

**PADM 60381: Methods in Public Administration (CRN#: 22380)**  
**Fall 2018 (2<sup>nd</sup> Seven-Week Session)**  
**Department of Political Science**  
**Kent State University**

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**Course Description**

Politics involves more than elected and appointed officials and bureaucrats choosing and implementing their preferred policy options. Public administrators need to adopt a scientific approach when addressing various issues that may occur in the private sector. A scientific approach is important when assessing and evaluating various programs or projects you may encounter. During this course, you will learn how to develop a research plan, collect data, organize and analyze data using statistical software programs, and be able to present those results to an audience in manner that will be easy-to-understand for those not familiar with the scientific methods on how to analyze issues public administrators typically address.

This course is a seven-week intensive course and is required to complete the MPA program. The course is divided into five modules, with the first three each being one-week long and the last two modules spanning two weeks each. Assignments will be due each week of the course. Please pay attention to the course posted in Blackboard Learn.

**Course Goals**

1. Understand the scientific method and the logic of inference
2. Understand the basic principles of research design and methodology
3. Have a basic understanding of statistics and statistical inference
4. Be able to conduct basic quantitative statistical analysis
5. Be able to apply knowledge of statistics to problems and the decision----making process

**Course Learning Outcomes**

1. Recognize key components of the scientific method and apply this knowledge to a problem
2. Critically assess causal theories, explanations and hypotheses
3. Conduct data collection activities and recognize different types of publicly available data
4. Demonstrate basic data management and data manipulation skills using statistical software
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the key concepts related to variable

operationalization

6. Determine the uses, appropriateness and limitations of different research designs
7. Link concepts of probability and statistical theory to sampling and statistical inference
8. Conduct basic statistical analysis using statistical software (Excel and SPSS).
9. Interpret statistical information and evaluate its importance to a public administration issue
10. Construct a professional report based on statistical analysis

### **Textbooks**

Eller, Warren S., Brian J. Gerber and Scott E. Robinson. 2018. *Public Administration Research Methods: Tools for Evaluation and Evidence-Based Practice*. New York: Routledge Press. ISBN: 978-1138059290 **(Required)**

Kirkpatrick, Lee A., and Quentin Kidd. 2013. *A Simple Guide to SPSS for Political Science*. Boston, MA: Wadsworth Press. ISBN: 978-1111353797 **(Recommended)**

### **SPSS Software**

This course requires the use of a statistical software package called SPSS. SPSS is a program that specializes in computational statistical analysis that allows students to apply the concepts learned in lectures, presentations, and workbook practices using real-world data. SPSS is available on computers across campus and does not have to be purchased. However, to use the software on your personal computer, you must purchase and download the program from IBM or the campus bookstore. The software, the SPSS Statistics Base GradPack 25, comes with a single-user license for 6- or 12-months and can be renewed after your license expires. You can purchase the SPSS Statistics Standard GradPack for Windows or MacOS from official distributors of SPSS as well as Kent State University at <https://kent.onthehub.com/>.

### **Student Responsibilities**

Please be prepared to read all the material for each module and complete the assignments before the deadlines. As we will have discussion boards in each module, you are also responsible for treating your fellow classmates with respect, especially during class discussions. We each come to this course with diverse backgrounds and different ideas regarding various issues and how government should work. Please use your @kent.edu email address to contact me.

Assignments must be turned in on time. As a future public administration practitioner, hard deadlines exist and learning how to manage your time will be a large part of your success. I will not accept late work, except for extraordinary situations. This does not include not having enough time or technology problems. Have a back-up plan in place if you have a power failure or Internet outage. Technology issues are bound to happen, so plan your schedules assuming you may run into issues instead of waiting until the last

minute to complete work.

### **Technology Requirements**

**A personal computer with consistent, reliable Internet access is required:**

1. A DSL or cable connection to the Internet; dial-up is not sufficient.
2. Laptop or desktop computer with a minimum of a 2 GHz processor and 2 GB of RAM

**One of the following computer operating systems and additional software applications installed on your computer:**

1. Windows 7 system operating software for PC computers OR Mac OS X 10.6 or 10.7 for Apple Mac computers.
2. Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint). Kent State students have free access to Office 365. Visit <https://portal.office.com/OLS/MySoftware.aspx> and use your Flashline login info to sign in.

### **Instructor Responsibilities**

As part of being your instructor, I have responsibilities to you. I will help answer questions regarding the course, and help you understand all the material. I will be available by appointment. I will also try to answer questions via email within 48 hours (does not include weekends). All questions regarding grades must be asked in person either after class, or during office hours. My turnaround time to grade any work is one week or less.

My responsibility to you is to provide clear guidelines as to what is expected. I will be using Blackboard Learn to communicate and post grades. Please check Blackboard Learn regularly to make sure you can view course announcements and review your grades as the semester progresses. I am also responsible for ensuring the classroom provides an environment for everyone to learn and to express themselves.

### **Grading**

Homework assignments: 50%  
Final report: 20%  
Discussion boards: 15%  
Quizzes: 10%  
Worksheets: 5%

**Final grade scale:** A = 94% and above, A- = 90%-93%, B+ = 87%-89%, B = 84%-86%, B- = 80%-83%, C+ = 77%-79%, C = 74%-76%, C- = 70%-73%, D+ = 67%-69%, D = 60%-66%, F = 59% and below (Note: I do not round up final grades if you are just below the cutoff, such as having a 93.8%. I have to define the scale at some point, and some students are always going to fall on the other side of the divide).

**Homework assignments (50%):** There will be a total of six homework assignments in the course. Homework assignments will involve using SPSS. Homework assignments will be due at the end of their respective module (Sunday night). Please follow the instructions for submitting homework, as each assignment has different requirements. Details for each assignment will be posted in their respective modules.

**Final report (20%):** The culminating project for this class is a final report where you will showcase some of the research and statistical skills you have learned. More details are in Module 5 of Blackboard Learn.

**Discussion boards (10%):** *Each module has a discussion board. You will need to post a response of at least 250 words and respond to two of your classmates' posts with 150 words responses each. Your original discussion board post must be made by Thursday night of each module to give your classmates a chance to respond.*

**Quizzes (10%):** *Each module has an accompanying quiz. Quizzes are multiple-choice and due by each Sunday night.*

**Worksheets (5%):** *There will be three short worksheet assignments. Details will be posted in their respective module.*

Proper spelling, punctuation, grammar, and sentence structure will be part of your discussion board, homework, and final project grades. Students need to develop the ability to write clearly. You are expected to carefully read, edit, and proofread their written work. If English is not your native language, or even if it is and you would like further assistance, there are on-campus resources that are there to help you. The Writing Commons center is located on the fourth floor of the library. More information can be found at <http://www.kent.edu/writingcommons>.

### **Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty**

University policy 3-01.8 addresses academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. Academic dishonest, cheating, or plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment in question. Repeat violations academic dishonesty/cheating/plagiarism on exams or the final paper will result in a failing grade for the course. I reserve the right to refer students for Plagiarism School or recommend to the Chair of the Department of Political Science that further action be taken. Kent State University policy on academic honesty can be found at <http://www.kent.edu/policyreg/administrative-policy-regarding-student-cheating-and-plagiarism>.

### **Student Accessibility**

University policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary course adjustments. Please

note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit <https://www.kent.edu/sas>) for more information on registration procedures for accommodation.

### **Registration Requirement**

Information regarding withdrawal deadlines is available through the University Registrar. Please refer to the bursar's policies regarding pro-rated tuition refund dates. University policy requires all students to be officially registered in each class they are attending. Students who are not officially registered for a course by published deadlines should not be attending classes and will not receive credit or a grade for the course. Each student should confirm enrollment by checking his/her class schedule (using Student Tools in FlashFast) prior to the deadline indicated. Registration errors must be corrected prior to university deadlines.