

## Course Information

Course Number: INTA 689  
Course Title: Research Methods  
Section: 65X  
Time: 6:30-9:10 pm  
Location: 1620 L St, NW, Suite 700, Washington DC in-person and electronic-to-group in College Station  
Credit Hours: 3.0

## Instructor Details

Instructor: Jodi L. Carr  
Office: 1620 L St, NW, Suite 700, Washington DC  
Phone: 703.598.0473  
E-Mail: [jcarr11@tamu.edu](mailto:jcarr11@tamu.edu)  
Office Hours: 1-5 pm, Tuesdays

## Course Description

This course introduces students to the interpretation and application of social science research methods and critical thinking. This course emphasizes the comparison of alternative philosophies of research, ways of formulating questions/hypotheses, research plans, and analysis procedures. Students evaluate existing studies and investigate a range of research approaches. Students will learn how to think critically and develop their way of knowing through conceptual frameworks and epistemological stance. A major component throughout this course is to learn how to write clearly and coherently and apply this knowledge to your capstone.

This course is offered as both a face-to-face course to students in College Station and through electronic to group delivery to students at the Bush School's Washington, D.C. teaching site synchronously via Zoom. Students participating online may utilize the chat box only with the express approval of the professor, and verbal participation during class sessions is required. The course requirements for students in both locations are the same.

## Course Prerequisites

Graduate classification

## Course Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students should:

- Understand what research is, and how it differs from other intellectual and practical activities in the social sciences;
- Understand the major approaches to research, and the implications of the differences between these for doing and evaluating research;
- Understand, evaluate, and apply published research that is relevant to their field;
- Design the basic components of small-scale research studies, both quantitative and qualitative, including
  - identifying a research problem to study
  - formulating the purposes of the study
  - developing a conceptual framework for the study
  - generating appropriate research questions
  - planning relevant and feasible methods of sampling, data collection, and analysis
  - anticipating plausible validity threats, and thinking of ways to deal with these
  - dealing appropriately with ethical issues in the research
- Write clearly and coherently about the conceptual framework, questions, and methods used in a research study;
- Reflect on their actions and choices and use that reflection to inform practice;
- Present written research results clearly and coherently;
- Analyze, evaluate, and distinguish different kinds of evidence and reasoning based on situational aspects of a particular event or moment in time; and
- Distinguish between evidence and assertion.

## Textbook and/or Resource Materials

Creswell, J.W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches (5th ed.). Thousand Oakes, CA: Sage.

Galvan, J. L., & Galvan, M. C. (2017). Writing literature reviews: A guide for students of the social and behavioral sciences (7th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.

Merriam, S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation (4th ed.). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Salkind, N. J. (2011). Statistics for people who (think they) hate statistics (4th ed.). Los Angeles, CA: Sage. (newer editions are fine)

There is a Canvas site that contains course documents and relevant links. Students are required to download pertinent documents for class.

## Grading Policy

The following scale will be used for calculating final grades for this course:

90-100 A; 80-89 B; 70-79 C; 60-69 D; and 0-59 F  
<http://student-rules.tamu.edu/rule10>

All written assignments are to be word-processed using Times New Roman 12 pt font, double-spaced, and submitted electronically to [jcarr11@tamu.edu](mailto:jcarr11@tamu.edu). Title each assignment using the format noted on the class schedule. It is required that you save your work in multiple places for safe keeping.

At the end of each class, please take a minute and reflect on the class session and email me if you have question(s) or concerns that remain unanswered. Your comments will provide feedback to help me be responsive to your ongoing learning needs.

**1. Homework Assignments:** Students will be asked to work individually or in groups of 2-3 students on homework assignments.

**2. Research Methods Homework Worksheets:** Students will be asked to work individually on assignments.

**3. Human Subjects Proposal:** Students will write a human subjects proposal to accompany a quantitative intervention research method section and one to accompany a quantitative research study. The materials are available on the web and the class Sonis site. The work must be submitted electronically to the instructor.

**4. Evaluation of Empirical Research Articles:** Students will write a review of one quantitative intervention study and one qualitative study. The critiques should include the following parts:

- purpose
- methods
- results
- critical comments
- your reflections about the article (see Sonis site for specific instructions).

**5. Method Sections:** Students will write two different method sections replicating and extending previous research studies. Each method section will contain relevant sections specific to each type of research design. One will be a quantitative intervention research study; one will be a qualitative research study. Please turn in electronic versions attached to an email sent to the instructor at [jcarr11@tamu.edu](mailto:jcarr11@tamu.edu) so that they may be graded electronically.

A. Statement of purpose and research questions, including a statement indicating research you are replicating and extending and a relevant citation for the study. This portion should include a relevant literature review to demonstrate a basic level of knowledge of the research that has

already been accomplished in the field of interest. A rough estimate of references would be approximately 10, but more may be needed to establish the research questions.

B. Method (5-6 pages)

- Participants and setting
- Materials
- Data sources (dependent variables) instrumentation (where relevant)
- Research design
- Procedures (proposed data collection process)
- Proposed preliminary data analyses (bonus section)

C. References

**6. Method Section Presentation:** One method section will be presented orally using audio-visual aides (e.g., power point slides) during a ten-minute presentation. Bring a copy of the slides to class on a USB. Sign up sheets for presentation times will be distributed in class. Sample power point templates will be available.

**7. In Class Assignments, Participation, Critical Friend Team, and Attendance Policy:** Students will be asked to work individually or in groups of 2-3 students in class assignments throughout the semester (all assignments are described on Sonis). Because of the importance of lecture and discussion to your total learning experience, I wish to encourage you to both attend and participate in class regularly. Attendance, punctuality, preparation, and active contribution to small and large group efforts are essential. These elements of your behavior will reflect the professional attitude implied in the course goals and will account for 10% of your course grade. With reference to the grading scale described later in this syllabus, you will note that this percentage is equivalent to a full letter grade. Students who must miss a class must notify the instructor (preferably in advance) and are responsible for completing all assignments and readings for the next class. A student may miss no more than two classes.

The most important thing you can bring with you to class is a willingness to try to conceptually understand the material. Please be active--ask questions and participate. Outside of class, remember that reading statistical information takes a long time, and even when you read slowly and deliberately,

you will need to go back and revisit it over and over. Many people find that this is not easy material; you should accept struggles as a normal part of the learning process.

**8. Bring flash drive or other relevant media to class in order to save work completed during class.**

#### **RUBRIC FOR HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS**

***Adequate assignment (5 point):*** Assignment is thorough, thoughtful, correctly done, and submitted on time.

***Marginal assignment (2.5 point):*** Assignment is carelessly prepared, not thoughtful, or incomplete.

***Inadequate assignment (0 points):*** Assignment has little or no value, or is not submitted on time.

#### **RUBRIC FOR QUANTITATIVE HOMEWORK WORKSHEETS**

Each assignment will be graded based on whether the questions are answered correctly.

#### **RUBRIC FOR HUMAN SUBJECT PROPOSAL**

***Exemplary (9-10 points):*** Appropriately written document containing all components, including: protocol contains answers to all questions, clearly written, informed consent forms written in readability and format appropriate for target audience.

***Adequate (7-8 points):*** Good overall proposal, but is lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary proposal. Not entirely reflective or thoughtful, or minor writing style or format errors may be present.

***Marginal (6-7 points):*** Overall, is acceptable but contains one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with procedures, writing style or format, or unclear or inappropriate description of implementation of project.

***Inadequate (<6 points):*** Proposal contains substantial problems in important areas such as writing, proposed implementation of intervention, procedures for evaluation of results, or overall thoughtfulness.

#### **RUBRIC FOR EVALUATION OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH ARTICLES**

***Adequate evaluation (5 point):*** Evaluation is thorough, thoughtful, correctly done, and submitted on time.

***Marginal evaluation (2.5 point):*** Evaluation is carelessly prepared, not thoughtful, or incomplete.

***Inadequate evaluation (0 points):*** Evaluation is poorly done and/or is not submitted on time.

#### **RUBRIC FOR METHOD SECTIONS**

***Exemplary paper (18-20 points):*** Appropriate topic, thorough and thoughtful purpose and research questions with appropriate study cited for replication and extension, appropriate and clearly described research design, participants, materials, data sources, implementation procedures, and careful brief description of data analyses. Good writing style, free of mechanical or stylistic errors, appropriate use of format.

***Adequate paper (16-17 points):*** Good overall paper, lacking in one or two of the criteria for an exemplary paper. Not entirely reflective or thoughtful, or minor writing style or format errors may be present.

***Marginal paper (14-15 points):*** Overall, acceptable but with one or more significant problems. Contains some useful information, but may have substantial problems with evaluation, writing style or Aformat, or unclear or inappropriate description of implementation of project.

***Inadequate paper (1-13 points):*** Paper with substantial problems in important areas such as writing, proposed implementation of intervention, procedures for evaluation of results, or overall thoughtfulness. Contains little or no information of value to field of education.

***Unacceptable/no paper (0 points):*** Paper with no value whatsoever relative to the assignment, or no paper turned in at all. May describe a project of no value that was not approved for this assignment.

#### **RUBRIC FOR PRESENTATION**

***Exemplary presentation (10 points):*** Keeps within the time limits; reflects poise, clarity, knowledge and interest in the content being presented; reflects a high level of preparation; make effective use of overheads, handouts, demonstrations; describes very clearly the

treatments(s) under consideration; keeps the audience engaged; provides information of interest and value to audience.

***Adequate presentation (8-9 points):*** Good overall presentation, but may be lacking in one or two of the criteria specified in exemplary response. May seem a little less polished or prepared, may be vague in some place, or may fail to completely engage the audience.

***Marginal presentation (6-7 points):*** Presentation provides relevant information, but demonstrates only a limited understanding of the topic or project. Style, handouts, or visual aids may be less than inadequate.

***Inadequate presentation (1-5 points):*** Weak overall presentation that reflects very little knowledge of topic or project. May appear very poorly prepared, or may not have followed directions. Handouts or visual aids may be inadequate or lacking.

***Unacceptable/no presentation (0 points):*** Completely unsatisfactory presentation, with no reasonable reference to topic or project; or no presentation made.

#### **RUBRIC FOR IN CLASS ASSIGNMENTS, PARTICIPATION, AND ATTENDANCE**

***Exemplary (9-10 points):*** The student attends all classes, is on time, is prepared and follows outlined procedures in case of absence; the student actively participates and supports the members of the learning group and the members of the class.

***Adequate (8 points):*** The student attends all classes, is on time, is prepared and follows outlined procedures in case of absence; the student makes active contributions to the learning group and class.

***Marginal (7 points):*** The student is on time, prepared for class, and participates in group and class discussions. The student attends all classes and if an absence occurs, the procedure outlined in this section of the syllabus is followed.

***Inadequate (6 or less points):*** The student is late for class. Absences are not documented by following the procedures outlined in this section of the syllabus. The student is unprepared for class and does not actively participate in discussions. The student may fail to exhibit professional

behavior and dispositions. Excessive absences can result in additional penalties and potential withdrawal from class.

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| Homework Assignments (2)  | 10 pts total (5 pts each)  |
| Evaluation of Empirical Research Articles (2)                             | 10 pts total (5 pts each)  |
| Quantitative Homework Assignment  | 20 pts (10 pts each)       |
| Human Subject Proposals (2 with methods sections)                         | 10 pts (5 pts each)        |
| Method Section  | 40 pts total (20 pts each) |
| Method Section Presentation   | 10 pts                     |
| In Class Assignments, Participation, Critical Friend Team, and Attendance | 10 Pts                     |
| <b>TOTAL</b>  | <b>110 pts</b>             |

### Late Work Policy

All assignments must be completed. For full consideration, all assignments are to be sent to [jcarr11@tamu.edu](mailto:jcarr11@tamu.edu) prior to the beginning of class on the day they are due, unless otherwise announced. Please note, for each day an assignment is late, 10 percent will be deducted from the overall grade per day for up to five days. After five days, the late assignment will result in a zero. If an emergency occurs please notify the instructor in advance.

Reading assignments are listed on the class day on which they will be discussed. You are expected to complete all class readings prior to each session so as to engage in active dialogue and sharing of insights. Go beyond "what the author said." Share ANY questions you have about the readings in class.

Work submitted by a student as makeup work for an excused absence is not considered late work and is exempted from the late work policy (Student Rule 7).



## Course Schedule

Prior to first class read Week 1 assigned reading.

| CLASS  | TOPIC  | ASSIGNED READING DUE  | WORK DUE   |
|--------|--|---|--|
| Week 1 | Review syllabus; Introduction to the field of social science research; Overview of capstone protocol; Overview and narrowing of research topics; Researcher bias; and Introduction to literature reviews.      | Chapters 1-2: Creswell & Creswell; Establishing Your Critical Friend Team (Sonis); Becker & Richards (Sonis); Chapters 1 & 3: Galvan & Galvan | Bring a research topic that is of interest to you- think ahead to your capstone/area of expertise!<br><br><b>Go Over Homework Assignment #2 Literature Review – Addressing “How much is enough?”</b>   |
| Week 2 | Critical theory: Thinking critically, constructing knowledge, moral issues.  | Chapters 2, 5, & 9: Chaffee   |  |
| Week 3 | Human subject research overview and protocol; Writing strategies, researcher relationship, and ethics; Quantitative v. Qualitative Methods; Writing Literature Reviews; and Intro to analyzing the literature. | Kennedy (Sonis); Samaras 12 (Sonis); Chapters 4, 5, & 7: Galvan & Galvan Chapter 4: Creswell & Creswell                                       | Read the Belmont Report and be prepared to discuss:<br><a href="https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/the-belmont-report-508c_FINAL.pdf">https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/sites/default/files/the-belmont-report-508c_FINAL.pdf</a><br><br><b>Due: Homework Assignment #1 Researcher Bias Memo. Please email to jcarr11@tamu.edu</b><br>Name assignments with the following protocol<br>LastName_ResearcherBias.doc<br><br><b>Start digging through literature!</b> |



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| Week 4 | Conceptual frameworks in the social sciences; Introduction to qualitative research.   | Chapter 9: Creswell & Creswell; Chapter 6: Galvan & Galvan; Chapter 1: Merriam and Tisdell |  |
| Week 5 | Critical Theory: Solving problems and perceiving and believing; Conceptual frameworks, epistemology, ontology; use of theory.           | Chapters 3 & 4: Chaffee; Chapter 3: Creswell & Creswell                                    | <b>Check on Homework Assignment #2 Literature Review – Addressing “How much is enough?”</b>  |
| Week 6 | Qualitative methods: Designing research questions and hypothesis; and research methods and research design.                             | Chapter 7: Creswell & Creswell; Corbin & Strauss (Sonis); Chapters: 2: Merriam & Tisdell   | <b>Homework Assignment #2 Literature Review due electronically to jcarr11@tamu.edu</b><br><b>Name assignments with the following protocol</b><br><b>LastName_LitReview.doc</b>   |
| Week 7 | Qualitative methods: Designing the introduction and purpose statement; Site and participant selection; and Interviews and observations. | Mears (Sonis); Chapters 4, 5 & 6 Merriam; Chapters 5 & 6: Creswell & Creswell              | Watch a famous TV interviewer and come prepared to orally present key interviewer qualities in class<br><br><b>Bring your draft hypothesis and research questions to class for review by CFT</b>   |
| Week 8 | Qualitative methods: standards of validity, reliability, & ethics; and Mining data.   | Chapters 7, 9, & 10: Merriam & Tisdell   | <b>Draft of Qualitative Research Method Section and matching Human Subject Proposal - please email to jcarr11@tamu.edu</b><br>Name assignments with the following protocol<br>LastName_Qual_Methods.doc<br>LastName_Qual_HSRB.doc<br><b>Bring a hard copy to class for review by CFT</b> |

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| Week 9  | Quantitative methods: Collecting, analyzing/coding and interpreting qualitative data, and summary; and Writing up qualitative research. | Chapter 8<br>Merriam and Tisdell                                  | <b>Evaluation of Empirical Research Article #1</b><br>Bring a qualitative research study to class. Identify the research problem, the literature review, the purpose or research questions, the method section, the data collection procedures, the data analyses and the discussion. Highlight each area by identifying it in the margins.  |
| Week 10 | Introduction to quantitative methods: Data, descriptives and sampling distributions.  | Chapters 1, 2, 4, & 6: Salkind;<br>Chapter 8: Creswell & Creswell | <b>Final Qualitative Research Method Section and matching Human Subjects Proposal - please email to jcarr11@tamu.edu</b><br>Name assignments with the following protocol<br>LastName_Qual_Methods.doc<br>LastName_Qual_HSRB.doc  |
| Week 11 | Quantitative Methods: Distributions and standardized scores, standard error, hypothesis testing.  | Chapters 3, 7, 8, 9, & 12: Salkind                                | <b>Homework Assignment #3: Quantitative methods</b>  |
| Week 12 | Quantitative methods: Z test, T-tests, correlation, and regression.   | Chapters 5, 10, 11, & 12: Salkind                                 | <b>Draft of Quantitative Research Method Section and matching Human Subjects Proposal - please email to jcarr11@tamu.edu</b><br>Name assignments with the following protocol<br>LastName_Quan_Methods.doc<br>LastName_Quan_HSRB.doc<br><b>Bring a hard copy to class for review by CFT</b>   |
| Week 13 | Quantitative methods: Regression and Chi Square; and Mixed methods  | Chapters: 16 & 17: Salkind  | <b>Evaluation of Empirical Research Article #2</b><br>Bring a group (not single-subject) experimental design intervention RESEARCH study to class. Identify the research problem, the literature review, the purpose or research questions, the method section, the data collection procedures, the data analyses and the discussion. Highlight each area by identifying it in the margins.<br><br><b>Homework Assignment #4: Quantitative methods</b> |

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| Week 14 | Mixed Methods;<br>and<br>Critical Theory:<br>Language and<br>thought and<br>thinking critically<br>about moral<br>issues.<br><br>Last Class! | Chapters 6 &<br>11: Chaffee | <b>Final Quantitative Research Method Section and matching Human Subject Proposal - please email to <a href="mailto:jcarr11@tamu.edu">jcarr11@tamu.edu</a></b><br>Name assignments with the following protocol<br>LastName_Quan_Methods.doc<br>LastName_Quan_HSRB.doc<br><br><b>Presentations on Methods section</b> |
|---------|--|-----------------------------|--|

## University Policies

### Attendance Policy

The university views class attendance and participation as an individual student responsibility. Students are expected to attend class and to complete all assignments.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about excused absences, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

### Makeup Work Policy

Students will be excused from attending class on the day of a graded activity or when attendance contributes to a student's grade, for the reasons stated in Student Rule 7, or other reason deemed appropriate by the instructor.

Please refer to [Student Rule 7](#) in its entirety for information about makeup work, including definitions, and related documentation and timelines.

Absences related to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 may necessitate a period of more than 30 days for make-up work, and the timeframe for make-up work should be agreed upon by the student and instructor" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.1](#)).

"The instructor is under no obligation to provide an opportunity for the student to make up work missed because of an unexcused absence" ([Student Rule 7, Section 7.4.2](#)).

Students who request an excused absence are expected to uphold the Aggie Honor Code and Student Conduct Code. (See [Student Rule 24](#).)

### Academic Integrity Statement and Policy

"An Aggie does not lie, cheat or steal, or tolerate those who do."

"Texas A&M University students are responsible for authenticating all work submitted to an instructor. If asked, students must be able to produce proof that the item submitted is indeed the work of that

student. Students must keep appropriate records at all times. The inability to authenticate one's work, should the instructor request it, may be sufficient grounds to initiate an academic misconduct case" ([Section 20.1.2.3, Student Rule 20](#)).

You can learn more about the Aggie Honor System Office Rules and Procedures, academic integrity, and your rights and responsibilities at [aggiehonor.tamu.edu](http://aggiehonor.tamu.edu).

### Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Policy

Texas A&M University is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. If you experience barriers to your education due to a disability or think you may have a disability, please contact the Disability Resources office on your campus (resources listed below) Disabilities may include, but are not limited to attentional, learning, mental health, sensory, physical, or chronic health conditions. All students are encouraged to discuss their disability related needs with Disability Resources and their instructors as soon as possible.

Disability Resources is located in the Student Services Building or at (979) 845-1637 or visit [disability.tamu.edu](http://disability.tamu.edu).

### Title IX and Statement on Limits to Confidentiality

Texas A&M University is committed to fostering a learning environment that is safe and productive for all. University policies and federal and state laws prohibit gender-based discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking.

With the exception of some medical and mental health providers, all university employees (including full and part-time faculty, staff, paid graduate assistants, student workers, etc.) are Mandatory Reporters and must report to the Title IX Office if the employee experiences, observes, or becomes aware of an incident that meets the following conditions (see [University Rule 08.01.01.M1](#)):

- The incident is reasonably believed to be discrimination or harassment.
- The incident is alleged to have been committed by or against a person who, at the time of the incident, was (1) a student enrolled at the University or (2) an employee of the University.

Mandatory Reporters must file a report regardless of how the information comes to their attention – including but not limited to face-to-face conversations, a written class assignment or paper, class discussion, email, text, or social media post. Although Mandatory Reporters must file a report, in most instances, a person who is subjected to the alleged conduct will be able to control how the report is handled, including whether or not to pursue a formal investigation. The University's goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and to ensure access to the resources you need.

Students wishing to discuss concerns in a confidential setting are encouraged to make an appointment with [Counseling and Psychological Services](#) (CAPS).

Students can learn more about filing a report, accessing supportive resources, and navigating the Title IX investigation and resolution process on the University's [Title IX webpage](#).

### Statement on Mental Health and Wellness

Texas A&M University recognizes that mental health and wellness are critical factors that influence a student's academic success and overall wellbeing. Students are encouraged to engage in healthy self-care by utilizing available resources and services on your campus

Students who need someone to talk to can contact Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) or call the TAMU Helpline (979-845-2700) from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 a.m. weekdays and 24 hours on weekends. 24-hour emergency help is also available through the National Suicide Prevention Hotline (800-273-8255) or at [suicidepreventionlifeline.org](http://suicidepreventionlifeline.org).

### College and Department Policies

The Bush School of Government and Public Service supports the Texas A&M University commitment to diversity, and welcomes individuals of all ages, backgrounds, citizenships, disabilities, ethnicities, family statuses, genders, gender identities, geographical locations, languages, military experiences, political views, races, religions, sexual orientations, socioeconomic statuses, and/or work experiences (see <http://diversity.tamu.edu/>). Accordingly, all of us in this class are expected to respect the different experiences, beliefs, and values expressed by others, and to engage in reasoned discussions that refrain from derogatory comments or dehumanizing language about other people, cultures, groups, or viewpoints.

Intellectual argument and disagreement are a fundamental element of both the academic world and the policy process. Disagreement does not, in and of itself, mean disrespect. However, the way that disagreement is expressed can be disrespectful. Unprofessional, insensitive, or disrespectful behaviors (such as using dehumanizing, derogatory, or coarse language; dismissing ideas based on the characteristics of the speaker/writer; or expressing threat or intent to harm, even if framed "as a joke") are inconsistent with the Bush School's commitment to diversity, and will not be tolerated by faculty or students participating in this class. This applies both inside and outside of the classroom and includes electronic venues such as GroupMe.