near Texas Tech campus.)

**Miscellaneous:**
• The instructor reserves the right to make any changes to the syllabus, schedule, assignments, readings, forms, lecture topics, assessments, and any other course content if deemed necessary to facilitate classroom management and to achieve the learning objectives for the course. Students are responsible to stay aware of these changes.

• I take plagiarism very seriously. I expect your work in this class to be completely your work. It should also be original for this class—you may not receive credit for work you do in this class for another class, or vice versa. If you have a question about the originality of your work, please discuss with the instructor as soon as possible. I reserve the right to report plagiarism or suspected plagiarism to the university. The same policy goes for both presenting another’s work as your own, for recreating another’s work in substantially the same form, or for using work you’ve done for another class in this class. The instructor will be the sole judge of what constitutes “substantially the same form.” Any and all instances of plagiarism will receive a zero, and your final course grade will be Fail, at the instructor’s discretion. Students agree that in taking this course, all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review via Turnitin.com or other plagiarism checks.

**Lecture Schedule and Readings**

Course schedule is subject to change. In such a case, announcements will be made via e-mail or blackboard announcement.

**June 4-8**

**Section 1:** Introduction to survey research, types of error in survey research, ethics, sampling

- **Readings**
  - Chapter 1
  - Chapter 2
  - Chapter 11
  - Chapter 3
  - Chapter 4

- **Assignments**
  - Watch Section 1 Instructor Video
  - Literature Review draft
  - Participants sub-section of the Method
  - Procedures sub-section of the Method
  - Obtain Qualtrics account and password (e-mail Dr. Cummins at glenn.cummins@ttu.edu)

**June 9-15**

**Section 2:** Writing survey questions

- **Readings**
  - Chapter 7
  - Chapter 8

- **Assignments**
  - Watch Section 2 Instructor Video
  - Measures sub-section of the Method
- Work on Survey/Questionnaire

**June 16-22**  
**Section 3: Creating the survey**  
- **Readings**  
  - Chapter 5  
  - Chapter 6  
- **Assignments**  
  - Watch Section 3 Instructor Video  
  - Survey/Questionnaire  
  - Survey critique

**June 23-29**  
**Section 4: Data Collection**  
- **Assignments**  
  - Watch Section 4 Instructor Video  
  - Program survey/questionnaire into Qualtrics  
  - Pre-test the survey (3-4 people), and make necessary changes  
  - Pilot test the survey with a relevant sub-sample (20-30 people)

**June 30-July 6**  
**Section 5: Post-survey data processing/analysis**  
- **Readings**  
  - Chapter 10  
- **Assignments**  
  - Watch Section 5 Instructor Video  
  - Preliminary Data Analysis  
  - Discussion about preliminary results  
  - Revised versions of each of the previous assignments (except survey critiques)