Appendix 2

RESEARCH METHODS

Sample Syllabus

Course Objective

This course is designed to provide students with an understanding of how to conduct original research and its application to public policy and management issues. Specifically, this course examines the logic and techniques of hypothesis testing, identifying and defining variables, variable measurement, sampling, data collection, and data analysis. Gaining an understanding of research design and methodology will better enable students to think critically across all social science fields.

Learning Outcomes

Be able to plan a research project that makes appropriate use of empirical research tools, sampling and statistical analysis.

Course Requirements and Grading

RESEARCH PROPOSAL (100 points): Each student will be required to complete a research proposal that presents a deductive research question, hypothesis, and a research design to test that hypothesis. Students’ proposals will be graded not only on the elements of research methods, but also on writing quality and overall clarity.

PROPOSAL ASSIGNMENTS (50 points total): These are smaller assignments that deal with specific portions of the larger proposal. The idea here is to learn each part in a specific order, and then put all of the parts together at the end of the semester.

Assignment 1: Research question, hypothesis, and significance = 10 points
Assignment 2: Identify unit of analysis and variables = 10 points
Assignment 3: Define and measure variables = 20 points
Assignment 4: Sampling = 10 points
LITERATURE REVIEW (30 points): Each student will be required to submit a literature review relevant to his/her research proposal. The literature review should consist of at least five detailed summaries of peer-reviewed, scholarly articles related to a student’s research topic, research question, and/or hypothesis.

POWERPOINT PRESENTATION (20 points): Students must develop a power point presentation to accompany the written proposal. Both style and substance are taken into account when grading. PowerPoint must be used and each student must present his or her research proposal before the class.

COURSE SCHEDULE AND ASSIGNMENTS

WEEK 1: COURSE INTRODUCTION
Presentation of course objectives and student obligations

WEEK 2: EMPIRICAL TOOLS OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH
Assignment: List of potential topics for research proposal due

WEEK 3: LITERATURE REVIEW, UNIT OF ANALYSIS AND IDENTIFYING VARIABLES

WEEK 4: DEFINING VARIABLES
Proposal Assignment # 1: Research question and hypothesis due

WEEK 5: MEASURING VARIABLES

WEEK 6: SURVEY RESEARCH
Proposal Assignment #2: Identify UoA and all variables due

WEEK 7: EXPERIMENTATION
Literature Review due

WEEK 8: EXISTING DATA

WEEK 9: SAMPLING

WEEK 10: POLICY ANALYSIS
Proposal Assignment # 4: Define and measure all variables due

WEEK 11: PROGRAM EVALUATION

WEEK 12: MIXED METHODS

WEEK 13: DATA ANALYSIS

WEEK 14: RESEARCH ETHICS
Proposal Assignment #5: Sampling method due

WEEK 15: STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
Final research proposal due