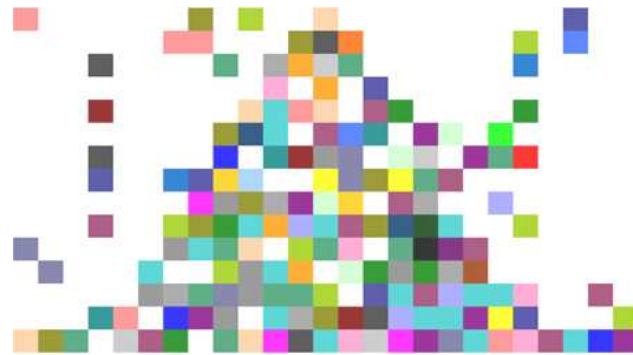


# Research Methods in Human Relations



William Ray, Fall 2013

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# 1. Introduction

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## 1.1. Course Schedule

- *First Friday evening.* Introduction, graphs, group exercises.
- *First Saturday morning.* Descriptive Statistics. Spreadsheets, Normal Calculations.
- *First Saturday afternoon.* Foundations of Research, Research Design, teams.
- *First Sunday afternoon.* Survey Construction, Confidence Intervals for Means, teams.

- *Second Friday evening.* Distributions, Confidence Intervals for proportions, teams.
  - *Second Saturday morning.* Hypothesis tests for means and proportions.
  - *Second Saturday afternoon.* ANOVA, teams. **Prospectus due.**
  - *Second Sunday afternoon.* Linear Regression. Multiple Regression, teams, time permitting
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- *Third Friday evening.* Sample Examination, Library faculty presentation, teams.
  - *Third Saturday morning.* Inter-rater Reliability, Multiple Regression, Chi-squared tests.
  - *Third Saturday afternoon.* Two-way ANOVA, Chi-Squared tests, Teams.
  - *Third Sunday afternoon.* Team presentations.


## 1.2. Grading

### Graded Assignments

Gradebook Declarations	5%
Team Prospectus	15%
Team Research Presentation	25%
Team Contribution	5%
Final Examination	30%
Final Written Assignment	20%

### Grading Scale

Last A	90%
Last B	80%
Last C	70%
Last D	55%



It is essential that you familiarize yourself with the course content on **CANVAS**.

Be sure to read the syllabus and related materials on the website **CANVAS** for details on

- the assignments;
- the gradebook declarations and the postings to the discussion boards;
- on academic honesty.

There is also a set of videos [Against All Odds](#) available in the OU-Tulsa library that provide further learning opportunities for many course topics.

### 1.3. Team Research Project

A major component of this course will be the team research project. Each team will be responsible for

- identifying a research problem;
- defining research objectives;
- defining the population to be studied;
- defining the variables;
- developing a model (or set of hypotheses);
- designing a research instrument to measure the variables;
- gathering data;
- analyzing the data;
- presenting the data to the class.

More details are available in the syllabus and online in the content area **Basic Research Concepts**.

## 1.4. Examples of Research Projects

- Can the wording of a survey influence results?

What kind of data do you think you would have to gather to answer this question? Does the subject matter of the survey matter?

- Do an opinion survey, with an analysis of the population characteristics that might influence the outcome.

For example, gender, age, income and education often influence political preferences. Would you include hair color? Political Affiliation?

- Who is more likely to ask for "paper" bags at the grocery store, men or women?

Are there any other factors that might influence this request? How would you gather data on this question?

- Who is more likely to come to a complete stop at a stop sign, men or women?

Are there other factors, such as location, time of day or weather, that could influence this behavior? What would be the advantages and drawbacks of doing a survey on this topic?


- What are the optimal hours for the library to be open?

What kind of data would you gather in order to answer this question? Do you think a student's major, age, work or family situation might influence their response?

- Does knowledge about a disease influence how people react when meeting someone with that condition?

Many studies show a fear of contagion even when the person knows that the disease cannot be transmitted by casual contact, or is not communicable at all.





Your topic does not have to be complex or deep. It should be one that is fun and interesting – or at least that you can convince your group is interesting! It should be **sharply focused** so that you can actually complete the entire project during the time allotted.

In all cases your project and presentation must

- avoid stereotypes;
- use inclusive language;
- show a sensitivity to diversity.

You are, after all, going to be professionals in human relations and your research presentation should reflect these basic principles.

This is a **team project**. That means that all team members share equally in the credit for the project. Team members should all put forward equal effort on the project, although this does not mean every person does exactly the same thing. For example, some of the team members may be able to observe more subjects than others, although each team member should observe a minimum of ten subjects. Some team members may be proficient at computers or video and make special contributions in those areas, while others are especially adept at public speaking or role-playing.

Working on a team also means compromise, finding common ground, accepting errors (especially first draft errors!), listening as well as speaking, shared responsibility and shared rewards.


After the final weekend team members will be asked to evaluate the contribution of other members of their team. These peer evaluations will be used in part by the instructor to assign a **team contribution** grade to each individual.

## 1.5. Peer Evaluation

Each student will be asked to rate the **other** members of their team using, for example, the following four criteria.

- **Preparation.** Were they prepared when they came to class?
- **Contribution.** Did they contribute productively to group discussion and work?
- **Respect for others' ideas.** Did they encourage others to contribute their ideas?
- **Flexibility.** Were they flexible when disagreements occurred?

The overall ratings you assign to your team members must average ten points – with some team members getting higher ratings and some lower. You will be expected to explain your ratings.



Teams may develop their own criteria for peer evaluation, but teams should agree among themselves **this weekend** if they plan to use different criteria than the ones listed above. Changing the rules mid-course would be seen by most people as unfair.

Each person will be assigned an average peer evaluation score, omitting the **lowest** and **highest** peer score. The instructor may further adjust the peer evaluation averages based on his observations and based on the reasons provided on the peer evaluation. Altogether the peer evaluations and the instructor's adjustments will comprise the **Team Contribution** portion of the grade, which counts 5% of the total grade.

It is important that you do your peer evaluations honestly so that the contributions of your fellow team members can be recognized.

There is a form on **LEARN.OU.EDU** to complete to assign the peer evaluation score to the other members of your team.

## 1.6. Absences

It is important that you come to class. Whether you are in class or not, you will be responsible for all material covered in class.

Throughout the scheduled class sessions time is set aside for the teams to work together on the research project. The instructor will rotate among the teams during these times to ask and answer questions. It is important that team members take advantage of this scheduled time.

In the real world, team members sometimes must be absent. The team is still expected to perform and everyone, including the absent member, benefits. If the team feels the absence is justified and if the absent member tries to make amends, most teams will gladly extend the benefit. However, if the team members feel that the absence is not justified or that the absent person is freeloading, there are likely to be consequences on the peer reviews. If you must be absent, consult with your team members early and work to make up your contribution.

## 1.7. Gradebook Declarations

As you have already seen, several assignments requiring posting something to a message board. Other assignments will involve doing one of the active learning modules, or reacting to another student's postings. All of these online assignments require that you take a "quiz" in which you affirm that you have done the assignment. The instructor will check at least 50% of all gradebook declarations for accuracy.

If you misrepresent what you have done in a gradebook declaration, you can be charged with academic misconduct. As a minimum sanction, you will receive a grade of "zero" for the **entire** 15% of your grade related to the declarations.

Honesty is both a fundamental scholarly value and a fundamental value of human relations professionals. Scholars rely on honest reports from other scholars to advance knowledge. Human relations professionals value fair play; personal advantage gained through dishonesty disrespects your fellow students.