

**COURSE SYLLABUS**

Evaluating Public Policy (Research Methods I)

PUP3043 Section # (2771)

Online Instruction

Semester code (0630): (Spring 2024)

View [How to be a Successful Student (Syllabus Addendum)](http://www.spcollege.edu/addendum/) which provides details about success factors and links to the most current version of fluid information, such as the academic calendar.**WELCOME**

The course is designed to introduce you to concepts of research methods and how these concepts can be applied to the field of public policy. You will learn how to design a research study. The course will introduce you to designs for description and designs for explanation. You will explore measurement of variables and sampling strategies. You will investigate surveys and questionnaires and learn about the proper design and conduct of these important data collection tools. You will also learn about protection of human subjects during research studies.

**INSTRUCTOR**

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**ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT**

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**WEBSITE**

Public Policy and Administration: <https://www.spcollege.edu/future-students/degrees-training/public-safety-public-policy-and-legal-studies/public-policy-and-administration/public-policy-and-administration-bs-degree>

**COURSE INFORMATION**

**Course Description:** This course will provide an introduction to research methods used in public policy and administration.  The student will be introduced to several concepts including initiating and organizing a research study, appropriate study designs, measurement of variables, sampling techniques, use of surveys and protection of human subjects and other ethical issues.

Full course description: [PUP3043 Course Outline](http://www.curricunet.com/stpetersburg/reports/course_outline_pdf.cfm?courses_id=5879)

**Course Goals & Objectives**

1. The student will formulate the research process in public policy and administration by:

a. creating a research question that is feasible, clear, measurable, significant and ethical.

b. describing common research terms, including variables and hypotheses.

c. describing the literature review process, including types of sources, types of search engines, types of databases, and meta-analysis.

2. The student will analyze the study designs for data description in public policy and administration by:

a. describing the criteria for selecting a cross-sectional, time-series, panel or case study design.

b. identifying the major strengths and weaknesses of cross-sectional, time-series, panel or case study designs.

c. describing the methods of interpretation of findings from cross-sectional, time-series, panel or case study designs.

d. relating the value of case studies and how to judge their quality.

e. describing how to effectively use focus groups in public policy study research.

3. The student will analyze the study designs for data explanation and interpretation by:

a. describing the evidence necessary to establish that two variables are related.

b. discussing the methods to evaluate empirical evidence that a program or treatment caused an outcome.

c. identifying whether findings can be generalized to an applicable population.

d. describing the study designs utilized to investigate causality among variables.

e. relating the use of non-experimental designs and their value in public policy research.

4. The student will discuss the methods used to measure variables by:

a. using the vocabulary associated with quantifying variables, including conceptual and operational definitions, measurement and measurement scales, reliability, operational validity, and sensitivity.

b. explaining the importance of measurement decisions and how these decisions affect the practical aspects of research including data quality and financial considerations.

c. Explaining the categories used to describe measurement scales and their role in developing measures.

d. identifying strategies for developing reliable, operationally valid, and sensitive measures.

e. explaining the methods for assessing and improving the reliability, operational validity and sensitivity of measures.

5. The student will explain the reasoning and methods of sampling by:

a. describing the reasons for sampling.

b. utilizing commonly sampling terminology including sample, population, sampling frame, parameter, statistic, and unit of analysis.

c. comparing and contrasting the most commonly used sampling methods.

d. identifying, constructing and interpreting common probability and non-probability samples.

e. describing guidelines for estimating sample size.

6. The student will explore the use of surveys to collect data by:

a. describing how to conduct and effectively utilize mail, telephone, internet and in-person surveys.

b. evaluating the methods to deal with low response rates on surveys.

c. explaining the value of and basic requirements for intensive interviewing and focus groups to collect public policy research information.

d. explaining the role of model building in the design of a survey.

e. identifying and utilizing open-ended and closed-ended questions in survey design.

f. explaining how question wording and content can affect reliability and operational validity of a survey.

7. The student will discuss the protection of human subjects and other ethical issues encountered in conducting research in public policy and administration by:

a. describing the elements of ethical practice in conducting research with human subjects.

b. explaining the requirements for obtaining informed consent from a research subject.

c. explaining the considerations for protecting confidential information.

d. identifying the federal requirements for protecting human subjects, including the use of an Institutional Review Board to review and approve proposed research studies.

e. explaining what administrators and employers should consider before permitting research on their employees or the agency’s clients.

**Prerequisites:** Admission to Public Policy and Administration BAS

**Availability of Course Content:** All course materials, except projects, will be available at the beginning of the course.  Students can work ahead.  Projects will be assigned at appropriate times in the course.

**REQUIRED TEXTBOOK & OTHER RESOURCE INFORMATION**

**Required Textbook:** 

IMPORTANT: THE SAME TEXTBOOK IS USED FOR PUP3046 SO KEEP THIS IN MIND WHEN YOU DECIDE TO BUY OR RENT

**LEARNER SUPPORT**

View the [Accessibility Services](http://www.spcollege.edu/accessibility/) site.

View the [Academic Support](http://www.spcollege.edu/support/) site.

View the [On-Campus and Online Support](http://www.spcollege.edu/tutoring/) site.

View the [Student Services](http://www.spcollege.edu/services/) site.

**IMPORTANT DATES**

**Course Dates:** View the [Academic Calendar](http://www.spcollege.edu/calendar/).

**Drop Date:** View the [Academic Calendar](http://www.spcollege.edu/calendar/).

**Withdrawal Date:** View the [Academic Calendar](http://www.spcollege.edu/calendar/).

**Financial Aid Dates:** View the [Financial Aid Dates](http://www.spcollege.edu/pages/dynamic.aspx?id=800).

## ATTENDANCE

View the college-wide attendance policy included in [How to be a Successful Student](http://www.spcollege.edu/addendum/).

The policy notes that each instructor is to exercise professional judgment and define “active participation” in class (and therefore “attendance”), and publish that definition in each syllabus.

For this class, attendance is defined as logging into the MyCourses course at least twice each week and completing all of the assignments on time for each week. A student whose cumulative grade is lower than 50% at the 60% point in the semester will be listed as non-participatory and will receive a WF (prior to the 60% point).

**GRADING**

**Grading Scale (1,000 points possible)**

1000 – 900 – A

899 – 800 – B

799 – 700 – C

699 – 600 – D

599 – 0 – F

**Point total by Category**

Quizzes Total - 100

Final Exam – 50

Module Based Discussion Boards and Drop Boxes Total – 475

Research Question Project – 75

Research Question Presentation – 50

Final Paper – 150

Final PowerPoint – 50

Presentation of Final Paper/PowerPoint – 50

**Assignments and point values:**

Semester Long: Class Participation/Questions and Correct Answers – 200 Points

Module 1 – Syllabus Quiz – 4 points

Module 1 – Discussion Board – 10 points

Module 2 – Module 2 Quiz – 12 points

Module 2 – Discussion Board – 30 points

Module 3 – Module 3 Quiz – 12 points

Module 3 – Literature Review Drop Box – 85 points

Module 3 – Research Question Drop Box – 75

Module 3 – Research Question Presentation – 50

Module 4 – Module 4 Quiz – 12 points

Module 4 – Ethical Considerations Drop Box – 40 points

Module 5 – Module 5 Quiz – 12 points

Module 5 – Variables Drop Box – 40 points

Module 5 – Module 5 Topics Drop Box – 30 points

Module 6 – Module 6 Quiz – 12 points

Module 6 – Comparing Groups Drop Box – 40 points

Module 6 – Module 6 Topics Drop Box – 30 points

Module 7 – Module 7 Quiz – 12 points

Module 7 – Levels of Measurement, etc. Drop Box – 40 points

Module 7 – Module 7 Topics Drop Box – 30 points

Module 8 – Module 8 Quiz – 12 points

Module 8 – Sampling Drop Box – 40 points

Module 8 – Module 8 Topics Drop Box – 30 points

Module 9 – Module 9 Quiz – 12 points

Module 9 – Module 9 Topics Drop Box – 30 points

Module 10 – Final Paper – 150 points

Module 10 – Final PowerPoint – 50 points

Module 10 – Final Paper/PowerPoint Presentation – 50 points

Module 11 – Final Exam – 50 Points

**CHAPTER QUIZZES:**

Chapter quizzes are designed to reinforce vocabulary associated with each chapter. Students will only have one attempt.  The chapter quizzes are auto-graded; students will see the grade after the quiz attempt is submitted. Quizzes are not timed; they are open-notes, and open-book.

**FINAL EXAM:**

Students will be required to complete a cumulative final exam. The exam will be completed online. Students who complete all online work prior to each deadline will be given a 100% on the final exam without having to take it. Unfortunately, there are **no exceptions for this policy** - even if you miss class or an assignment for a "good" reason. Students who have to take the final exam will only have one attempt.

**DROP BOXES and DISCUSSION BOARDS:**

Students are expected to read the course materials before coming to class each week. To reinforce concepts, students will participate in discussion topics related to each chapter. These topics will focus on current issues in public administration. For all discussions except the Class Introduction discussion, students must post first before they will see postings of other students.  Grading criteria are included in the instructions for each discussion topic.

**RESEARCH QUESTION PROJECT/PRESENTATION**

Students are required to develop a research question and present to the class about it. More details are given in the module and the corresponding rubrics. The presentations will be done via YouTube and/or narrated PowerPoint.

**FINAL PAPER/POWERPOINT/PRESENTATION**

Students are required to formulate a research project (including a qualitative interview protocol and a survey) and present to the class about it. More details are given in the module and the corresponding rubrics. The presentations will be done via YouTube and/or narrated PowerPoint.

**Online Due Dates Schedule 11:59pm**

Date Assignment Due

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1/21 | Module 1 Discussion Board and Syllabus Quiz |
| 1/28 | Module 2 Discussion Board and Module 2 Quiz |
| 2/4 | Module 3 Quiz |
| 2/11 | Module 3 – Literature Review Drop Box |
| 2/18 | Module 3 – Research Question Drop Box |
| 2/25 | Module 3 – Research Question Presentation Post |
| 3/3 | Module 4 Drop Box and Module 4 Quiz |
| 3/10 | Module 5 Drop Boxes and Module 5 Quiz |
| 3/24 | Module 6 Drop Boxes and Module 6 Quiz |
| 3/31 | Module 7 Drop Boxes and Module 7 Quiz |
| 4/7 | Module 8 Drop Boxes and Module 8 Quiz |
| 4/14 | Module 9 Drop Box and Quiz |
| 4/28 | Module 10 – Final Paper Drop Box, Final PowerPoint Drop Box, Final Presentation Post |
| 5/5 | Module 11 – Final Exam due online by 11:59pm |

**STUDENTS’ EXPECTATIONS AND INSTRUCTOR’S EXPECTATIONS**

**REQUIRED INTERACTION**

Students are expected to log into the MyCourses course at least twice each week and to participate in the course discussions located in MyCourses.  Students must use the MyCourses email to communicate with the professor. Emails will be responded to within 48 hours.

The Chapter quizzes in MyCourses are auto-graded so students will see their grades upon completion of the assignment.  Discussion postings will be graded within 48 hours of the due date/time. Projects are graded within 7 days.

**LATE WORK**

An important note… Because this is blended class, there is greater flexibility for students.  However, it is important that students note from the beginning that **I do not accept late work**. All units, work, and assignments are available from the start of the semester until the due dates listed. You should plan on working ahead. Because you will have so much time to work on these, late work is not accepted for any reason.  Because it is so important I will reiterate to work ahead. Computer problems, problems with MyCourses, problems with “the internet,” life issues, emergencies, sicknesses/illnesses, surprise birthday parties, travel, cruises, etc. will not allow for work to be turned in late. The lesson here is to do the work early so you do not run into problems.

I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.

**PARTICIPATION, CONDUCT, & NETIQUETTE**

SPC has outlined expectations for student behavior and interaction for online discussions, email, and other forms of communication. View the Student Expectations in [How to be a Successful Student](http://www.spcollege.edu/addendum/).

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

View the [Academic Honesty Policy](http://www.spcollege.edu/academichonesty/).

St.Petersburg College has an Academic Honesty policy. It is your responsibility to be familiar with the policies, rules, and the consequences of violations. **There is no tolerance for cheating and academic dishonesty. Students who violate the academic honesty policy within this course will receive a final grade of an “F” on the first offense.** Note that copy/pasting published information, whether it is from your textbook or the Internet, without citing your source is plagiarism and violates this policy. Even if you change the words slightly, the ideas are someone else's so you still have to cite your sources. Cheating, plagiarism, bribery, misrepresentation, conspiracy, and fabrication are defined in Board Rule 6Hx23-4.461. Student Affairs: Academic Honesty Guidelines, Classroom Behavior.

**COPYRIGHT**

Copyrighted material within this course, or posted on this course website, is used in compliance with United States Copyright Law. Under that law you may use the material for educational purposes related to the learning outcomes of this course. You may not further download, copy, alter, or distribute the material unless in accordance with copyright law or with permission of the copyright holder. For more information on copyright visit: [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

**TURNITIN**

The instructor of this course may require use of Turnitin.com as a tool to promote learning. The tool flags similarity and mechanical issues in written work that merit review. Use of the service enables students and faculty to identify areas that can be strengthened through improved paraphrasing, integration of sources, or proper citation. Submitted papers remain as source documents in the Turnitin database solely for the purpose of detecting originality. Students retain full copyright to their works. Review the [Turnitin Usage Agreement](http://turnitin.com/agreement.asp). Students who do not wish to submit work through Turnitin must notify their instructor via course email within the first seven days of the course. In lieu of Turnitin use, faculty may require a student to submit copies of sources, preliminary drafts, a research journal, or an annotated bibliography.

**STUDENT SURVEY OF INSTRUCTION**

The Student Survey of Instruction is administered in courses each semester. It is designed to improve the quality of instruction at St. Petersburg College. All student responses are confidential and anonymous and will be used solely for the purpose of performance improvement.

**TECHNOLOGY**

**MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS**

View the [MyCourses Minimum Technology Requirements](https://mycoursessupport.spcollege.edu/technical-requirements-for-mycourses).

Students should know how to navigate the course and use the course tools. Dropbox-style assignments may require attachments in either Microsoft Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text Format (.rtf), so that they can be properly evaluated. If an attachment cannot be opened by the instructor, students will be required to re-format and re-submit an assignment so that it can be evaluated and returned with feedback.

**Minimum Technical Skills:** Specify the minimum technical skills expected of the learner: general and course-specific learners must have to succeed in the course.

MyCourses tutorials are available to students new to this LMS and are located at the beginning of the course. Most features on MyCourses are accessible on mobile devices, although it is recommended that you use a computer for quizzes, tests, and essay assignments.

**ACCESSIBILITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

* [MyCourses (Brightspace by Desire2Learn) Accessibility](http://www.brightspace.com/about/accessibility)
* [Turnitin Accessibility](http://turnitin.com/en_us/about-us/accessibility)
* [Google (YouTube) Accessibility](http://www.google.com/accessibility/)

**PRIVACY**

* [MyCourses (Brightspace by Desire2Learn) Privacy](http://www.brightspace.com/legal/privacy)
* [Turnitin Privacy](http://turnitin.com/en_us/about-us/privacy)
* [YouTube Privacy](https://www.youtube.com/static?template=privacy_guidelines)

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT**

Technical support is available via the [Technical Support Desk](https://mycoursessupport.spcollege.edu/technical-support-desk-call-center).

**INSTRUCTIONAL CONTINUITY PLAN - EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS POLICY**

The St. Petersburg College website at [www.spcollege.edu](http://www.spcollege.edu/) is the official source of college information regarding the status of the institution. Other important information will be communicated via SPC Alert, local media outlets, and the college toll-free phone number 866-822-3978. All decisions concerning the discontinuation of college functions, cancellation of classes, or cessation of operations rest with the President or his/her designee. The College realizes that it is possible for a significant natural disaster to compromise SPC campus facilities sufficiently to disrupt the delivery of classes on campus/campuses for an extended period of time, and is planning ways our operations can continue following such an emergency.

So, in the event that a hurricane or other natural disaster causes significant damage to St. Petersburg College facilities, you may be provided the opportunity to complete your course work online. Following the event, please visit the college website for an announcement of the College's plan to resume operations.

Further, in the event of such a disaster, the instructor will continue using the Learning Management System (LMS) of MyCourses for continuation of all required learning and instructional activities in this course, including the issuing of graded online assignments and expectation of student completion of those graded assignments.

Therefore, in order to keep up with all activities in this course during and after a natural disaster, please plan to continue this course by maintaining online access to MyCourses in lieu of meeting in a classroom—possibly through duration of the course’s regularly scheduled end date. We will finish this course in MyCourses, as directed by your instructor online, and your instructor will use all graded assignments—both online and formerly on-campus—to assess and issue your final letter grade for this course, as normally planned, despite occurrence of the natural disaster.

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