Community Research Methods – Fall 2015
RLST 3065-, 20801
Tues. & Thurs.: 3:30-4:45

Instructor: Jen Wallin-Ruschman
Office Hours in Bowen 216: Mon. 3:30-5, Wed. 6:15-7:45, Tues. & Thurs. 8:15-9:15, 11-12:15, & 2-3:30 and by appointment

You can schedule an office hour visit at: https://bookjwr.timetap.com
I highly recommend scheduling your appointment!

Email: jwruschman@abac.edu I prefer to be emailed directly at this address (please do NOT email me through D2L).
Office Phone: (229) 391-5092 –although email will get you a quicker response.

Overview:
Welcome! This outline provides you a resource to consult for frequently asked questions. Read it completely before our second class meeting and consult it throughout the quarter. This course will provide students with an overview of research methods emphasizing critical thinking and application in community context. This course will explore the foundations of research methods and elaborate on topics such as: funding research, qualitative research methods, mixed methods research, evaluation research, cultural competency, qualitative data analysis, and dissemination strategies. These concepts and methods will be taught through the lens of community and participatory action research models.

Course Learning Outcomes:
By the end of this course, students should be able to:
1. Design a research study
2. Utilize a variety of research methods
3. Analyze and interpret collected data
4. Assess and critique research studies
5. Understand the benefits and challenges of community based research
6. Discuss cultural competence and identify challenges in working in diverse communities
7. Understand key considerations in partnering with communities.
8. Accurately document sources using APA documentation style

Course Requirements:

Desire 2 Learn:
This course will rely on the D2L system (https://abac.view.usg.edu/) as an additional resource for learning. I will be using D2L to post additional material, slides, links, exams, grades, and announcements. D2L is also a place to continue in-class discussions.
Classroom norms:

To have a productive learning environment, I believe it is essential to promote a respectful class climate. Some guidelines to keep in mind in accomplishing this goal are: speak from your own experience, engage thoughtfully with the content of the class, do not expect yourself or other class members to speak as a representative of a social and/or cultural group. Differences of opinion are welcome, as they help us to re-examine our own thinking. You should always maintain respect for opinions differing from your own and practice confidentiality if other students choose to share personal information. In addition, please avoid side conversations, texting/cell phone use, off topic computer work, and other behavior that is distracting to me and other students.

Turnitin.com:

Applicable assignments are to be submitted electronically via turnitin.com. The class ID is 10288176 and the password is SiSePuede. The password is case sensitive. Assignments are not accepted by email.

Office Hours:

My office hours are listed on the first page of the syllabus. If my designated office hours do not work with your schedule feel free to schedule a time at https://bookjwr.timetap.com. If none of the available times work then please email me. If you have a question about the material, want to review your exam, or have a concern about any of the assignments – please take advantage of my office hours.

Ethical Behavior:

Students are expected to maintain a high standard of personal ethics. Any evidence of cheating on exams, helping others to cheat, or plagiarism will lead to serious academic consequences. Plagiarism is anytime you take someone else’s ideas or words without citing the source. You should cite the source with the authors name and year at the end of the sentence. If you are directly quoting someone or something the quote MUST be in quotation marks for this is plagiarism even if you have cited the source at the end of the sentence.

If plagiarism is discovered (whether it is accidental or on purpose) students will receive a 0 on the assignment. This means that if you copy your response (including the definition) to an essay question on the exam you will receive a 0 for the exam! The second time plagiarism is discovered the student will fail the course and will be reported to the Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Attendance

Attendance is part of your grade, my policy is described below. For my attendance policy it does not matter why you missed class. If or when you miss a class meeting you should utilize your peers to get notes and handouts from the class. You do not need to let me know when you are missing class and please do not email me to ask what you missed in class. If after you have talked with your peers, read the chapter, and looked over the powerpoint slides you have specific questions please schedule an office hours appointment.

Paper Format

All papers, including papers submitted on turnitin.com, are to be double spaced in 12
point, times new roman font with 1 inch page margins. This is what “counts” as 1 page. I will not accept papers that are not in this format.

Other Important Tips (for this and other classes)

Late Assignments

Late assignments will be deducted one letter grade (e.g., 10 points for a 100 point assignment) for each day they are late. So if you get an 85 and it is two days late you receive a 65. Weekends count as days and the time is calculated based on the due date time. For example, if an assignment is due at 5 on Friday and you submit the assignment at 4 on Sunday you will lose 2 letter grades if you submit at 6 on Sunday you will lose 3 letter grades. After a maximum of 10 days you cannot turn in the assignment as you have no chance of receiving credit. There are no exceptions to this policy at all ever. I recommend you not wait until the last minute to complete assignment so as not to have a technical or personal problem that causes you to be late.

The exemption to this rule is small assignments, I do not accept these if they are late. This is fully explained below.

Other:
If you feel there is something about you that might impact your experience in this class that I should be aware of, please let me know. If anything arises during the term, please speak to me as soon as possible.

Grading Scheme:

Community Research Proposal 200 points
Pre-Proposal + Meeting (25 points)
Intro. & Literature Review (50 points)
Final Paper (125 points)
Exams: (3 x 50 points) 150 points
Class Participation: 100 points
Small Assignments: (10 x 10 points) 100 points
Total: 550 points

Letter grades are based upon total points earned.

Assignments:

Exams (50 points x 3= 150 points)
The exams will consist of multiple-choice, true/false, and written response questions.

Exams will be given online in D2L. Exams will be open to take for a 3-5 day window (see schedule) but once you begin the exam you will only have 1 hour and 15 minutes to finish. The exception is exam 3 which will only be open for the 2 hour time frame that is our assigned
final exam time. I suggest you only begin and take the exam in a location with reliable internet connection and on a reliable computer. If this is a problem see me and I will help find you a place on campus to take the exam. No test can be taken outside of the specified window. **If you plagiarize on the exam you will receive a 0 for the entire exam!**

Please do not make the mistake of thinking that because the exam is online you do not need to study- this will not end well for you.

**Community Research Proposal (200 points)**

For this assignment you will design a research project with a local community or community organization that you have connections with. If you have connections with a community organization through a practicum or internship you may work with them for this project. Alternatively, if you need help connecting with a community organization I will offer some resources early in the semester. It is possible for a group of individuals to work with the same community (if the community agrees). However, you should carry out an individual aspect to the project. If you plan to work in a team or group I recommend you meet with me so we can discuss the division of labor. Also, each individual will need to do a different project and turn in a separate research proposal paper.

For this semester you will just be conceptualizing and designing your research project and connecting it to a community identified need. Ideally, you will carry out this project after the term is over, potentially as your capstone project.

This assignment has three parts.

i) **Pre-Proposal + Meeting** (25 points)

ii) **Intro. & Literature Review** (50 points)

iii) **Final Paper** (125 points)

i) Before the date in the attached schedule you should schedule a meeting with me to discuss your research project proposal. To this meeting you should bring a brief outline (~ 2 pages) of what you plan to write your proposal on. This **pre-proposal paper AND meeting** are worth 25 points. The earlier you meet with me the more time you will have to make necessary edits to submit a literature review and final paper.

ii) In the middle of semester (see attached schedule for exact date) you will turn in the first portion of your research proposal on turnitin.com. This will include:

**Brief Introduction, Literature Review, and Research Questions or Hypothesis (6-8 pages)**

_This paper is worth 50 points._

This section will include: working title, introduction, objectives, justification, review of the literature, and research questions and/or hypothesis. Pages 52-58 of your Gray text provide more information on each of these sections and chapter 5 provides additional information on conducting and writing your literature review. Your proposal should be specific to the community you are working with and meet some of their identified needs.
For the literature review you need at least 5 peer-reviewed journal articles related to your topic. A literature review doesn't simply summarize each article. Instead, it shows how all of the articles tie together, how they relate, and how these relations lead to your research question. Your literature review should not read like a list of summaries of articles, it should be thematically organized.

iii) At the end of the semester (see attached schedule for exact date) you will turn in your full research proposal on turnitin.com. This will include your revised introduction and literature review (6-8 revised pages) as well as a second section that will include:

**Methodology & Analysis (3-4 new pages)**

_You final proposal is worth 125 points._

This new section will include: description of research methodology, time frame/time table, sampling strategy & participants, data collection instruments/measure, data analysis plan, ethical considerations, discussion, limitations, and related material (e.g., interview schedule or survey). Pages 58-62 of your Gray text provide more information on each of these sections. Additionally, you should utilize the chapters that provide more detailed information on the methods that you choose to employ. Any measures or instruments you plan to use should be included as appendices in your document and do not count towards your page total.

For the analysis plan, discuss how you intend to analyze or make sense your data. What are your independent and dependent variables? What statistical test(s) might you use to analyze them? If you’re doing a qualitative study, how will you code and analyze your data? Chapters 22 or 23 should be very useful depending on the type of data you are using. Be sure to also acknowledge the limitations of your study, no research is perfect!

**Your final paper will be 9-12 double spaced pages and be in APA format (title page, reference pages, and appendices are necessary but do no count towards your page total).**

**A rubric for this assignment will be posted in D2L.**

If you are having trouble with any aspect of this assignment, please meet with me sooner rather than later so we can work out any issues.

**Small Assignments (10 points x 10 = 100 points)**

Throughout the semester, I will assign small tasks to complete outside of class. These assignments are given to increase your understanding of course material by applying course concepts outside of the classroom. Small assignments may involve completing an activity and then writing a short paper, participating in our class community research assignment, or doing something else. I will assign 7 of these throughout the semester, and you must complete 5. Because I will be assigning more of these than are required, I will **not allow makeup or late assignments.** To receive credit you must turn in a copy by the specified deadline. **All assignments are to be submitted electronically via turnitin.com.**
Class Participation and Attendance (100 points)

Attendance and participation are essential components of this class and all college courses. We will strive to create a classroom atmosphere in which open dialog and communication is comfortable and encouraged. Please ask questions, offer observations, and suggest alternative perspectives during class. Participation will also make up a portion of your grade and will be divided among the following three categories.

I. Syllabus Quiz (10 points)

During the first few days of the course (see schedule) you will take an online quiz in D2L over the material in the syllabus. You can take this quiz up to three times, and only your highest score will be recorded.

II. Participating in class discussions, activities, and filling out exit cards (80 points)

This course will include discussions and activities designed to increase your understanding of the material. ALL portions of in-class time (including lecture) require active engagement for you to learn. Additionally, it is important that you read the addressed chapter being covered BEFORE you come to class. This will not only allow you to participate, but also help you comprehend the material, which will set you up to do well on the exams.

To be awarded the full 80 points for participation in this course you must come to class AND be an active participant by participating in the following two ways:

1. Being active in class discussion and activities by contributing your voice and being a vocal participant in both large and small group discussions and activities. Asking questions is also a great way to be an engaged class member. If you are reading this, congratulations and thank you for reading the syllabus. Please email me your favorite appropriate humorous meme or picture before August 19th and you will receive 3 extra credit points. Further, you cannot be engaged if you are on your phone or doing off-topic work on your computer—so please avoid these activities that are distracting to yourself, myself (yes, I can see you), and other class participants.

2. In addition to active participation, weekly reflection cards or Exit Cards will be collected. These will be written on index cards during the last few minutes of class. Each exit card should include a brief reflection on the week, which might include some combination of answers to the following questions:
   i. What did you learn today?
   ii. What are you still confused about? What questions do you still have?
   iii. What went well/poorly in the class today? What helped you learn? What inhibited your learning?

You will need to put your name on your exit cards so I know you are turning in thoughtful responses. These cards not only let me know you are attending class and are an engaged class participant, but also help me be a better teacher and make the class the best it can be.

Your 80 potential points in this category will be assigned utilizing the following scale:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>72-80</td>
<td>Actively participates every week. Asks questions and brings up discussion points without having to be prompted. Questions are exceptionally thoughtful and demonstrate a thorough understanding of the readings. Completes high quality out of class activities. Attends at least 90% of classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>64-71</td>
<td>Actively participates each week. Demonstrates an understanding of the readings on a weekly basis. Questions are relevant, and demonstrate an understanding of the readings. Completes the out of class activities. Attends at least 80% of classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>56-63</td>
<td>Participates each week. Engages with the week’s topic and readings although some gaps in understanding may be evident. Listens but rarely comments. Only completes some of the out of class activities. Attends at least 70% of classes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>48-55</td>
<td>Does not participate actively. Responds to direct questions but does not volunteer opinions. Comments reveal only surface level understanding of the readings/topic. Does not volunteer information and lack of preparation may be evident. Does not complete out of class activities. Attends at least 60% of class.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Below 47</td>
<td>Does not participate in class. Is distracted in class (e.g., on phone, side conversations, off topic computer work). Does not read before class. Attends 50% of less of classes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To calculate your grade for attendance and participation I start with your percent attendance as a base score. So if you attend 85% of classes you start with an 85% for attendance then I add or subtract up to 10 points for your participation. So if you never talk or participate you would get a 75% or if you are a great and regular participant you would get a 95%. Also I will record tardiness and 3 tardies= 1 absence.

**III. Closing Assignment** (10 points)

Towards the end of the class you will write a short response (approximately 1-2 pages) detailing your experiences in the course. **Specifically, some examples of what you took away from the course, what you would do differently if you took the course again, and what I could do differently if I taught the course again.** There is no right or wrong answer, the assignment is simply intended to facilitate reflection on what you have taken away from this course and help me improve the course in the future. These are due in class (can be printed or hand written) at the start of class on the due date in the attached schedule. If all the printers in the world are broken then you must email this to me before the start of class on the scheduled due date.

**Extra Credit:** (up to 10 points)

This term we will cover a wide range of topics, each of which people dedicate their entire lives to understand. As such, I do not know everything. If someone asks a question in class that the instructor or another classmate is unable to provide a satisfactory answer to, then you can independently research the question. To receive any credit you must submit your findings via turnitin.com by date indicated in the schedule. You should be using at least one scholarly source for your response. Students may be encouraged, but not required, to spend a few minutes
presenting their results in class. There may be opportunities for this throughout the term but there is designated time during the last week of class.

**Grade Disputes:** All grade disputes must be submitted in writing within one week of having receive the assignment grade. The written grading dispute should clearly articulate your justification, or principled argument, for the grade adjustment.

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**College Policy on Course Attendance:**
Courses at ABAC are provided for the intellectual growth and development of students. The interaction with instructors and other students is an important element of the learning process, and a high correlation exists between class attendance and course grades. Therefore, to attain maximum success, students should attend all their classes, be on time, and attend all scheduled course activities. Absence from class does not excuse students from full responsibility for class work or assignments missed. Students must accept this responsibility.

Individual instructors will establish attendance policies for each class, will publish the policy in the course syllabus, and keep attendance records. The penalty for absences is at the discretion of the instructor and may include failure of the course. Students who stop attending class without officially withdrawing will receive a grade for the course. A student penalized for excessive absences may appeal through the grade appeal process as stated in this catalog and the Student Handbook.

**Institutional Absence:**
A student who serves as an official representative of the college is defined as one who:

1. is authorized to use the college name in public relationships outside the institution;
2. regularly interacts with non-college individuals and groups over an extended period of time (at least one semester);
3. represents the college as a part of a group and not as an individual;
4. represents the college under the direct supervision of a college faculty or staff member; and
5. is authorized in writing, in advance, by the President of the college.

Such a student is in no way released from the obligations and responsibilities of all students, but will not be penalized with unexcused absences when absences result from regularly scheduled activities in which he/she represents the college.

Further, it is the responsibility of each student to contact instructors prior to the absence and to make arrangements to make up any work that will be missed, in a manner acceptable to the instructor. Advisors of activities will schedule off-campus activities in a manner that does not unduly disrupt the learning process for a student.

**College Policy on Academic Dishonesty:**
Academic irregularities include, but are not limited to, giving or receiving unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any academic assignment; taking or attempting to take, stealing,
or otherwise obtaining in an unauthorized manner any material pertaining to the education process; selling, giving, lending, or otherwise furnishing to any person any question and/or answers to any examination known to be scheduled at any subsequent date; fabricating, forging, or falsifying lab or clinical results; plagiarism in any form related to themes, essays, term papers, tests, and other assignments; breaching any confidentiality regarding patient information.

For more information on Disciplinary Procedures associated with Academic Dishonesty, please refer to the Academic Code of Conduct in the Student Handbook.

**Student Resources:**

**Disability Accommodations**
If there is a student in this class who has specific needs because of learning disabilities or any other disability, please feel free to contact the instructor.

**Weather Hotline:** In case of inclement weather during class we will move to the safety of the designated shelter. If you have experienced inclement weather and want to check on the ABAC status for class meetings, check the ABAC website or call the Inclement Weather Hotline: 229-391-5225