



**Department of Political Science
Public Administration Program**

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for this course only

Course: **Research Methods in Public Administration**, 3 credit hours, PADM 9040 IA

Location / Date / Time: Spring Semester (January 9 - April 30, 2012)

***Special Note:** This is a BlazeView Blackboard Vista 8 (abbreviated as BB) course and requires that extensive work be done by the student using the Internet. You must familiarize yourself with your VSU BB account, which you can access through the BlazeView VSU site to complete required course discussions and assignments. All written assignments will be submitted only in Microsoft Word format via BB.

Class Readings:

- 1) Remler, Dahlia K., and Gregg G. Van Ryzin. 2011. *Research Methods in Practice*. CA: Sage (ISBN: 978-1-4129-6467-8).
- 2) Pyrczak, Fred. 2010. *Making Sense of Statistics*. CA: Pyrczak Publishing. (ISBN: 1-884585-88-4).
- 3) Rosenberg, Kenneth M. 2007. *The Excel Statistics Companion 2.0*. CA: Wadsworth. (ISBN: 978-0-495-18695-3).
- 4) Course Articles: for certain weeks of the course, there will be a selection of journal articles which are required reading. Students will access these under the "course articles" icon on the main page of BB. These are shown on the schedule at the end of the syllabus.

* Students may purchase the course textbooks either from the VSU bookstore or a merchant of their choice.

Office Hours / Communication: Since this is an online course, students will need to communicate via BB through BB email or the chat room for this course.

Weekly Lectures: Weekly lectures will be posted on BB for students to reference. Please understand that these lectures are not a substitute for reading the text and participating in course discussions and assignments. They contain additional content not covered in the texts.

Please also note that the lectures are ONLY available in Adobe PDF format. Since they are uploaded into the BB system at the beginning of the course, they cannot be changed or altered from how they appear. Students can use the zoom tool (+ or -) in Adobe to focus in on areas for better clarity.

Video Note: There will be a selection of videos which supplement the course readings. They will primarily relate to the course discussions and will be shown online using the “course videos” tool on BB. Students should use the videos to reinforce what they are studying in the text.

Prerequisite: Standing as a DPA student

Course Learning Assessments and Outcomes:

For successful completion of this course students will:

- 1) Demonstrate an overall understanding of the importance of research in public administration, along with the significance of using theories and models to understand political life, public policy, administrative structures and functions, etc.
- 2) Demonstrate an understanding of quantitative research methods, experimentation, survey research, and statistical analyses including, but not limited to basic descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode), measures of association, the Pearson correlation coefficient, regression analysis, statistical significance, chi square, the t-Test, path and analysis of variance (ANOVA).
- 3) Demonstrate an understanding of qualitative analysis, including the use of case studies, organizational documents, media and the internet, interviews, survey instruments, focus groups, and participant observation studies.
- 4) Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of related research concepts like inquiry and science, ethical conduct, hypotheses development, empirical research, experimentation, primary and secondary data collection, and causation.
- 5) Demonstrate an understanding of how to structure and write a literature review and applied research paper, using an appropriate research design with testable hypotheses and associated statistical tests.

Course Learning Assessment and Outcome matrix:

This matrix provides a design and structure for students to track their progress in each learning objective and outcome shown above.

Learning Assessment and Outcome	Weeks	Content	Evaluation
1 Demonstrate an overall understanding of the importance of research in public administration, along with the significance of using theories and models to understand political life, public policy, administrative structures and functions, etc.	1-17	Remler and Pycszak books, weekly lectures; video lectures; (see schedule at end of syllabus)	Feedback on class discussions; quizzes; course writing assignment
2 Demonstrate an understanding of quantitative research methods, experimentation, survey research, and statistical	3, 4, 6-9	Remler, Rosenberg, and Pycszak books, weekly lectures; video lectures; (see schedule at end of syllabus)	Feedback on class discussions; quizzes; final exam; course writing assignment

	analyses including, but not limited to basic descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode), measures of association, the Pearson correlation coefficient, regression analysis, statistical significance, chi square, the t-Test, path and analysis of variance (ANOVA)			
3	Demonstrate an understanding of qualitative analysis, including the use of case studies, organizational documents, media and the internet, interviews, survey instruments, focus groups, and participant observation studies	3, 5, 7, 12-16	Remler and Pyrczak books, weekly lectures; video lectures; (see schedule at end of syllabus)	Feedback on class discussions; quizzes; final exam; course writing assignment
4	Demonstrate an understanding of the importance of related research concepts like inquiry and science, ethical conduct, hypotheses development, empirical research, experimentation, primary and secondary data collection, and causation	6-16	Remler and Pyrczak books, weekly lectures; video lectures; (see schedule at end of syllabus)	Feedback on class discussions; quizzes; final exam; course writing assignment
5	Demonstrate an understanding of how to structure and write a literature review and applied research paper, using an appropriate research design with testable hypotheses and associated statistical tests	1-17	Remler and Pyrczak books, weekly lectures; video lectures; (see schedule at end of syllabus)	Feedback on course writing assignment

Communication/Email Note: All communication and emails will proceed through BB, and not personal email accounts, for this course. The basic protocol for email includes:

1. Emails must be properly addressed and use appropriate language, tone, etc. (in other words, you must follow proper “Netiquette.”
2. Emails to the professor will normally be answered within two working days (weekends and holidays are not working days).
3. Attachments sent to the professor should include the student’s name and project title. (example: smith_writing_assignment_one.doc). They must be in Microsoft Word format.
4. All assignments must be submitted before the due date and time indicated in order to receive credit, unless other prior arrangements have been made.
5. I will notify the class if I will be out-of-touch for any reason (i.e. professional conference).

A Note on Internet Access:

- This is an on-line class. Students must have access to a working computer and access to the Internet. Students can use the VSU computer lab, a public library, another university or college, etc., to ensure they have access.
- “Not having a computer” or “computer crashes” are not acceptable excuses for late work.

Policies and Procedures:

A) Grades for this course will be determined on the basis of points earned on the following assessments:

Quizzes:	90 points (3 x 30 points each)
Course Discussions:	25 points (5 x 5 points each)
Writing Assignment:	70 points
Final Exam:	65 points
Total = 250 points	

B) Letter grades will be assigned on the following percentile basis of points earned (250 total possible points):

<u>Points</u>	<u>Letter Grade</u>
225-250	A
200-224	B
175-199	C
150-174	D
149 and lower	F

*Please note that at no time will there be any extra credit offered.

C) Students should access and be familiar with the online assistance available to help them with their courses in the program. A variety of course resources for PA students can be accessed at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/pa/argyle/index.shtml>

D) Course discussions and participation are an important component of this course. Each discussion will require that students respond to the question(s) posed with an *original posting*. After completing an original posting, students can then post *responses* to what other students discuss in their original postings. Responses should add to the content of the discussion and not be “I agree” or short brief answers. *Remember not to ever plagiarize and/or copy and paste content from another source.* Course discussions will be graded using the following rubric and scale:

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators		
	Need Improvement	Meet Expectations	Good+
Original posting (content, grammar, style, originality)	(0 points) Student does not post an original posting, or posting is not relevant / appropriate to forum	(1 points) Student meets expectations in posting an original posting, and provides average content in the forum with some reference to course materials	(2 points) Student exceeds expectations in posting an original posting, and provides well thought out content in the forum with effective references to

Objective/Criteria	Performance Indicators		
	Need Improvement	Meet Expectations	Good+
			course materials
Responses to other students (content, grammar, style, originality)	(0 points) Student does not respond to other students' postings, or does not add relevant / appropriate information to topic	(1 points) Student meets expectations in responding to other students' postings, and provides some additional content which references course materials	(2 points) Student exceeds expectations in responding to other students' postings and provides well thought out additional content in the forum with effective references to course materials
Overall contribution to discussion	(0 points) Student does not enhance the quality of substantive content in the forum	(1 points) Student does enhance the quality of substantive content in the forum	(1 points) Student does enhance the quality of substantive content in the forum
			out of 5

Finally, think of the discussions as raising your hand in class. You do not need to respond to every student's original posting, but are to select 2 or so which complement what you discussed in your original posting. Also remember to rotate who you respond to so that it is not the same individuals for each discussion. If you select two students for one posting, then select two different ones for the next.

E) I will post specific guidelines and instructions for the course writing assignment under the "assignment" tool on BB. Formatting for the assignment should follow the American Political Science Association (APSA) style manual, which is the accepted style of the VSU Public Administration Program. This is reviewed in the book: Gregory M. Scott and Stephen M. Garrison, *The Political Science Student Writer's Manual*. 6th ed., 2008.

A Note on Submission: To submit an assignment, enter the "assignments" tool on BB, and follow these steps: 1) Select the assignment you are submitting; 2) Under the submission box, select "add attachments;" 3) Select "my computer" and then your document; 4) Finally select "submit" at the bottom of the page. BB will prompt you with a box which asks "Are you sure you want to submit this assignment?" Select "okay" and a screen like this will appear:

Confirmation

Your Name:
 You have submitted your assignment(Your Name).
 Submitted Time: Month Day, Year XX:XX PM

The above confirmation only appears when you submit your assignment properly. If you do not receive this confirmation message on BB, then you have not successfully attached your assignment and will need to try again until you reach this screen. If you experience any technical difficulties, then you will need to contact the Distance Learning VSU Vista helpdesk at: (229) 245-6490 or select the “**Email: Contact Us**” option on the main page of BB.

Any student who does not follow this procedure will have his/her assignment counted as “late” in accordance with course policy, with a penalty of one full letter grade for each day it is late. You should also double check to make sure you have completed the process successfully by selecting the “submitted” icon in the “assignments” tool, and confirm the submission date, indicated next to your assignment. This screen should appear:

The Submitted tab contains your submissions and any assignments for which you have missed the cutoff date.



[Assignment paper - Title](#)



Status: Submitted , Month Day, Year XX:XX PM

Also, if you click on your submitted assignment, BB will take you into the assignment screen and show you the status of your assignment with the time and date of the submission being posted. (There will be **NO EXCEPTIONS** for students who claim that they have attached their assignment, forgot to attach it, or who otherwise indicate that they did it but the assignment somehow disappeared).

F) The quizzes and final exam will be in essay/short answer format. Students will log into BB, and within the assessment, enter their responses in the box provided. The schedule for the quizzes and final exam are shown at the end of this syllabus.

G) According to university policy and the VSU catalog, an “I” [Incomplete] grade indicates that a student was doing satisfactory work at the end of the term but, for non-academic reasons, was unable to complete all requirements for the course. A report of “I” requires the subsequent completion of all course requirements within a time limit specified by the professor, not to exceed one calendar year from the end of the term in which a grade of incomplete is assigned, regardless of the student’s enrollment status during the period specified for completion. Students are responsible for making arrangements with their professor for completion of course requirements within the time specified, in accordance with this regulation. If an “I” is not changed to a letter grade within one calendar year, it will be changed to the grade “F”.

H) It is the student's responsibility to ensure that he/she is registered throughout the course so that a grade can be administered. Work out problems in registration and withdrawal directly with the Registrar's Office.

I) Please be aware of the College’s established *Student Conduct and Academic Honor Code*, specifically regarding plagiarism and cheating. A grade of zero will be recorded in these instances. Each student is **required** to read and to be familiar with the section on plagiarism in the Valdosta State University *Thesis and Dissertation Guide* (available online under the Graduate School). Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and in some cases, for the course. In extreme cases, plagiarism will result in dismissal from the program.

All students should review the VSU website on Academic Honesty Procedures at: <http://www.valdosta.edu/academic/AcademicHonestyPoliciesandProcedures.shtml>.

In particular, please also review “Plagiarism in the PA Program” shown at the bottom of the page at the following link: <http://www.valdosta.edu/pa/students/index.shtml>.

J) Valdosta State University complies fully with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Students requesting classroom accommodations or modifications due to a documented disability must contact the Access Office for Students with Disabilities located in the Farber Hall. The phone numbers are 229-245-2498 (V/VP) and 229-219-1348 (TTY) and the web address is: <http://www.valdosta.edu/access/>.

Semester Schedule

For the Week of:

1- 1/9/12

Class Starts 1/9; DPA Residency Weekend 1/13-1/14 on VSU main campus

Topics: Introduction to research

(Readings: Remler, ch. 1; Pyrczak, sections 1 & 2; Rosenberg - flip through all; review weekly lecture)

2- 1/16/12

Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday on 1/16 (No Classes); Topics: Theory and Models

(Readings: Remler, ch. 2; Pyrczak, sections 5 & 6; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 1. What Is Statistics & 2. Picturing Distributions)

Discussion 1: 1/17-1/29

3- 1/23/12

Topics: Measurement

(Readings: Remler, ch. 4; Pyrczak, sections 4 & 7; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 3. Describing Distributions & 4. Normal Distributions)

4- 1/30/12

Topics: Quantitative data

(Readings: Remler, ch. 8; Pyrczak, sections 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, & 26; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 5. Normal Calculations & 6. Time Series)

Quiz 1 period starts on 1/30 and closes by end of day on 2/5 (covering all content for weeks 1-3)

5- 2/6/12

Topics: Qualitative analysis

(Readings: Remler, ch. 3; Pyrczak, sections 14, 15, 22, 23, 27 & 28; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 7. Models for Growth & 8. Describing Relationships)

Discussion 2: 2/6-2/19

6- 2/13/12

Topics: Sampling

(Readings: Remler, ch. 5; Pyrczak, sections 3, 17, 18 & 19; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 9. Correlation, 10. Multidimensional Data Analysis & 11. The Question of Causation)

7- 2/20/12

Topics: Secondary data

(Readings: Remler, ch. 6; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 12. Experimental Design, 13. Blocking and Sampling, & 14. Samples and Surveys)

8- 2/27/12

Topics: Primary data collection

(Readings: Remler, ch. 7; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 15. What is Probability? & 16. Random Variables)

Discussion 3: 2/27-3/11

Quiz 2 period starts on 2/27 and closes by end of day on 3/4 (covering all content for weeks 4-7)

9- 3/5/12

Topics: Multivariate statistics

(Readings: Remler, ch. 9; Pyrczak, sections 16, 24 & 25; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 17. Binomial Distributions & 18. The Sample Mean and Control Charts)

10- 3/12/12

VSU Spring Break from 3/12-3/16 (No Classes);

11- 3/19/12

Topics: Causation

(Readings: Remler, ch. 10; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 19. Confidence Intervals & 20. Significance Tests)

Discussion 4: 3/19-4/1

12- 3/26/12

Topics: Observational studies with control variables

(Readings: Remler, ch. 11; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 21. Inference for One Mean, 22. Comparing Two Means, 23. Inference for Proportions)

13- 4/2/12

Topics: Randomized field experiments

(Readings: Remler, ch. 12; review weekly lecture; review video lectures: 24. Inference for Two-Way Tables & 25. Inference for Relationships)

Quiz 3 period starts on 4/2 and closes by end of day on 4/8 (covering all content for weeks 8, 9, 11, 12)

14- 4/9/12

Topics: Natural and quasi experiments

(Readings: Remler, ch. 13; review weekly lecture; review video lecture: 26. Case Study)

Discussion 5: 4/9-4/22

Course Writing Assignment due by noon on 4/10 on BB in the "assignment" tool

15- 4/16/12

Topics: Ethics and research

(Readings: Remler, ch. 14; review weekly lecture)

16- 4/23/12

Topics: Presenting research

(Readings: Remler, ch. 15; review weekly lecture)

Final Exam period 4/26-4/29 on BB (covering all content for weeks 1-17)

17- 4/30/12

Course wrap-up and conclusion
