

NRES 389/589: Methods in Social Science

Fall 2020 Syllabus

Dr. Robin Rothfeder
Monday and Wednesday from 9:30 – 10:45 am

Contact

- rrothfed@uwsp.edu
- CANVAS messenger

Lecture

- Access through CANVAS Zoom Application
- Meeting Password: 389

Office Hours

- Mon. & Thurs., 11 am – 12 pm, or by appt.
- <https://uwsp.zoom.us/j/9074408715>
 - Phone: (312)-626-6799
- Meeting ID: 907 440 8715

I. COURSE DESCRIPTION

The purpose of this course is to provide students in HDNRM with an introduction to social science research methods and their applications in natural resource management. These tools and skills are becoming increasingly important as the complex connections between humans and the environment become increasingly clear. It is an exciting time to enter this arena, as individuals, communities, businesses, and state and federal agencies work to improve conservation, advance sustainability and resilience, promote stewardship, and build awareness and understanding of complex social-ecological challenges and opportunities.

II. TEACHING APPROACH AND PHILOSOPHY

My goal is to help you develop the knowledge, skills, and creativity required to address the sustainability challenges facing humanity, as well as creating and capitalizing on new opportunities. My teaching approach is to create a learning environment that is engaging, interactive, participatory, and hands-on. Every student will be responsible for a significant amount of the learning that takes place both inside and outside the classroom.

III. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Natural resource social science very often employs ‘mixed methods’ – finding the best combination of different data and analytical tools to achieve specific objectives in specific places. This course will help students to develop their mixed methods social science research skills. By the end of the semester students will be able to:

1. Describe the role of human dimensions research in natural resource management;
2. Explain the purpose and function of different social science methods, including both theory-driven research and program evaluation;
3. Apply a range of quantitative and qualitative research methods to analyze social science variables and the relationships between them;
4. Compose a clear and complete research proposal targeted at a specific important issue in resource management; and
5. Communicate effectively about data, methods, and research results.

IV. COURSE MATERIALS

Textbook: *The Essential Guide to Doing Your Research Project*. Zina O’Leary, 2017 (3rd edition). SAGE Publications Inc.

Learning Platform: This course will use the online learning management software CANVAS. All assignments, discussions, instructor updates, non-textbook readings, and other course materials will be posted on the CANVAS platform.

V. CORONAVIRUS

1. *Class Principles*

- This is new and different for all of us. We will be patient and kind to ourselves and others. We will adjust our expectations as necessary and appropriate for unprecedented circumstances.
- We will approach this course with the same enthusiasm, commitment, and overall learning style as a traditional in-person class. We will work together to build a learning community by mastering the technology we have available.
- We will prioritize clear communication and flexibility, shared support for one another.

2. *Face Coverings*

At all UW-Stevens Point campus locations, the wearing of face coverings is mandatory in all buildings, including classrooms, laboratories, studios, and other instructional spaces. Any student with a condition that impacts their use of a face covering should contact the Disability and Assistive Technology Center to discuss accommodations in classes. Please note that unless everyone is wearing a face covering, in-person classes cannot take place. This is university policy and not up to the discretion of individual instructors. Failure to adhere to this requirement could result in formal withdrawal from the course.

3. *Other Guidance*

- Please monitor your own health each day using this screening tool. If you are not feeling well or believe you have been exposed to COVID-19, do not come to class; email your instructor and contact Student Health Service (715-346-4646).
- As with any type of absence, students are expected to communicate their need to be absent and complete the course requirements as outlined in the syllabus.
- Maintain a minimum of 6 feet of physical distance from others whenever possible.
- Do not congregate in groups before or after class; stagger your arrival and departure from the classroom, lab, or meeting room.
- Wash your hands or use appropriate hand sanitizer regularly and avoid touching your face.
- Please maintain these same healthy practices outside the classroom.

VI. ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING

1. **Attendance and Participation** (7.5%, 75 points total, with possible deductions up to 30%)

Consistent, enthusiastic participation in class activities and learning experiences is a crucial component of this course. Attendance and participation points may be earned in 2 different ways:

- Synchronous – Students are encouraged to attend lectures synchronously whenever possible. Each day of class is worth 2.5 points.
- Asynchronous: All course meetings will be recorded in Zoom and posted to CANVAS. For any class day not attended synchronously, students may earn attendance points by doing the following: (i) watch the recorded lecture, (ii) write 1-2 comments or questions that you think

would add to the synchronous discussion, and (iii) post these to the class *Asynchronous Participation* discussion thread available in CANVAS. For full credit, these posts will be due by midnight on Friday each week.

2. CANVAS Reading Discussions (10%, 100 points total)*

To encourage timely and in-depth engagement with assigned material, there will be 10 online reading discussions during this semester, worth 10 points each. For every discussion, each student will be required to submit at least 1 detailed question about the readings and at least 1 detailed response to another student's question; or, to make 2 or more posts in response to questions posed by the instructor. All posts will be due by midnight on Friday for the week of the assigned readings.

3. Class Activities (15%, 150 points total)*

This course will include a wide range of class activities that require you to practice and demonstrate the research tools and skills we discuss. There will be a total of 10 activities worth 15 points each. Activities will be due by Friday at midnight the week they are assigned. Some activities will take place during class time; other activities will take place on your own time and will not involve a synchronous class meeting. Please carefully note the course schedule to ensure that you are aware of these days.

4. Case Study (7.5%, 75 points)

To help our class further explore complex topics in social science research, you will be assigned a case study to analyze and present for the rest of class, in groups of 3. These case studies will be based upon excellent examples of different research practices and methods in our field. Specific assignment instructions will be provided in the first month of class, as well as forming project teams.

5. CITI Training (10%, 100 points)

To gain further knowledge and experience in social science research, you will complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) Program for Human Subjects Research.

6. Research Proposal (25%, 250 points total)

This course will include a semester-long project, requiring you to compose a clear and complete research proposal targeted at a specific important issue in resource management that includes a human subjects component. In Part 1 of this project, you will specify a social science research question, review existing relevant literature, and produce a relationship map. In Part 2, you will detail methods for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data. For the final deliverable, you will update, expand, and combine Parts 1 and 2, as well as completing the first 3 sections of the UWSP Institutional Review Board (IRB) application, which would be required to conduct this research.

7. Exams (25%, 250 points total)

The course will include a midterm and a final exam worth 100 points (10%) each, which will test your understanding of readings, lectures, and applied research tools and skills.

**The lowest score from both the reading discussion and class activity assignments will be dropped.*

VII. COURSE POLICIES

1. Assignments

To receive full credit, assignments must be submitted by the stated deadline. Assignments turned in after the deadline will be considered late and will be subject to a 10% per-day late penalty, including

weekends. Deductions will be capped after one week, meaning that even very late assignment will be worth up to 30% of the total available points.

2. Attendance

A student will be marked absent if they do not (a) attend a scheduled synchronous lecture, or (b) follow instructions for asynchronous participation as detailed above. Absences due to illness, family emergency, etc. may be excused if a written explanation is provided beforehand (except for emergencies, in which case an explanation should be provided as soon as practical). If absences occur on days when assignments are due, it is the student's responsibility to submit their work prior to the due date in order to receive full credit. If you need to miss a scheduled presentation assignment or exam, you must inform me beforehand and must explain why you are unable to be present at the scheduled time. Unexcused absences from presentations and exams will result in a grade of zero points.

3. Grading Scale

92.6% or higher = A	72.6 – 77.5% = C
90.0 – 92.5% = A-	70.0 – 72.5% = C-
87.6 – 89.9% = B+	67.6 – 69.9% = D+
82.6 – 87.5% = B	62.6 – 67.5% = D
80.0 – 82.5% = B-	60.0 – 62.5% = D-
77.6 – 79.9% = C+	Less than 60% = F

4. Academic Integrity

All work (unless part of a group project) must be done independently. Cheating, plagiarism, and other forms of academic misconduct will not be tolerated and will result in a grade of zero on the assignment. I encourage you to discuss any questions you may have about citation, paraphrasing, or related topics with me prior to turning in an assignment. In addition, assignments turned in through CANVAS will be linked to turnitin.com – a program that compares your work to other sources to check for originality. The UWSP Community Bill of Rights and Responsibilities specifies the University policies regarding academic misconduct and disciplinary action available here:

<https://www.uwsp.edu/dos/Pages/Academic-Misconduct.aspx>.

Please further note that free-riding will not be tolerated in group activities; no student will be allowed to share in the benefits of group work without completing their share of the workload. If there is a problem with the group dynamics, it is imperative that you call it to my attention at the earliest possible time. If your group would like to meet with me for assistance on a group project, I will make myself readily available. If evidence of a free-riding problem arises, we will attempt to address it at a group meeting. If the problem persists, the free-rider will be removed from the group by the instructor and will receive 0 points for the project.

5. Other Course Policies

- Posting course materials onto course-sharing websites directly violates the instructor's copyright on his intellectual property; permission to do so is unequivocally denied.
- All written work is expected to be grammatically correct, neat, and well organized. Work that is sloppy, hard to read, does not follow the prescribed format, and/or contains many spelling and/or grammatical errors will receive a grade of zero points.
- Cell phones will be put into pockets/backpacks/bags or otherwise stowed away during lecture and discussion. Appearance of your cell phone during class will indicate your disinterest in the topic and will thus count as an absence, and you will lose attendance points when this occurs.

6. Emergency Preparedness

- See the UW-Stevens Point Emergency Management Plan at www.uwsp.edu/rmgt for details on all emergency response issues at UWSP.

7. Accessibility Statement

If you have a learning or physical challenge which requires classroom accommodation, please contact the UWSP Disability Services office with your documentation as early as possible in the semester:

103 Student Services Center, (715) 346-3365; TTY (715) 346-3363;

www.uwsp.edu/special/disability/studentinfo.html

**** THE SYLLABUS, ASSIGNMENTS, READINGS, GRADE WEIGHTS, AND COURSE SCHEDULE ARE ALL SUBJECT TO CHANGE. THE INSTRUCTOR WILL NOTIFY THE STUDENTS AS SOON AS ANY SUCH CHANGES ARE MADE AND WILL PROVIDE UPDATED COURSE MATERIALS AS APPROPRIATE. ****

Class #, Date	Topic	Readings	Class Activity	Assignments
1) Sept. 2	Introduction		<i>Introduce Research Proposal Part 1</i>	
2) Sept. 9	Consuming Research Wisely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Science Isn't Broken 	Personal Inquiry <i>Introduce CITI Training Assignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 1 and CA 1 due 9/11 by midnight
3) Sept. 14	Methods Overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary Chapter 8 		
4) Sept. 16	Terminology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pick a HDNRM faculty research article 	Analyze faculty research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 2 and CA 2 due 9/18 by midnight
5) Sept. 21	Research Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary Chapter 3 		
*6) Sept. 23	Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary Chapter 6 	Research Questions and Literature search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 3 and CA 3 due 9/25 by midnight
7) Sept. 28	Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary Chapter 11 		
8) Sept. 30	Research Ethics, Human Subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary Chapter 4 Riddick and Russel Belmont Report 	<i>Introduce Research Proposal Part 2 Assignment</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 4 and Proposal Part 1 due 10/2 by midnight
9) Oct. 5	Questionnaires and Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary pp. 224-238 Forest Service Chapter 5 	<i>Introduce Case Study Assignment, form teams</i>	
10) Oct. 7	Questionnaires and Surveys		Survey exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 5 and CA 4 due 10/9 by midnight
11) Oct.12	Interviews and Focus Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary pp. 239-250 Forest Service Chapter 6 		
12) Oct. 14	Interviews and Focus Groups		Interview exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 6 and CA 5 due 10/16 by midnight
13) Oct. 19	Observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary pp. 250-260 		
*14) Oct. 21	Observation		Observation exercise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CA 6 due 10/23 by midnight
15) Oct. 26	Exam Review, Work Day			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CITI due 10/26 by midnight
*16) Oct. 27 – Oct. 29	Midterm Exam			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midterm exam available 10/27, 6 am to 10/29, 6 am

17) Nov. 2	Quantitative Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary Chapter 14 Ewing and Park Chapter 7 		
*18) Nov. 4	Quantitative Analysis		Descriptive Stats, Visualization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 7 and CA 7 due 11/6 by midnight
19) Nov. 9	Quantitative Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ewing and Park Chapters 9-11 		
*20) Nov. 11	Quantitative Analysis		Inferential Statistics (comparisons, relationships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 8 and CA 8 due 11/13 by midnight
21) Nov. 16	Qualitative Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary Chapter 15 Saldana and Omasta 		
22) Nov. 18	Qualitative Analysis		Interview Coding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal Part 2 due 11/20 by midnight
23) Nov. 23	Secondary Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> O'Leary Chapter 13 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 9 and CA 9 due 11/23 by midnight
*24) Nov. 25	Work Day			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 10 due 11/25 by midnight
*25) Nov. 30	Secondary Data		Secondary Data	
26) Dec. 2	Present Case Studies			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case studies due 12/2 by 9 am CA 10 due 12/4 by midnight
27) Dec. 7	Demographics	Demographic Trends in WI		
*28) Dec. 9	Population Projections		Population Projections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RD 11 and CA 11 due 12/11 by midnight
*29) Dec. 16 – Dec. 18	Final Exam			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final Research Proposal due 12/16 by midnight Final exam available 12/16, 6 am to 12/18, 6 am

***No class meeting; please complete the assigned activity on your own time.**