



**PST 5151 RESEARCH METHODS AND ANALYSIS  
IN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES  
COURSE SYLLABUS  
FALL 2026**

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## *Research Methods*

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This is a three-credit, introductory course in qualitative and quantitative research methods, designed to provide the student with an overview of basic concepts, tools, design, and ethical issues encountered in research investigation, as well as writing the research report (article, thesis, dissertation, etc.).

“Research” in this course is used in the sense of being a systematic procedure that is undertaken to advance human knowledge, is goal oriented toward answering specific questions, and involves interpretation of the facts discovered—that is, empirical research as opposed to simply gathering known facts and transposing them. Included in the course is an overview of diverse research methods, including survey, historical research, content analysis, participant and non-participant observation, and experimental design. The inclusion of an overview of statistical means of data interpretation allows the student to explore quantitative means that can be applied to social sciences and peace studies and to better understand such applications in published papers. Legal and ethical issues related to research, including research with human subjects, also is a cornerstone of the course.

### **STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Upon the conclusion of the course, the student will be familiar with:

1. Various methods of conducting research (survey, content analysis, etc.)
2. The tools of research
3. General statistical measures available for research
4. Assessing the published empirical research of others
5. Writing a quality research report
6. Improvement of writing skills, especially those skills concerned with accurate communication of information and rational arguments
7. Guidelines on ethical components of conducting research, including with human subjects

## Student Learning Outcomes Rubric

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Progressing</b>	<b>Fair</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
1. Familiarity with various methods of conducting research (survey, content analysis, historical, participant and non-participant, experimental, etc.)	Ability to name several different research methods	Ability to demonstrate an inconsistent or incomplete knowledge of the diverse research methods presented	Ability to demonstrate a mostly clear and concise knowledge of the diverse research methods presented	Ability to demonstrate clear and concise knowledge of the diverse research methods presented, to critique strengths and weaknesses and applicability of each, and practical experience with at least one
2. Familiarity with tools of research	Ability to name several tools of research	Ability to demonstrate an inconsistent or incomplete knowledge of the tools of research	Ability to demonstrate a mostly clear and concise knowledge of the tools of research	Ability to demonstrate a clear and concise knowledge and practical experience with various tools of research
3. Familiarity with the general statistical measures available for research	Ability to recognize some of the general terms and parametric and non-parametric statistical tests used in research	Ability to demonstrate basic, but incomplete, knowledge of statistical tests and when they can be applied.	Ability to compare and contrast the various statistical tests and the situations to which they can be applied.	Ability to demonstrate clear knowledge of several parametric and non-parametric statistical tests and when they can be applied and practical experience with one.
4. Ability to access the published empirical research of others.	Familiarity with reading published accounts involving true research	Ability to basically outline the published, empirical research of others in terms of statistics used, conclusions drawn, organization, and research method used.	Ability to demonstrate comprehension of the published, empirical research of others in terms of statistics used, conclusions drawn, references cited, organization, and design used.	Ability to identify some weaknesses in published research of others in terms of statistics used, conclusions drawn, organization, design flaws, references cited, or other components.
5. Ability to write a quality research report.	Ability to identify the components of a complete research article, thesis, or dissertation (abstract, introduction, methodology, etc.)	Ability to produce a respectable, but incomplete or inadequately written research report.	Ability to produce a generally acceptable research report, but with some notable flaws.	Demonstrates the crafting of a well-written, complete, and accurate research report.
6. Improvement of writing skills, especially those skills concerned with accurate communication of information and rational arguments.	Familiarity with importance of writing skills and basic rules of academic writing (including citation options, plagiarism and US copyright rules), but very poorly executed.	Basic ability in academic writing, but with much room for improvement.	Basic proficiency in academic writing, including proper citations skills, punctuation, and so forth, but with some room for improvement.	Demonstrates proficiency in academic writing, including proper citations skills, punctuation, grammar, organization, paragraph structure, and understanding of plagiarism and US copyright rules.

7. Understanding the ethical components of conducting research, including research involving human subjects	Basic but inadequate familiarity and recognition of ethical components of research, including protections for human subjects	Adequate understanding of research ethics and able to provide an example of a research project that would require a human subjects protection protocol	Ability to summarize fundamental research ethics requirements, including policies developed for protection of human subjects.	Can demonstrate excellent understanding of research ethic requirements and those policies developed for protection of human subjects.
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## READINGS

The content of the class is presented in comprehensive PowerPoint presentations, which are made available online. There will also be some supplementary readings added from time to time.

There are no required textbooks. However, there are two texts that the student may find helpful and that served as sources for construction of the course.

Leedy, Paul D., and Jeanne E. Ormrod. 2018. *Practical Research: Planning and Design, 12<sup>th</sup> Ed.* Pearson. ISBN-10: 013374132X. ISBN-13: 978-0134775654. Paperback. (US\$116 new, but can find used versions; Is a newer, 2023 version by just Ormrod that would also be suitable).

Cargan, Leonard. 2007. *Doing Social Research.* Bloomsbury. (ISBN-13: 978-0742547148. Paperback. (US\$58.)

The Leedy/Ormrod text offers both a systematic overview of research methods and attention to writing a research report. The Cargan text is notable for presenting many classic studies illustrating various research methodologies.

## FORMAT OF COURSE

As an online course, students will proceed through a series of modules, one per week. Each module is to be completed prior to moving on to the next module.

Each module will consist of the following components:

1. PowerPoint presentation(s) of the topic
2. Any supplemental readings
3. Short Quiz or Discussion

Each discussion and quiz are graded.

During the course, students also will have to complete six assignments (described below): a topic sentence, a draft literature review, a draft methodology, a sample survey, a research paper, and a final exam.

## **DISCUSSIONS**

For those modules with a discussion, the topics become available for posting on the Monday morning of each week. For each discussion, a student must make an initial post of two or more paragraphs by 11:59PM on Wednesday, and then must reply to one of his or her peers before 11:59PM on Saturday. The discussion closes at 11:59PM on Saturday. A grading rubric will be used to evaluate discussions.

## **QUIZZES**

For modules in which there is a quiz, the questions will be a mixture of objective questions (multiple choice, true/false, matching -- **no** essay, short essay, or fill-in-the-blank type questions) on material covered in the PowerPoint presentations. All quizzes have a time limit of 20 minutes. Quizzes become available on the Monday mornings and must be completed by 11:59PM on Sunday night of that week. Once you begin a quiz, you must finish; there is no re-entry.

## **PAPERS**

During this course, the student **will design** a true research project and submit a final paper with the following components: Title, Abstract, Introduction, Literature Review, Methodology, Results, Discussion, and References Cited.

Note that the student is **not** being asked to actually conduct the research, but to design the research. In lieu of actual results, the student is to submit fictionalized results in order to complete the abstract, results, and discussion sections. The student may choose to actually complete the research endeavor, but is not required to do so. Attempting to collect data within the time constraints of one semester is likely too limiting on the type of research methodologies available.

The student will also submit two short papers: a draft version of the Literature Review and a draft version of the Methodology. The student will then utilize recommendations from the professor relative to the Literature Review and Methodology, and prepare a final version of the Literature Review and a final version of the Methodology, both of which, as long as they are relevant, can be included as part of the larger research paper.

The student will submit a Topic Paragraph for approval of the research project. The student will also submit a short (ten-question) Sample Survey.

**Topic Paragraph.** The Topic Paragraph introduces your research idea and rationale. Students are to present one paragraph (maximum of 150 words) outlining their proposed research topic. At this stage, the topic does not have to be precisely defined and can be more narrowly delineated in subsequent weeks as the student gathers more information, particularly as he or she prepares the Literature Review. But the basic outline of the question to be studied should be presented.

**Literature Review draft.** The Literature Review will be a four- to eight-page, double-spaced paper summarizing five (5) relevant scholarly articles taken from academic journals. An academic book, or article taken from an academic book that is a compilation of articles, may be substituted for one of the scholarly articles. One purely web source may also be submitted for one of the five journal articles. Literature reviews of over eight double-spaced pages will be penalized. The Literature

Review will include proper citations, whether using a (1) notes and bibliography citation system (footnotes or endnotes, such as with AMA style) or a (2) two-part parenthetical documentation system (brief in-text citations—such as author/date, or author/page number—followed by full, alphabetical citations at the end, such as with the APA and MLA styles). While the student may select whatever citation style he or she prefers, the citation style should be consistently followed.

The draft version is to include a short paragraph summarizing the research topic. This paragraph may be incorporated later into the Introduction section in the final paper.

For this course, it is preferred that the Literature Review be written as summaries of relevant articles, one by one, as will be exemplified in samples presented during the course. However, also acceptable is the method exemplified in the “sample literature review” by Leedy & Ormrod (pages 70-73), where references are synthesized “into a cohesive whole,” as long as the research being integrated and summarized in each section involves studies where “researchers have all come to a similar conclusion” and the organizational structure is made very clear to the reader. Both of these styles will be presented in the class.

Please submit this paper in double-spaced format (excepting block quotations in set-off style, which may be single-spaced). This will facilitate the professor’s review and ease of making recommendations for revisions. Also, please set paper size (print function) to letter size (8.5” x 11”) **not** A4. Submit the paper through Canvas.

The “draft” version should still be a strong effort on behalf of the student and will be graded. That is, the student should strive for a Literature Review draft that will need few corrections for the ultimate submission. Once the professor has reviewed and graded the Literature Review draft, the student is expected to make all recommended changes (unless the student can reasonably justify not making any particular recommended change) and submit the revised version in the final paper.

Note: If the student substantially changes his or her research topic after completing the Literature Review draft, then the student will need to submit both a revised Literature Review, incorporating the recommended changes, and a second Literature Review section in the final paper, appropriate for the new research topic. Thus, it is advised the student carefully select his or her research topic before beginning the Literature Review.

**Methodology draft.** The paper on Methodology will detail the research procedure being proposed or undertaken, whether it be survey, content analysis, experimental, scientific observation, or another research method. The student should provide sufficient detail that another researcher would be able to duplicate or undertake the research. As appropriate, the population being studied should be outlined and the sampling technique listed, and any apparent shortcomings of the methodology noted. (In the final paper, the shortcomings would be presented under the Discussion section.)

There are no size limits, minimum or maximum, for the methodology section. The size of the paper will be determined by how much detail is needed to comprehensively describe the procedure. Some submissions may be only two double-spaced pages; some may be considerably longer.

The “draft” version should still be a strong effort on behalf of the student and will be graded. That is, the student should strive for a Methodology paper that will need few corrections for the ultimate submission. Once the professor has reviewed and graded the Methodology draft, the student is expected to make all recommended changes (unless the student can reasonably justify not making any particular recommended change) and submit the revised version in the final paper..

All submissions should be presented in double-spaced format.

For the Methodology draft, the tense of the verbs is of little concern in the grading, as long as consistent. For example, since the student has not yet completed the project, the student may use future

tense in verb selection (such as “One hundred students will be surveyed...”). Or the student may use past tense if desired (eg., “One hundred students were surveyed...”) **However, for the methodology section in the final paper, which is presented on the basis of the research project having been completed, the student should select the verb tense (eg., “past tense”) appropriate to submitting a paper for a completed research project, as if data had actually been gathered** (even if “fictionalized”). (For example, “One hundred students were surveyed.”)

**Sample survey.** The student will present a series of 10+ survey questions designed by the student to investigate a particular issue, which may or may not be related to the proposed research project mentioned above. The paper will include:

- (1) a brief introduction to the purpose of the survey (the research objective);
- (2) a brief overview on how the survey would be conducted (mailed, self-administered questionnaire; person-to-person in-home interview; Internet-based questionnaire utilizing SurveyMonkey; telephone questionnaire; etc.);
- (3) the population on which the survey would be conducted and the sample size (eg., the population may be all HJI alumni and the sample size may be 20 students; or the population may be all US registered voters and the sample may be 1000 registered voters); and
- 4) the survey questions.

The length of the paper (brief intro and survey questions) can range from one to three single-spaced pages in length. If related to the research project, the survey questions may be included in the final research paper, either in the Methodology section or in an Appendix after the References Cited section.

**Research paper.** The main product of this course will be a research paper for an investigation proposed and designed by the student, although not actually conducted (unless the student desires) given the time constraints of this class. Each student will design a research project to address a particular research question. Because of the time constraints, the student **will not** have to conduct the research, but will instead produce **fictionalized results** that can be used for the discussion. That is, the student will invent possible results and then analyze those concocted results in the paper.

The final paper is to be written up as if the research were completed (example: methodology in past tense) and is to have the following components:

- **Title.** Should be descriptive of the project.
- **Abstract.** Should include all the standard components of an abstract, but also include disclaimer that the research was not actually conducted, but that the results are invented as part of an assignment for a Research Methods class.
- **Introduction.** The Introduction is to follow the guidelines for an introduction as presented in the course. For example, it should address what the research question is and why this research question and research project are important. The student may use as part of the Introduction that introductory part of the draft Literature Review that summarizes the research topic. The Introduction should also include the above-mentioned disclaimer that this research project was not actually undertaken but part of an exercise for a class.
- **Literature Review.** Should be authentic, based on actual research studies relevant to the proposed research project.
- **Methodology.** Should be idealized for the particular research project, but will include some fictionalized components since research not actually done. For example, may state that a

telephone survey was conducted between October 10, 2025 and October 17, 2027 among registered voters in the United States.

- **Results.** This will be fictionalized results and any relevant statistics.
- **Discussion.** This will be based on the invented results. Should include any shortcomings of the research (from Methodology draft).
- **References cited.** This will be authentic, using genuine references as cited in the introduction and literature review (and methodology should one reference a particular methodology).

It is acceptable to combine the results and discussion sections if the research supports that organization.

In grading the final paper, it will be assumed that the student has not actually conducted the research, but that the results are fictionalized. If the student has actually conducted the research, this is to be clearly communicated to the professor at the time of submission, in order that the student can receive a bonus for having actually conducted the research.

The proposed research does not need to be extensive; the main criteria is that it be a “true research” project (explained in lectures) and the main deliverable is the paper.

There is no suggested length for the paper, just that it be appropriate to cover the topic. Also, please set paper size (print function) to letter size (8.5” x 11”) **not** A4. Submit the paper through Canvas.

## FINAL EXAM

The final exam, which will be administered online, will have a time limit for completion and must be completed and submitted within two hours from when the test is begun. The final exam will include a mixture of objective questions (multiple choice, true/false, matching — **no** essay, short essay, or fill-in-the-blank type questions) on material covered in the presentations. All material from the first day of the course will be available to be tested. (There will not be any mathematical calculations involved).

## GRADING SCHEME:

Participation in Discussions.....	15%
Quizzes.....	15%
Papers	
Topic paragraph .....	5%
Literature review draft .....	10%
Methodology draft .....	10%
Final paper .....	25%
Sample Survey .....	10%
Final Exam .....	10%

## **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY.**

Plagiarism, cheating, or any other form of academic dishonesty is a fundamental violation of the nature and purposes of HJ International and is expressly prohibited.

### **Plagiarism**

Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of another's words, work, ideas, facts, or conclusions. It can give a reader the false impression that these are one's own ideas, words, and so forth and is considered a serious academic offense. It is not plagiarism when one uses facts that are common knowledge without acknowledging a source, such as "Abraham Lincoln was the 16<sup>th</sup> president of the United States," because one is not claiming or creating the impression of originality when using well-known facts. However, the unacknowledged use of ideas, works, facts, conclusions, or words that originate with another and are not common knowledge, and can reasonably give the impression that these are one's own ideas being presented, does constitute plagiarism.

Charges of plagiarism can be avoided by acknowledging the sources(s) (idea, words, works, etc.) upon which one draws. Direct quotes are either to be (1) enclosed in quotation marks (when integrated into the text) and cited, or (2) set off from the main text as block quotations and cited. Even if this direct quotation is from a well-known work and most people would recognize the source of the quotation, one still needs to identify the work. It is not enough to change the wording of the source: paraphrased content from any source must be cited. Ideas that are not one's own must be cited. (Facts that are common knowledge do not need to be referenced.)

Whether deliberate or accidental, plagiarism is not tolerated. Similarly, self-plagiarism, whereby a student submits the same work for credit to more than one teacher—unless both teachers give their permission—is unacceptable. Students are expected to understand what constitutes plagiarism and how to avoid the charge of plagiarism or unauthorized assistance. For further understanding of this issue, see the document *Class Policy on Plagiarism* by Frederick Swarts.

It is HJI policy that "Each student's work shall be the product of his or her own effort. Plagiarism and other acts of academic dishonesty are serious violations of academic integrity. The penalty for a violation of this nature is suspension or dismissal."

### **Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI)**

"Generative AI" (or "AI") is a machine-based tool that learns from large amounts of data and mimics patterns, creating human-like output (text, images, etc.) in response to user questions and prompts. Examples of a generative AI chatbot includes OpenAI's ChatGPT, Google's Bard, Stability AI's Stable Diffusion, and Github's Copilot. These algorithm-based tools can produce and revise text, generate images, create music and videos, and construct software code.

The professor of this course limits the use of AI to brainstorming, outlining, and producing images or charts; it is not to be used for producing text (including rewording or editing) or generating survey questions, nor for answering quiz or test questions.

As generative AI is not produced by a person, but is algorithm-generated, its output would not be *cited* as one would to avoid plagiarism, but rather would be *disclosed*. In this class, students are to *disclose* if they used generative AI platforms in any portion of completing assignments, and disclose what role such played in their coursework.

It is expressly prohibited to directly present the output of generative AI as one's own work, and it is expressly prohibited to fail to disclose the role that generative AI played in the process of completing any assignment. It is likewise prohibited to reword or paraphrase content derived from generative AI and submit in a way that it would give a reasonable impression to the teacher that this is one's own work independent of a role of generative AI in the process. It would be counterproductive to teach content on writing research reports and improving writing where the content was actually generated by AI not the author.

It is important for the student to also know that content produced by generative AI may be factually inaccurate. Generative AI has produced citations for legal briefs and publications where the papers, and even the authors, do not exist. It has produced content that is itself plagiarized or violated the intellectual property rights of others, and it has fabricated images and experimental data for experiments not actually conducted. It has provided demonstrably false information to prompts, while presenting convincing arguments for its erroneous information. If generative AI is used, it is up to the student to independently verify the accuracy of the content produced.

[This section on IA was modified from a section written by Dr. Frederick Swarts for a student/parent handbook used by a high school.]

### **Netiquette Statement**

When posting online or by email, you need to follow the same ethical standards and laws as you would in face-to-face communications. Your language should be respectful of faculty members and fellow students. Do not post private or confidential information about anyone and do not provide personal information that could put yourself at risk. HJI's Learning Management System has robust security measures to protect communication between teacher and student. Yet, please be aware that anything that you post in discussions and groups in which other students participate can be retrieved by others and copied.

Do not download and share course materials without permission of the instructor, as this may violate copyright. HJI reserves the right to delete postings on HJI-maintained sites that are considered insensitive, harassing, or illegal. Language that is illegal, obscene, defamatory, threatening, infringing of intellectual property rights, invasive of privacy, profane, libelous, threatening, harassing, abusive, hateful or embarrassing to any person or entity, or otherwise, is a violation of the Student Code.

## COURSE SCHEDULE:

<u>Module</u>	<u>Topic</u>	<u>Readings/Assignments</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1	Introduction to course Course requirements	Intro Video PowerPoint #1 Discussion #1	August 24 – 30
2	What research is and what it is not Characteristics and tools of research	PowerPoint #2 Quiz #1	August 31 – Sept. 6
3	Writing of research papers, Part 1 Literature review Ethical and legal issues in writing: plagiarism, copyright law	PowerPoint #3 Discussion #2	September 8 – 13
4	Writing of research papers, Part 2 Citation methods Issues in Writing	PowerPoint #4 Quiz #2 (on modules 3 & 4)	September 14 – 20
<b>Topic Paragraph due September 20</b>			
5.	Quantitative & qualitative research design Overview of research methodologies	PowerPoint #5 Discussion #3	September 21 – 27
6	Measurement Sampling Validity, reliability	PowerPoint #6 Quiz #3 (on modules 5 & 6)	September 28 – Oct. 4
<b>Literature review draft due October 4</b>			
7	Survey research Survey statistics	PowerPoint # 7 Discussion #4	October 5 – October 11
8	Content analysis Historical research	PowerPoints #8 & #9 Quiz # 4 (on modules 7 & 8)	October 12 – 18
<b>Sample survey due October 18</b>			
9	Scientific observations (participant and non-participant)	PowerPoint #10 Discussion #5	October 19 – 25

10	Experimental design and correlation	PowerPoints #11; 11.1; 11.2 PowerPoint 12 Quiz #5 (on modules 9 & 10)	October 26 – Nov. 1
<b>Methodology draft due November 1</b>			
11	Legal and ethical issues in research	PowerPoints #13 & #14 Discussion #6	November 2 – Nov. 8
12	Human subject research ethics	PowerPoints#15 Belmont Report Quiz #6 (on modules 11 & 12)	November 9 – Nov. 15
13	Statistics in general & Parametric Stat.	PowerPoints #16 & #17 Discussion #7	November 16 – Nov. 22

**No Class the Week of November 23 – 29 for Thanksgiving Break (US Holiday)**

14.	Non-parametric statistics	PowerPoint #18 Quiz #7 (on modules 13 & 14)	Nov. 30 – Dec. 6
15	Review, Discussion, and Final Paper	Discussion #8	December 7 – Dec. 13

**Research Paper due December 9**

16	Final Exam		December 14 – Dec. 17
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Please note: The professor reserves the right to make changes in the course schedule and grading scale.