

# Advanced Research Methods

Fall 2018 Quarter

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**Class Meetings:**

Mondays 6:00pm-10:00pm, Sept. 24<sup>th</sup> – Dec. 3<sup>th</sup>

**Class Location:**

SEM 2: E2109

**Course Description:** Advanced research methods examines statistical approaches from a practical viewpoint using R, a powerful tool for statistical modeling. The course aim is to introduce students to a variety of statistical research techniques as well as enhance their ability to generate, read, and interpret research findings. Ultimately the goal is for students to become better users and readers of research and workplace data. Our task is to learn how to analyze data sensibly and in context in order to enhance decision-making and organizational performance.

Using R we will be able to fit statistical models to data, assess the goodness of fit, display estimates, standard errors, and predicted values derived from models. The software also provides us with the means to define, manipulate, explore, tabulate, and sort data. The assigned textbooks provide programing scripts and datasets for practice and homework assignments.

*“Learning R is not easy, but you will not regret investing the effort to master the basics.”<sup>1</sup>*  
(Crawley, 2015)

**Learning objectives and student competencies:**

1. Develop and achieve familiarity and competency with concepts and application of advanced quantitative methods typically used in administrative, service, and policy arenas. This includes both statistical procedures and software application.
  - a. Understand how to use these in research design.
  - b. Know what questions to ask of data; the techniques to use to ask the “right” questions and how to interpret findings.
2. Develop facility with interpreting the use of these methods in research done by others; be able to understand when the methods are applied appropriately and what the results do and do not tell us.
3. Make meaning of research output.

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<sup>1</sup> R is a free software that is similar to SAS, software used by Washington State’s agencies.

4. Acquire proficiency with R.
5. Increase proficiency with other research methods including sampling, secondary data analysis, and statistical process control.

### Required Readings

**Books:**

Crawley, Michae J. 2015. *Statistics: an indtoruction using R*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Fox, John & Sanford Weisberg. 2011. *An R companion to applied regression*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Sage Publications Inc.

### Other Suggested Readings\*\*

\*\*Readings will be posted on the course Canvas site.

### Fall 2017 Schedule (Faculty may alter schedule and reading assignments)

DATE	TOPIC	READINGS
<b>Week 1</b> September 24	Introduction, Fundamentals, and R	Crawley: Chapter 1 Fox & Weisberg: Chapter 1
<b>Week 2</b> October 1	Dataframes, reading and manipulating data	Crawley: Chapter 2 Fox & Weisberg: Chapter 2
<b>Week 3</b> October 8	Exploring and transforming data	Fox & Weisberg: Chapter 3
<b>Week 4</b> October 15	Central tendency, variance, and sampling	Crawley: Chapters 3, 4, 5, &6
<b>Week 5</b> October 22	Linear regression part I	Crawley: Chapter 7
<b>Week 6</b> October 29	Analysis of variance, covariance, and qualitative variables	Crawley: Chapter 8 & 9
<b>Week 7</b> Nobember 5	Multiple regression	Crawley: Chapters 10 & 11
<b>Week 8</b> November 12	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
<b>Week 9</b> November 19	NO CLASS	NO CLASS
<b>Week 10</b> November 26	Linear regression part II	Fox & Weisberg: Chapters 4, 5, & 6
<b>Week 11</b> December 3	Other response variables: generalized linear models	Crawley: Chapters 12, 13, 14, 15

## Student Assignments / Basis of Evaluation

1. **Participation** – Students must attend class having completed the readings and prepared to fully participate in class discussions and exercises. Students are expected to fully engage in discussions, presentations, exercises, and learn from them. If you are unable to attend class, please discuss this with the instructor to find a way to make up the work.
2. **Homework exercises** – Students will be required to complete and submit exercises from the assigned readings on weekly basis.
3. **Research paper** – Students will be required to write a research paper (research report). This assignment may be completed individually or in small groups (2-3 students). The project must include: (i) an abstract; (ii) introduction; (iii) literature review; (iv) methods section; (v) findings; (vi) discussion; and (vii) conclusion sections.

## Course Policies

**Format:** Unless otherwise noted, all written assignments should be typed, double spaced, 12 point font, and follow APA format and citation style. [APA Style <http://www.apastyle.org/learn/index.aspx> Purdue Writing & Grammar Guide <http://owl.english.purdue.edu/>] All written work will be of high quality, grammatically correct, clear and without spelling errors. Students may request resource writing assistance from faculty and/or the Graduate Writing Assistant.

**Participation and attendance:** Students are required to attend each class meeting in its entirety. Participation includes focusing on class content, speaking in class and seminar, listening to others, taking notes, completing class interactive exercises, avoiding distractions, and listening to and dialoging with the guest speakers. If an absence is unavoidable, faculty should be notified prior to a class. After one absence per quarter (4 hours), make-up work may be assigned at faculty discretion, case-by-case. Makeup work must be completed by the deadline assigned to ensure full receipt of course credit. After three absences (12 hours) students may be denied full credit. After reoccurring weekly absences (missing an hour of class week to week) students may be denied full credit. Finally, if students do miss a class, they are expected to do the reading for that class meeting and turn in any assignments that were due that class date.

**Late assignments:** Turning in assignments late is unacceptable. However, if there is an unavoidable need to turn in an assignment late, the student should contact their seminar faculty no later than the original assignment due date to discuss options. Parameters are left to the discretion of the faculty on a situation-by-situation basis. Late assignments must be completed by the revised due date to ensure full receipt of course credit.

**Credit:** Students will receive four graduate credits at the end of the course if all requirements have been satisfactorily completed. Students will be evaluated based upon their progress towards the learning objectives, assessed from classroom, seminar, and assignment performance. No incompletes will be awarded. Full loss of credit decisions will be made by the faculty. Full loss of credit for two terms of core may result in dismissal from the MPA program. Plagiarism (i.e., using other peoples' work as your own) may result in total loss of credit for the class and may result in dismissal from the MPA program. See the [MPA Handbook](#) and [College statement on academic honesty](#) for more information. Failing to meet course requirements (ex. not completing one or more assignments, completing one or more

assignments late, or multiple absences) may constitute denial of total credit at the discretion of the faculty. Students at risk of losing credit will receive written notification prior to the end of the quarter.

**Evaluation:** A written self-evaluation and faculty evaluation are required each quarter for credit. All final evaluations are to be submitted via [my.evergreen.edu](http://my.evergreen.edu). Evaluation conferences may occur in-person or over the phone.

**Multiculturalism and diversity:** Faculty and students will actively work towards contextually weaving multiculturalism and diversity throughout our learning as related to readings, lectures, seminar, and group projects. In a learning community students and faculty share the responsibility for the teaching and learning environment. Multiculturalism and diversity is to be understood as: aiming to promote constructive community discourse about issues of culture, power, and differences including but not limited to race, ethnicity, color, nationality, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, class, sexual orientation, age, religion, (dis)ability, and veteran status.

**Technology use and learning styles:** We all have different ways of acquiring new knowledge. Therefore, faculty will actively work towards providing information in multiple formats: tactile, auditory, visual, experiential, etc. However, style applications are limited to means appropriate for the classroom environment. (Activities such as surfing the internet, posting on/checking social media, reading unrelated materials such as e-mail, playing with an IPOD, laptop, or cell phone are not appropriate.) Consult your faculty to discuss learning style options.

**Reasonable accommodations** will be provided for any student who qualifies for them through a working relationship with Access Services. To request academic accommodations due to a disability, please contact the office of Access Services for Students with Disabilities (867-6348 or 6364). If the student is already working with the office of Access Services the faculty should have received a letter clearly indicating the student has a disability that requires academic accommodations. If any student has a health condition or disability that may require accommodations in order to effectively participate in this class, please do the following: Contact faculty before class and Contact Access Services to receive a letter of accommodation. Information about a disability or health condition will be regarded as confidential. Please refer to TESC's [Students with Disabilities Policy](#).

**Conduct and conflict resolution:** Discuss any problems involving others in the learning community directly with the individuals involved (so long as the concerned party feels safe doing so). Possessing respect for others is fundamental to an open, free, and educational dialogue. All students are expected to support and contribute to a well-functioning MPA classroom and learning community. Behavior that disrupts the learning community may be grounds for disciplinary action, including dismissal from the MPA program. All students will be held accountable for maintaining the highest of academic standards.

**We will abide by the [social contract](#):** WAC 174-121-010 College philosophy.

**We will abide by the [student conduct code \(including academic integrity and plagiarism\)](#):** Chapter 174-123 WAC, Student Conduct Code & Grievance/Appeals Process.

**We will abide by the [non-discrimination policies and procedures at TESC](#).**

**Guest policy:** Guests are welcome to visit our learning community during class time and seminar meetings with discretionary approval from course faculty in advance of the requested visit. It is the host student's responsibility to contact the faculty with details about the requested guest visit and await

approval. Guests must abide by all social contract conduct code, and nondiscrimination policy guidelines as aforementioned in this syllabus.

**Inclement weather:** In the event of bad weather or emergencies students should check with for announcements of campus closures. Students can call the main campus line 867-6000 to get the latest news regarding a campus closure or delay. Faculty may decide to cancel a class meeting even if campus is open and we will send an all-class email prior to 3:00 pm the day of class. Students are responsible for checking email and ensuring viable transportation options are available to them.

**Communicating:** Email and Canvas are our primary means of communication. Students are responsible for checking their Evergreen email and Canvas regularly.