



# On-Campus Course Syllabus

## POL 200 L1

### Research Design

### Fall 2021

#### Class Information

**Day and Time:** Tuesdays and Thursdays 12:15-1:30pm  
**Room Number:** E209

#### Contact Information

**Instructor Name:** Dr. Brandon Seitzler  
**Instructor Email:** bseitzler@criswell.edu  
**Instructor Phone:** 214.818.1309  
**Instructor Office Hours:** Mondays 11am-1pm; Wednesdays 1:15-3:15pm

#### Course Description and Prerequisites

This course teaches the process and methods of asking and answering questions in the social sciences. The course teaches the process of developing a research question, choosing a research design, collecting data, analyzing data and reporting results.

#### Course Objectives

By the end of the semester students will:

- Be conversant in the purpose and language of research in the social sciences.
- Be able to form a researchable question.
- Understand how different questions require different research methods.
- Know how to collect and utilize different types of data.
- Understand what types of data are appropriate for different types of questions.
- Be able to critically analyze, utilize, and build upon research literature in their field of study.

#### Required Textbooks

Trochim, William M. et. al. Research Methods: The Essential Knowledge Base. Cengage. 2016.

#### Recommended Reading

- [www.economist.com](http://www.economist.com) – After reading whatever click-bait, infotainment news sources your friends and family link to on Facebook, have you ever found yourself thinking “there must be a better way!” (cue black and white infomercial video of frustration personified)? Try “The Economist!” The Economist goes to press once per week. This means that you are able to stay current on what is going on in the world but without the daily (or hourly) urgency created by daily newspapers and the 24-hour news cycle. By reading a weekly newspaper that is global in perspective you are able to step back and see what is going on in the world with a more complete and reasonable perspective. You can get a discounted student

subscription to The Economist magazine. The digital subscription includes an audio version of each week's edition.

## **Course Requirements and Assignments**

- Weekly Canvas reading quizzes (20%)
- Research Question and Introduction (10%) (See Addendum 1)
- Literature Review (10%) (See Addendum 1)
- Data Description (10%) (See Addendum 1)
- Research Design (10%) (See Addendum 1)
- Midterm Exam (20%)
- Final Exam (20%)

## **Course/Classroom Policies and Information**

- You may not have your cell phone anywhere in sight during class.
- The one exception to my cell phone rule is using your cell phone as a calculator or to look something up online as a part of class participation. Other than these two exceptions, phones belong in bags.
- You may not use your laptop during class for anything other than class-related activities.
- Instructors work closely with the Student Success Manager. To help provide resources to students who may need it most, I will communicate the names of students who have two consecutive absences, low grades, or any other signs that they may be struggling. The Student Success Manager will reach out to these students and help find appropriate resources.

## **Class Attendance**

Students are responsible for enrolling in courses for which they anticipate being able to attend every class session on the day and time appearing on course schedules, and then making every effort to do so. When unavoidable situations result in absence or tardiness, students are responsible for acquiring any information missed. Instructors are not obliged to allow students to make up missed work. Per their independent discretion, individual instructors may determine how attendance affects students' ability to meet course learning objectives and whether attendance affects course grades.

## **Campus Closure**

To ensure the health and safety of students and employees, college administrators may decide it is necessary on rare occasions to close the campus. Once this decision is announced, instructors will contact students to provide further details regarding the campus closure's impact on those courses. Students are responsible to watch for communication from their instructors and respond appropriately. (Unless otherwise specified by the instructor in this syllabus, this communication will be sent to the student's Criswell College e-mail account.)

In order to make progress toward the courses' objectives, instructors have the freedom during most campus closures to require students to participate in activities as alternatives to meeting on campus. An instructor may, for example, hold class remotely (through Zoom) at the scheduled time, provide a recording of a class or presentation for students to watch independently, or assign other activities that students are to accomplish

before returning to campus. Students are responsible for accomplishing these alternative activities as well as any course requirements listed in this syllabus during the period of the campus closure. If, during the period of the campus closure, personal circumstances prohibit a student from accomplishing these alternative activities or course requirements and assignment listed in the syllabus during the campus closure, the student is responsible for communicating with the instructor as soon as possible. Instructors will not penalize students who do not have the means to accomplish the alternative activities during the period of the campus's closure and will work with students whose circumstances during the campus closure prohibited their timely completion of course requirements and assignments in the syllabus.

## Grading Scale

			Grade Definitions (optional)
A	93-100	4.0 grade points per semester hour	Exceptional
A-	90-92	3.7 grade points per semester hour	
B+	87-89	3.3 grade points per semester hour	
B	83-86	3.0 grade points per semester hour	Above Average
B-	80-82	2.7 grade points per semester hour	
C+	77-79	2.3 grade points per semester hour	
C	73-76	2.0 grade points per semester hour	Average
C-	70-72	1.7 grade points per semester hour	
D+	67-69	1.3 grade points per semester hour	
D	63-66	1.0 grade point per semester hour	Below Average
D-	60-62	0.7 grade points per semester hour	
F	0-59	0.0 grade points per semester hour	Unacceptable

## Incomplete Grades

Students requesting a grade of Incomplete (I) must understand that incomplete grades may be given only upon approval of the faculty member involved. An "I" may be assigned only when a student is currently passing a course and in situations involving extended illness, serious injury, death in the family, or employment or government reassignment, not student neglect.

Students are responsible for contacting their instructors prior to the end of the semester, plus filing the appropriate completed and approved academic request form with the Registrar's Office. The "I" must be removed (by completing the remaining course requirements) no later than 60 calendar days after the close of the term or semester in which the grade was awarded, or the "I" will become an "F."

## Academic Honesty

Absolute truth is an essential belief and basis of behavior for those who believe in a God who cannot lie and forbids falsehood. Academic honesty is the application of the principle of truth in the classroom setting. Academic honesty includes the basic premise that all work submitted by students must be their own and any ideas derived or copied from elsewhere must be carefully documented.

Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to:

- cheating of any kind,
- submitting, without proper approval, work originally prepared by the student for another course,
- plagiarism, which is the submitting of work prepared by someone else as if it were his own, and
- failing to credit sources properly in written work.

## **Institutional Assessment**

Material submitted by students in this course may be used for assessment of the college's academic programs. Since programmatic and institutional assessment is done without reference to specific students, the results of these assessments have no effect on a student's course grade or academic standing at the college. Before submitting a student's work for this type of assessment, the course instructor redacts the work to remove anything that identifies the student.

## **Institutional Email Policy**

All official college email communications to students enrolled in this course will be sent exclusively to students' institutional email accounts. Students are expected to check their student email accounts regularly and to respond in an appropriate and timely manner to all communications from faculty and administrative departments.

Students are permitted to setup automatic forwarding of emails from their student email accounts to one or more personal email accounts. The student is responsible to setup and maintain email forwarding without assistance from college staff. If a student chooses to use this forwarding option, he/she will continue to be responsible for responding appropriately to all communications from faculty and administrative departments of the college. Criswell College bears no responsibility for the use of emails that have been forwarded from student email accounts to other email accounts.

## **Disabilities**

Criswell College recognizes and supports the standards set forth in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, and similar state laws, which are designed to eliminate discrimination against qualified individuals with disabilities. Criswell College is committed to making reasonable accommodations for qualifying students, faculty, and employees with disabilities as required by applicable laws. For more information, please contact the Student Services Office.

## **Intellectual Property Rights**

Unless otherwise specifically instructed in writing by the instructor, students must neither materially nor digitally reproduce materials from any course offered by Criswell College for or with the significant possibility of distribution.

## **Resources and Supports**

Canvas and SONIS: Criswell College uses Canvas as its web-based learning tool and SONIS for student data. Students needing assistance with Canvas should contact the Canvas Help Support line at (844) 358-6140. Tech support is available at this number, twenty-four hours a day. Students needing help with SONIS should contact the Campus Software Manager at [studenttechsupport@criswell.edu](mailto:studenttechsupport@criswell.edu).

Student Services: The Student Services Office exists to foster and encourage success in all areas of life—physical, intellectual, spiritual, social, and emotional. Students are encouraged to reach out for assistance by contacting the office at 214.818.1332 or [studentservices@criswell.edu](mailto:studentservices@criswell.edu). Pastoral and certified counseling services are also available to Criswell students. Appointments are scheduled through the Dean of Students, at [deanofstudents@criswell.edu](mailto:deanofstudents@criswell.edu).

Wallace Library: Students can access academic resources and obtain research assistance by contacting or visiting the Wallace Library, which is located on campus. For more information, email the Wallace Library at [library@criswell.edu](mailto:library@criswell.edu). Offsite login information is available in Canvas in the “Criswell Student Training Course” under “Library Information.”

Tutoring Center: Students are encouraged to consult with tutors to improve and enhance their skills and confidence in any subject matter taught at the college. Tutors have been recommended by the faculty to ensure that the tutor(s) are qualified to serve the student body. Every tutor brings experience and expertise in an effort to provide the proper resources for the subject matter at hand. To consult with a tutor, students can visit the Tutoring Center located on the second floor in room E203, or schedule an appointment by emailing [tutoringcenter@criswell.edu](mailto:tutoringcenter@criswell.edu) or by calling 214.818.1373.

### Course Outline/Calendar

Date	Reading Due	Assignments Due
August 17 • Course Introduction • Syllabus • Tools for academic success		
August 19		
August 24	• Ch. 1 Foundations of Research Methods	• Ch. 1 Reading Quiz • Paper topic due
August 26		
August 31	• Ch. 2 Ethics	• Ch. 2 Reading Quiz
September 2 • Research Question and Introduction Workshop		• Research Question and Introduction Draft due
September 7	• Ch. 3 Qualitative Approaches to Research	• Ch. 3 Reading Quiz
September 9		
September 14	• Ch. 4 Sampling	• Ch. 4 Reading Quiz

September 16 • Research Question and Introduction Presentations		• Research Question and Introduction due
September 21	• Ch. 5 Introduction to Measurement	• Ch. 5 Reading Quiz
September 23		
September 28	• Ch. 6 Scales, Tests, and Indexes	• Ch. 6 Reading Quiz
September 30 • Literature Review Workshop		• Literature Review Draft due
October 5	• Ch. 7 Survey Research	• Ch. 7 Reading Quiz
October 7 • Literature Review Presentations		• Literature Review due
October 12	<b>No Class – Student Development Week</b>	
October 14	<b>No Class – Student Development Week</b>	
October 19	• Ch. 8 Introduction to Design	• Ch. 8 Reading Quiz
October 21 • Data Description Workshop		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Midterm Exam Due 10/24 at 11:59pm</b></li> <li>• Midterm Exam is on Canvas.</li> <li>• Midterm Exam covers all lecture and reading material from 8/16 – 10/13.</li> <li>• Data Description Draft due</li> </ul>
October 26	• Ch. 9 Experimental Design	• Ch. 9 Reading Quiz
October 28 • Data Description Presentations		• Data Description due
November 2	• Ch. 10 Quasi-Experimental Design	• Ch. 10 Reading Quiz
November 4		
November 9	• Ch. 11 Introduction to Data Analysis	• Ch. 11 Reading Quiz
November 11		
November 16	• Ch. 12 Inferential Analysis	• Ch. 12 Reading Quiz
November 18 • Research Design Workshop		• Research Design Drafts due
November 23	<b>No Class – Fall Break</b>	
November 25	<b>No Class – Fall Break</b>	
November 30	• Ch. 13 Research Communication	• Ch. 13 Reading Quiz

December 2 • Research Design Full Paper Presentations		• Research Design due
December 7	<b><u>No Class</u></b>	
December 9		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b><u>Final Exam Due 12/10 at 11:59pm</u></b></li> <li>• Final exam is on Canvas.</li> <li>• Final exam covers all lecture and reading material from 10/18 – 12/6.</li> </ul>

***The descriptions and timelines contained in this syllabus are subject to change at the discretion of the Professor.***

## Addendum 1

### POL 200 Research Design Writing Assignment

Over the course of the semester, you will complete four short writing assignments, each constituting 10 percent of your final grade. Each assignment should meet the requirements and guidelines outlined below. The due dates for each assignment are listed on the course syllabus.

The “Research Question and Introduction” should be just that – an introduction to the question and topic you have chosen write on throughout the semester. This paper’s purpose is to contain the motivating facts of your question. In this first paper you should explain what you are and are not asking. Provide clarification to anyone who may confuse the question you’re asking with a different one. For example, you might ask “why are some countries democracies?” By this, you might be asking about the moral impetus by which some leaders or citizens form democracies and others don’t. You could be asking about the means or mechanisms by which a democratic spirit is fostered. You might be asking a conceptual question about what qualities and characteristics make us consider one country a democracy and another country not a democracy. In this first paper you will explain which question you are asking.

The literature review should move beyond the reporting of facts and the clarification of topics and questions that take place in the first paper. In the “Literature Review” I expect you to synthesize what scholars before you have said about your topic. How have others answered the question? How have they conceptualized the topic and question? What data sources and methods have they used? Why the variety in data and methods from one study to another? Where and why do other scholars disagree? Do you prefer one data source or method to another? Is one area of the literature more right or wrong than another? The purpose of a literature review is to establish for your reader your place in the literature. Without a literature review I, the reader, have no way of knowing whether what you are saying is new, controversial, revolutionary, etc. Use the literature review as an opportunity to tell your readers why your paper exists – because you have something new to say!

The final two papers will progress beyond fact reporting, question clarification, and literature synthesis to the meat and potatoes of what makes your study possible – the data (paper three) and methods (that you will use to answer your question). On the basis of the research question you described in the first paper and in light of the literature you reviewed, paper three, “Data Description,” will do just this – describe the data. You will explain why you chose the data source that you chose. What kind of data are you using? What are the pros and cons of using this data? What possible critiques do you expect for your choice of data. How do you respond to these critiques?

Finally, in your “Research Design” paper, paper four, you will tell the reader the methods you are using to analyze your data. Why this design over another design? What problems does this design solve? What problems does it create? What critiques do you expect to receive regarding your choice of research design? How do you respond to these critiques?



**Paper guidelines:**

- Double spaced – no extra space between paragraphs
- 12 pt Times New Roman Font
- 1 inch margins
- 500-600 words per assignment. This does not include reference pages or cover sheet.
- Assignment must be submitted electronically, via Canvas as a .pdf document. The file name must follow the format “LastName\_AssignmentName”. In the header of each assignment, include your full name and assignment name. Assignments uploaded with the wrong file name or in the wrong file type will be penalized 10 points.
- Late assignments will be penalized 7 points per day
- Paper should be in Chicago or Turabian style including a bibliography.
- The policy Literature Review should contain 4-6 scholarly, references. The policy introduction, analysis and recommendations can and should make reference to these 4-6 sources when and where it is deemed necessary.