Organizational Research is a “systematic and organized effort to investigate specific problems that need solutions.”
   Sekaran, 2007

A theory is “a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting phenomena.”

**This syllabus is subject to modification.**

**OVERVIEW**

This is the first part of a year-long exploration of research design, quantitative and qualitative tools for law and policy social science research and policy analysis. In this course, students will have the opportunity to become familiar with the issues involved in research design and the collection and analysis of data using qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods. This first quarter introduces the fundamental characteristics of variables, including levels of measurement, reliability, validity, and proficiency in computer software that are used in analyzing data. This course will also discuss issues involved in selecting a research design, literature review, the use of theory, and use of qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Along with readings on research design, methods, and the use of statistics for policy analysis, structured exercises involving data analytic techniques are assigned.

**CLASS FORMAT**

Though lectures are part of this course and program. **This is not a traditional lecture-style course.** This program is not structured like a Master’s-level program. This is a doctoral-level program. Socratic method, student presentations, structured and/or assigned discussion participation, asynchronous weekly online assignments and discussions, and various learning activities are utilized.

Doctoral students are required to complete all readings, and be prepared to participate in all class activities, including online weekly assignments and discussion boards. During the monthly weekend intensives, students are called on randomly to explain their view of the readings for the class and to provide their perspectives. Advance preparation and timely completion of all assignments is required and critical to student success.

Faculty recognizes that a significant amount of reading and writing are assigned each week and understand that this is a rigorous doctoral program. Faculty work with students to provide some flexibility for extenuating circumstances, but the demands and requirements of this program are not flexible. You are responsible for allocating an
appropriate amount of time to complete these assignments. This time simply must be allocated. Students must acquire knowledge and develop knowledge creation skills consistently during the entire two-year program. The work and learning is a constant endeavor during the two-years of the program and is not limited to the monthly intensives.

ONLINE COURSES ON BLACKBOARD

At the beginning of each term students log in to the College of Professional Studies Blackboard at

https://cpsblackboard.neu.edu/webapps/login/

Your Blackboard login (username and password) is the same as your myNEU login.

Students are responsible for accessing the course on Blackboard regularly throughout each term to read and post to the discussion, access and upload written assignments, view supplemental readings, faculty announcements and other updates to the course.

DISCUSSION BOARD

Students engage in online discussions concerning readings and their applicability to individuals’ doctoral thesis domains on Blackboard. Faculty monitor on-line discussions and provide guidance and refinement as appropriate, but do not necessarily respond to specific individual posts. Faculty facilitation of on-line discussions is normally provided a few times each week. The discussion board is a mechanism for class discussion and students need to post as well as respond to colleagues’ posts. As a guideline students should strive to post and respond to at least two other posts each week to maintain satisfactory participation and contribution to the discussion.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

24/7 CPS Blackboard Technical Support: 866-847-1573
Get immediate 24/7 technical support for the CPS Blackboard by calling 866-847-1573. You may also visit the support portal for answers to common questions, or email CPSBlackboard@neu.edu for help.

myNEU Account Support: 617-373-4357
For myNEU questions or assistance call the university help desk at 617-373-4357.
USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CLASSROOM

Cell phone ringers must be turned off before entering the classroom.

Laptops are acceptable only for note taking only. Class sessions are a time for focus and clarity of mind. Laptops are not tolerated for any other purpose as this distracts fellow students and interferes with concentration and focus.

No email, no web browsing, and no computer games of any sort are to be engaged in during class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY AND INTEGRITY STANDARDS

The University views academic dishonesty as one of the most serious offenses that a student can commit and imposes appropriate punitive sanctions on violators. Here are some examples of academic dishonesty. While this is not an all-inclusive list, we hope this will help you to understand some of the things instructors look for. The following is excerpted from the University’s policy on academic honesty and integrity; the complete policy is available at http://www.osccr.neu.edu/policy.html.

- **Cheating** – intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information or study aids in an academic exercise. This may include use of unauthorized aids (notes, texts) or copying from another student’s exam, paper, computer disk, etc.
- **Fabrication** – intentional and unauthorized falsification, misrepresentation, or invention of any data, or citation in an academic exercise. Examples may include making up data for a research paper, altering the results of a lab experiment or survey, listing a citation for a source not used, or stating an opinion as a scientifically proven fact.
- **Plagiarism** – intentionally representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise without providing proper documentation by source by way of a footnote, endnote or intertextual note.
- **Unauthorized collaboration** – Students, each claiming sole authorship, submit separate reports, which are substantially similar to one another. While several students may have the same source material, the analysis, interpretation and reporting of the data must be each individual’s.
- **Participation in academically dishonest activities** – Examples include stealing an exam, using a pre-written paper through mail order or other services, selling, loaning or otherwise distributing materials for the purpose of cheating, plagiarism, or other academically dishonest acts; alternation, theft, forgery, or destruction of the academic work of others.
- **Facilitating academic dishonesty** – Examples may include inaccurately listing someone as co-author of paper who did not contribute, sharing a take home exam, taking an exam or writing a paper for another student.

ESSAY GRADING CRITERIA
A Range Essay:

The essay is of outstanding quality in all, or almost all, respects. It is both ambitious and successful. It demonstrates mastery of the “Elements of the Academic Essay” with grace and confidence. It includes:

- An interesting, arguable thesis that is sufficiently limited in scope, presented early and developed throughout the essay;
- A logical, progressive structure that takes the reader on a journey, developing, complicating, and expanding the initial thesis by considering counter-arguments; strong and clear links between points, and well-organized paragraphs;
- Sufficient, appropriate, and interesting evidence, presented in a readable and understandable way;
- Original and insightful analysis, that shows how the evidence supports the thesis, and that goes beyond summary or paraphrase;
- Sources that are deployed in a range of ways (to motivated and support the argument, provide key-terms, and so on), that have been selected carefully, and that are quoted and cited correctly; and
- A style that is both conversational and sophisticated; that uses diction appropriate to the subject matter and the audience; that engages and stimulates the reader.

A-/B+ Range Essay:

The essay nearly lives up to the above requirements, but in one or two minor ways it falls short of the ideal. For example, the prose may be occasionally awkward, or word choice may be imprecise at points, or one section of the argument may be less well-developed than the others.

B Range Essay:

The essay is one that is ambitious but only partially successful, or one that achieves modest aims well. It exhibits one or more of the following features:

- A thesis that may be arguable but vague, uninteresting, or fragmentary; it may be implied rather than stated directly (or stated quite late); it may be dropped in places;
- A structure that proceeds logically most of the time or in general, but is periodically confusing due to missing links or large intellectual leaps; it might be overly predictable and undeveloped, with few complications; it may include disorganized paragraphs;
- Evidence that is generally solid but may be thin in places, or might be presented without analysis (as undigested quotations);
- Analysis that is at times insightful but sometimes either simply summary or entirely absent; that makes inconsistent or illogical connections between evidence and thesis;
- Sources that are quoted and cited correctly (for the most part) but are deployed in limited ways—as a straw person or a simple confirmation of the author’s viewpoint;
- A style that is clear but lacking in sophistication; or that is weighed down by inappropriately fancy diction; may demonstrate some errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, and format.

B-/C+ Range Essay:
The essay, while still retaining the promise of an original and well-argued thesis, fall short in a number of ways. Perhaps the support for key assertions is inadequate, or an obvious counter-argument is ignored, or a major misstep in logic mars the coherency of the whole argument, or grammatical errors consistently mar the prose.

**C Range Essay:**
A C range essay has significant problems in articulating and presenting its argument, or seems to lack a central argument entirely. Its features include one or more of the following:
- A **thesis** that is vague, descriptive, or confusing; that has unintegrated parts; that is implied rather than stated directly (or stated too long); that is dropped in places;
- A **structure** that is confusing (making huge, unmotivated intellectual leaps) or predictable (a list or a “five paragraph” essay); that includes few complications or counter-arguments; that exhibits disorganized, often overly descriptive, paragraphs;
- Insufficient **evidence**, often presented without analysis as undigested quotations; may be taken out of context;
- **Analysis** that has moments of insight but is generally missing or simply summary and may include some misreadings;
- **Sources** that are not adequately situated or explained; that may be quoted and cited incorrectly; that are used simply as filler or as affirmation of the author’s viewpoint;
- A **style** that is difficult to read or overly simplistic; perhaps including errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, and format.

**D Range Essay:**
A D range essay fails to grapple with either ideas or tests, or fails to address the expectations of the assignment. It features include:
- A **thesis** that is missing or purely descriptive (un-arguable), or that is a total misreading;
- A **structure** that is confusing, demonstrating little focused development; disorganized paragraphs; plot summary;
- **Evidence** that is scanty or absent; when present, it is chiefly undigested quotation and/or taken out of context;
- **Analysis** that is absent, based on misinterpretations of the evidence, or mere summary;
- **Sources** that are absent or, if present, are not adequately situated or explained, incorrectly quoted and/or cited, and/or used as filler;
- A **style** that is simplistic or difficult to read, and is probably riddled with technical errors.

**FALL TERM MEETING DATES**

September Intensive:
September 11-13, 2009

October Intensive:
October 9-11, 2009
November Intensive:
November 6-8, 2009

December Washington, D.C., Joint Intensive:
December 3-5, 2009

Please refer to each session’s schedule for details. Schedules are distributed in advance of each weekend intensive.

TEXTS
The following texts were initially distributed during the first introductory seminar sessions in July and August.

Dr. Fox’s Texts:

Essential Statistics for Public Managers and Policy Analysts by Evan M. Berman

The Chicago Guide to Writing About Numbers by Jane E. Miller

Using SPSS for Social Statistics and Research Methods by William E. Wagner

Elementary Statistics for Social Research by Levin, Fox and Forde

Dr. Dopkins’ Texts:


Evaluation Essentials: Methods for Constructing Sound Research by Beth Osborne Daponte

Dr. Koenig’s Texts:

Feminist Legal Theory: A Primer by Nancy Levit, Robert R. M. Verchick, and Martha Minow

Foundations of the Law, An Interdisciplinary and Jurisprudential Primer by Bailey Kuklin and Jeffrey W. Stempel

Global Issues in Tort Law by Julie A. Davies and Paul T. Hayd

Internet Law in a Nutshell by Michael L. Rustad

In Defense of Tort Law by Thomas Koenig and Michael Rustad.
Law’s Order: What Economics Has to Do with Law and Why It Matters by David Friedman


The Squandering of America: How the Failure of Our Politics Undermines Our Prosperity by Robert Kuttner

FALL TERM 2009 READINGS:

Additional readings are posted on Blackboard. Students are responsible for accessing the course on Blackboard regularly to access supplemental readings, participate in discussion board posts, submit assignments, readings, and view faculty announcements and other updates to the course.

Professor Fox: Quantitative Methods Topics, Readings and Assignments

September 2009

Topics:
- Measurement
- Rates, ratios, percentages and odds
- Frequency distributions and graphical displays
- SPSS basics

Read: Wagner Chapters 1-5
    Berman Chapters 1-5
    Levin, Fox and Forde Chapters 1-2
    Miller Chapters. 1-2

Assignment:
- The assignment will involve replicating the summer Excel data analysis project using SPSS. The steps will include:
  1. Downloading the data file from ICPSR
  2. Recoding variables
  3. Creating crosstabulations
  4. Creating and editing of bar charts

October 2009

Topics:
- Central tendency and dispersion
- Weighting
- SPSS syntax
Read:   Wagner Chapters 10-11  
Berman Chapters 6, 7  
Levin, Fox & Forde Chapters 3-4  
Miller Chapters 4-5

Assignment:  
The assignment will involve analysis of the US News College Rankings data.  
Steps will include:  
1. Importing the data file from Excel into SPSS  
2. Transforming of variables  
3. Merging data  
4. Weighting data  
5. Comparing of means and standard deviations

November 2009  
Topics:  
Probability and sampling  
Cross-tabulations  
Chi-square

Read:  Wagner Chapter 6  
Berman Chapters 8-9  
Levin, Fox & Forde Chapter 9  
Miller Chapter 3

Assignment  
The assignment will involve analyzing Presidential Election exit poll data with SPSS.  
The steps will include:  
1. Downloading specific data files from ICPSR  
2. Weighting data for representativeness  
3. Creating a variety of crosstabulations  
4. Testing associations with chi-square

Professor Dopkins: Research Design, Qualitative Methods and Evaluation  

September 2009  
Topic: Research Paradigms

Readings:  
• Creswell, Chapter 1  
• Gray, Chapter 1  
• Guba and Lincoln, “Competing Paradigms in Qualitative Research: Theories and Issues” (posted on Blackboard)
Assignment: Fall Term 2009 Research Design, Qualitative Methods and Evaluation Essay Dr. Dopkins Due on or before December 10, 2009

Guba and Lincoln define a paradigm as a “worldview that guides the investigator” in terms of ontological, epistemological and methodological questions. Using the four paradigm model elaborated by Guba and Lincoln, explain which worldview best fits with your choice of dissertation topic, approach to social research and methodological orientation. In the second part of the essay, engage in a “thought experiment” and adopt an alternative paradigm. Describe how this requires you to reframe the topic, change the approach, and assume a different methodological orientation. In the final section of the essay, return to your original worldview and reflect on lessons learned from the “thought experiment”. Provide examples of new insights regarding the strengths and limitations of this paradigm.

October 2009

Topic: Planning a Research Study

Readings:
- Creswell, Chapters 2-4
- Gray, Chapters 2-4

Assignment: Complete a short writing exercise posted on Blackboard

November/December 2009

Topic: Formative Steps in the Research Process

Readings: Creswell, Chapters 5-7

Assignment: Complete a short writing exercise posted on Blackboard

Professor Koenig: Theoretical Design:

September 2009

Topics: Theories and Frames of Research
- Conflict Theories
- Feminist Theories

Reading: Feminist Legal Theory: A Primer by Nancy Levit, Robert R. M. Verchick, and Martha Minow

Assignment: Theoretical Perspectives Essay

Due on or before December 10, 2009
After completing the term readings, *Feminist Legal Theory: A Primer*, *Law’s Order: What Economics Has to Do with Law and Why It Matters*; and *The Squandering of America: How the Failure of Our Politics Undermines Our Prosperity*, (and doing supplementary research, when necessary), write an essay of approximately 10-15 pages explaining what perspective (or, more likely, what combination of legal perspectives) are most frequently employed in your area of specialization. Which of the perspectives in the readings are least likely to carry any weight among decision-makers? Are there structural reasons for privileging certain perspectives in your field (i.e. it would cost us a substantial amount of money and other resources if we accepted certain arguments) or are they based on the personal beliefs of key individuals or groups (i.e. the newspapers and the public would pillory us if we openly supported this legal perspective)? Which perspectives do you find most compelling and which do you most dislike? Why? When you disagree with a legal decision or principle employed in a dispute (by the courts, your human resources office, political leaders or other stakeholders), what is the underlying ideological basis of your disagreement?

The page length specified is only a guideline. Length does not make strength. I would rather have ten tightly written pages than twenty pages of repetitive and meandering statements.

On or before December 10, 2009, submit your essay using the View/Complete Assignment link in the Assignments folder on Blackboard.

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**October 2009**

**Topics: Economic Theories and Research Design Approach**

**Reading:** *Law’s Order: What Economics Has to Do with Law and Why It Matters* by David Friedman

**Assignment:** See Fall Assignment Above.

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**November 2009**

**Topics: Economic, Political, and Policy Theories**

**Readings:** *The Squandering of America: How the Failure of Our Politics Undermines Our Prosperity* by Robert Kuttner

**Assignment:** See Fall Assignment Above

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**December 2009**

Reading: Not a Suicide Pact: The Constitution in a Time of National Emergency by Richard Posner

Assignment: See Fall Assignment Above