

Research Methods – Fall 2019  
PS/CJ 3115, Section 103  
MWF 10:00a.m. – 10:50a.m.  
Room: BH 223

## Contact Information

Instructor: Dr. William D. Hicks  
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Office Hours: 12:00p.m.-1:00p.m., MTW

## Course Objectives and Learning Outcomes

This course introduces students to social science research with three goals in mind. First, I will familiarize students with the philosophy of science and how the scientific approach is used to answer questions of human behavior. Second, students will develop the skills to comprehend and criticize existing social science research, whether it comes from popular or academic sources. Finally, students will learn how to conduct research on their own - i.e., how to generate reliable and valid conclusions about human behavior. To the extent that I'm successful, this class will make students better consumers and producers of scientific research.

## Required Texts and Materials

Wheelan, Charles. 2014. Naked Statistics: Stripping the Dread from the Data. W.W. Norton & Company. ISBN: 9780393347777

## Exams & Graded Activities

Exams: 30% of each student's grade is based on his or her performance on two non-cumulative exams. These exams are comprised of multiple choice, true/false, and short answer questions. **If**

**a student misses an exam, they have no more than 24 hours after the time of the exam to notify me of this absence in order to qualify for a makeup.**

Quizzes: 20% of each student's grade is based on his or her performance on periodic quizzes. I will give students roughly one quiz per week, typically administered at the end of class.

Research Project: 30% of students' grade is based on their performance on a research project. In groups of 3 to 4, students will develop and administer a survey **with an imbedded experiment** on a topic of their choosing. I break this project into smaller, manageable steps, which I describe in the table below. I will discuss this more in class.

Research Project Components

Component	Worth
Research Question & Significance	10%
Statement of Methodology	30%
Questionnaire & Experiment	30%
Survey Analysis	30%

Labs: Finally, 20% of students' grade is based on their performance in the lab. Your lab syllabus will contain all of the activities, assignments, and tests that go into this grade.

## Course Grades

<i>Grading Scale</i>			<i>Grade Requirements</i>
A	94-100	C	74-76
A-	90-93	C-	70-73
B+	87-89	D+	67-69
B	84-86	D	64-66
B-	80-83	D-	60-63
C+	77-79	F	0-59
		Exam 1	15%
		Exam 2	15%
		Quizzes	20%
		Labs	20%
		Research Project	30%

## Absence Policies

I will not take attendance everyday. That said, I will have pop-quizzes, which I usually administer at the end of class. Students who are not present will earn a zero on these quizzes. As such, attendance will strongly shape students' grades directly via their quiz grade. Additionally, attendance in my classes always positively shapes students' scores on the exams. **If a student misses an exam, they have no more than 24 hours after the time of the exam to notify me of this absence in order to qualify for a makeup.**

## **Student Conduct**

As a community of learners at Appalachian State University, we must create an atmosphere of honesty, fairness, and responsibility, without which we cannot earn the trust and respect of each other. Furthermore, we recognize that academic dishonesty detracts from the value of an Appalachian degree. Therefore, we shall not tolerate lying, cheating, or stealing in any form and will oppose any instance of academic dishonesty. This course will follow the provisions of the Academic Integrity Code, which can be found on the Office of Student Conduct Web Site:

[www.studentconduct.appstate.edu](http://www.studentconduct.appstate.edu).

## **Statement on Student Engagement with Courses**

In its mission statement, Appalachian State University aims at “providing undergraduate students a rigorous liberal education that emphasizes transferable skills and preparation for professional careers” as well as “maintaining a faculty whose members serve as excellent teachers and scholarly mentors for their students.” Such rigor means that the foremost activity of Appalachian students is an intense engagement with their courses. In practical terms, students should expect to spend two to three hours of studying for every hour of class time. Hence, a fifteen-hour academic load might reasonably require between 30 and 45 hours per week of out-of-class work.

## **Disability Support Services**

Appalachian State University is committed to making reasonable accommodations for individuals with documented qualifying disabilities in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Those seeking accommodations based on a substantially limiting disability must contact and register with The Office of Disability Services (ODS) at [http://www.ods.appstate.edu/](http://www.ods.appstate.edu) or 828-262-3056. Once registration is complete, individuals will meet with ODS staff to discuss eligibility and appropriate accommodations.

## **Religious Observances Policy**

Faculty members are required to make reasonable accommodations for students requesting to miss class due to the observance of religious holidays. All ASU students are allowed a minimum of two absences per year for religious observances. Up to two absences for such observances will be excused, without penalty to the student, provided that the student has informed the instructor in the manner specified in the syllabus. Notice must be given by the student to the instructor before the absence occurs and no later than three weeks after the start of the semester in which the absence(s) will occur. Arrangements will be made to make up work missed by these religious observances, without penalty to the student. For the purposes of this policy, ASU defines the term “religious observance” to include religious holidays, holy days, or similar observances associated with a student’s faith that require absence from class. Faculty, at their discretion, may

include class attendance as a criterion in determining a student's final grade in the course. On the first day of class, faculty must inform students of their class attendance policy and the effect of that policy on their final grade; both policies must be clearly stated in the class syllabus.

## **Syllabus Change Policy**

This syllabus is only a guide for the course and is subject to change with advanced notice.

## **Course Schedule**

### **Monday, August 19**

Course Introduction

### **Wednesday, August 21**

Empirical Questions & Hypotheses: Wheelan, Chapter 1

### **Friday, August 23**

Empirical Questions & Hypotheses: Wheelan, Chapter 1

### **Monday, August 26**

Measurement & Variables: Pollock Essentials, Ch. 1 & 2

### **Wednesday, August 28**

Measurement & Variables: Pollock Essentials, Ch. 1 & 2

### **Friday, August 30 - NO CLASS**

### **Monday, September 2 - NO CLASS**

### **Wednesday, September 4**

Research Design, Experiments, Causality: Pollock Essentials, Ch. 4

### **Friday, September 6**

Research Design, Experiments, Causality: Pollock Essentials, Ch. 4

**Monday, September 9**

Samples & Surveys: Clawson and Oxley, Appendix to Ch. 1

**Wednesday, September 11**

Samples & Surveys: Clawson and Oxley, Appendix to Ch. 1

**Friday, September 13**

Samples & Surveys: Clawson and Oxley, Appendix to Ch. 1

**Monday, September 16**

Survey Experiments: Harrison & Michelson 2016, PS: Political Science & Politics

**Wednesday, September 18**

Survey Experiments: Harrison & Michelson 2016, PS: Political Science & Politics

**Friday, September 20**

Survey Experiments: TBD

[Survey Projects: Questions & Significance](#)

**Monday, September 23**

Descriptive Statistics: Wheelan, Chapters 2 & 3

**Wednesday, September 25**

Descriptive Statistics: Wheelan, Chapters 2 & 3

**Friday, September 27**

Descriptive Statistics: Wheelan, Chapters 2 & 3

**Monday, September 30**

Probability: Wheelan, Chapters 5 & 6

**Wednesday, October 2**

Probability: Wheelan, Chapters 5 & 6

**Friday, October 4**

**Exam 1**

**Monday, October 7**

Making Comparisons – Crosstabs

**Wednesday, October 9**

Making Comparisons – Crosstabs

**Friday, October 11**

Qualtrics Overview

[Survey Projects Methodology](#)

**Monday, October 14 - NO CLASS**

**Wednesday, October 16**

Making Comparisons – Correlation: Wheelan, Chapter 4

**Friday, October 18**

Making Comparisons – Correlation: Wheelan, Chapter 4

**Monday, October 21**

Inference & Hypothesis Testing: Wheelan, Chapter 7 & 8

**Wednesday, October 23**

Inference & Hypothesis Testing: Wheelan, Chapter 7 & 8

## **Friday, October 25**

Inference & Hypothesis Testing: Wheelan, Chapter 7 & 8

## **Monday, October 28**

Inference & Means: Wheelan, Ch. 9

## **Wednesday, October 30**

Inference & Means: Wheelan, Ch. 9

## **Friday, November 1**

Inference & Means: Wheelan, Ch. 9

[Survey Projects: Questionnaire & Experiment \(i.e., submit link\)](#)

## **Monday, November 4**

Inference & Proportions: Wheelan, Ch. 10

## **Wednesday, November 6**

Inference & Proportions: Wheelan, Ch. 10

## **Friday, November 8**

Inference & Proportions: Wheelan, Ch. 10

## **Monday, November 11**

Intro to Regression: Wheelan, Ch. 11

## **Wednesday, November 13**

Intro to Regression: Wheelan, Ch. 11

## **Friday, November 15**

Intro to Regression: Wheelan, Ch. 11

**Monday, November 18**

Regression: Wheelan, Ch. 12

**Wednesday, November 20**

Regression: Wheelan, Ch. 12

**Friday, November 22**

**Exam 2**

**Monday, November 25**

Survey Project Analysis Discussion

**Wednesday, November 27 - NO CLASS**

**Friday, November 29 - NO CLASS**

**Monday, December 2**

**Survey Project Analysis**