# SUSM 603 – Research Methods – Winter 2021

Course Instructor: Prof. Juan Moreno-Cruz [juan.moreno-cruz@uwaterloo.ca](mailto:juan.moreno-cruz@uwaterloo.ca)

Office Hours: After class and by appointment Class Meetings: TBA

Course Description: This course lays the foundations of relevant empirical research in the social and environmental sciences. It deals with the assumptions and the logic underlying social research. It also covers some of the tools available for doing research, but not in detail. Students develop their own research projects and learn to evaluate empirical research.

Course Main Goal: When students are done with this course, they should be able to plan and execute their own research projects. To achieve this, students will be able to:

* Describe the conceptual aspects of research methods
* Describe the process of conducting a literature review
* Compare and contrast the use of theory in qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods research
* Recognize the elements of an introduction to a research study
* Draft a purpose statement
* Draft research questions and hypotheses
* Identify ethical concerns to anticipate in research
* Integrate knowledge of qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches into developing a research design

Expectations: In order to gain maximum benefits from this course, you should

1. Participate fully in class by

* + reading assigned material prior to class sessions
  + always attending class
  + contributing meaningfully to class discussions

2. Take responsibility for your own learning by

* relating course content and projects to your own professional interests
* monitoring your own understanding
* seeking clarification and assistance when necessary

3. Demonstrate respect and consideration for others by

* listening when others are speaking
* being present for the entire class period

### Books:

* J.W. Creswell and J. D. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed Methods*, 5th Edition, Sage Publishing, 2018 **(C&C)**
* M. Alvesson and J. Sandberg, *Constructing Research Questions: Doing Interesting Research*, 5th Edition, Sage Publishing, 2013 **(A&S)**
* S. **Pressfield**, *The War of Art: Break Through the Blocks and Win Your Inner Creative Battles*, Black Irish Entertainment, LLC. 2012
* E.R. **Tufte**, *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information*, Graphics Press Cheshire, Connecticut, 2001

### Course Requirements and Grading:

Several deliverables are expected as indicated below:

Deliverable 1: Research approach

Deliverable 2: Literature review

Deliverable 3: Introduction

Deliverable 4: Research design

Deliverables are each worth 20% (total 80%). Class participation is worth 20%.

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| --- | --- |
| Grade scale: | |
| A’s | Above 90% |
| B’s | Between 80%-90% |
| C’s | Between 60%-80% |
| D’s | Between 50%-60% |
| F’s | Below 50% |

The rubric for class participation is below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Below Expectations**  **(i.e. below 70%)** | **Meets Expectations**  **(i.e. 70-79%)** | **Exceeds Expectations**  **(i.e. 80%-100%)** |
| * Comments often not of a critical nature and do not demonstrate integration of material * Little evidence of integrated learning * Frequently absent from class/online discussions * No consistent or thought- provoking contribution * Unprepared for course activities/discussions discussions/activities * Provides little to no contribution to peer learning | * Comments and questions demonstrate some critical analysis * Effort made to build on the idea of others * Consistently shares ideas * Prepared for activities * Volunteers constructive contributions to discussion * Contributes to a supportive and learning environment (e.g. respectful of others, etc.) * Attends most seminars | * Facilitates discussion items that are insightful and stimulate the learning of others * Contributes relevant and interesting resources to the class (e.g. media, cases, articles) * Demonstrates critical reflection and makes connections between concepts * Consistent and ‘value- added’ presence both in class and online * Very well-prepared for in- class activities and review of peer work |

## Class structure:

Classes will be divided in 3 parts:

Part 1: Lecture

Part 2: Individual writing exercise

Part 3: Peer-feedback

## Tentative Course Schedule

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Subject | Readings and Topics | Deliverables |
| Jan 9 | Introduction to the course |  |  |
| Jan 16 | Research approach | C&C Chapter 1 |  |
| Jan 23 |  | | |
| Jan 30 | Review of the literature | C&C Chapter 2 | Research approach |
| Feb 6 | The use of theory | C&C Chapter 3 | Literature review |
| Feb 13 | The organization of the study | C&C Chapters 4-7; **Pressfield** |  |
| Feb 20 | Reading Week | | |
| Feb 27 | Quantitative Methods | C&C Chapter 8 | Introduction |
| Mar 5 | Qualitative and Mixed Methods | C&C Chapters 9-10 |  |
| Mar 12 | Displaying information | **Tufte** | Research design |
| Mar 19 | Presentations | | |
| Mar 26 | Presentations | | |
| Apr 2 | Presentations | | |

Note: I will generally follow the above sequence. I may add or subtract topics.

**University Academic Policies**

**INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:** Students should be aware that this course contains the intellectual property of their instructor, TA, and/or the University of Waterloo. Intellectual property includes items such as:

* Lecture content, spoken and written (and any audio/video recording thereof);
* Lecture handouts, presentations, and other materials prepared for the course (e.g., PowerPoint slides);
* Questions or solution sets from various types of assessments (e.g., assignments, quizzes, tests, final exams); and
* Work protected by copyright (e.g., any work authored by the instructor or TA or used by the instructor or TA with permission of the copyright owner).

Course materials and the intellectual property contained therein, are used to enhance a student’s educational experience. However, sharing this intellectual property without the intellectual property owner’s permission is a violation of intellectual property rights. For this reason, it is necessary to ask the instructor, TA and/or the University of Waterloo for permission before uploading and sharing the intellectual property of others online (e.g., to an online repository).

Permission from an instructor, TA or the University is also necessary before sharing the intellectual property of others from completed courses with students taking the same/similar courses in subsequent terms/years. In many cases, instructors might be happy to allow distribution of certain materials. However, doing so without expressed permission is considered a violation of intellectual property rights.

Please alert the instructor if you become aware of intellectual property belonging to others (past or present) circulating, either through the student body or online. The intellectual property rights owner deserves to know (and may have already given their consent).

**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:** In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. The University’s guiding principles on academic integrity can be found here: <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/>

ENV students are strongly encouraged to review the material provided by the university’s Academic Integrity office specifically for students: <http://uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/Students/index.html>

Students are also expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. Student who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for team work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor, academic advisor, or the Undergraduate Associate Dean. Students may also visit this webpage: <https://uwaterloo.ca/library/get-assignment-and-research-help/academic-integrity/academicintegrity-tutorial>

When misconduct has been found to have occurred, disciplinary penalties will be imposed under **Policy 71 – Student Discipline**. For information on categories of offenses and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71 - Student Discipline,

<https://uwaterloo.ca/secretariat-general-counsel/policies-procedures-guidelines/policy-71>

Students who believe that they have been wrongfully or unjustly penalized have the right to grieve; refer to **Policy #70, Student**

**GRIEVANCE**: A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. See **Policy 70 - Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4** [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm)

When in doubt please contact your Undergraduate Advisor for details.

**APPEALS**: A decision made or penalty imposed under **Policy 70** - Student Petitions and Grievances (other than a petition) or **Policy 71** – (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to **Policy 72** (Student Appeals) [www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm](http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm)

**RESEARCH ETHICS**: Please also note that the ‘University of Waterloo requires all research conducted by its students, staff, and faculty which involves humans as participants to undergo prior ethics review and clearance through the Director, Office of Human Research and Animal Care (Office). The ethics review and clearance processes are intended to ensure that projects comply with the Office’s Guidelines for Research with Human Participants (Guidelines) as well as those of provincial and federal agencies, and that the safety, rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected. The Guidelines inform researchers about ethical issues and procedures which are of concern when conducting research with humans (e.g. confidentiality, risks and benefits, informed consent process, etc.)’ (<http://www.research.uwaterloo.ca/ethics/human/> ).

**NOTE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:** AccessAbility Services, located in Needles Hall, Room 1401, (<https://uwaterloo.ca/accessability-services/> ) collaborates with all academic departments to arrange appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities without compromising the academic integrity of the curriculum. If you require academic accommodations to lessen the impact of your disability, please register with AccessAbility Services at the beginning of each academic term.

**MENTAL HEALTH**: The University of Waterloo, the Faculty of Environment and our Departments consider students' well-being to be extremely important. We recognize that throughout the term students may face health challenges - physical and / or emotional. **Please note that help is available.** Mental health is a serious issue for everyone and can affect your ability to do your best work. Counselling Services <http://www.uwaterloo.ca/counselling-services> is an inclusive, non-judgmental, and confidential space for anyone to seek support. They offer confidential counselling for a variety of areas including anxiety, stress management, depression, grief, substance use, sexuality, relationship issues, and much more.

**RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES**: Please inform the instructor at the beginning of term if special accommodation needs to be made for religious observances that are not otherwise accounted for in the scheduling of classes and assignments.

**Unclaimed assignments**: Unclaimed assignments will be retained until one month after term grades become official in quest. After that time, they will be destroyed in compliance with UW’s [confidential shredding procedures](https://uwaterloo.ca/records-management/records-disposal-and-destruction).

**Recording lectures**: Use of recording devices during lectures or meetings is only allowed with explicit permission of the instructor of the course. If allowed, video recordings may only include images of the instructor and not fellow classmates. Posting of videos or links to the video to any website, including but not limited to social media sites such as: facebook, twitter, etc., is strictly prohibited.