

**UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SCHOOL OF LAW
CONFLICT AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION MASTER'S PROGRAM**

CRES 632: RESEARCH METHODS

SPRING 2017

Class Meets: Tuesdays/Thursdays, Noon to 1:50 (8 weeks)
Location: 282 Knight Law Center
Instructor: Robert Rocklin
Office Hours: Monday 3-4 or (especially) by appointment
Office: 341 Knight Law Center
Email: rrocklin@uoregon.edu

Note: This syllabus is subject to change, as the needs of the course dictate. I will provide notice if it does.



COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course is intended to help students become critical consumers and producers of empirical research. It does so in two ways: by examining and critiquing completed research, and by having students walk through the initial stages of a master's level research project. For those who choose to complete their CRES master's degree through the course concentration option, the course will provide you with the background necessary to evaluate research and, if the occasion arises, to conduct your own research. For those who choose the master's thesis or final project, this course will not only make you informed consumers of empirical research, but will also provide the foundation for your thesis or project. All students will emerge from the course with a better understanding of what it means to conduct social science research, how to conduct the research, how to evaluate others' research and, more generally, how to critically approach an issue as a professional and choose the tools best suited to address it.

The process of starting with nothing and creating something intelligible and compelling can be daunting. How do you choose what to focus on? How do you narrow that focus to a researchable question? How do you conduct a literature review? Which theories are you engaging with? What methods do you use to get the information you are looking for and how do you put those methods into action? How do you conduct your research ethically? How do you analyze your findings? And how do you write up your thesis or project?

In this course we will examine all the questions raised above. At the end of the course, you should have the basic information to answer those questions, to understand the research process and its relevance to published research, and to be prepared to begin your own research. The course will be conducted as a seminar, meaning that a significant amount of

class time will be devoted to discussion of the readings and other students' work. We will also have several guest speakers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

As a result of taking this course, students will:

- Have a general understanding of research design and methods that will contribute to their ability to understand, interpret, and explain the major theories in their own profession or field of research.
- Be able to perform literature reviews using print and online databases.
- Be able to describe, compare, and contrast descriptive and inferential statistics.
- Be able to explain the rationale for research ethics, and the importance of and local processes for Institutional Review Board (IRB) review.
- Be able to act as an educated consumer of empirical research.
- Have prepared a preliminary research design for projects in their subject matter areas.
- Be able to develop a do-able research question.
- Acquire the knowledge to formulate appropriate methodologies to their thesis/project.
- Know how to organize data collection.
- Be able to assess and perform simple analysis of their data.

COURSE MATERIALS

- Zina O'Leary, *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Own Research Project* (2nd ed 2014)
- Additional readings on Canvas

The required text is available for purchase at the Duck Store, as well as at the other usual purveyors of textbooks.

COURSE POLICIES

Accessible Education for All Students: The University of Oregon works to ensure inclusive learning environments for all students. Please be in touch with the professor if there are aspects of the instruction or design of this course that result in barriers to your

participation as a result of learning style or diagnosed disability. For more information, you are also encouraged to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 346-1155 or uoaec@uoregon.edu.

Inclusion and Collegiality: The communities of which we are members (the University, the Law School, and CRES) value inclusion. We are committed to equal opportunities for all faculty, staff, and students to develop individually, professionally, and academically regardless of ethnicity, heritage, gender, sexual orientation, ability, socio-economic standing, cultural beliefs and traditions. We are dedicated to an environment that is inclusive and fosters awareness, understanding, and respect for diversity. If you feel excluded or threatened, please contact Associate Dean for Student Affairs Jennifer Espinola at espinola@uoregon.edu or 541-346-1557. The University Bias Response Team is also a resource that can assist you. See <http://bias.uoregon.edu> or call 541-346-2037.

Statement Regarding Sexual Violence (from Senate Task Force to Address Sexual Violence and Survivor Support)

The UO is committed to providing an environment **free** of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are **not alone**. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

Please be aware that all UO employees, other than designated confidential resources (see <https://safe.uoregon.edu/services>) are required to report credible evidence of prohibited discrimination, including sexual harassment and sexual violence. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need.

If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24- hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at safe.uoregon.edu.

Academic Integrity: Students are expected to demonstrate high levels of academic integrity, and are prohibited from committing or attempting to commit any act that constitutes academic misconduct. Plagiarism and other forms of academic dishonesty will be grounds for automatic failure in the course. If you have questions about conduct please ask your instructor or review the University Student Conduct Code (available at <http://dos.uoregon.edu/conduct>).

Attendance: Attendance promotes class discussion on the assigned material. In addition, material may be presented in class that is not in the reading. You are expected to come to class on time (meaning arriving before the class is scheduled to begin) and to stay until the end. Failure to attend class may result in a grade reduction. Please let your instructor know before class if you must leave early (for a legitimate reason), in which case please sit near the door in order to leave unobtrusively.

Preparation and participation: You are responsible for reading the assigned materials prior to class so that you can participate effectively. Class will be interactive as we build answers to questions we ask together. I expect you to engage actively in these opportunities for joint inquiry and exploration. Your participation will contribute both to your learning and to that of your classmates.

Late assignments: Assignments must be submitted on time. Failure to do so may result in a reduction in grade.

Electronic devices: Electronic devices are permitted in class only for note taking or other activities approved by the instructor. Use of these devices for other purposes detracts from everyone's learning experience.

Pronouns: Note that most of the materials we will read, as well as much of our discussion in class, will use the pronouns "he/him/his" or "she/her/hers." Gender is not binary, and some people prefer to use "they/them/their" or "ze/hir" for individuals. I try to limit the use of pronouns, but when pronouns are necessary, having a singular pronoun match a singular noun can be important for clarity. For more information on gender identity, please visit the LGBTQIA+ office, <http://dos.uoregon.edu/lgbt>.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM YOUR INSTRUCTOR

You can expect me to:

- Treat you with respect
- plan and facilitate learning opportunities that will help you meet the course goals and objectives
- provide constructive feedback on your performance
- be open to constructive feedback on my performance
- bring my teaching and professional expertise and experience into the classroom
- be open-minded in responding to your ideas and suggestions
- allow you to wrestle with ideas to shape your own conclusions

COURSE ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

Very Important Note About Grading

After you submit your assignments, I will review them and provide feedback. You may resubmit any assignment (except for the final research proposal) within 7 days after I provide feedback with any changes you would like to make in light of my feedback. I will review that resubmission and, if it results in a higher score on the assignment, you will receive that higher score.

1. **Research Question** (20 points), Due **April 18**: Developing a research question is central to conducting research. What specifically will you focus on? You must be able to turn an interesting topic into a researchable question. In class, we will discuss how to think about and write a researchable question. The research question you submit will be an important part of the research proposal that you will write and submit later in the quarter. Your research question will include a brief (1-2 paragraph) introduction. Your research question must be based on the idea of conducting primary research. Guidelines will be on Canvas.
2. **Summary/Analysis of One Article** (25 points), Due **May 2**: In order to learn how to conduct and write-up research, it is very helpful to see how other researchers do it. For this assignment, you will summarize and analyze the research of others. For the summary/analysis, you will select an article based on the research proposal you will be submitting. Guidelines will be on Canvas.
3. **Questionnaire**, (12 points), Due **May 9**: As part of your research proposal, you will write a questionnaire consisting a number of questions that you intend to administer to the subjects you will work with. These questions will be based on your research question. This is “mock” since some of you most likely will not be actually administering the questionnaire. Guidelines will be on Canvas.
4. **Human Subjects Test Confirmation**, (no points, but students cannot complete the course without having passed the test), Due **May 16**: Research is regulated by the federal Department of Health and Human Services and subject to state laws and rules. Depending on the type of research one is engaged in, an examination that demonstrates an understanding of the researcher’s ethical and legal obligations to protect participants (which includes issues of “informed consent,” risks to the health or safety of participants, and related ethical considerations) must be taken/passed. You must request prior approval from the Institutional Review Board to conduct research. All students in our course are required to take the human subjects test, even if they will not be conducting research with human subjects!
5. **Research Proposal**, (35 points), Due no later than **noon, May 30**: Your research proposal is the culmination of your work in our course. Research proposals include:
 - a. An introduction, including your (perhaps revised) research question

- b. Literature review
- c. Your methodology (including your questionnaire)
- d. Your tentative data analysis plan.

Research proposals will generally be approximately 12 pages in length. Guidelines will be on Canvas

- 6. **Attendance**, (8 points): Attendance is important! Students will receive ½ a point for each class attended. Students who do not attend a minimum of 13 sessions will receive no attendance points.

Note: I may use students' work in class to illustrate the topic we're discussing. I will not identify the author of the work when discussing it. If you object to the use of your work to help others learn, please email me and I will not use it.

GRADING

Grades will be assigned as follows: A=90% and above; B=80-89%; C=70-79%; D=60-69%; F=below 60%. Pluses/minuses may be given, and the scale may be adjusted, but *any adjustment will be in your favor.*

Grading Guidelines:

- A: Outstanding written work and participation. Shows a very high quality of understanding of course material.
- B: Very good written work and participation. Shows a high quality of understanding of course material.
- C: Acceptable written work and participation. Shows an understanding of course material.
- D: Poor written work. Shows minimal understanding of course material.
- F: Incomplete work and/or shows a lack of understanding of course material.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Week 1:
Introduction: Theses & Terminal Projects in Conflict Resolution, Learning to Structure a Study, Doing Research and the IRB Process

April 4:

Read: O'Leary, ch. 1, 2 (pp. 1-30)
Read: Final Project Guidelines: Deciding Between Terminal Project, Thesis, and Course Concentration; CRES Thesis & Terminal Project Guidelines (both on Canvas)

April 6:

Read: O'Leary, ch. 3 (pp. 31-46)
Guest Speaker: Caitlin Alcorn, Research Compliance Administrator: What You Need to Know about Human Subjects

Week 2:
Research Question/Research Proposals/Studies/Practice

April 11: Read: O'Leary, ch. 4, 5 (pp. 47-84)
Read: Additional material TBA

April 13: Read: TBA

Week 3:
Lit Review Fundamentals/ How To's of Lit Review and Managing Data

April 18: **Research Question Due**
Read: O'Leary, ch. 6 (pp. 85-104)

April 20: Read: All that material that you've gotten behind on
(**Note:** This class meets from 9-11 a.m. We will meet in Room 144 of the Knight Library.)
Guest speaker: Kelly Reynolds, Law Reference Librarian

Week 4
Introduction to Methodology/ Methods in Surveys, Questionnaires, Interviews

April 25: Read: O'Leary, ch. 7, 8 (pp. 105-155)

April 27: Read: O'Leary, ch. 10, 11 (pp. 181-242)
Read: Additional material TBA

Week 5
Methodology II/Quantitative Methods

May 2: **Summary Analysis of One Article due on Canvas**
Read: O'Leary, ch. 12 (pp. 243-273)
Read: Additional material TBA

May 4: Read: O'Leary, ch. 13 (pp. 274-298)
Guest speaker: Robert Mauro, Associate Professor, Psychology Department, Senior Research Scientist, Decision Research

Week 6
Analyzing Data

May 9: **Questionnaire due on Canvas**
Read: O'Leary, ch. 14 (pp. 299-324)

May 11: *Writing Up Panel* (tentative)
Read: Additional material TBA

Week 7
Writing It All Up/Principles of Writing It Up

May 16: **Human subjects test confirmation due on Canvas**
Read: O'Leary, ch. 15 (pp. 325-345)

May 18: Read: Additional material TBA

Week 8
Putting It All Together

May 23: **Small group feedback on research proposals**
Read: Additional material TBA

May 25 **Small group feedback on research proposals**
Read: Additional material TBA

→ May 30: Research Proposal due on Canvas ←