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## American Public University System

*The Ultimate Advantage is an Educated Mind*

**School of Health Sciences  
PBHE550  
Research Methods in Public Health  
3 Credit Hours  
Length of Course: 8 weeks  
Prerequisite: None**

### Instructor Information

*Please refer to the Syllabus tab for your instructor's contact information and biography.*

### Course Description (Catalog)

This course in research methods prepares the student to understand materials and issues associated with but not limited to the logic of the scientific method, research design, and qualitative and statistical analysis of data. Students will be afforded the opportunity to conduct research on topics within their field of study. The course is intended to provide a foundation from which the student may use the knowledge and practices gained in this course throughout the rest of their graduate program.

### Course Scope

This course of study will take the student through the various steps of a traditional research design. The student will select a specific and appropriate research topic in their discipline which will be approved by the instructor. With the approved topic, the student will begin to acquire the basic information and tools in order to complete a research proposal. By accomplishing exercises, the student will gather information, assess materials, and analyze data. This will result in the submission of a final research proposal.

### Course Learning Objectives

After successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

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1. Demonstrate proficiency in the use of selected research methods and tools.
2. Describe and examine the scientific method.
3. Accomplish specific research tasks: hypothesis construction, conceptualizing terms, literature review, data collection, critical analysis, and communicate findings.
4. Evaluate data and critically assess research findings.
5. Judge the usefulness of various research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods analysis.
6. Show graduate level critical thinking and writing.

### Course Delivery Method

This course delivered via distance learning will enable students to complete academic work in a flexible manner, completely online. Course materials and access to an online learning management system will be made available to each student. Online assignments are due weekly as noted on the course outline and can include Forum questions and written assignments. Assigned faculty will support the students throughout this eight-week course.

### Course Materials

#### Required Course Textbook:

Guest, G. & Namey, E.E. (eds.). (2015). Public health research methods. Thousand Oaks, CA.: SAGE Publications.

#### Additional Readings:

Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). (2012). Guide to social science data preparation and archiving: Best practice throughout the data life cycle (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Retrieved from <http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/deposit/guide/>

Jackson, G., Kezar, A., Kozi, M., & de las Alas, N. (2006). Preparing scholarly reviews of the literature: A webtorial. Retrieved from <http://www.gwu.edu/~litrev>

Pole, K. (2007). Mixed method designs: A review of strategies for blending quantitative and qualitative methodologies. *Mid-Western Educational Researcher*, 20(4), 1-4.

Smith, D., Schwarz, N., Roberts, T.R., Ubel, P.A. (2006). Why are you calling me? How study introductions change response patterns. *Quality of Life Research*, 15(4), 621-630.

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Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis J., & Dillon, L. (2003). Quality in qualitative evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence. Retrieved from [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/498322/a\\_quality\\_framework\\_tcm6-38740.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/498322/a_quality_framework_tcm6-38740.pdf)

### **Academic Writing Requirements:**

The School of Health Sciences requires use of APA format and style and all students are encouraged to have a current copy of the *APA Publication Manual*. All written assignments are to be submitted in APA format style unless otherwise noted in the assignment directions.

### **Web Sites**

In addition to the required course texts, the following public domain web sites are useful. Please abide by the university's academic honesty policy when using Internet sources as well. Note web site addresses are subject to change.

- APUS Library Public Health Program Guide: [http://apus.libguides.com/friendly.php?s=public\\_health](http://apus.libguides.com/friendly.php?s=public_health)
- Public Health Research Methods Student Study Site: <http://studysites.sagepub.com/guestph/study/default.htm>
- Purdue Online Writing Lab: <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>
- American Psychological Association: <http://www.apastyle.org/index.aspx>

## **Evaluation Procedures**

### **Forums**

Please join the forums each week. Replies must be posted in the week due and posts after the end of the week will not be graded. The Forums are for student interaction and input should be submitted before the week ends in order to fully participate in the discussions and in the class each week. Students should demonstrate their own knowledge in the forums and avoid copying and pasting from websites.

#### **Guidelines:**

- Post the initial response to each forum by 11:55pm, ET, Wednesday.
- Initial responses should be no less than 450-500 words.
- Initial responses are to be original in content and demonstrate a thorough analysis of the topic.
- Reply to at least 2 of your classmates in each forum by 11:55pm, ET, Sunday.
- Replies to classmates should be no less than 200 words.

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- Responses to classmates are significant to advance the forum.
- All forums can be accessed in the Forums section of the course.
- Forum rubric is included in the forum section of the course
- Additional guidelines for week one forum introduction are included in the forum tab within the course
- More in-depth specific instructions for each forum can be found in the forum tab within the course.
- **Late Forum posts receive a 10% per day late penalty. If your 2 peer responses are posted after the week is ended (after Day 7, Sunday) they receive a zero, in that the discussion is over and you cannot receive credit for participation in a discussion with others after the discussion week has closed.**

Students will be responsible for providing a peer response posting for at least two (2) of their peers' postings, unless there are less than 3 students in the course, where only one (1) peer posting will be required. Your peer postings should challenge or expound upon at least one of the points made by your peer, and "I agree" does not constitute as an adequate response. As graduate students, you will be expected to provide comprehensive, relevant and well supported points in your assignments.

We all bring something unique to the classroom, from our understanding, our experiences, and our value systems. We honor and respect each person's diverse beliefs to help us see beyond the classroom to be the most effective individuals we can be. Therefore, we should all be respectful of others while expressing our viewpoints and opinions. Proper netiquette behavior is expected. Any inflammatory, demeaning or disrespectful language in a posting will be immediately removed from the discussion space.

### Assignments

For this course, students will be required to submit a writing assignment each of the eight (8) weeks. All papers should be formatted in APA format and style and are due by Sunday of each week.

- More in-depth specific instructions for each assignment can be found in the Assignment tab within the course.
- **Assignments submitted late without advance notice will receive a 5% per day late penalty and will not be accepted for grading five (5) days past the due date.**

### Course Grading Outline

Grading Instrument		Percentage of Final Grade
<b>Forums</b> (8 @ 100 pts each)	800 pts	<b>25%</b>
Introductory Forum Post	10 pts	

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<b>Assignments (8 @ 100 pts each)</b>	800 pts	
Assignment One: Online Library Exercise	5%	
Assignment Two: IRB and CITI Training	10%	
Assignment Three: Epidemiology	10%	
Assignment Four: Research proposal intro	20%	<b>75%</b>
Assignment Five: Quantitative vs. qualitative	10%	
Assignment Six: Data collection methods	10%	
Assignment Seven: Statistics in research	10%	
Assignment Eight: Research Proposal	25%	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1610 pts</b>	<b>100%</b>

### Course Outline

Lesson	Topic	Learning Objective(s)	Course Learning Objective	Reading(s)	Assignment(s)	Forum(s)
1	Introduction to Public Health Research Methods  Developing a Research Question  APUS Library and Online Research	Develop a public health research question  Develop your online research approach  Use computerized databases available for reviewing the literature  Assess whether your topic is researchable	Demonstrate proficiency in the use of selected research methods and tools.  Describe and examine the scientific method.  Show graduate level critical thinking and writing.	Guest & Namey: Chap. 1, 2  APUS library resources  Jackson, G., Kezar, A., Kozi, M., & de las Alas, N. (2006). Preparing scholarly reviews of the literature: A webtorial. Retrieved from <a href="http://www.gwu.edu/~litrev">http://www.gwu.edu/~litrev</a>	Week 1 Assignment: - Online Library Exercise	Week 1 Forum: - Introduction - Literature Research
Lesson	Topic	Learning Objective(s)	Course Learning Objective	Reading(s)	Assignment(s)	Forum(s)
2	Research Ethics	Appraisal of ethical issues in the phases of	Demonstrate proficiency in the use of selected	Guest & Namey: Chap. 3, 4; Appendix (pgs.	Week 2 Assignment: - IRB & CITI	Week 2 Forum: - Research

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	Institutional Review Boards  Theories and Models in Public Health Research  Community Engagement in Public Health Research	research  Implement a public health theory or model into study design  Integrate theory into the research study  Implement community engagement into a public health research question	research methods and tools.  Show graduate level critical thinking and writing.	723-743)	training	Theory & Models
<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Learning Objective(s)</b>	<b>Course Learning Objective</b>	<b>Reading(s)</b>	<b>Assignment(s)</b>	<b>Forum(s)</b>
<b>3</b>	Public Health Research Fields: Epidemiology	Deconstruct the role of surveillance in aspects of research  Evaluate epidemiologic studies including case-control, cohort, and randomized controlled trials  Examine study objectives and endpoints  Assess bias, confounding, controls, and sample size in study design	Evaluate data and critically assess research findings.  Show graduate level critical thinking and writing.	Guest & Namey: Chaps. 5,7,8; Chap. 6 is optional reading	Week 3 Assignment: - Epidemiologic research in the literature	Week 3 Forum: - Study objectives and outcomes of experimental research studies

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Lesson	Topic	Learning Objective(s)	Course Learning Objective	Reading(s)	Assignment(s)	Forum(s)
4	Public Health Research Fields: Health Economics, Health Services, and Psychosocial health	<p>Construct a writing script for the research question</p> <p>Evaluate the role of health economics in research and integrate perspectives into health research</p> <p>Investigate data collection methods in health services research and understanding systematic reviews and meta-analyses</p> <p>Examine psychosocial interventions for research designs</p>	<p>Accomplish specific research tasks: hypothesis construction, conceptualizing terms, literature review, data collection, critical analysis, and communicate findings.</p> <p>Show graduate level critical thinking and writing.</p>	<p>Guest &amp; Namey: Chap. 10,11,16</p> <p>Supplemental information on systematic literature reviews</p> <p>In Resources section of classroom</p>	<p>Week 4 Assignment: - Begin writing research proposal</p>	<p>Week 4 Forum: - Public Health Research: Economics, Services, and Psychosocial interventions</p>
Lesson	Topic	Learning Objective(s)	Course Learning Objective	Reading(s)	Assignment(s)	Forum(s)
5	Quantitative Methods Qualitative Methods Mixed Methods Approach	<p>Assess research question in order to write data collection methods</p> <p>Design data collection methods and experimental procedures</p>	<p>Judge the usefulness of various research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods analysis.</p> <p>Show graduate</p>	<p>Guest &amp; Namey: Chaps. 13, 15, &amp; 19</p> <p>Additional Readings: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). (2012). Guide to social science data</p>	<p>Week 5 Assignment: - Compare and contrast the different approaches</p>	<p>Week 5 Forum: - Quantitative, Qualitative, and Mixed Methods Research Approaches</p>

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		<p>Develop a diagram for research data collection</p> <p>Employ one of the three types of research approaches for data collection</p>	<p>level critical thinking and writing.</p>	<p>preparation and archiving: Best practice throughout the data life cycle (5<sup>th</sup> ed.). Retrieved from <a href="http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/deposit/guide/">http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/deposit/guide/</a></p> <p>Pole, K. (2007). Mixed method designs: A review of strategies for blending quantitative and qualitative methodologies. <i>Mid-Western Educational Researcher, 20(4)</i>, 1-4.</p> <p>Spencer, L., Ritchie, J., Lewis J., &amp; Dillon, L. (2003). Quality in qualitative evaluation: A framework for assessing research evidence.</p>		
<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Learning Objective(s)</b>	<b>Course Learning Objective</b>	<b>Reading(s)</b>	<b>Assignment(s)</b>	<b>Forum(s)</b>

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6	Data Collection  Primary vs. Secondary sources of data	Create steps for analyzing data  Evaluate data collection methods for internal and external validity  Generate an effective method for analyzing data  Use a technological approach in data analysis	Accomplish specific research tasks: hypothesis construction, conceptualizing terms, literature review, data collection, critical analysis, and communicate findings.  Show graduate level critical thinking and writing.	Guest & Namey: Chaps. 9,12,17  Additional Readings: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research (ICPSR). (2012). Guide to social science data preparation and archiving: Best practice throughout the data life cycle (5 <sup>th</sup> ed.). Retrieved from <a href="http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/deposit/guide/">http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/content/deposit/guide/</a>  Smith, D., Schwarz, N., Roberts, T.R., Ubel, P.A. (2006). Why are you calling me? How study introductions change response patterns. <i>Quality of Life Research</i> , 15(4), 621-630.	Week 6 Assignment: - Methods for answering a research question	Week 6 Forum: - Data Collection
Les son	Topic	Learning Objective(s)	Course Learning Objective	Reading(s)	Assignment(s)	Forum(s)
7	Innovative methods in public health research	Critique research methods  Deconstruct	Accomplish specific research tasks: hypothesis construction, conceptualizing	Guest & Namey: Chaps. 14,18,20,21	Week 7 Assignment: - Statistics in research	Week 7 Forum: - Technology in public health

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	Incorporating technology into research  Statistics in research	research question and methods to evaluate the research question  Evaluate research proposal for dissemination  Plan for implementation of research proposal	terms, literature review, data collection, critical analysis, and communicate findings.  Show graduate level critical thinking and writing.			research
<b>Lesson</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Learning Objective(s)</b>	<b>Course Learning Objective</b>	<b>Reading(s)</b>	<b>Assignment(s)</b>	<b>Forum(s)</b>
<b>8</b>	Planning for Research Implementation and Dissemination  Writing a Research Proposal	Create a Research Proposal  Plan how to disseminate research  Integrate research into real world situations including policy and practice  Defend value of proposed research	Accomplish specific research tasks: hypothesis construction, conceptualizing terms, literature review, data collection, critical analysis, and communicate findings.  Describe and examine the scientific method.  Show graduate level critical thinking and	Guest & Namey: Chaps. 22 & 23	Week 8 Assignment: - Research Proposal	Week 8 Forum: - What will you do with your research?

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## Policies

Please see the [Student Handbook](#) to reference all University policies. Quick links to frequently asked question about policies are listed below.

[Drop/Withdrawal Policy](#)

[Plagiarism Policy](#)

[Extension Process and Policy](#)

[Disability Accommodations](#)