

5305
GRADUATE RESEARCH METHODS
Sul Ross State University

Instructor: Stefanie A. Latham, Ph.D.

Class location: ALL online via Blackboard

Contact: 405-659-9770 cell; text or leave message DO NOT CONTACT AFTER 7pm

E-mail address: Stefanie.latham@sulross.edu

Please ONLY use Firefox or Chrome browsers. Internet Explorer is not compatible.

For Blackboard Technical Help Contact:

techassist.sulross.edu

432-837-8888

For Blackboard Instructions to help you navigate this online course please see Appendix A at the end of the Syllabus

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Course Description and Objectives: In this course students are introduced to the basic concepts and techniques that are used in social science research. The course is divided into three sections, which cover social scientific inquiry and research design, quantitative data gathering and analysis, and qualitative data gathering and analysis, respectively. As a result of taking the course, students should be able to:

- (a) demonstrate their understanding of the basic principles and procedures of research methodology through weekly discussions and written assignments;
- (b) critically evaluate both quantitative and qualitative research studies by conducting a literature review on a topic of interest to the student;
- (c) define, give the significance of, and use key concepts in research ethics (particularly but not exclusively research with human subjects) as they apply to research design by creating and evaluating a proposed research study with informed consent documentation;
- (d) evaluate and apply appropriate research methodology by creating a research design for a specific research project of their choice;

Required Texts: (amazon.com)

American Psychological Association. (2009). *Publication manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th Edition). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Leedy, P.D., & Ormrod, J.E. *Practical research: Planning and design* (10th or 11th Edition is acceptable). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education, Inc.

Will not need the text until week 3 so plenty of time to get on Amazon.

Useful Websites for APA style and textbook purchase:

<http://www.apastyle.org/>

<http://www.apastyle.org/pubmanual.html>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>

Attendance: This course is a graduate course that meets completely online. Absences are not allowed.

COURSE MATERIALS WARNING:

It is imperative that you read and/or listen (if a podcast is provided) to ALL of the materials provided to you in the course materials tab within blackboard. Everything within the course materials tab is there to ensure your success in a time-consuming, tedious course. This course is not difficult but does require discipline to read everything and work diligently on the course each day/night. In past courses those who used all info in the course materials passed with flying (A++) colors. Please follow this word of warning and you will do well!

Academic Honesty:

Each student is expected to do his or her own work. Suspected cheating will be given the rightful due process, but will be subjected to an “F” given for the assignment/exam. Plagiarized work will receive an "F" for that assignment. All written work is subject to inspection for plagiarism. The university’s academic honesty policy is published in the graduate catalog.

Methods of Evaluation:

Discussions questions	500 points
Responses to others work	160 points
6 Assignments	380 points
Research proposal (paper)	300 points
Total	1340 points

Description of Assignments:

Discussion questions: There will be a discussion question posted under the discussion tab for you to respond to by Midnight Friday night each week. To respond to the discussion you click on the hyperlink to the discussion and then click on create new thread. Put your last name and the week in the subject line (eg. LathamWeek1). You can respond directly in the message area, however, I suggest you type your response in a word document, spell check, then copy and paste it into the message area. You can upload your response as an attachment, but please ALSO copy and paste it into the message area so we do not have to open an attachment to read your post. Each discussion post is worth 40 points. 10 points will be deducted for each day it is late. 10 points will be deducted for not following the instructions above. Follow all instructions in the directions of the discussion.

Responses to others: Under each discussion post you must respond to another classmate’s original discussion post. The response is worth 20 points (so a total of 60 points for class discussion is available for you to earn each week) and due by Sunday Midnight each week. The response must be more than “good job”, “I like what you said”, etc., it must be a substantial response that would be as if you were having a discussion on the topic in class. A substantial response would include, but not limited to: adding to the discussion with further information you find (cite your source), asking relevant questions, as well as critiquing in a positive way the post.

ALWAYS spell check and edit your responses. These should be academic responses and not chat room or informal language. Do be respectful of others, do use proper language – do NOT hurt others feelings. To respond to another’s post, click on their post and reply. Title the subject of your response with your last name and “response to _____ week 1 post” (eg. Latham’s response to Henderson’s Week 1 post).

Assignments: Under the assignment tab you have weekly assignments due by Midnight Weds of each week. Click on the hyperlink (title of the assignment), read the directions completely, you will do the assignment in a Word (***MUST BE MICROSOFT WORD...no other format is accepted***) document and attach the file in the assignment submission section, then click submit. Follow all instructions and mind the due dates. I will accept late work with 10 point deductions for each day past the due date.

Research proposal (paper): You will be writing a research proposal, which is the first 3 chapters of a thesis, dissertation, or academic journal article. The paper will have 3 chapters: chapter 1 (Introduction), chapter 2 (Review of Literature), and chapter 3 (Methodology). The chapters required are the introduction, literature review (which will be the longest- usually - unless your topic does not have much information out there on it...which I would think twice and have a really good explanation for choosing it...), and methodology. Before turning this paper in you must have it proof read by at LEAST 3 people (other than yourself). The paper has a 30 page maximum, this includes separate pages for the title page, abstract, Table Of Contents, and reference page. (no page minimum, but most are usually close to 30 pages). I will be grading on APA formatting so if you have questions about APA style you better get them answered before turning in the paper (You will have many rough drafts throughout the semester). I will also be grading on the content and form of your writing. **There will be no re-writes after the due date of the FINAL paper, but you will have a rough draft for classmates and me to review and provide feedback. I will not tolerate any grammatical or spelling errors** on the final as this is a graduate level research paper. Edit, proof, edit, proof, and then edit and proof again. THEN have 3 other people edit and proof it before turning in the final.

A good literature review will take at least 1 hour of your time each night. Use all of the handouts, powerpoints, and example papers to help you. Particularly the 3 handouts with guides on “how to” write each chapter (titled ChapterOneGuide, ChapterTwoGuide, etc.). Use those, read those, follow those and you will do fine.

If you have more than 3 different types of APA style/format errors I will deduct 75 points from your paper. So, I encourage you do turn in many rough drafts. If you have more than 2 spelling/grammatical/poor writing issues I will also deduct 75 points.

APPENDIX A

Blackboard Instructions

1. Login to the blackboard course
2. Most things are “clickable”. Once in click on every tab and read everything.
3. Announcements – click on this tab and check those daily. A copy is always sent to your email. So check your email often as well.
4. Syllabus & Course Materials tab – has everything in attachments for you to download that you need for the course. Read the Syllabus first day you log in. All other course materials are referenced to you in discussions and assignments for you to download and refer to. I suggest saving everything to a flash drive, hard drive, cloud database (i.e. drop box) so you have them forever.

5. Assignments – click on the assignment tab. Click on the Name of the assignment (usually named by week). Read all of the assignment information. If the assignment refers you to materials in the course materials tab be sure to use/read all of those. Due dates are always mentioned in the assignment information. When you are ready to submit (turn in) your assignment go to the Assignment Submission” area, click on browse my computer, search your computer for wherever you saved your finished/completed assignment, upload it to attach the file in the assignment submission area. **YOU MUST checkmark the box “I agree to submit mypaper(s) to the GRD” where the plagiarism tools are.** This ensures you did not copy/paste from the internet or from another student you may have had the course before. You can be kicked out of the university, and/or fail a class for plagiarizing. The add comments are is optional, but a place for you to leave me a comment. Ps. I like jokes when I am grading!!!! ☺ Click the SUBMIT button to actually turn in your assignment.
6. Discussions – click on discussions tab. Each week there are discussions (these are formal discussions not chat room type discussions) you must respond to as well as respond to at least one other classmate (see syllabus). Click on the Forum/Discussion Name (e.g. Week 1). To post your discussion post = click on create thread. Put your First and last name in the Subject line followed by 1-2 words describing your post/thread, e.g., StefanieLatham_Week1 Discussion. Type your response to the discussion/forum in the message. **I highly, highly, really really, highly recommend that you first type your response in a Word Doc spell check and grammar check (read it yourself as spell check doesn’t fix grammar) and then copy/paste it into the message area. DO NOT attach a file for discussions. You will only use the browse my computer/attach file feature for assignments.** Click Submit to submit your work. If you need to edit whatever you turned in for some reason, find your thread in the discussion area, click on it, move your cursor around near the “reply” button, you will see an option to delete, edit, or email yourself. To respond to a classmate: click on the thread of a classmate you want to read his/her post then click reply. Type your response in the message area (again recommend using word to edit first...plus if you have a computer issue you can save your word doc...you can’t save your message until you submit it). [Please Check your thread so read what others have said to you. If classmates or if I ask you a question in your thread and you never respond...points will be deducted from your weekly discussion points. It is also recommended for you to scan all the threads and read any feedback I am giving other students as that feedback may help you as well.](#)
7. MY Grades tab – you should be able to view your numerical grade here as well as written feedback. I will always provide written feedback. If you cannot view the written feedback please check your email as it is always emailed to you as well. If you do not see a numerical grade either I haven’t graded it (I will grade all previous week’s work by Wed of the week after it is due if not sooner). If you feel you turned it in and still see not grade email or text me and I will look into it.
8. Late work. Despite what the syllabus says if you are taking a Senior Level undergraduate course or a Graduate Level course with me....as long as you are in communication with me I will NOT deduct point for things that are 1 week late. Anything 1 week late or longer you MUST CALL ME for approval and let me know what is going on in your life. I am a fair and reasonable person and will most likely work something out with you as I want everyone to be successful in the least “stressful” way. This being said, if you are just lazy and waiting to do things last minute, most likely your work will reflect that and so will your grade that you earn. Communication is key to online learning. As long as the technology is working I will NOT be MIA (missing in action). There are multiple ways to communicate with me (cell phone text, call, sul ross email, personal email, and in blackboard under the questions forum in the discussion tab).