

## **J395 Advanced Social Science Methods (08470)**

University of Texas  
School of Journalism  
Spring 2014

**Instructor:** Dr. Tom Johnson

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**Office Hours:** MWF 1-2, by appointment and when you least expect it

**Class Time:** 9-noon, CMA 6.146

### **Course Goals and Objectives**

J395, Advanced Social Science Methods, which takes students through the final steps of the research phase and introduces students to the post-research phase, is a hands-on seminar designed to develop proficiency in using SPSS, analyzing data, selecting statistics, interpreting statistically significant results, and writing research-based conference papers and journal articles. Through a combination of readings, hands-on computer data analysis assignments, class demonstrations and presentations, and research paper writing, editing, and reviewing assignments, students will be able to:

1. integrate research, theory, and data analysis.
2. use SPSS to analyze data with proficiency.
3. conduct bivariate and multivariate analyses.
4. write, revise, and submit a scholarly conference paper.
5. critique a scholarly conference paper using the blind peer review process
6. prepare a powerpoint research presentation
7. develop a plan for getting the conference paper published in an academic journal.
  
8. think like a scholar.

## Assignments

Class time will be used for lectures, preparations for and presentations of data analysis assignments, discussions of writing assignments, hands-on SPSS data analyses, and one-on-one consultations.

**Data Analysis Assignments:** We will be doing three data assignments, each worth 10 points. They will be due at the beginning of the next class period, but there will be time set aside during the class to work on the assignments, so it is possible to complete the analysis during class. If you have your own laptop with SPSS, please bring it to class. For each of the three class periods in which we discuss data analysis, one person in the class will be responsible for getting the laptops from the third floor checkout and bring them on a cart to class. The data analysis assignment will consist of an SPSS printout with appropriate statistics. You also need to write a description of the results and construct a results table. (For examples of what the description of the results should look like, please see the journal articles and conference papers among the required readings.)

**Writing assignments:** The major assignment will be writing your research paper, which must be uploaded to the AEJMC website by 11:59 p.m. CT on April 1. After you receive your submission confirmation, please forward it to me. To help you meet the deadline, the paper will be submitted in several stages: the introduction and problem statement, the literature review, methods, results and rough draft. All assignments (other than the AEJ paper) are due at the beginning of class. The introduction and problem statement is due **Jan. 31** (10 points); literature review and hypotheses/research questions is due **Feb. 7** (20 points); the methods is due **Feb. 14** (10 points); a rewrite of the paper through the methods is due **Feb. 28** (20 points); the results section is due **March 7** (10 points) and a rough draft of the entire paper is due **March 21** (40 points). You must turn in your final draft of the paper **April 4** (200 points), which means you do have an opportunity to revise it after you submit it to AEJMC.

**Peer Review:** Each of you will review the rough draft of your partner's research paper. When you send your rough draft to me on March 21, please also send a copy to your research partner. You need to submit a copy of your review of the paper to me and to your research partner by **4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26**. This assignment is worth 30 points.

**Powerpoint presentation of your paper:** On the last day of the course (May 2<sup>nd</sup>) you will give a 12-minute powerpoint presentation of your paper to the class. In the past, papers have presented as poster sessions for the show-your-work day scheduled in April. A show-your-work day *may* be scheduled sometime during the semester and you are welcome to present your paper at it. However you will not be required to. The powerpoint presentation is worth 20 points.

### **SPSS Help Sessions:**

As soon as a time and room are determined, SPSS help sessions will be scheduled for. These sessions will be used to help with SPSS assignments due on Friday. To participate, you must bring a laptop with SPSS. Laptops with SPSS can be checked out.

### **REQUIRED READINGS:**

1. Russell K. Schutt. (2012). *Investigating the social world*. Los Angeles: Sage (our text from last semester)
2. Readings on Blackboard

### **GRADING**

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|---|------------|
| 1. Data analysis assignments, and review assignments  | 30 points  |
| 2. Peer review of AEJMC conference paper drafts       | 30 points  |
| 3. Data-based paper submitted to AEJMC conference     | 200 points |
| 4. Writing Assignments (stages of the research paper) | 120 points |
| 5. Powerpoint presentation of your paper              | 20 points  |

### **ATTENDANCE:**

I will allow you three unexcused absences. After the third absence, I will deduct half a letter grade for each additional absence. You need to contact me **in advance** if you are going to miss a class. All assignments are due by the beginning of class, except the final draft of the AEJ paper which is due 11: 59 p.m. April 1 (Central Time). I will deduct 10 percent for every day the assignment is late except for the final draft of the

AEJMC paper, which must be turned in by the deadline or it will not receive credit. I will not accept any papers more than a week late.

**Religious Holy Days Observance Policy:**

The Texas Education Code specifies that an institution of higher education shall excuse a student from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day, including travel for that purpose. A student whose absence is excused under this subsection may not be penalized for that absence and shall be allowed to take an examination or complete an assignment from which the student is excused within a reasonable time after the absence. A student who misses classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day should inform the instructor as far in advance of the absence as possible, so arrangements can be made to complete an assignment within a reasonable time after the absence.

<http://www.utexas.edu/student/registrar/catalogs/gi03-04/ch4/ch4g.html#attendance>

**Students with Disabilities:**

Please notify your instructor of any modification/adaptation you may require to accommodate a disability-related need. You will be requested to provide documentation to the Dean of Student's Office in order that the most appropriate accommodations can be determined. Specialized services are available on campus through Services for Students with Disabilities.

<http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd/>

**Policy on Scholastic Dishonesty:**

The University defines academic dishonesty as cheating, plagiarism, unauthorized collaboration, falsifying academic records, and any act designed to avoid participating honestly in the learning process. Scholastic dishonesty also includes, but is not limited to, providing false or misleading information to receive a postponement or an extension on a test, quiz, or other assignment, and submission of essentially the same written assignment for two courses without the prior permission of the instructor. By accepting this syllabus, you have agreed to these guidelines and must adhere to them. Scholastic dishonesty damages both the student's learning experience and readiness for the future

demands of a work-career. Students who violate University rules on scholastic dishonesty are subject to disciplinary penalties, including the possibility of failure in the course and/or dismissal from the University. [http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint\\_student.php](http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs/acint_student.php).

### **The Honor Code:**

The core values of the University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the University is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, fairness, and respect toward peers and community.

### **Cell Phones**

Few things are more annoying than a cell phone going off during class, so be sure to turn them off before class. I will try to remember too. I also do not want to see them out as texting during class is distracting to me and the students around you.

### **Laptops**

I encourage you to bring your laptops to class. I post the powerpoints online before class and I encourage you to download them and to take notes on the lectures. I cannot police you to see if you are taking notes or updating your Facebook page. Those who pay attention to class, however, perform better. If you are disrupting the class with your laptop use, you will be asked to put it away.

## **LECTURE TOPICS AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**Note: Dates for the exams and assignments may change depending on progress of the class.** Readings should be completed *before* the class for which they are assigned.

### **WEEK 1: JANUARY 17**

1. Introductions, course goals, and expectations.
2. Update and consultations on research projects
3. Work with partner on pre-testing your instrument or teaching your partner how to code your instrument

## **WEEK 2: JANUARY 24**

1. Writing the introduction and problem statement and literature review
2. Excel: Entering data and running frequencies

**Read:** Jennifer Leahy, “Using Excel for analyzing survey questionnaires”

Alan M. Rubin (2001). “The challenge of writing the quantitative study. In *How to publish your communication research*

Schutt, Chapter 15

### **Survey Reading**

Thomas J. Johnson & Shahira Fahmy.(2010). ‘When blood becomes cheaper than a bottle of water’: How viewers of *Al-Jazeera’s* English-language website judge graphic images of conflict. *Media, War & Conflict*, 3, 43-66.

### **Content Analysis Reading**

Summer Harlow & Thomas J. Johnson. (2011). Overthrowing the protest paradigm? How the New York Times, Global Voices and Twitter covered the Egyptian Revolution. *International Journal of Communication*, 5, 1359-1374.

## **WEEK 3: JANUARY 31:**

**DUE: Writing Assignment #1: Introduction and problem statement .**

1. Literature review continued: Learning APA and reference management software
2. Writing the Methods section
3. Introduction to SPSS fundamentals: variable and value labels, frequency and recoding

Read: Zealure C. Holcomb (2013), *SPSS Basics*, chapters 2, 3

## **WEEK 4: FEBRUARY 7**

**DUE: Writing Assignment #2: Literature Review and research questions/hypotheses**

**DUE: Data analysis assignment #1: run frequencies and recoded frequencies**

1. Statistics: Measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion, measures of association (chi-square)

**Read:** Holcomb, *SPSS Basics*, chapters 6, 7, 17

Schutt, Chapter 14

**WEEK 5: FEBRUARY 14**

**DUE: Writing Assignment #3: Methods Section**

**DUE: Data Analysis Assignment #2: descriptives and chi-square**

1. Writing the results section
2. T-tests, correlations

**Read:** Holcomb, *SPSS Basics*, chapters 10, 13

Schutt, Chapters 14, 15

**WEEK 6: FEBRUARY 21**

Discuss Results, Implications, and abstract of conference paper in individual conferences.

**Data Analysis Assignment #3: T-tests, correlations**

**WEEK 7: FEBRUARY 28**

**INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS**

**DUE Writing assignment #5: Rewrite of paper through the Methods.**

**WEEK 8: MARCH 7**

1. Writing the discussion section
2. Discuss submitting papers to AEJMC

**DUE: Writing assignment #6: Results section**

**WEEK 9: HAPPY SPRING BREAK!!**

**WEEK 10: MARCH 21**

**Due: Writing assignment #5 Rough draft of paper due**

Consultations on AEJMC conference papers.

**WEEK 11: MARCH 28**

**DUE: Writing assignment #6 Peer review of paper due (March 26, 4:30)**

**DUE: Writing assignment #7: Abstract of paper due**

Consultations on AEJMC conference papers

**WEEK 12: APRIL 4**

**Due to AEJMC April 1: AEJMC conference paper and abstract submitted to appropriate AEJMC Division.**

**Due to Instructor APRIL 4: Copy of submitted AEJMC Paper and Abstract plus AEJMC confirmation that paper was submitted.**

Go to International Symposium on Online Journalism, Blanton Symposium, Attendance will count for class

**WEEK 13: APRIL 11**

1. Debriefing about conference papers
2. Planning for the conference presentations: Research sessions, poster presentations, high density sessions

**WEEK 14: APRIL 18**

Turning your Conference papers into published journal articles

**Read:** Michael J. Bugeja and Lee Wilkins “The Pipeline to Publication,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Dec. 6, 2006.

<http://chronicle.com/article/The-Pipeline-to-Publication/46862>



Hai Tran, "The Pipeline to publication: Student research output in mass communications journals (1999-2008)," *Journalism & Mass Communication Educator*, December 2009