



TROY STATE UNIVERSITY

DRAFT SYLLABUS

This is posted for your info to help you select or prepare for a course. An official version will be ready at or prior to your course start. Texts will be same or very similar. Please check online bookstore for exact texts.

**Course Syllabus**

**Course Title**

**Course Number**

**Term of Course**

**Instructor**

**Prerequisites**

**Class Times**

**Course Description**

**Research Methods**

**PA 6601**

**Term 4: March 15<sup>th</sup> – May 23<sup>rd</sup> (2004)**

Dr. George Nixon (Nik), DPA

**Office Hours:** All emails will be addressed within 24 hours of receipt, Monday through Friday. For phone and facsimile points of contact, please see the Faculty Information component of the course web site.

It is anticipated that students will possess varying degrees of prior knowledge about the field of intergovernmental relations obtained from other graduate and undergraduate courses in American Government, Public Administration, management, psychology, and sociology. It is expected that students are able to write clear, grammatically and syntactically correct papers, and to orally present their ideas.

This online course is ten weeks in length. Each academic week begins on a Monday and ends on Sunday. Coursework for each week of instruction is due no later than Sunday of the assigned week unless otherwise indicated in assignment descriptions.

This course covers basic methods and language of social science research. Prepares students to appreciate the complexities of public policy analysis, personnel selection and advancement, budgetary allocations, and organizational design issues. Explores both quantitative and qualitative methodologies pertaining to public administration research (core course).

**Course Objectives**Students completing this course should:

- Describe the research process and explain its relationship to basic, applied, and evaluative research.
- Create, analyze, and apply research models and designs
- Comprehend and apply methods to address the concepts of internal and external validity in research design
- Comprehend and apply the concepts of informed consent and confidentiality
- Comprehend and apply the concepts of validity and reliability in data collection instruments
- Analyze current research problems in the field of public administration
- Comprehend the ethical issues associated with research
- Comprehend and apply basic descriptive and inferential statistical analysis techniques to evaluate issues pertaining to public administration

**Text**

Frankfort-Nachmias, C., and Nachmias, D. Research Methods in the Social Sciences, 6<sup>th</sup> Ed., Worth Publishers, 2000.  
ISBN 1-57259-794-1 (Earlier editions unacceptable)

**Other Materials**

Students will be directed to use the TSU online library and other Internet resources to accomplish various assignments. Assignment instructions will be elaborated in the course web site.

**Methods of Instruction**

This is an internet-based course that assumes the student will log in a minimum of three days during each academic week. It is not an independent study course; students are required to communicate and collaborate with each other and with the course instructor each week as assigned and to deliver academic products as assigned and when due. Learning methods include assigned readings, peer-to-peer online, asynchronous discussions, group collaborations, research and writing and feedback, testing, and select digital audio and digital content. While this robust set of instructional tools is employed, a great deal of the learning is self-directed and requires considerable self-discipline.

**Course Outline**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Textbook Chapters</b>	<b>Activities</b>
<b>1</b>	March 15 <sup>th</sup> – 21 <sup>st</sup>	1, 2	Discussion
<b>2</b>	March 22 <sup>nd</sup> – 28 <sup>th</sup>	3, 4	Discussion, Homework
<b>3</b>	March 29 <sup>th</sup> – April 4 <sup>th</sup>	5, 6	Discussion, Homework
<b>4</b>	April 5 <sup>th</sup> – 11 <sup>th</sup>	7, 8	Discussion, Homework
<b>5</b>	April 12 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup>	No textbook reading assignment	Proctored Exam
<b>6</b>	April 19 <sup>th</sup> – 25 <sup>th</sup>	9, 10	Group Project begins; homework
<b>7</b>	April 26 <sup>th</sup> – May 2 <sup>nd</sup>	11, 12	Discussion, Homework
<b>8</b>	May 3 <sup>rd</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup>	13, 14	Discussion, Group Project Due
<b>9</b>	May 10 <sup>th</sup> – 16 <sup>th</sup>	15, 16	Discussion,
<b>10</b>	May 17 <sup>th</sup> – 23 <sup>rd</sup>	17, 18	Final Exam

[Go to next page for grading information.]

**Grading Information**

Assignments will be posted on a weekly basis in the appropriate area of the course web site. Each student's end of course grade will be determined by the quality of academic performance demonstrated in the assigned activities. Also, the end of course grade will be weighted proportionately as indicated on the table, below.

Activity/Element	Percent of grade	Numerical/Letter Grading Table
1. Threaded Discussions	25	90 - 100 = A
2. Weekly Homework	25	80 - 89 = B 70 - 79 = C
		60 - 69 = D
3. Proctored Exam	20	< 60 = F
4. Final Exam	15	
5. Group Study Project	15	

**Activity/Element Descriptions**

1. **Threaded discussions.** During each module, relevant topics will be identified for class discussion. Students are expected to participate throughout the week, providing not only their own positions but also participating in academic dialogue with their classmates (student-to-student) and instructor (student-to-instructor). Minimum satisfactory participation is defined as posting a total of at least three responses, each provided on different days in any week a discussion topic is assigned. Grades are based on the degree of knowledge you display, the clarity of thought you portray, the quality of your interaction with others and your facility in applying the concepts mentioned in your textbook and associated readings.

2. **Weekly Homework.** Weekly homework may take several forms. Students may be assigned discussion questions from textbook end of chapter reviews, they may be assigned essays or WWW web searches, or they may be assigned short quizzes.

3. **Proctored Exam.** During week five, you will write a proctored examination. The examination not only tests your cumulative knowledge of course material but also it allows us to ensure the integrity of your work. The examination may consist of the following test items: matching, true-false, and short-sentence completion. It will also contain a significant written essay portion. This will be a closed book test. The examination will contain clear instructions on the weighting of various portions. Grades will be based on the correctness of answers as well as the degree of knowledge you display and the clarity of thought you portray in written communications.

**Activity/Element  
Descriptions**

(Continued)

**Course Policies**

4. **Final Exam.** During week ten you will complete an open-book, cumulative examination in the form of an online exam. Test items will be similar in structure to those mentioned above in the description of the proctored examination. Grades will be based on the correctness of answers as well as the degree of knowledge you display and the clarity of thought you portray in written communications.

5. **Group Study Project.** In week six, you will be assigned to a group of about five students, which will be given a research topic. You will work together to produce (1) an outline of a report for approval, (2) a draft of the report for approval, and (3) a final report on the assigned topic. Report length, format, and style requirements will be described in the appropriate assignments area of our course web site. This activity will last three weeks. Additional instructions and assignment elaboration will be provided on the class website.

**Note:** Instructor reserves the right to deviate from the course outline and activity descriptions indicated above. These are meant to provide a general instructional plan and are not to be construed as a contract of any sort.

**Make-up/Absence Assignment Policy**

Students must participate in on-line courses, submitting on-time assignments each week. Student failures to fully participate should be rare exceptions and not the rule. If any part of course work is missed, either excused or unexcused, it must be made up.

Make-up assignments must be arranged with the professor in person. At a minimum, students will be required to submit 3-5 typed pages summarizing **each** of the chapters/readings assigned for the week missed. These summaries are due by Wednesday of the week following the missed module assignment. Scheduled assignments submitted late for **any** reason will be marked down at a rate of 10% of the total possible points.

**Effort**

Students should spend 6-8 hours minimum per week on this class. Log in to the course site, participate in the topic discussions, and do the assigned tasks at least three times per week. Take care not to fall behind; online course work is difficult and sometimes impossible (e.g., missed discussions) to fully make up if the original opportunity is lost.

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## University Policies

## Learning Resources

### Americans With Disabilities Act

Any student whose disabilities fall within ADA must inform the instructor at the beginning of the term of any special needs or equipment necessary to accomplish the requirements of this course.

### Standards of Conduct

The commission of or the attempt to commit any cheating and/or plagiarism are in violation of the Standard of Conduct stated in the *Troy State University Student Handbook*. Any student committing any of these offenses may be disciplined, up to and including suspension and expulsion. **Plagiarism is the use of words or ideas from someone else's work without giving them credit. Plagiarism occurs when you represent the words or ideas of another person as your own. It is academic and intellectual theft. To commit such an offense, whether it is in a research paper, an exam, an oral presentation, or any other course assignment, is unacceptable. The policy in this class will be that students who plagiarize will fail the course. Using another's work, regardless of the source, diminishes your credibility as a professional, and by association, it reduces the integrity of the discipline in general. Therefore, plagiarism in any form must be dealt with severely. Any papers prepared by someone other than the students in this class or which contain improperly cited quotations will receive an automatic F.**

Troy State University has an excellent on-line library to serve you. For graduate research, your most likely sources are professional and academic journals and there are numerous journal databases available for your use. Visit [www.tsulearn.net](http://www.tsulearn.net) and enter the library section to discover how to navigate through the various sources present there. In addition, your TSU site staff can provide you with a copy of *Troy State University Library Services on the World Wide Web*. to get you started.

<p><b>Hardware &amp; Software Requirements</b></p>	<p>Troy State University online courses require that the student have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Access to a PC with the Windows 98 or higher operating system, or a Macintosh OS7 or higher.</li> <li>➤ Connection to the internet and an email account</li> <li>➤ Internet Explorer or Netscape browser, version 3 or higher java-enabled browser</li> <li>➤ Microsoft Word or WordPerfect word processing software</li> <li>➤ Connection to a printer</li> </ul>
<p><b>Technology Usage Policy</b></p>	<p>The University's Information Technology System includes computing, information, technology and network resources. All users of this technology system are obligated to utilize the various resources responsibly, legally and ethically for their intended purpose. All students should read the policy before participating in online course activities.</p>
<p><b>Student Support</b></p>	<p>Distance learning administrative support is available online at <a href="http://www.tsulearn.net">http://www.tsulearn.net</a>.</p> <p>Distance learning staff are identified at <a href="http://www.tsulearn.net">http://www.tsulearn.net</a> -- "Contact Us".</p> <p>Assistance is available to students who experience difficulty using technology at the BlackBoard access web-page located at <a href="http://www.tsulearn.net">http://www.tsulearn.net</a> -- "Access BlackBoard".</p>
<p><b>Additional Information</b></p>	<p>The course is presented in an asynchronous distance learning format. Participants are free to participate at times and places of their own choosing. All correspondence should be sent electronically since this is the primary mode of communication. When doing so, provide the following information in the subject line or at the top of the page (in this order): Course number, Last Name, First Name, Subject of Correspondence (reference assignment).</p>
<p><b>Supplemental Course Information</b></p>	<p>Throughout the course, supplemental materials may be made available to students. These supplemental materials will outline some of the major points covered in the reading assignments and in the lectures. This material will be made available as appropriate, and may also serve as a discussion-generating device. The lectures may address some of the points posed in the supplemental material and provide examples of how these central concepts pertain to research methods and design.</p>