

**San José State University**  
**Political Science**  
**PADM 212 – Administrative Research Methods**  
**Spring 2018**

**Course and Contact Information**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Matthew Record
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	MW 2:00-3:00, 4:30-6:00 and by appointment (including weekends)
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Wed, 6:00-8:45p
<b>Classroom:</b>	Clark Hall (Cl) 306

**Welcome!**

Welcome to PADM 212 – Administrative Research Methods! This course will likely one of the most challenging you take in the MPA program but, also, likely one of the most rewarding. At the end of this class, you should have a strong understanding of the practical applications of statistics for social science research and you will be able to utilize a professional statistical research package to that end. In a very real and practical way, you will leave this class with a genuinely new set of skills and tools.

However, learning anything new can be scary and intimidating. The majority of the students in this class are working professionals and all of you are college graduates. As such, you are accustomed to a certain level of competence and certainty in your day-to-day life. You will need to shed that as you embark upon this class. You are learning something brand new and that can feel intimidating and, often, uncomfortable. Fear not! Everyone else is in the same boat as you and I, myself, was once in your shoes as well. As we all work together toward this new knowledge, rest assured, I will be doing everything I can to make the journey as comfortable as possible for you. So long as you are doing your best, you will be fine (even if it doesn't feel that way at the time).

**Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging**

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, can be found on the Canvas learning management system course website. Please make sure you are consistently reachable via the messaging system as e-mails through the Canvas system and the student's individual e-mails are how I maintain contact with the class over the course of the semester. The responsibility for being up-to-date on developments in the class and assignments lies with the student.

By enrolling in this course you consent to all course requirements listed in this syllabus, published on our Canvas site, and announced in class. You accept responsibility for accessing the Canvas course website to

download any required handouts, assignments, or readings. You also accept responsibility for checking the course website regularly for any announcements. You also accept responsibility for receiving any messages sent via the MySJSU email system. Make sure that MySJSU has your current email address. Contact me by Thursday of week one if you cannot access the Canvas website, download and read .pdf files, link to other websites, or send or receive email.

### **Course Description**

**From the SJSU Course Catalog:** The study and application of principles and methods of social science research and evaluation in a public administration context. Emphasis on learning research designs and using statistics and computers. Prerequisite: Statistics.

The purpose of this course is for students to use analytical tools for collecting, analyzing, presenting, and interpreting data, including appropriate statistical concepts and techniques. Students will learn topics such as research design, statistics, and computer usage in political science and public affairs with an emphasis on the interpretation of results.

### **Learning Outcomes (LO)**

**Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:**

1. **LO1:** Understand the terminology surrounding quantitative data analysis
2. **LO2:** Employ analytical tools for collecting, analyzing, presenting, and interpreting data, including appropriate statistical concepts and techniques
3. **LO3:** Learn to communicate their results effectively to others, including non-experts.

### **Required Texts/Programs**

#### **Textbooks**

- Andy Field, *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS, 4th ed.*, 4th ed. (Sage CQ Press, 2011)  
ISBN# 1446249182

Please note: Older editions of this book is perfectly acceptable to purchase. However, key information, page numbers and chapter numbers may vary from edition to edition. It is the student's responsibility to account for these discrepancies when they exist.

Students are also required to download and have available for their use a copy of SPSS. Students can download this program for free at (<http://its.sjsu.edu/services/software/>)

### **Course Requirements and Assignments**

#### **Written Assignments (Due Before Class, Various Dates)**

Over the course of the semester, students will be given written assignments that may include data analysis utilizing SPSS. Students may, but do not have to, work in groups of up to three people per assignment. Assignments must contain both narrative answers to the substantive questions (when appropriate) and the commands/calculations utilized to derive the results. When answers are incorrect, it is possible for a student to get partial or even full credit on a question if the method for deriving the answer is sound.

However, an such determination would require that students show their work. These assignments should help the students to understand the terminology surrounding quantitative data analysis (LO1). Students will find an assignment for the relevant week through Canvas and will have no less than a week to complete the project once assigned.

**Mid-term Examination (Normal Class Time, March 14<sup>th</sup>)**

Students will take a midterm exam. The exam will test whether a student understands the statistical concepts (LO1) and check whether the student is on the right track for preparing for the empirical research (the final paper).

**Research Proposal and Initial Findings (April 11<sup>th</sup>, Class time)**

Students must submit a document (1-3 pages) outlining a research question relevant to the empirical study of public administration. The document must have a data source, posit a specific hypothesis, backed by high quality administrative sources (academic journals, government reports or books) and present some preliminary descriptive and inferential findings. The purpose of this initial assignment is not perfection but rather to serve as a forcing mechanism to students will not delay in finding in a data source and to get some initial feedback on how the student’s project is shaping up. As well as getting written feedback, the student will have an opportunity to discuss statistical questions relevant to their particular problem in class as well.

**Empirical Report Presentation (April 25<sup>th</sup> and May 6<sup>th</sup>, Class time)**

Students will present the findings from their empirical project in a 5-minute presentation that includes their research question, source of data and preliminary findings. This means that you must develop an interesting research question, develop and find measurement for your study, find a source of data, and provide adequate statistical analyses (CLO2). You are also expected to communicate the results effectively to others, including non-experts, both in your presentation and final paper (CLO3). Please refer to the final paper guidelines, which will be provided on Canvas. The students will make a presentation of their preliminary findings on April 25<sup>th</sup> or May 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Empirical Report (May 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:15 pm)**

Students will develop one empirical project throughout the semester regarding an issue of local governance, administration or policy. This means that you must develop an interesting research question, develop and find measurement for your study, find a source of data, and provide adequate statistical analyses (CLO2). You are also expected to communicate the results effectively to others, including non-experts, both in your presentation and final paper (CLO3). Please refer to the final paper guidelines, which will be provided on Canvas.

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Assignment & Exam Schedule	
Written Assignments (4)	January 31st, February 14th, March 7th & April 4th
Mid-term Examination	March 14th
Research Proposal and Initial Findings	April 11th
Empirical Project Presentation	April 25th or May 6th
Empirical Project Final Report	May 16th

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**Grading Information**

While I expect you to attend class regularly, per University policy F69-24 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F69-24.pdf>), students will not be graded on daily attendance. One of the purposes of this class is to help simulate the stamina necessary to stick with a project day-in, day-out even

as your interest in it naturally waxes and wanes. It is very, *very* unlikely that a student who misses class regularly will do well. More importantly, classroom discussion will tease out much of the important nuance in the readings. As such, regular attendance is strongly encouraged.

Your grade will be calculated as follows:

Grading Paradigm			
98 - 100%	A+	77 - 79.9%	C+
93 - 97.9%	A	73 - 76.9%	C
90 - 92.9%	A-	70 - 72.9%	C-
87 - 89.9%	B+	67 - 69.9%	D+
83 - 86.9%	B	63 - 66.9%	D
80 - 82.9%	B-	60 - 62.9%	D-
Below 60%		F	

And assignments and exams will be weighted accordingly:

Assignment & Exam Weights	
Written Assignments (4 @ 10 pts each)	40 points
Mid-term Examination	20 points
Empirical Project Research Proposal and Initial Findings	5 points
Empirical Project In-class Presentation	5 points
Empirical Project Final Report	30 points

## **Make-up/Late Policy**

There are no make-up exams or other assignments without appropriate documentation (serious medical illness or serious medical emergency, religious holiday, pre-approved university-sanctioned event or activity, military orders, family emergency) that you were unable to complete the assignment on time.

This also applies to in-class assignments. If you are seriously ill, you must notify me as soon as possible by email or on my office phone that you will be unable to complete an assignment on time. Except in cases of documented medical emergency, you **MUST** notify me before the scheduled assignment.

Out of fairness to your colleagues, work, missing an alarm, and generally not feeling well will not be accepted excuses for missing assignments. Be sure you schedule all of our assignments right away. If you have a vacation or similar event planned during one of these assignment days, you may want to take this course during another session or make arrangements to hand in the assignment early.

Major assignments like the policy paper will be graded if handed in late; however, these will be penalized commensurate with how late they were. If you have reason to think you will not make a deadline, always at least discuss it with me first. I can't guarantee anything, but I can guarantee a fair hearing. Communication will always lead to a better outcome for you than not communicating.

## **Classroom Policies and Protocol**

### **Attendance and participation**

Students may be called upon by name to address concepts from the readings. Students should take the time and effort to read the materials when they are assigned, and be prepared to actively participate in discussion of the topics, using both citations of the readings and their own defended views. Small group discussions during class will only enhance learning if each participant is prepared to contribute to the group's learning. In addition to the fact that students are graded on the quality and quantity of classroom participation, regular attendance will enhance your grade by virtue of giving students the opportunity to develop the knowledge necessary to complete assignments that might not otherwise be available except from class discussion.

## Cellphones, laptops, and other technology

You may not use your cell phone for non-class purposes in class. If you need to have it on for family reasons, please let me know ahead of time, turn it on vibrate and leave it out of sight. If you must make an emergency text, feel free to step outside of class. All other texting needs to take place before or after class. Laptops, tablets, and other such technology are allowed in class but for notetaking and educational use only. I reserve the right to bar specific students from using these technologies if they are making inappropriate use of them during class time. Please see me if you have questions about this policy or questions regarding SJSU academic accommodations related to this policy.

## Recording of Lectures

Please obtain my permission before taking an audio or video recording of lectures or other class activities. I will almost certainly grant such permission but it is common courtesy to let people know you will be recording them before you do so. Thus, out of respect to your colleagues and to me, please do not record this class without my explicit permission.

## University Policies

Per University Policy S16-9, university-wide policy information relevant to all courses, such as academic integrity, accommodations, etc. will be available on Office of Graduate and Undergraduate Programs' [Syllabus Information web page](http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo>."

## Workload and Credit Hour Requirements

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

## Course Schedule

	Date	Topic	Readings/Media	Due
Unit #1 - The Building Blocks for Empirical Administrative Research				
1	17-Jan	Introduction - Developing a Research Question; Review of Probability Theory		
2	24-Jan	Statistics Review: Measures of Central Tendency and Variation	Field, Ch. 1	
3	31-Jan	Sampling, Probability & the Central Limit Theorem; Research Ethics	Field, Ch. 2, Canvas Readings	Assignment #1
4	7-Feb	Exploring and Understanding Data Graphically; Introduction to the SPSS Environment	Field, Ch. 3-4	
5	14-Feb	Survey of Qualitative Research Methods; Workshop on Finding Data	Canvas Readings	Assignment #2
Unit #2 - Quantitative Methods				
6	21-Feb	Means Comparison and Correlation	Field, Ch. 7 & 9	

7	28-Feb	Linear & Multiple Regression I	Field, Ch. 8	
8	7-Mar	Linear & Multiple Regression II; Mid-term Review	Field, Ch. 8	Assignment #3
9	14-Mar	Mid-term Examination		Mid-term
Unit #3 - Developing a Clearer Understanding of Statistical Analysis				
10	21-Mar	Statistical Analysis w/ Binary & Categorical Dependent Variables	Field, Ch. 18 & 19	
11	28-Mar	Spring Break - Give your brain a genuine break!	No Class	
12	4-Apr	Formulating a Research Design; Finding Your Final Data	Canvas Handouts	Assignment #4
13	11-Apr	Final, all-purpose statistical review	<i>None</i>	Research Proposal & Initial Findings
14	18-Apr	Research Project Workshop	<i>None</i>	Draft/outline of your final paper
15	25-Apr	Presentations	<i>None</i>	Presentations
16	6-May	Presentations and Party Time!		Presentations
Final Project Due - Wednesday, May 16 @ 5:15p				