



Kuwait University
College of Business Administration
Department of Public Administration

Course Syllabus
PA 310 - Research Methods in Public Administration

Lecture Time and Location: 14:00 – 14:50
DEPT: Public Administration Department

C2:1021 : أستاذ

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Teaching Assistant: Faris Aldousari

Location : Public Administration Department
Office Hours : 24988578

Course Description:

This course develops student's practical skills in designing, collecting, and analyzing data using descriptive techniques and presenting data to address research questions. Students will learn how to select appropriate research techniques to use in different contexts, ethical issues and limitations. It introduces students to statistical procedures and computer skills used in the field of public administration, management, and public policy to evaluate and manage programs and services. The course also develops the student's skills to assess the quality of research by others. The course offers an introduction to some of the key practices and principles associated with conducting research. This course will describe the research design process and challenges students to be better users of information so that they can make better decisions. Topics will range from research design, interview and survey techniques to qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Students throughout the semester will need to practice good information analysis by being comfortable with SPSS and dataset analysis.

Course Content:

This course introduces quantitative and qualitative research methods that are employed in public administration. The goal of this course is to acquaint students with basic methodological concepts and research tools in public administration. The course emphasizes practical application of research methods. A variety of examples will be provided to help in gaining better understanding of research methods.



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Teaching Methods and Learning Activities:

This course will be taught in a lecture format. Students are expected to complete a mid-term test, a final test, and four short assignments, write a research proposal, present the research proposal, and participate in class discussions.

Course Learning Outcomes:

The overarching goal of this course is to help students understand the concepts behind the construction and analysis of research.

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

- To explore the process of research design and analysis;
- To be able to construct research designs applicable for the workplace;
- Better understand the role and relationship between theory and method
- To discuss the nature of quantitative and qualitative data analysis;
- To be able to critically analyze and communicate research findings, and when needed, improve upon faulty research and analysis;
- To become familiar in using SPSS statistical software.
- Understand the scientific method and the research process cycle.
- Be able to make research design.

CLO Mapping to CBA Skill Based Competency Goals¹

CLO	Analytical	Communication	Information Technology	Business Ethics
1				
2				
3	I	R	A	R
4				

Type of Emphases:

- **(I)ntroduce:** Students will be introduced to the skill and their grasp of it assessed in the course.
- **(A)pply:** The course will not cover the skill. Students should have a high-level grasp of the skill and are required to apply it in the course.
- **(R)einforce:** Students should have an introductory-level grasp of the skill and the course will improve their mastery to a higher level.



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Required Material:

Textbook : 1. Warren S. Eller, Brian J. Gerber, and Scott E. Robinson. Public Administration: Research Methods. Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group. New York and London. 2013.

2. Additional handouts will be given at other time of the course.

*This course addresses NASPAA competency 3: To analyze, synthesize, think critically, solve problems, and make decisions.

Course Requirements and Policies:

Students are required to be active participants in all aspects of this course

- Class attendance and participation are required to be successful in this course.
- Students should have read all material prior to class in order to be ready to engage in class discussion and group work
- All assignments are due in class the day indicated in the assignment handout.

Course Policies:

1. Readings should be completed prior to class.

2. Class participation is an important part of the learning process and therefore students are expected to attend class. Your class participation grade will be based on the quality of your contribution to class discussions, your ability to listen and constructively respond to points made by others, and your participation during in-class exercises.

Course Assignments & Exams:

Homework Assignments (30%):

There will be various homework assignments throughout the semester. The assignments will focus on your ability to search, analyze and synthesize information from scholarly articles. The assignment will focus on your ability to understand and apply the knowledge learned from the lectures. It requires that each student create a viable research design for a project, identify the research question(s) that you intend to answer, the methods that you would apply in order to answer the question(s), and a projected plan for analysis of the data (report/case/paper). The final project will be 8 to 10 pages in length.

Mid-Term Exams (25%):

The in class exams will cover the first half of the semester and focus on questions about research design, theory and qualitative methods.



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Final Exam (35%):

The final exam will cover the entire semester, but with particular emphasis on the major concepts and statistical analysis learned in the second half of the semester.

Attendance and Participation: (10%):

This course depends on the active participation of students. Participation means having read all material prior to coming to class and being prepared to share your own insights with your classmates. Integration of the material with personal experience and insight is particularly encouraged.

Cheating and Plagiarism: Every student in this course must abide by the Kuwait University Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism (published in the Student Guide, Chapter 3, Section 2). A copy of the student guide can be accessed online on:

http://www.kuniv.edu/cs/groups/ku/documents/ku_content/kuw055940.pdf

Please carefully note all sources and assistance when you turn in your work. Under no circumstances should you take credit for work that is not yours. You should neither receive nor give any unauthorized assistance on any deliverable.

Writing Style: Students must refer to APA writing style for their assignments and report writing.

Grading:

The scores in this course will be the weighted average of the following items:

Weight	Description
25%	Midterms
35%	Final Exam
30%	Assignments
10%	Class Attendance & Participation
100%	TOTAL



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Grade Distribution:

Grade	Range
A	≥ 95
A-	≥ 90 and < 95
B+	≥ 87 and < 90
B	≥ 83 and < 87
B-	≥ 80 and < 83
C+	≥ 77 and < 80
C	≥ 73 and < 77
C-	≥ 70 and < 73
D+	≥ 65 and < 70
D	≥ 60 and < 65
F	< 60

Course Outline:

Title	Page No.
Chapter 1: Introduction: What is Research?	1-17
Chapter 2: Evidence-Based Practice For Public Affairs	18-33
Chapter 3: The Research Process: An Introduction to Key Concepts	34-55
Chapter 4: Conducting Preliminary Research , Getting Started with a literature Review and Getting Background Information	55-70
Chapter 5: Research Design, Issues of Validity and inference	71-94
Chapter 6: Measurement in Research	96-114
Chapter 7: Population Sampling	115-131
Chapter 8: Case Studies	132-146
Chapter 9: Interviews	148-174
Chapter 11: Survey Data	195-213
Chapter 12: Coding and Data Display	215-235



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Chapter 13: Descriptive Statistics	236-255
Chapter 15: Testing Hypothesis	272-288
Chapter 16: Measures of Association	289-306
Chapter 17: Simple Linear Regression	307-331
Chapter 21: Presenting Research	387-402

Important Dates

Date	Event
	1 st MT
	2 nd Mt
	Weekly Assignments & Quizzes
	Submission of the research project (term paper)
	Final Exam

Updating the Syllabus

1. The syllabus is updated periodically by adding new readings relevant to the course.
2. Diversifying teaching method to include lectures, group discussions, and case studies.
3. Asking students to prepare individual and group research reports on public administration topics.
4. Making several assignments & quizzes thorough out the course in addition to regular exams.

CBA Competency Goals

1. **Analytical Competency:** A CBA graduate will be able to use analytical skills to solve business problems and make a well-supported business decision.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 1.1. Use appropriate analytical techniques to solve a given business problem.
- 1.2. Critically evaluate multiple solutions to a business problem.
- 1.3. Make well-supported business decisions.



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2. **Communication Competency:** A CBA graduate will be able to communicate effectively in a wide variety of business settings.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 2.1. Deliver clear, concise, and audience-centered presentations.
- 2.2. Write clear, concise, and audience-centered business documents.

3. **Information Technology Competency:** A CBA graduate will be able to utilize Information Technology for the completion of business tasks.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 3.1. Use data-processing tools to analyze or solve business problems.

4. **Ethical Competency:** A CBA graduate will be able to recognize ethical issues present in business environment, analyze the tradeoffs between different ethical perspectives, and make a well-supported ethical decision.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 4.1. Identify the ethical dimensions of a business decision.
- 4.2. Recognize and analyze the tradeoffs created by application of competing ethical perspectives.
- 4.3. Formulate and defend a well-supported recommendation for the resolution of an ethical issue.

5. **General Business Knowledge:** A CBA graduate will be able to demonstrate a basic understanding of the main business disciplines' concepts and theories.

Student Learning Objectives:

- 5.1. Acquire a fundamental understanding of knowledge from the main business disciplines (e.g. finance, accounting, marketing, and management information systems, among others).