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URB 8620/9020: Advanced Seminar in Research Design and Methods

Spring 2022

I. Course Overview

This course provides doctoral students and research-track MIS students in urban studies with the fundamentals of research design in social sciences and essential skills for developing a research proposal. It will contextualize the design and implementation of social research in urban issues and introduce the students to empirical urban research.

The course consists of two parts:

- The first part gives an overview of the various options for empirical social research. We will cover topics including the formulation of research questions and/or hypotheses, the use of theory, the operationalization and measurement of research constructs, sampling methods, experimental and quasi-experimental designs, correlation versus causality, internal and external validity, quantitative and qualitative inquiries, and the ethics in social research.
- The second part involves conversations with urban researchers from different disciplinary and methodological backgrounds, critical analyses of empirical urban research, and discussion-based [RCR \(Responsible Conduct in Research\) training](#) required for GSU graduate students. Students will share selected journal articles or working papers in their fields of interest, identify the elements of the research design, and discuss the quality of the research, as well as any practical or ethical considerations in conducting the research. Through this process the students will learn to critically examine and refine their own research designs.

II. Learning Objectives

PhD students

Upon completion of the course, students will:

- have a working knowledge of a broad-range of approaches to social research, including experimental and quasi-experimental designs, survey methods, case studies, and comparative studies;
- understand the concepts of causality, validity and generalizability in research methods;

- be familiar with the strengths and limitations of major designs and their applications in urban studies;
- be able to critically evaluate the quality of empirical research and discuss design issues;
- recognize and understand the practical and ethical issues associated with social research;
- be prepared to design and implement a research study in their fields of interest.

MIS students

Upon completion of the course, students will:

- understand the differences between descriptive, explanatory, and exploratory studies;
- be able to identify different research designs in urban research;
- be able to choose a suitable design based on a research question and discuss its strengths and limitations;
- understand the concepts of causality, validity and generalizability in research methods;
- be able to evaluate the quality of empirical research;
- recognize and understand the practical and ethical issues associated with social research;
- be prepared to design and implement a capstone project.

III. Course Materials

Primary texts:

- (All students) Babbie, E. (1995-2010) *The Practice of Social Research*. Belmont, CA: Thomson Wadsworth.
- (PhD students only) Shadish, William R., Cook, Thomas D. and Campbell, Donald T. (2002) *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Generalized Causal Inference*. New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin.
- (MIS students only) Trochim, William M.K. (2020) [Research Methods Knowledge Base](https://www.conjoint.ly/). Conjoint.ly.

Optional texts:

- Blackstone, A. (2012) *Principles of Sociological Inquiry – Qualitative and Quantitative Methods*. Saylor Academy. Available at https://saylordotorg.github.io/text_principles-of-sociological-inquiry-qualitative-and-quantitative-methods/
- Creswell, J. (2013) *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*, 4th ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Lofland, J., Snow, D., Anderson, L. & Lofland, L. H. (1995) *Analyzing Social Settings: A Guide to Qualitative Observation and Analysis*, 3rd ed (used copies available on Amazon). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Recommended:

- American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication Manual of the American*

Psychological Association, 6th ed. Washington, DC: APA.

Additional reading materials will be either available online or posted on iCollege.

IV. Requirements and Grading

Class participation (PhD students: 15 points; MIS students: 20 points)

Active participation of all students are critical for a graduate seminar. Please complete all readings and assignments *before* the class and be prepared to contribute to class discussions. PhD students should be prepared to summarize and critique the assigned empirical readings.

If you cannot attend a class due to unavoidable circumstances, please send me an email at your earliest convenience including the reason and any supporting documents (if applicable). Each unexcused absence will subtract 5 points from the final grade.

Empirical paper critique (PhD students: 15 points; MIS students: 20 points)

From week 3 through week 7, each student should find an empirical research paper of a different research design every week and submit a critique in class. The submitted assignment should be no longer than 2 pages and include 1) a summary & critique of the paper's research elements (a template will be provided), and 2) a short reflection (200-300 words) related to the topic(s) covered in that week. This assignment aims to help students identify and analyze different research designs in the context of their own fields of interest and start building a library of literature for their doctoral research. Students should be prepared to discuss their critique in class. Please post a copy or link of the article you are critiquing to the iCollege discussion board.

Journal article presentation (PhD students: 10 points)

Between week 8 and week 13, each PhD student will be assigned a week in which they will present a peer reviewed journal article to the class and lead a discussion on design issues related to the presented study. Students are free to choose an article of interest to them. The presentation can be informal and conversational, though the presenter should be prepared to fully describe the study and its research elements, as well as to give a critical analysis of its research design. Other students are expected to ask insightful, probing questions and participate in the discussion afterwards. This assignment will expose students to more diverse research topics and viewpoints and help them practice presentation and teaching skills. Please post a copy or link of the article you are presenting to the iCollege discussion board.

This assignment is not required for MIS students. If schedule permits, MIS students can do a journal article presentation for extra credit (up to 10 points).

CITI training and draft IRB application (PhD & MIS students: 10 points)

All students should complete CITI training for [Responsible Conduct in Research \(RCR\)](#) and [working with human subjects](#). Students are also expected to develop a draft [IRB application](#) based on their proposed research design. If your research proposal does not involve human

subjects, a sample research design will be provided for this assignment.

Proposal presentation (PhD & MIS students: 10 points)

During the last class (week 14), each student will give a brief presentation (8-10 minutes) of their research proposal. Students should describe the selected research design, identify its strengths and weaknesses, and address questions from the class. The presentation gives students an opportunity to reflect on their research design and incorporate any feedback before submitting the final proposal.

Research proposal (PhD & MIS students: 40 points)

The final proposal will be in the form of a research grant proposal for PhD students (15-20 pages, double-spaced, including bibliography) and a capstone paper proposal for MIS students (10-15 pages, double-spaced, including bibliography). Both PhD and MIS proposals should include the following:

- Specific aims (broad research questions and specific hypotheses)
- Background and significance (brief review of literature that focuses on methodological considerations; innovation and significance)
- Research methods (the most important part of the proposal – the research design and procedures, variables and measures, how the data will be collected, analyzed and interpreted)
- Strengths and limitations

Each student should submit a brief outline (no more than 1 typed page) including the research question and key design elements by the 8th class. Students are strongly encouraged to get feedback on their topic and research design as early as possible. Earlier drafts are accepted in any length or format until week 13, and feedback will be provided by the last class.

Late submission of assignments will not be accepted without prior approval and valid reasons. Late penalties may apply.

V. Policies and Resources

Grading Scale

The course will use a plus/minus grading scale: 98-100: A+; 92-97: A; 90-91: A-; 88-89: B+; 82-87: B; 80-81: B-; 78-79: C+; 72-77: C; 70-71: C-; 60-69: D; 0-59: F.

Important Note: AYSPS students must maintain a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of a B (3.00) or higher in all attempts at courses numbered 6000 or higher. (This means that the original grade in a course that is repeated is not dropped from the cumulative GPA for purposes of determining good academic standing.) USI doctoral students must earn a B or higher in all core courses to maintain their doctoral candidacy.

Withdrawals, Incompletes, and Grade Changes

Students who withdraw after the midpoint of each term will not be eligible for a “W” except in cases of Emergency Withdrawal.

- Withdrawal Policy: <http://advisement.gsu.edu/self-service/policies/withdrawal-policy/>
- Repeat to Replace Policy: <http://advisement.gsu.edu/self-service/policies/repeat-to-replace-policy/>
- Grade Appeal and Change (including Incomplete Grades) Policy: <http://registrar.gsu.edu/academic-records/grading/grade-appeals-and-changes/>

Important University dates can be found at <http://registrar.gsu.edu/registration/semester-calendars-exam-schedules/>

Academic Integrity

High standards of intellectual and academic integrity will be enforced. GSU guidelines are posted at <https://deanofstudents.gsu.edu/files/2017/09/Academic-Honesty-Policy.pdf> and <https://codeofconduct.gsu.edu/>. Special attention should be paid to the following sections:

- Plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting another person’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism includes any paraphrasing or summarizing of the works of another person without acknowledgment, including the submitting of another student’s work as one’s own. Plagiarism frequently involves a failure to acknowledge in the text, notes, or footnotes the quotation of the paragraphs, sentences, or even a few phrases written or spoken by someone else. The submission of research or completed papers or projects by someone else is plagiarism, as is the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else when that use is specifically forbidden by the faculty member. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one’s reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Failure to indicate the extent and nature of one’s reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. Any work, in whole or part, taken from the internet without properly referencing the corresponding URL (along with the author’s name and title of the work, if available) may be considered plagiarism. Finally, there may be forms of plagiarism that are unique to an individual discipline or course, examples of which should be provided in advance by the faculty member. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly or creative indebtedness, and the consequences of violating this responsibility.
- Unauthorized Collaboration. Unauthorized collaboration means working with someone or getting assistance from someone (a classmate, friend, etc.) without specific permission from the instructor on any assignment (e.g., exam, paper, homework) that is turned in for a grade. It is also a violation of academic honesty to knowingly provide such assistance to another student. Collaborative work specifically authorized by a faculty member is allowed.

- **Multiple Submissions.** It is a violation of academic honesty to submit substantial portions of the same work for credit more than once without the explicit consent of the faculty member(s) to whom the material is submitted for additional credit. In cases in which there is a natural development of research or knowledge in a sequence of courses, use of prior work may be desirable, even required; however, the student is responsible for indicating in writing, as a part of such use, that the current work submitted for credit is cumulative in nature.

All quotes, ideas, data or other information that are not original must be clearly cited in written work. Plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration or multiple submissions will result in all participating students failing the course and being remanded to the discipline committee for further action.

Course Evaluation

Your constructive assessment of this course plays an indispensable role in shaping education at Georgia State. Upon completing the course, please take time to fill out the online course evaluation. We appreciate honest, open and constructive feedback.

Disability Accommodation

Students who wish to request accommodation for a disability may do so by registering with the Office of Disability Services. Students may only be accommodated upon issuance by the Office of Disability Services of a signed Accommodation Plan and are responsible for providing a copy of that plan to instructors of all classes in which an accommodation is sought.

The Office of Disability Services also offers free academic coaching and other services. To learn more go to disability.gsu.edu/services.

Research Data Services

The GSU Library has a **Research Data Services (RDS) Team** that offers help with various statistical/quantitative and qualitative software tools (SPSS, SAS, Stata, Excel, NVivo), finding data, survey design, and mapping and data/GIS visualization. Check out their website (library.gsu.edu/data) to learn more about their services, browse and register for [workshops](#), see when they have [drop-in help hours](#), or email [RDS Team members](#) directly to set up appointments. The RDS Team also offers the following special initiatives:

- **RDS@GSU Data Certification** – if GSU students, staff, and faculty attend a minimum of five unique RDS workshops, they receive a custom RDS@GSU Data Certified certificate listing their completed workshops – learn more at research.library.gsu.edu/dataservices/data-certified
- **Data After Dark workshops** – to better meet the needs of our GSU researchers with

daytime commitments, we offer evening workshops – learn more at research.library.gsu.edu/dataservices/data-after-dark

AYS Career Services & Alumni Office

The Andrew Young School provides career support and leadership development services to all AYS students and alumni. If you are interested in career building activities and are in the Atlanta area go to career.aysps.gsu.edu. If you are out of the area, please contact the office to schedule a phone or online consultation with the Career Services department.

Basic Needs Statement

Any student who faces challenges securing their food or housing and believes this may affect their performance in the course is urged to contact the Dean of Students for support. Furthermore, please notify the professor if you are comfortable in doing so. This will enable us to provide resources that we may possess. The [Embark program at GSU](#) provides resources for students facing homelessness and [Panther's Pantry](#) provides resources for students facing food insecurity.

Diversity, Inclusivity, and Respect Statement

It is my intent that students from all diverse backgrounds and perspectives be well served by this course, that students' learning needs be addressed both in and out of class, and that the diversity that students bring to this class be viewed as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of all diversity including gender, sexuality, disability, age, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, and culture. Your comments (in the discussion posts and in person) related to the class and content will be encouraged and appreciated. Please let me know ways to improve the effectiveness of the course for you personally or for other students or student groups.

GSU Policy Prohibiting Students from Posting Instructor-Generated Materials on External Sites

The selling, sharing, publishing, presenting, or distributing of instructor-prepared course lecture notes, videos, audio recordings, or any other instructor-produced materials from any course for any commercial purpose is strictly prohibited unless explicit written permission is granted in advance by the course instructor. This includes posting any materials on websites such as Chegg, Course Hero, OneClass, Stuvia, StuDocu and other similar sites. Unauthorized sale or commercial distribution of such material is a violation of the instructor's intellectual property and the privacy rights of students attending the class, and is prohibited. This policy was approved by the GSU Faculty Senate on August 21, 2020.

Syllabus Deviation

The course syllabus provides a general plan for the course; deviations may be necessary.

VI. Tentative Course Schedule

Week	Date	Topic & Assignments
1		Introduction to Social Research Elements of Research Design <i>(All students)</i> Babbie: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 1: Human inquiry and science Ch 2: Paradigms, theory, and social research Ch 17: Reading and writing social research
		Davis, Murray S. (1971) That's interesting! Towards a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. <i>Philosophy of the Social Sciences</i> , 1(2), 309-344.
2		Causation & Validity Overview of research designs <i>(PhD students only)</i> Shadish, Cook and Campbell: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 1: Experiments and generalized causal inference Ch 2: Statistical conclusion validity and internal validity
		<i>(MIS students only)</i> Trochim: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Internal Validity (including subtopics) Conclusion Validity (including subtopics)
3		<i>(All students)</i> Babbie: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 4: Research design
		Campbell, Donald T. (1969) Reforms as experiments. <i>American Psychologist</i> , 24(4), 409-429. Belkin, L. (2002) The odds of that. <i>New York Times</i> (August 11). Available at https://www.nytimes.com/2002/08/11/magazine/the-odds-of-that.html
3		<i>(Empirical paper critique #1 due)</i> Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs I
		<i>(PhD students only)</i> Shadish, Cook and Campbell: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 4: Quasi-experimental designs that either lack a control group or lack pretest observations on the outcome Ch 5: Quasi-experimental designs that use both control groups

Week	Date	Topic & Assignments
		<p>and pretests</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (OPTIONAL) Ch 8: Randomized experiments: Rationale, designs, and conditions conducive to doing them <p>(MIS students only)</p> <p>Trochim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of Designs • Experimental Design (including subtopics) • Nonequivalent Groups Design • Other Quasi Designs <p>(All students)</p> <p>Babbie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 8: Experiments <p>Plotnick, Robert D. and Hoffman, Saul D. (1999) The effect of neighborhood characteristics on young adult outcomes: Alternative estimates. <i>Social Science Quarterly</i>, 80(1), 1-18.</p> <p>Harding, David J. (2003) Counterfactual models of neighborhood effects: The effect of neighborhood poverty on dropping out and teenage pregnancy. <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 109(3), 676-719.</p> <p>Ludwig, Jens, Duncan, Greg J., Gennetian, Lisa A., Katz, Lawrence F., Kessler, Ronald C., Kling, Jeffrey R. and Sanbonmatsu, Lisa. (2013) Long-term neighborhood effects on low-income families: Evidence from moving to opportunity. <i>American Economic Review</i>, 103(3), 226-231.</p> <hr/> <p>(Empirical paper critique #2 due)</p> <p>Time Series Designs</p> <p>Regression Discontinuity Designs</p> <p>(PhD students only)</p> <p>Shadish, Cook and Campbell:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 6: Quasi-experiments: Interrupted time-series designs • Ch 7: Regression discontinuity designs <p>(MIS students only)</p> <p>Trochim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Regression-Discontinuity Design • Pre-Post Design Relationships • Designing Designs for Research <p>(All students)</p> <hr/>

Week	Date	Topic & Assignments
		<p>Bloom, Howard S. and Riccio, James A. (2005) Using place-based random assignment and comparative interrupted time-series analysis to evaluate the jobs-plus employment program for public housing residents. <i>The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science</i>, 599(1), 19-51.</p> <p>Galster, George, Temkin, Kenneth, Walker, Chris and Sawyer, Noah. (2004) Measuring the impacts of community development initiatives: A new application of the adjusted interrupted time-series method. <i>Evaluation Review</i>, 28(6), 502-538.</p> <p>Pellegrini, Guido, Terribile, Flavia, Tarola, Ornella, Muccigrosso, Teo and Busillo, Federica. (2013) Measuring the effects of European regional policy on economic growth: A regression discontinuity approach. <i>Papers in Regional Science</i>, 92(1), 217-233.</p> <p>Grout, Cyrus A., Jaeger, William K. and Plantinga, Andrew J. (2011) Land-use regulations and property values in Portland, Oregon: A regression discontinuity design approach. <i>Regional Science and Urban Economics</i>, 41, 98-107.</p>
		<p><i>(Empirical paper critique #3 due)</i></p> <p>Measurement and Operationalization</p> <p>Sampling strategies</p> <p><i>(PhD students only)</i></p> <p>Shadish, Cook and Campbell:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 3: Construct validity and external validity <p><i>(MIS students only)</i></p> <p>Trochim:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construct Validity • External Validity <p><i>(All students)</i></p> <p>Babbie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ch 5: Conceptualization, operationalization, and measurement • Ch 6: Indexes, scales, and typologies • Ch 7: The logic of sampling
		<p><i>(Empirical paper critique #4 due)</i></p> <p>Qualitative Research Methods</p> <p>Survey Research</p>
5		
6		<p><i>(All students)</i></p> <p>Babbie:</p>

Week	Date	Topic & Assignments
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 9: Survey research Ch 10: Qualitative field research <p>Geertz, C. (1973) Thick description: Toward an interpretive theory of culture. In <i>The interpretation of cultures</i>. New York: Basic Books, pp. 3-30. Available at semanticscholar.org</p> <p>Corbin, Juliet M. and Strauss, Anselm. (1990) Grounded theory research: Procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. <i>Qualitative Sociology</i>, 13(1), pp. 3-21.</p> <p>Pandit, Naresh R. (1996) The creation of theory: A recent application of the grounded theory method. <i>The Qualitative Report</i>, 2(4), pp. 1-15. Available at https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol2/iss4/3/</p> <hr/> <p><i>(Empirical paper critique #5 due)</i></p> <p>Unobtrusive Research Comparative Studies Meta-Analysis</p> <p><i>(PhD students only)</i> Shadish, Cook and Campbell:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 13: Generalized causal inference: Methods for multiple studies <p><i>(All students)</i> Babbie:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 11: Unobtrusive research Ch 15: The elaboration model
7		<p>Brown-Saracino, Japonica and Rumpf, Cesraea. (2011) Diverse imageries of gentrification: Evidence from newspaper coverage in seven U.S. cities, 1986-2006. <i>Journal of Urban Affairs</i>, 33(3), 289-315.</p> <p>Carpenter, Juliet and Lees, Loretta. (1995) Gentrification in New York, London and Paris: An international comparison. <i>International Journal of Urban and Regional Research</i>, 19(2), 286-303.</p> <p>DeVerteuil, Geoffrey. (2011) Evidence of gentrification-induced displacement among social services in London and Los Angeles. <i>Urban Studies</i>, 48(8), 1563-1580.</p> <p>Hamidi, Shima, Kittrell, Katherine and Ewing, Reid. (2016) Value of transit as reflected in U.S. single-family home premiums: A meta-analysis. <i>Transportation Research Record</i>, 2543(1), 108-115.</p>

Week	Date	Topic & Assignments
		<i>(One-page proposal outline due)</i> <i>(CITI courses for RCR and human subjects' protection due)</i> Evaluation Research Ethics of social research <i>(PhD students only)</i> Shadish, Cook and Campbell: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 9: Practical problems 1: Ethics, participant recruitment, and random assignment
8		<i>(All students)</i> Babbie: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ch 3: The ethics and politics of social research Ch 12: Evaluation research The Belmont Report: https://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/regulations-and-policy/belmont-report/read-the-belmont-report/index.html Campos, P. (2015) Alice Goffman's implausible ethnography. <i>The Chronicle of Higher Education</i> (August 21). Available at https://www.chronicle.com/article/alice-goffman-s-implausible/232491
		Spring Break – NO CLASS
9		Guest speaker Journal article presentation
10		Guest" speaker Journal article presentation
11		Guest speaker Journal article presentation
12		RCR Training 1
13		RCR Training 2
14		<i>(Draft IRB application due)</i> Proposal Presentations
		<i>FINAL PAPER DUE</i>