Disaster Research Methods  
Fall 2019  
EMDS 6800  
Wednesdays 6:00-8:50 PM  
Chilton 242

Instructor: Dr. Mary Nelan  
Office Hours: Mondays 1:00-3:00 PM (and by appointment)  
Office: Chilton Hall, Room 122C  
Email: mary.nelan@unt.edu (Use this email address, do not send messages through canvas)

Course Readings

Required Text:

Additional Readings: Additional readings are listed in the class schedule and will be available on the course canvas site.

Course Overview
This course will introduce you to research design and methodologies used to conduct research into the human dimensions of disasters. This semester, you will not only learn how to build a research proposal, but you will learn the process of research and how to utilize the proper methodologies for the type of research that you are conducting. Through readings, lecture, and discussion, you will learn how to critically analyze research methods, leading you to a great understanding of how to conduct your own research and also evaluate the research already done in the field of disaster science.

This course will be both lecture based, and seminar based. Each student will be required to work in pairs to complete their overall assignment of their research proposals due at the end of the semester. These proposals should be worked on throughout the semester, starting with a research question that each student wishes to address. In addition, each student will be required to complete a short survey, which they will deploy and improve on this semester.

Course Objectives
1. To introduce you to the basics of designing a research project.  
2. To examine different approaches to social sciences research.  
3. To understand that different methods have strengths and weaknesses.  
4. To be able to critically analyze existing research.  
5. To learn how theory is applied in research.  
6. To recognize ethical issues in researching human subjects.  
7. To complete a research proposal.
Course Requirements

IRB Certificate (50 points – 8%)
Each student will be required to complete CITI training for human subject’s research by September 18 at: https://about.citiprogram.org/en/series/human-subjects-research-hsr/.

Survey (120 points – 18%): 
Each student is required to design one survey of 10-15 questions. The first draft of the survey will be due in class October 23 (40 points). In class, each student will ask the other students questions on their survey, outside of class they will ask the questions to family and friends, for a total of 15 participants. You will then take the data that you have gathered and enter it into a excel spreadsheet. Your questions should vary between nominal, ordinal, integral, and ratio. You will build a code sheet for your excel worksheet. This will be due in class on October 30 (40 points). Each student will then revise their survey, changing questions that didn’t work and submit their final survey along with a 1-2 page reflection of their experience with the survey and what they learned. This final draft and reflection will be due November 6 (40 points).

Research Question (30 points - 5%):
Each student will email me a research question, pertaining to the human dimensions of disasters, by September 25, at 11:59 pm. I will respond to each research question with recommendations by the end of that week.

Literature Review (100 points – 15%)
Each student will write a 10-12 page literature review, dealing directly with their previously identified research question, which will be due on October 16 by 11:59 pm. Students will be required to cite 20 or more peer-reviewed articles in their literature reviews. These literature reviews will directly contribute to their final proposal.

Final Proposal (300 points – 46%):
After you have received feedback for your literature review, you will proceed with your final research proposal, which will be between 20-25 pages. Each student is required to make an appointment with me by November 1 (25 points) to discuss their literature review and proposal. You must have a completed first draft to send to one other student in the class, a “reviewer” of your proposal, on Wednesday November 13 (75 points). Each reviewer is required to read over their fellow student’s research proposal and send constructive criticism back to them. The reviewer should write at least one page highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of the proposal, referencing topics from class. These reviews are due to myself and the author of the proposal on November 20 (25 points). Each student will then revise their proposals and submit a 20 – 25 page final draft by December 4 (150 points). Each student will also build a 10-15 minute presentation defending their proposal, these presentations will be on December 11 (25 points).

Participation (50 points – 8%):
I do not take attendance in this class. This is a graduate level class, so I expect students to be present every week and to actively participate in the class. Each student will be required to send me 5 discussion questions by noon each Wednesday. I will put together a list of questions, and each class one student will be required to lead the discussion. These questions, leading the discussion, and participation in the discussion will go towards their overall participation grade in the course.

**Course Grades:**
Your grade for the course is broken down as follows:
- IRB Certificate 50 points
- Survey 120 points
- Research Question 30 points
- Literature Review 100 points
- Final Proposal 300 points
- Participation 50 points

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>90% and above</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>80% - 89%</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>70% - 79%</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60% - 69%</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 – 59%</td>
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Your grades in this course are earned, at the end of the semester I only report earned credit. I will not add any points or tenths of a point to your grade. *I will not respond to any emails at the end of the semester asking for unearned points to boost your grade.*

**Late Assignments:**
In general, I do not accept late assignments after the due date. If you are having trouble with an assignment or meeting a deadline speak to me as soon as possible so that I can work with you. Do not wait until the last minute to reach out to me.

**Professionalism**
One purpose of graduate courses is to help professionalize students. Two ways that we can work towards that in our class is through professionalizing your emails as students and using proper titles.

**Emails**
Please feel free to email me when you need help in the class, this is not meant to intimidate you but rather help you to send appropriate emails not only to me but your other professors. There are 5 key elements to a successful email to professors:

1. **Subject Line:** Clearly identify which class you are in and what you are emailing about in a few words.
2. **Name:** Use the proper title and name for your professor. Address the email to either Professor or Dr. Nelan (I have a Ph.D.; you can call me doctor). Also, make sure you know my last name and spell it correctly (this goes for all of your professors).
3. **Briefly (and politely) state the reason for your email.** If you are frustrated with something, try to take a step back and write a polite email, it will go a long way. If your email is aggressive then I will not receive it well. Remember to write in a
professional manner, it is respectful and I always try to respect my students so it is nice when they reciprocate.

(4) Do not use slang, text language, or emoticons. This is very important, professional emails do not include this type of language and it is better to get into the habit of writing emails this way.

(5) Proofread: Anything that you send to professors should be proofread, whether it is an assignment or an email.

*Bonus: Check the syllabus for the answer before you send an email (I will respond by referring you back to the syllabus if the answer to your question can be found here).

**Titles**

Using the proper title or honorific is respectful and important professional correspondence and interactions (emergency management being one of them). Please address me as either Dr. Nelan or Professor Nelan. Studies have shown that women are less likely than men to be addressed as Dr. and generally are called Ms. or Mrs. Why am I putting such an emphasis on this? It will serve you well in your future, in Emergency Management you will find that many people have titles and it is respectful to use those titles. This is not just for my ego; this is an important component of professionalization as you progress through the university.

**Laptops and Cell Phones in the Classroom**

Technology can be an excellent learning tool; however, it can also hinder learning when it is abused in the classroom. In this course, I allow personal laptops for note taking purposes. For your information, studies have shown that taking notes by hand is a more effective method of learning the material presented in your college courses.

If laptops are used for entertainment purposes while in class, you may unknowingly distract your fellow students who are not only interested in learning the topic of the course, but have also paid for the course. (See this article on the "cone of distraction" that is caused by individuals using laptops and cellphones in class for entertainment purposes: https://derekbruff.org/?p=2915) Please be aware of how you choose to use your laptops and what affect you may be having on students around you.

Cell phones are prohibited in class. Please turn off your ringer and put your cell phone away for the duration of class. If you need to be reached for any reason during class, please keep your phone on vibrate and leave the room to talk or text on your phone. Like laptops, cell phones can distract the students around you, and the instructor. Texting in class (no matter how stealthy you think you are) is disrespectful to the instructor and your fellow students.

**Policy on Cheating and Plagiarism**

**Definitions**

The UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline defines cheating and plagiarism “as the use of unauthorized books, notes, or otherwise securing help in a test; copying other’s tests, assignments, reports, or term papers; representing the work of another as one’s own; collaborating without authority with another student during an examination or in preparing academic work; or otherwise practicing scholastic dishonesty.”

**Penalties**

Normally, the minimum penalty for cheating or plagiarism is a grade of “F” in the course.
In the case of graduate departmental exams, the minimum penalty shall be failure of all fields of the exam. Determination of cheating or plagiarism shall be made by the instructor in the course, or by the departmental faculty in the case of departmental exams.

Cases of cheating or plagiarism on graduate departmental exams, papers, theses, or dissertations shall automatically be referred to the departmental Curriculum and Degree Programs Committee. Cases of cheating or plagiarism in ordinary course work may, at the discretion of the instructor, be referred to the Curriculum and Degree Programs Committee in the case of either graduate or undergraduate students. This committee, acting as an agent of the Department, shall impose further penalties, or recommend further penalties to the Dean of Students, if they determine that the case warrants it. In all cases, the Dean of Students shall be informed in writing of the case.

Appeals
Students may appeal and decision under this policy by following the procedure laid down in the UNT Code of Student Conduct and Discipline.

POLICY ON DISABILITY ACCOMMODATION
The University of North Texas makes reasonable academic accommodation for students with disabilities. Students seeking reasonable accommodation must first register with the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) to verify their eligibility. If a disability is verified, the ODA will provide you with a reasonable accommodation letter to be delivered to faculty to begin a private discussion regarding your specific needs in a course. You may request reasonable accommodations at any time, however, ODA notices of reasonable accommodation should be provided as early as possible in the semester to avoid any delay in implementation. Note that students must obtain a new letter of reasonable accommodation for every semester and must meet with each faculty member prior to implementation in each class. Students are strongly encouraged to deliver letters of reasonable accommodation during faculty office hours or by appointment. Faculty members have the authority to ask students to discuss such letters during their designated office hours to protect the privacy of the student. For additional information see the Office of Disability Accommodation website at http://www.unt.edu/oda. You may also contact them by phone at 940.565.4323.

POLICY ON STUDENT BEHAVIOR IN THE CLASSROOM
Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students’ opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student’s conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university’s expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at www.unt.edu/csrr.

Tentative Course Schedule
Week 1: August 28
Introduction to EMDS, go over the syllabus and the course

Week 2: September 4
The Research Process
Readings
Creswell Ch. 1
Phillips Ch. 1
Drabek 1997
Stallings 2002
Quarantelli 2002

Week 3: September 11

*Literature Reviews and Developing Propositions*

**Readings**
- Creswell Ch. 2
- Fothergill, Maestas, Darlington 1999

Week 6: September 18

*Using Theory in Research*

**Readings**
- Creswell Ch. 3
- McEntire and Marshall 2003
- Blumer 1954

**IRB Certificate due**

Week 6: September 25

*The Ethics of Research*

**Readings**
- Creswell Ch. 4
- Donner and Diaz – Methodological Issues in Disaster Research
- Rubin & Rubin pages 85-91

**Research Question Due**

Week 7: October 2

*Research Design*

**Readings**
- Creswell Chapters 5-7
- Phillips Ch. 2
- Killian – An Introduction to Methodological Problems of Field Studies in Disasters

Week 8: October 9

Guest Speaker

Week 9: October 16

*Choosing your Methods: Quantitative*

**Readings**
- Creswell Ch. 8
- Freedman 1991
- Utts 2003

**Literature Review Due**

Week 10: October 23

*Choosing your Methods: Quantitative Cont.*

**Readings**
- Bourque, Shoaf, and Nguyen 1997
- Riad, Norris, Ruback 1999
Survey Draft Due

Week 11: October 30
Choosing your Methods: Qualitative
Readings
Rubin & Rubin Chapter 2
Creswell Ch. 9
Phillips Ch. 3
Peek & Fothergill – Studying Children and Youth in Disasters: A Note on Methods

Survey Code Sheet due
Make an appointment to meet with Dr. Nelan by November 1 to discuss proposal

Week 12: November 6
Choosing your Methods: Qualitative cont.
Readings
Phillips Chapters 4 & 5
Rubin & Rubin Chapters 3 & 4
Michaels 2003
Klinenberg 2006

Revised Survey and Reflection Due

Week 13: November 13 – No class
Public Space exercise
Send Draft to Reviewer

Week 14: November 20
Content Analysis and Coding
Readings TBA
Proposal Reviews due to Dr. Nelan and to each other

Week 15: November 27 – No Class

Week 16: December 4
Choosing your Methods: Mixed Methods
Readings
Creswell Ch. 10
Bergman 2011
Bevinton et. al 2011

Final Proposal Due

Final Week:
Presentations