Fundamentals of Inquiry & Discovery

BAAS 3926.001 | Summer 2026

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Prerequisites	Declared BAAS major
Format	Hybrid
In-Person Dates	Saturday, June 6 and Saturday, July 11 — 9:00–11:50 am, FBLD 310
Withdrawal Deadline	Friday, July 10, 2026 (last day to receive a "W")

Contents

Overview
Materials
Grading
Assignments
Course Policies
Academic Integrity
Technical Support
Class Schedule
Frequently Asked Questions

Overview

The main purpose of this course is to focus on good questions and how to answer them — a skill essential to making sound decisions as a leader in any organization or in your own life. The goals of the course are (1) to introduce the concepts and techniques used to develop good questions, and (2) to help you structure an appropriate information-gathering and analysis process to answer them. This process is sometimes called research.

Topics include the connection between questions and inquiry design, variable measurement, sampling, the differences between experimental and non-experimental designs, data analysis, reporting, and the social context of research. The course emphasizes approaches used in the social sciences but also examines how natural scientists and business analysts approach similar problems.

No prior knowledge of statistics is required.

Materials

Required text: None. All required readings and course materials will be provided through Canvas.

Technology: Access to a reliable, modern computer is necessary throughout the semester. We will use podcasts and other forms of digital media to support learning.

> If you are considering graduate school, come talk to me. I maintain a substantial reading list I am happy to share.

Grading

Components

Assignment	Weight
Discussion Boards	10%
Module Quizzes	30%
Inquiry Project	40%
In-Class Activities	10%
Personal Journey Paper	10%

Scale

Grade	Range
A	89.51–100
B	79.51–89.50
C	69.51–79.50
D	59.51–69.50
F	Below 59.51

Rounding follows the international standard: 0.50 and below rounds down; 0.51 and above rounds up. Curving is at my discretion.

Assignments

Discussion Boards

There are five discussion board assignments distributed across the semester, collectively worth 10% of your final grade. Each is designed to take approximately 45 minutes to one hour to complete adequately. Each board has two deadlines:

- **Original post** due Wednesday at 11:59 pm
- **Replies** due the following Sunday at 11:59 pm

Important: Canvas only displays the Sunday deadline. You are responsible for making your original post by Wednesday.

Module Quizzes

Ten quizzes are worth a collective 30% of your final grade. Key details:

- **Open note,** but no outside assistance — you are expected to bring your readings and module materials, not look everything up during the quiz itself.
- **Timed:** 1.5 minutes per question (e.g., 15 minutes for a 10-item quiz). This is adequate time to respond thoughtfully and review your answers if you have prepared.
- **Format:** may include multiple choice, true/false, matching, and fill-in-the-blank.
- **Two attempts permitted:** if taken twice, the average of both scores is recorded.
- Quizzes close at their listed deadline and may not be made up without documentation (medical, judicial, or serious personal event).
- You may not copy, share, or retain quiz items. Doing so is an honor code violation.

If you experience a technical problem during a quiz (lost connection, quiz fails to submit), contact me **immediately** so I can reset your attempt before the deadline expires. Do not wait until the last moment.

Inquiry Project

The Inquiry Project is a team-based research design assignment worth 40% of your final grade. Teams are assigned by the professor. Each team selects a research topic and develops a project that includes conceptualization, a purpose statement, research questions, background literature review, and methods. The project is divided into seven parts (A through G), each equally weighted. **No late submissions are accepted for any component.** Check the Class Schedule for all due dates.

In-Class Activities and Attendance

This section meets in person on **two dates set by the university that cannot be moved:** Saturday, June 6 and Saturday, July 11. We will not use that time for lecture. Instead, you will spend the bulk of each session working in your teams on the Inquiry Project — time I have consistently found to be among the most productive of the semester. Each session carries an assignment worth 5% of your final grade (10% total). Attendance is expected on both dates.

Personal Journey Paper

Each student writes a personal reflection paper in which they assess their own learning across the course. A detailed prompt and grading rubric will be posted on Canvas. The paper is due **Sunday, July 26 at 11:59 pm** and is worth 10% of your final grade. No late submissions can be accepted; July 26 is the final day of the semester.

Course Policies

A Note on Teamwork

Because the Inquiry Project is a team assignment, I regularly send check-in emails to every team to monitor progress.

> If I find that a teammate is not responding or not fulfilling their agreed commitments, I will email that student and expect a reply within 48 hours with a concrete plan to re-engage. If no reply is received within that window, the team has the right to remove that student from the group. *A removed student receives no credit for any part of the Inquiry Project — including work already submitted — which represents 40% of the final grade.*

In all my years of teaching, I have only ever observed teammates extend grace and understanding when genuine difficulties arose. Please communicate proactively with me and your team if something comes up.

Learning Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. Investigate and evaluate the knowledge claims of themselves and others using evidence and examples. *(Critical Thinking and Reasoning)*
2. Communicate inquiry methods and approaches appropriate to specific problems. *(Written and Oral Communication)*
3. Collaborate with others to formulate questions and develop strategies to address them. *(Teamwork/Collaboration)*

Withdrawal Policy

The last day to withdraw from this course with a "W" is **Friday, July 10, 2026.** I will not initiate a withdrawal on your behalf. If you wish to withdraw, you must initiate that process yourself through the appropriate university channels.

ADA Accommodation

UNT makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide an accommodation letter to deliver to faculty to begin a private discussion about specific course needs. Students may request accommodations at any time, but ODA letters should be submitted as early as possible in the semester. A new letter is required each semester, and students must meet with each faculty member before accommodations are implemented. For more information, visit the UNT Office of Disability Accommodation website.

Emergency Notification

UNT uses a system called Eagle Alert to notify students quickly in the event of an emergency — severe weather, campus closings, and health and public safety events. In the event of a university closure, refer to Canvas for contingency plans for covering course material.

Instructor Availability

Email is the best way to reach me with questions, points of confusion, or concerns. I reply within one business day on weekdays. I do not check email on weekends. My primary goal is to help you succeed.

Professional Communication

Communication with me does not need to be formal, but it should be professional. This is a genuine career skill worth developing now. Some practical guidelines:

- **Subject line:** make it descriptive (e.g., *Question about my Inquiry Project score, not Question*).
- **Greeting:** begin with a name or title — "Dear Dr. S" or "Hi Professor" are fine. Launching straight into the message is poor form; "Hey Prof!" is worse.
- **Clarity:** be concise, make a specific request, and offer to provide more detail rather than providing your entire backstory upfront.
- **Self-service first:** check the syllabus and Canvas before emailing a question that is already answered.
- **School email:** use your official UNT address. Messages from personal email accounts may not receive a reply due to federal privacy law.
- **Form:** capitalize and punctuate.

I do not typically check email between 6 pm and 6 am or on weekends.

Student Expectations

I expect each student to:

- Read and understand this syllabus.
- Treat due dates as deadlines, not as reminders to begin.
- Have working familiarity with word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software.
- Navigate Canvas competently.
- Check their UNT email at least every 48 hours.
- Arrive to in-person sessions prepared for all planned activities.
- Let me know when difficulties arise.

In return, students can expect from me: course preparedness, professionalism, and collegiality; confidentiality regarding anything shared with me (within the bounds of what I am legally required to report); and a genuine, sustained effort to help you succeed.

Acceptable Student Behavior

Student behavior that interferes with instruction or with other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in any instructional setting. Students engaging in disruptive behavior will be directed to leave and may be referred to the Dean of Students. The University's conduct expectations apply to all instructional forums, including online environments. The UNT Code of Student Conduct is available on the Dean of Students website.

Academic Integrity

Standards and Consequences

Per UNT Policy 06.003, academic dishonesty includes cheating, fabrication, facilitating dishonesty, forgery, plagiarism, and sabotage. A finding may result in penalties ranging from a formal admonition to expulsion from the University.

Cheating and Plagiarism

Students caught cheating will receive no credit for the relevant assignment, and the incident will be reported to the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. Per the UNT catalog:

Cheating includes, but is not limited to: unauthorized assistance on quizzes, tests, or examinations; use of unauthorized sources in completing assignments; acquiring test materials without permission; submitting the same work for multiple courses without permission; and any act designed to give an unfair advantage.

Plagiarism includes: the knowing or negligent use — by quotation or paraphrase — of another person's work without full acknowledgment; and the use of materials prepared by paper mills or similar services.

Starting early on your work is the most reliable way to avoid the temptation to cut corners. If questions or concerns arise, come see me.

AI Policy

The use of ChatGPT or other generative AI to complete coursework is prohibited and subject to the same academic integrity consequences as other forms of dishonesty.

Using AI to **brainstorm** is acceptable. Submitting AI-generated text as your own is not. I reserve the right to convert any written assignment into an oral examination at the individual level if I have reason to believe AI was used to produce the submitted work. The purpose of written assignments is to assess *your* ability to apply and communicate course material — not your ability to type a prompt.

Questions or concerns about this policy? Come talk to me.

Technical Support

Technical problems are a normal part of online coursework. **I am not a technical support resource** — please do not contact me for help with Canvas or hardware.

Resource	Contact
UT Student Help Desk	UNT Information Technology Help Desk
Help Desk email	helpdesk@unt.edu

Do not wait until a deadline to discover a technical problem. Take quizzes and submit work from a location with a reliable internet connection, with enough time to troubleshoot if something goes wrong.

Class Schedule

Schedule key (text labels are used in addition to bold formatting so information is not conveyed by formatting alone):

- **[T]** — Team assignment
- **[O]** — Online assignment
- **[C]** — In-person class date

All assignments are due Sundays at 23:59 unless otherwise noted.

Week	Dates	Topics	Readings	Due
1	6/1–6/7	Process of Inquiry; Teams	Modules 0 & 1	[O] Modules 0 & 1 Week — 6/7
		[C] 6/6 — Variables		
2	6/8–6/14	Components of Inquiry Design	Module 2	[O] All Module 2 & 3 Week — 6/14
		Conceptualizing Research	Module 3	[T] [T] Part A — 6/14
3	6/15–6/21	Literature & Background	Module 4	[O] All Module 4 Week — 6/21
				[T] [T] Part B — 6/21
4	6/22–6/28	Ethics in Research	Module 5	[O] All Module 5 Week — 6/28
				[T] [T] Part C — 6/28
5	6/29–7/5	Measurement & Sampling	Module 6	[O] All Module 6 & 7 Week — 7/5
		Descriptive & Survey Research	Module 7	[T] [T] Part D — 7/5
6	7/6–7/12	Experimental Research Design	Module 8	[O] All Module 8 Week — 7/12
		[C] 7/11 — Research Methods		[T] [T] Part E — 7/12
7	7/13–7/19	Qualitative Research	Module 9	[O] All Module 9 & 10 Week — 7/19
		Mixed Methods	Module 10	[T] [T] Part F — 7/19
8	7/20–7/26	Research Presentations; Wrap-Up		[T] [T] Presentation — 7/26
				[T] [T] Part G — 7/26
				[O] Personal Journey Paper — 7/26

This syllabus is subject to change at the discretion of the instructor. Any changes will be announced on Canvas.

Frequently Asked Questions

- Why do I have to take this class?
- I don't like research and I'm afraid I will fail. What should I do?
- What if I'm not good at statistics?