

**Mississippi Valley State University  
 Department of Social Sciences  
 Rural Public Policy and Planning Program  
 RP 507: Research Methods for Public Policy  
 Fall 2018**

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### OFFICE HOURS

Office hour time provides an opportunity for students to receive essential assistance with assignments and for selecting journal articles for the article critique assignments. Students are expected to meet individually with the professor at least once during the semester. Office hours are the following: **TUESDAY (T) 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.; WEDNESDAY (W) 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.; THURSDAY (R) 4:00 p.m.– 6:00 p.m.** For students, unable to visit during the week to attend office hours, virtual office hours via Skype are available: **SATURDAY: 9:00 AM – 11:00 A.M.** Additional times are by appointment only. Please sign up in advance by Doodle. While you are welcome to stop by during office hours, most slots fill up in quickly. If you are unable to keep an appointment, please cancel it on Doodle, as early as possible so that another student may have the slot.

### CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course helps students develop an understanding of how basic quantitative tools are used in public policy analysis. The major concepts discussed include modeling, optimization, sensitivity analysis, confidence levels, and estimation and prediction. These concepts are covered in the context of applications such as constrained decision making based on calculus and on linear programming; policy choices with probabilistic information; evaluating and updating information. The course also examines the need for research in developing sound decisions and policy. It explores the scope of policy research, scientific reasoning, problem identification, hypothesis formulation, planning for data analysis and sampling procedures.

### EXPANDED COURSE DESCRIPTION

The goal of this course is to offer a comprehensive, systematic treatment of the scientific approach within the context of public policy. Emphasis will be put on the relationship between theory, research, and practice, and integrate research activities in an orderly framework so that students can more easily comprehend the nature of public policy research. The course will progress logically from the conceptual and theoretical building blocks of the research process to data analysis and computer applications, offering students a comprehensive and systematic foundation for comprehending the breadth and depth of policy research. Students should display such thinking in both class discussions and written assignments. Course content will be presented in lecture and discussion format.

Specifically, the course will accomplish the following objectives:

1. To introduce the student to formal research methodologies such as the logic of inquiry, classification, scaling, observation, questionnaire construction, and other measurements.
2. To develop the student's capability to examine critically various approaches to research design, as well as the analysis and interpretation of data.

3. To provide students with beginning expertise in the definition of research problems, which have a direct bearing on public policy issues.
4. To acquaint the student with the knowledge and skills which aid in the design and implementation of research projects such as theses, proposals for funds and responses to request for proposals.
5. To introduce students to the use of SPSS in policy research and data analysis.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be able to:

1. Apply basic analytical tools and research methods to assess rural public policy problems.
2. Write a methodologically rigorous public policy research paper or case studies based on the criteria of a good research paper,
3. Identify appropriate analytical methods and use the statistical package for social sciences software (SPSS) in data coding, input, and analysis.
4. Assess the required textbooks, optional textbooks, technology, and other supporting resources.
5. Analyze ideas presented in written, oral, and visual formats.
6. Utilize supplementary materials to strengthen their research and writing skills.
7. Transform into a more active learner with stronger ownership and control of the learning process.
8. Synthesize previous knowledge with understanding of current rural public policy issues to assemble research, which justifies critical and analytical thinking.
9. Complete the Verification of Syllabus Receipt Form.

### **STUDENT PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:**

Upon completion of this class, students will be able to:

1. Confidently and competently construct research proposals.
2. Appreciate the value of technological tools and be comfortable with these tools to produce research, which illustrates competent knowledge of the research process.
3. Consistently produce a writing product, which uses the writing process and demonstrates an expanded and improved vocabulary.
4. Easily instruct others of the research fundamentals in a peer-tutoring environment.
5. Possess a clear vision of where they are going in order to fully appreciate their matriculation and its impact on their life's journey.

### **INSTRUCTOR PERFORMANCE CRITERIA:**

To ensure students' success, the instructor will:

1. Deliver tools and techniques for students within a reasonable amount of time.

2. Provide quality and assessment evaluation of writing product and/or performance.
3. Strive for excellence by remaining prepared and putting forth full-effort.
4. Communicate effectively with students.
5. Establish high learning expectations for student achievement.

### **PROFESSOR RESPONSIBILITIES**

Your professor will provide additional help in locating various resources, as needed, to assist students in learning, especially regarding the writing and researching. Your professor will seek to help students improved a selected set of learning skills, educational techniques, and tools, by providing the following: guidance, opportunities, and mentoring.

### **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

As a student, you have specific responsibilities, including but not limited to the following:

1. Respect others and maintain proper order in the classroom environment.
2. Participate actively in class and engage in the challenge of personal growth.
3. Seek excellence by remaining prepared and putting forth full effort.
4. Constantly desire to improve personal performance.
5. Use technology for learning purposes only within the classroom.

### **INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES**

The instructional strategies for this course incorporates the following, but are not limited to just these: lecture, peer-partner learning, freewriting, journaling, quizzes, reading for meaning, global inquiry, active learning, discussion, homework, activating prior knowledge, analyzing perspectives, coaching model, reading for information, inquiry, blogs, self-directed learning, tutorial, service learning, learning communities, supplemental texts and materials, faculty-student interaction, read aloud, self-selected reading, interactive writing, multi-cultural events, the writing center, individual conferences, research, reflective discussion, case studies, learning logs, storytelling, reading logs, surveys, focused imaging, didactic questions, collaborative learning environment technology, and technology-assisted instruction.

### **REQUIRED TEXTBOOK**

1. Frankfort-Nachmias, C., Nachmias, D., & Deward, J. (2015). *Research methods in the social sciences*. (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.
2. Creswell, J. W. (2018) *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
3. Wagner, W. E. (2017). *Using IBM Statistics for research methods & social science statistics* (6<sup>th</sup> ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
4. American Psychological Association. (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.

## SUPPLEMENTARY TEXTS

1. Leedy, P. D. and Ormrod, J. E. (2016). Practical research: Planning and design (11th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
2. Johnson, G. (2010). Research methods for public administrators. (3rd ed.). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc.
3. Remler, D. K. & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2015). Research methods in practice: Strategies for description and causation. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
4. Babbie E. (2016). The practice of social science research (14th ed.) Boston, MA: Cengage.
5. Field, A. (2018). Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics (5th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

## MOBILE APPLICATIONS

1. Dropbox\*: <https://db.tt/CkchpePL>
2. YouTube\*: <http://youtube.com>
3. Dictionary\*: <http://dictionary.com>
4. Prezi\*: <http://www.prezi.com>
5. TED Talks\*: <http://ted.com/talks>
6. Microsoft Word\*
7. Microsoft OneNote\*
8. Paper 53: <http://fiftythree.com>
9. DocsToGo: <http://dataviz.com>
10. Evernote\*: <http://www.evernote.com>
11. Penultimate – Digital Handwriting: <http://www.evernote.com>

*\*Mobile applications offer websites to access information.*

## WEBSITES

1. IPUMS: <http://usa.ipums.org>
2. Plagiarism: <http://www.plagiarism.org>
3. Dropbox: <https://db.tt/CkchpePL>
4. Dictionary: <http://dictionary.com>
5. Mendeley: <http://www.mendeley.com>
6. Purdue Online Writing Lab: <http://owl.english.purdue/owl>
7. Turnitin - <http://www.turnitin.com>
8. Typing Practice - <http://www.sense-lang.org/typing/games/EN.php>
9. Time Management: <http://www.studygs.net/schedule/weekly.htm>

10. Punctuation Practice: <http://www.gamequarium.com/punctuation.html>

### SOFTWARE RESOURCES

1. IBM SPSS: <http://ibm.com/products/spss-statistics>
2. OpenOffice: <http://www.openoffice.org/download/> \*Free office productivity software
3. Adobe Flash Player: <http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/>
4. Adobe Reader: <http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

### EVALUATION CRITERIA

1. The following criteria contributes to a student's overall grade:

<b>Attendance and Class Participation</b>	20%
<b>Quizzes, Homework, SPSS, and Other Assignments</b>	10%
<b>Journal Article Critiques</b>	15%
<b>Annotated Bibliography and Literature Review</b>	15%
<b>Mid-Term Exam</b>	10%
<b>Research Paper and Presentation</b>	30%

2. Grammatical Errors will involve the following deductions:

Spelling errors = 1 point each

Minor errors (subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, pronouns, adjectives, adverbs, punctuation, mechanics) = 2 points each

Lack of development/supporting details = 2 points each

Lack of unity, cohesiveness, clarity = 2 points

Poor organization = 2 points

Major errors (fragments, run-ons, comma splices) = 5 points each

Ineffective topic sentence/thesis statement = 5 points

3. Grading Scale:

A	90-100	(90-93 A-	94-96 A	97-100 A+)
B	80-89	(80-83 B-	84-86 B	87-89 B+)
C	70-79	(70-73 C-	74-76 C	77-79 C+)
D	60-69	(60-63 D-	64-76 D	67-69 D+)
F	Below 60			

4. For written assignments, letter grades (rather than points) are customarily used. The following meanings should help you understand the available letter grades:

Grade	Explanation
A	A superior paper. Well-written with an interesting and insightful argument and a clear central thesis. A serious attempt to use reliable evidence. Use of primary

	sources to buttress the argument (if the paper is primarily empirical) or thorough consideration of major theoretical approaches (if the paper is more conceptual).
A-	An excellent paper written in a clear style. The argument is interesting and generally sound, but less insightful than an A paper. Some use of appropriate primary evidence or of conceptual tools of analysis.
B+	A very good paper with a reasonably clear argument. The ideas are not as original or clearly expressed as in A and A- papers, but there are some interesting points. More actual research and thinking would have been desirable.
B	A good paper, but with an argument that is not as well-structured as it should be. A few interesting ideas, but the paper could have been improved with more thought, organization, and imagination. Little actual research. Reliance is more on secondary sources than on appropriate primary sources. Minor problems of structure and organization.
B-	An above-average paper. Based mainly on secondary sources, but with generally clear writing. Some problems of structure and organization.
C+	A marginally above-average paper. Based almost entirely on secondary sources. Writing often unclear. Some problems of structure and organization. Central thesis either absent or unclear.
C	An average paper. Based entirely on secondary sources, with sometimes unclear and uninspired writing. No real central thesis. A few major problems of structure and organization.
C-	A below-average paper. Based on inadequate reading of secondary sources. The writing style is unclear, with errors of grammar and syntax. No discernible argument.
D+	A poor paper. Based on the reading of only a few secondary sources. Serious problems of grammar and expression. No attempt at arguing a central point. The structure is random.
D	A very poor paper. Based on only a few secondary sources, perhaps taken only from the required readings for the course. Serious problems of expression, with numerous passages that are simply not understandable. No central argument.
F	An unacceptable paper. Based on few or no secondary sources, or parroting of one or more secondary sources, bordering on plagiarism.

### **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

1. Attendance: Students are expected to attend all class sessions and complete all assignments promptly. Students must not only attend every class, but also arrive on time, be prepared, and actively participate in class. Students may be required to sign in each class session to verify attendance. Also, once students arrive to class, they are expected to stay in the classroom until the class session is over. Leaving class early or getting up in the middle of a class session is considered disruptive behavior and should only occur in extreme emergencies. Excessive absences or tardiness will affect your grade. Students, who are unable to attend class, should contact the professor when knowledge of their absence is known in advance or as soon as they return to school.
2. Diagnostic Writing Assessment: Students will complete a diagnostic writing assessment at the beginning of the semester. This assessment will not receive a grade. This assessment is designed to assess the student's writing and critical thinking capabilities.
3. Student Decorum Policy: Students are expected to dress in business casual attire. Males: no "do-rags," scarves, hats, sagging pants, "wife-beater" T-shirts or other visible undergarments, pajamas, slippers, obscene wording on any attire. Females: no midriff



tops, short shorts, halter-tops, pajamas, visible undergarments, slippers, obscene text on any attire. Students are expected to use courteous, respectful language. Do not use profanity or offensive language at any time. Students should refer to the Student Handbook. Students are expected to follow the Dress Code Policy of Mississippi Valley State University. Males must remove hats, caps, wave caps, etc. before entering the class. Females must remove any hair garments, which are not used considered professional and appropriate hair accessories. Clothing must not be revealing, derogatory, or offensive in any nature. Business casual attire or business attire must be worn to class.

4. Late Work: All writing assignments must be received by the professor on or before the due date, by the beginning of the class period, or as indicated by the course schedule of activities. Assignments submitted via Blackboard or electronically must meet the designated due date. Assignments submitted in any form other than specifically instructed or otherwise late will NOT be accepted. Excuses such as "crashed computers," "lost flash drives," or "empty printer ink cartridges" will not be accepted. All students will be required to save all assignments and readings on computer's hard drive and again on removable storage devices. Also, students are required to use Dropbox to back up copies of submitted work. The link for Dropbox is <https://db.tt/CkchpePL>. Dropbox is accessible as an application on mobile devices and as a website on computers and laptops.
5. Plagiarism: **ZERO TOLERANCE FOR PLAGIARISM. PLAGIARISM OF 30% OR MORE WILL RESULT IN FAILURE OF THE CLASS.** Plagiarism is the act of representing directly or indirectly another person's work as your own. It can involve presenting someone's speech, wholly or partially, as yours; quoting without acknowledging the actual source of the quoted material; copying and handing in another person's work with your name on it, and similar infractions. Even indirect quotations, paraphrasing, etc., can be considered plagiarism unless sources are appropriately cited. Plagiarism will not be tolerated, and students could receive an F grade on the test/assignment or an F grade for the course. Students must turn in their own assignments and not a representation of their assignment completed by someone else. The Academic Honesty policy is strictly followed.
6. Class Communication: Common procedural or curricular questions that arise each semester are answered on the syllabus. For correspondence to the professor, students are required to use only their Mississippi Valley State University assigned email account. Other means of communication include using Skype, Twitter, Facebook, Remind, and Google Voice.
7. Electronic Devices: Students are required to put turn off all electronic devices. There should be no use of cell phones, music players, computers, tablets, Bluetooth, etc. during the duration of class without the professor's permission.
8. Mississippi Valley State University: Students are required to read and adhere to all policies, rules, regulations of Mississippi Valley State University, as outlined in the Student Handbook and Student Catalog, at all times, including outside of the classroom environment.
9. Diversity: Students are from diverse backgrounds and experiences. In class, students vary based on ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, gender, exceptionalities, language, religion, sexual orientation, and geographical areas. All students will respect the individual differences of others.



10. Special Needs Leaders: If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting an accommodation, you are encouraged to contact both your professor and the office of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) coordinator and compliance officer on campus or call 662.254.3446 as early as possible in the term.
11. Academic Accommodations: You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the semester. For an accommodation request, provide a written request during the first two weeks of class or as soon as the need for accommodation is known to exist.
12. Quizzes: Quizzes cannot be made up. If you miss a quiz due to an absence or tardiness, that grade will be a zero. The lowest quiz grade will be dropped at the end of the semester.
13. Resubmissions: Any failed assignment may be resubmitted and revised at the discretion of the professor. Strict adherence to deadlines for resubmission is expected. Assignments, which have a passing grade may be resubmitted and revised if a student has met with the professor during office hours to discuss resubmission. Resubmissions may not be merely a corrected version of the original assignment, but all resubmissions must be substantially revised and must be submitted with the original graded assignment or draft stapled. Evidence of substantial revision may result in an improvement in a grade. If you did not submit an assignment at the appropriate time, the assignment cannot be offered as a "resubmission."
14. Presentation Assignments: Students have the option to use PowerPoint or Prezi to present their presentations. Handouts are expected for each presentation. Rescheduling of presentations will only be at the discretion of the professor and only as class schedule permits.
15. Course Readings: Readings may include any of the following but are not limited to: eBooks, journal articles, books, blogs, newspaper articles, etc. Students are responsible for reading all course readings and completing all reading assignments. Journal articles, handouts, textbooks, and other reading materials must be readily available in class at all times. Students should prepare reading summaries for assigned readings and bring to each class session.
16. Writing Assignments: All work must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman or 12-point Georgia. Other fonts will NOT be accepted. All work must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins. Follow the APA Format for writing. You must include a title page for all submitted work. Work not stapled will not be accepted. In-class writing assignments must be neatly printed in blue or black ink on loose-leaf composition paper or in Blue Books purchased from the Bookstore. In-class writing assignments must be double-spaced (skip every other line).
17. Tutorial: Tutorials can assist students in being academically successful. Students are encouraged to receive writing assistance from the campus writing center. Additionally, tutorial sessions for the entire class on a specific topic may be designed by the professor.
18. Extra Credit: (100 points maximum earned) Visit a museum. Write a critique of the exhibit. (25 points possible for each one, maximum 50 points). Write a review on a film/television/video related to public policy, rural policy, agriculture policy, or public administration (25 points possible each, maximum 50 points).

19. Remind: Students can sign up for Remind accounts by visiting **remind.com** or downloading the app at **rmd.me**. Students can join my class with the unique class code: **@rp507**. Students can also text the class code to the phone number 81010. Standard text messaging charges can apply if a student sign up using text.
20. Caveat: In the event of extenuating circumstances, the schedule and requirements for this course may be modified.

### **EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

1. Students are expected to carefully monitor Mississippi Valley State University website, social media (Facebook and Twitter), or local media for an announcement of the class being canceled due to weather or any other emergencies.
2. Students are expected to strictly follow the professor's instructions in case severe weather or any other disturbance that occurs during class hours.

## USERNAME AND PASSWORD SHEET

Use this sheet to keep up with your username and password for this class. I cannot reset your information. You are responsible for keeping up with this material.

<b>ACCOUNT</b>	<b>USERNAME</b>	<b>PASSWORD</b>
MVSU EMAIL:		
Dropbox:		

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- American Psychological Association (2010). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Babbie E. (2016). *The practice of social science research* (14<sup>th</sup> ed.) Boston, MA: Cengage.
- Creswell, J. W. (2018) *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th Ed.) Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS Statistics* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Frankfort-Nachmias, C., Nachmias, D., & Deward, J. (2015). *Research methods in the social sciences* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). New York, NY: Worth Publishers.
- Johnson, G. (2010). *Research methods for public administrators* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe Inc.
- Leedy, P. D. and Ormrod, J. E. (2016). *Practical research: Planning and design* (11<sup>th</sup> ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson.
- Remler, D. K. & Van Ryzin, G. G. (2015). *Research methods in practice: Strategies for description and causation*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Wagner, W. E. (2017). *Using IBM Statistics for research methods & social science statistics* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

## TENTATIVE SEMESTER SCHEDULE

Week One	Course Introduction
Week Two	Logic and Methods of Science
Week Three	Conceptual Foundations of Research
Week Four	Policy Evaluation
Week Five	Elements of Research
Week Six	Research Designs, Methods, and Strategies
Week Seven	Mid-Term Exam
Week Eight	Experimental and Quasi-experimental Designs
Week Nine	Randomization and Sampling
Week Ten	Library Research
Week Eleven	Data Collection
Week Twelve	Data Analysis
Week Thirteen	Applied Statistics
Week Fourteen	Fall Break and Thanksgiving Holiday
Week Fifteen	Research Team Meetings
Week Sixteen	Student Research Symposium

*Caveat: In the event of extenuating circumstances, the syllabus, schedule, and requirements for this course may be modified. Students will be notified of any changes.*

## REMIND



# Sign up for important updates from Dr. Hawkins.

Get information for **Mississippi Valley State University** right on your phone—not on handouts.

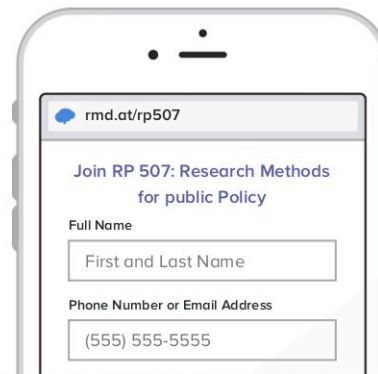
Pick a way to receive messages for **RP 507: Research Methods for public Policy**:

**A** If you have a smartphone, get push notifications.

On your iPhone or Android phone, open your web browser and go to the following link:

[rmd.at/rp507](https://rmd.at/rp507)

Follow the instructions to sign up for Remind. You'll be prompted to download the mobile app.



**B** If you don't have a smartphone, get text notifications.

Text the message **@rp507** to the number **81010**.

If you're having trouble with **81010**, try texting **@rp507** to **(662) 985-7415**.

\* Standard text message rates apply.



Don't have a mobile phone? Go to [rmd.at/rp507](https://rmd.at/rp507) on a desktop computer to sign up for email notifications.