Course Name

DPLS 722-Spring 2016-Preliminary

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Course Information
Course Name: Quantitative Methods
Course Number: DPLS 722
Credits: 3
Day of the Week/Time: Saturday 8 am – 12 pm
Dates: 1/16, 1/30, 2/13, 2/27, 3/5, 3/19, 4/2, 4/16
Location: TBA
Instructor: Chris Francovich, Ed.D
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Office Hours: By Appointment

Description & Format
Catalog Description
Quantitative data analyses require the use of statistics (descriptive and inferential) to summarize data collected, to make comparisons of data sets, and to generalize results obtained from samples back to the populations from which the sample were drawn. Knowledge about statistics and statistical analysis can help a researcher interpret data for the purpose of providing meaningful insights about the problem being investigated. Prerequisite: DPLS 720. (3 credits)

Course Overview
This course will explore the landscape of statistics, statistical thinking, and the analysis of phenomena using statistical method(s). We will begin the course with a very brief theoretical, conceptual, and discursive look at post positivist epistemology and quantitative methodology. This beginning part of the conversation will also contrast quantitative methodology with qualitative methodology and explore the ‘scientific method’ and the development and use of research hypotheses. You will note that there is a considerable amount of reading for the first few classes. I recommend that you get an early start and begin to study these chapters well before the first meeting.

The emphasis in this course will be on statistics and selected methods of using statistics to make inferences and judgments about phenomena. Resources will be available on Blackboard. Class time, group work, and instructor led conversation will focus on the meaning and understanding of key concepts with the expectation that students will work on practice sets and reading on their own. Specific practice or application of those concepts (methods) will be carried out in group and individual projects.

The focus on this course is on understanding.

The mathematical and logical foundations of statistical concepts will be explored in a concrete and elementary way. It is hoped that this basic understanding will support the ability of students to make sense of statistics in both theoretical and practical terms.

The purpose of this course is to prepare doctoral students and candidates for the task of creating good solid research based on a quantitative methodology and becoming informed consumers of quantitative research.
A note on the question of intelligence, capacity, skill & reading the texts: Math and statistics remain a difficult topic for many in our society to understand, become comfortable with, and regularly use as part of their critical thinking. I think that this is going to fundamentally change as the information revolution continues to ‘outsource’ or ‘off-load’ many of the cognitive elements of what we have historically understood as intelligence and mental or cognitive capacity. The particular types of intelligence associated with short term memory, symbolic pattern recognition, and speed of processing information are all being consistently augmented by technology. Certainly the postmodern and poststructural critique of power, oppression, and control is related to this conversation. The short version of my thinking around this indicates that in general the information revolution is freeing humanity up to express in a legitimate and dignified way the full range of human intelligence and creativity and at the same time share more widely the positive aspects of propositional and logical thought.

Math and statistics are rigorous, detailed, and deep domains of thought. Some people are absolutely brilliant, gifted, and fit for this type of mathematical and complex logical thought. Most of us can, with hard work, diligent practice, and discipline master the rudiments of the field and become competent statisticians or mathematicians. Some of us, however, (and in my view because of inadequate teaching) continue to struggle with basic mathematical and statistical concepts and never develop the skill or confidence to make sense of the field or ask intelligent questions about it. We ‘freeze up’.

It is also the case (again, in my view) that some of the people that totally freeze up in math or work diligently to understand it flourish in other domains. Many other domains. It is a fact that so called ‘scientific thinking’ (led by math and physics but followed by the natural sciences) has the most legitimacy in the academy. This legitimacy is tied historically to gendered (male) interests, economic interests, power, and technical innovation. It is highly abstract even in its corporeal manifestation (e.g., an i-pad). But this is only part of the picture of human consciousness and intelligence. The intent of this course is, in part, to help students join the conversation around mathematical deductive thinking without “freezing” up and/or rejecting the study or appreciation of statistics because of intrapersonal conditioning around not understanding basic mathematical and statistical concepts related to asking and answering research questions.

GH Mead wrote and spoke about reflective human consciousness in general as being ‘scientific thinking’ and that the goal of democratic society was to foster and facilitate this skill in every person. I firmly believe that leadership studies requires us to engage in this ‘scientific thinking’ without destroying our compromising other aspects of cultural and embodied ways of knowing. I also believe that cultural experience and discourse are, in general, increasingly calling human beings to understand larger and more general frames of reference and domains of knowledge. What this means for this course and for using statistics in research in leadership studies is that we are able to understand more and more and to consider the application of very complex ideas and concepts in ways that were very difficult for most people just a few years ago.

But this competence requires a rethinking of how we approach the task of ‘coming to know’ something. It is my view that spending hours and hours to study, practice, and memorize abstract

1 See the literature on intelligence in general and multiple intelligence in particular. There is a highly contested debate in academia about this subject and it is a fascinating look into paradigmatic assumptions. Gardner’s classic book is a good place to start: Gardner, H. (2011). Frames of mind. (3rd edition). Basic Books. NY
and highly complicated chains of algorithmic reasoning with no clear context for application is not generally productive. Certainly not in the context of the DPLS. So this course will not be done in quite that manner. It will be a highly interactive and collaborative discussion of core concepts and ideas and their relationship to the literature in leadership studies and the social sciences. However we will do problems and practice selected techniques. Those will become clear as the course progresses. What is absolutely vital for us, however, is that we read the texts and do the problems.

**Reading Math/Statistics**

It is my view that reading is no simple skill. Reading competence is relative to the genre being read. I read some things fluently and immersively. Other genres are fundamentally challenging to me. The only way that I can learn to read foreign genres is through reading and talking about the reading with others. But I have to read. This is nowhere more crucial than in math/statistics. You must read the texts painstakingly! You must make reading notes and question each paragraph, diagram, and list of numbers/equations. You must talk about your understanding and provoke yourself and others to great clarity and depth of meaning. When you do the problems expect that your will have to go back over the text and the examples to continually compare and check your understanding with the text. We will talk about this and about my suggestions for reading at our first meeting.

**Objectives**

The goals & objectives of this course are to:

- Understand and apply appropriate post-positivist\(^2\) and mixed methods research methodologies.
- Relate, understand, and apply post-positivist methodology to research questions relevant to leadership studies.
- Demonstrate a solid understanding of basic statistics through reading, talking, and writing about core statistical concepts.
- Formulate research questions and corresponding statistical hypotheses that can enhance understanding of a given phenomenon.
- Create and present meaningful leadership related quantitative research ideas to peers through poster presentations.
- Create or use existing databases to seek answers to research questions or to test hypotheses.
- Select appropriate statistical techniques (methods) for a given question or hypothesis statement.
- Apply statistical procedures to test hypotheses using appropriate statistical application(s).
- Correctly interpret statistical application output.
- Communicate findings verbally, visually, and in written format.

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\(^2\) Post positivism is understood here to reflect the recognition by researchers with a commitment to scientific naturalism that language and consciousness are nonetheless implicated in the interpretation and realization of the structure of reality.
Reading Materials
Required Texts


Other readings and web resources will be required and posted on Blackboard or handed out in class.

Other Readings
To be Announced

Assignments and Grading
Assignments & Tasks

Please see Blackboard for details on Course Assignments

- Poster presentation project will require that each individual imagine, design, test, and write up a mock study using real or imagined data to complete a quantitative research project.
- Course Participation: Participants will be expected to attend all sessions. If you miss a meeting please inform me via email or phone prior to the missed meeting. Missing more than two meetings will result in an incomplete and require either taking the course again or auditing it at some future time. You will also be expected to collaborate and problem solve with your work group over problem sets and difficult conceptual material. Participation > 10% of grade
- Problem Sets – These assignments must be completed autonomously but can be reviewed and revised in the in-class workgroups.
- Readings and reading based assignments – In this course we will use three text based sources and multiple web-based video tutorials – with suggested readings outlined in the course plan below. It is expected that all students will complete all the reading and tutorial assignments prior to each class meeting. These exercises will form the basis for assignments, class discussions, and exploration of the concepts. The Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences text is meant to be both a resource and a primary source of clarification for basic statistical concepts. Selected concepts will be thoroughly explored in class (e.g., standard deviation, error, variables, probability, p values, t-tests, etc.
- Creswell’s Research Design is meant to accompany you on the rest of your doctoral journey (I use this text in my ProSem courses also). This text is an excellent summary of design ideas and strategies and you are encouraged to become familiar with the contents of the chapters outlined below for the 3rd, 4th, and 5th class meetings. This material will
help form background understanding for your poster presentation and for the general problem of articulating research ideas.

**Assessment**
Assessment of your work in this course is based on a combination of objective evidence (your completed work and two poster projects scored with a rubric) and my subjective interpretation of your progress in engaging in both a critical discourse around quantitative methods and a coherent explication of relevant concepts. Much of our time in class will be spent in conversation or collaborative work.

**Grading:**
The grading emphasizes your individual learning achievement in this course.

Complete all assignments correctly, participate in class actively: = A

Complete all assignments, participate in class passively = A-

Complete all assignments, minimal class participation = B