

San José State University
Department of Political Science MPA
PADM 212 – Administrative Research Methods
Spring 2021

Course and Contact Information

Instructor:	Matthew Record
Office Location:	Clark Hall, 406N
Telephone:	(408) 924-5346
Email:	matthew.record@sjsu.edu
Office Hours:	MR 4:00-5:45 via Zoom and by appointment
Class Days/Time:	Mon, 6:00-8:45p
Classroom:	N/A

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.

Communication

It is essential that you check the class Canvas page routinely. This is a course requirement. All course materials will be posted on Canvas. I will also frequently make announcements on Canvas. I will make every effort to promptly return emails between M-F. If I do not respond within 24 hours, please feel free to send me another email. I will answer emails on the weekends and evening, though I can't guarantee prompt response at those times. I am available to meet with you by appointment if you have class or work during my regularly scheduled office hours.

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.

Course Learning Outcomes (LO)

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

1. **CLO1:** Understand the terminology surrounding quantitative data analysis. This outcome is assessed by the written assignments, mid-term examination, empirical report presentation, class participation and final empirical report.
2. **CLO2:** Employ analytical tools for collecting, analyzing, presenting, and interpreting data, including appropriate statistical concepts and techniques. This outcome is assessed by the written assignments, mid-term examination, class participation and final empirical report.
3. **CLO3:** Learn to communicate their results effectively to others, including non-experts. This outcome is assessed by the written assignments, the research proposal/initial findings, empirical report presentation, class participation and final empirical report.

Required Texts/Programs

Textbooks

- Andy Field, *Discovering Statistics Using IBM SPSS, 5th ed.*, (Sage CQ Press, 2018)
ISBN# 978-1526436566

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

Initial Dataset (February 22nd, Class Time)

Students must come to class with a dataset prepared in SPSS or Excel format that could potentially be used for a final project (though the students will not necessarily have to use it for their final project if they choose not to). The dataset will be submitted on Canvas. In the comments, the student must be able to convey a research question they would ask with the dataset, what variables they would use to answer it and must have a working understanding of the dataset's unit of analysis.

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, such a determination would require that students show their work. 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. This assignment evaluates CLOs #1, #2 and #3.

Mid-term Examination (Normal Class Time, March 22nd)

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). This assignment evaluates CLO #2.

Research Proposal and Initial Findings (April 19th, Class time)

Students must submit a document (approximately 3 pages) outlining a research question relevant to the empirical study of public administration. A suggested template will be provided. 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. This assignment evaluates CLO #3.

Empirical Report Presentation (May 3rd or May 10th, 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. You are also expected to communicate the results effectively to others, including non-experts, both in your presentation and final paper. Please refer to the final paper guidelines, which will be provided on Canvas. This assignment evaluates CLOs #1 and #3

Final Empirical Report (May 24th, 5:15 pm)

Students will develop one empirical project throughout the semester regarding an issue relevant to 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. You are also expected to communicate the results effectively to others, including non-experts, both in your presentation and final paper. Please refer to the final paper guidelines, which will be provided on Canvas. This assignment evaluates CLOs #1, #2 and #3.

Class Participation

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, classes will be delivered via Zoom. Class participation will be judged by the student's preparedness to participate in class discussions and the extent to which they make meaningful and engaged contributions during class time. Given the difficulties attendant to the pandemic, I intend to be as ecumenical as possible with regard to what will qualify as participation. Nonetheless, students are strongly encouraged to be present during classtime with their cameras on (i.e. not a black screen from the instructor's perspective). Obviously, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a strange and less-than-ideal learning environment and there may be technical or personal reasons why a student cannot participate in the manner prescribed above. However, students that are not able to abide by these participation guidelines should contact the instructor to explain any extenuating circumstances or required accommodations. Moreover, students are expected to take any reasonable steps they can to mitigate issues that crop up over the course of the semester.

Assignment & Exam Schedule	
Written Assignments (3)	February 15 th , March 15 th , April 12 th
Initial Dataset	February 22 nd
Mid-term Examination	March 22 nd
Research Proposal and Initial Findings	April 19 th
Empirical Project Presentation	May 3 rd or May 10 th
Empirical Project Final Report	May 24 th

Final Examination

As described above, the culminating project for this course will be an empirical data analysis developed throughout the semester regarding an issue relevant to governance, administration or policy. **This assignment will be due on May 24th at 5:15pm.** 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. You are also expected to communicate the results effectively to others, including non-experts, both in your presentation and final paper. Please refer to the final paper guidelines, which will be provided on Canvas.

Grading Information

While I expect you to attend class regularly, per University Policy F-15-12 (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/F15-12.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 to 100% — A Plus	93 to 97.9% — A	90 to 92.9% — A Minus
87 to 89.9% — B Plus	83 to 86.9% — B	80 to 82.9% — B Minus
77 to 79.9% — C Plus	73 to 76.9% — C	70 to 72.9% — C Minus
67 to 69.9% — D Plus	63 to 66.9% — D	60 to 62.9% — D Minus
Less than 60% — F		

And assignments and exams will be weighted accordingly:

Assignment & Exam Weights	
Written Assignments (3 @ 10 pts each)	30 points
Class Participation	10 points
Mid-term Examination	20 points
Initial Dataset	5 points
Research Proposal and Initial Findings	5 points
Empirical Project In-class Presentation	5 points
Empirical Project Final Report	25 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

I do not intend to record the Zoom lectures online for a number of reasons. (1) I do not record them when the class is in person and, to the extent that it is possible, I am trying to maintain some level of parity with how the class is usually delivered. (2) The primary benefit of a synchronous learning environment is that you may ask questions to probe for clarification in real time. Studies have shown that when students know there will be a recording of class lecture, it provides an incentive for them not to pay full attention in the moment. As such, barring extenuating circumstances, I do not intend to record my lectures for distribution to the class.

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 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.

Political Science Department Writing Policy

Students of political science should develop the ability to write in clear, grammatical English. Spelling and grammar count! Students must take care that appropriate citations are used. Direct quotations must be so indicated with quotation marks. Ideas from others must also be referenced. Failure to cite your sources constitutes academic misconduct, which carries with it serious sanctions. A tutorial on citations is available at <http://libguides.sjsu.edu/writeandcite>. The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center visit <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/>.

Useful Information for Students

SJSU Counseling Services

The SJSU Counseling Services is located on the corner of 7th Street and San Fernando Street, in Room 201, Administration Building. Professional psychologists, social workers, and counselors are available to provide consultations on issues of student mental health, campus climate or psychological and academic issues on an individual, couple, or group basis. To schedule an appointment or learn more information, visit [Counseling Services website](http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling>.

SJSU Writing Center

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the [Writing Center website](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter) at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>. For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

PADM 212 – Administrative Research Methods Spring 2021

Please note, the schedule below is subject to change with fair notice. It is the student's responsibility to stay apprised of changes to the course schedule.

Course Schedule

	Date	Topic	Readings/Media	Due
Unit #1 - The Building Blocks for Empirical Administrative Research				
1	1-Feb	Introduction - Developing a Research Question; Review of Probability Theory		
2	8-Feb	Statistics Review, Measures of Central Tendency and Dispersion	Field, Ch. 1	
3	15-Feb	Sampling; Developing Survey Questions	Field, Ch. 2; Canvas Readings	Assignment #1
4	22-Feb	Sampling; Exploring and Understanding Data Graphically	Field, Ch. 4, Canvas Readings	Initial Dataset

Unit #2 - Quantitative Methods

5	1-Mar	Means Comparison and Correlation; ; Workshop on Finding Data	Field, Ch. 8, 10; Canvas Readings	
6	8-Mar	Linear & Multiple Regression I	Field, Ch. 9	
7	15-Mar	Linear & Multiple Regression II; Midterm Review	Field, Ch. 9	Assignment #2
8	22-Mar	Mid-term Examination		Mid-term
9	29-Mar	No Class (Spring Break)		

Unit #3 - Developing a Clearer Understanding of Statistical Analysis

10	5-Apr	Statistical Analysis w/ Binary & Categorical Dependent Variables	Field, Ch. 19-20	
11	12-Apr	Formulating a Research Design; Finding Your Final Data	Canvas Handouts	Assignment #3
12	19-Apr	Research Project Workshop	<i>None</i>	Research Proposal & Initial Findings
13	26-Apr	Final, all-purpose statistical review	<i>None</i>	Draft/outline of your final paper
14	3-May	Presentations	<i>None</i>	Presentations
15	10-May	Presentations	<i>None</i>	Presentations

Final Project Due – Monday, May 24th @ 5:15p
