Disaster Research Methods
Fall 2021
EMDS 5110
Wednesdays 6:00-8:50 PM
Chilton 240

Instructor: Dr. Mary Nelan
Office Hours: By appointment on zoom
Office: Chilton Hall, Room 308K
Email: mary.nelan@unt.edu

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 (10 points)
Each student will be required to complete CITI training for human subject’s research by September 17. Follow the steps under CITI Training (Required for all Researchers) at: https://research.unt.edu/research-services/research-integrity-and-compliance/human-subjects-irb/training-and-education. You will be doing the course for Social Behavior Research.

Survey (25 points)
Each student is required to design one survey of 10-15 questions. The first draft of the survey will be due October 22 (10 points).

- Each student will create an online survey through Qualtrics using the following link: unt.qualtrics.com.
  - You will sign in and click create a new project.
  - Below “create your own” click on survey, make sure blank project is highlighted, and then click get started.
  - From here you will enter your questions and answers.
  - At the end of your survey have an open ended question for feedback.
- Once your online survey is entered, you will post the link on canvas (more details on that later). Each student will then be required to answer each survey posted (there are currently 11 students so that means each student will answer 10 surveys). On the last question you will leave feedback for each survey on if there was a confusing question or if you have suggestions on how to improve the survey.
- 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 book for your excel worksheet. This will be due in class on October 29 (5 points).
- Each student will then revise their survey, changing questions that didn’t work and submit their final survey along with a 1-page reflection of their experience with the survey and what they learned. This final draft and reflection will be due November 5 (10 points).

Coding exercise (10 points)
Each student will be required to complete a coding exercise which begins with observation. You have two options in this assignment.

Options 1: Go to a public space for 30 minutes. Take notes to record any observations of individuals, how they interact with one another, and anything else you find relevant including your surroundings and things that stike you as strange. Everything is data!
Option 2: Watch 15 minutes of a reality show (your choice) to complete this coding exercise (this is a COVID adaptation). You will need to watch 10 minutes where the individuals are interacting in some way, and 5 minutes of an interview with an individual on the show.
- 10 minutes of interaction – you will take notes about what is happening on the show at this time. Make sure your notes not only include the topics that they are
conversing about, but also what they are doing and what is going on around them.

- 5 minutes of interview – you will need to transcribe this interview word for word (I recommend watching a show that you can pause and rewind since you may need to in order to catch everything that they are saying).

You will then bring your notes to class. For this exercise, we will go through the basics of qualitative coding and you will code your notes into themes. Your notes will need to be done by **November 10** when we will be doing the in class coding exercise.

**Research Question (5 points)**

Each student will email me a research question, pertaining to the human dimensions of disasters, by **September 24, at 11:59 pm**. I will respond to each research question with recommendations by the end of that week.

**Literature Review (15 points)**

Each student will write a 5-7 page literature review, dealing directly with their previously identified research question, which will be due on **October 15 by 11:59 pm**. Students will be required to cite 15 or more peer-reviewed articles in their literature reviews. These literature reviews will directly contribute to their final proposal.

**Final Proposal (30 points):**

After you have received feedback for your literature review, you will proceed with your final research proposal, which will be 10-12 pages.

- Each student is required to make a zoom appointment with me for **October 27 (5 points)** to discuss their literature review and proposal. These appointments will take place during class time, we will not have face to face class that night.
- You must have a completed first draft to send to one other student (I will assign which student) in the class, a “reviewer” of your proposal, on **November 12 (5 points) – you will need to CC me on this email**.
- 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 19 (5 points)**.
- Each student will then revise their proposals and submit a final draft by **December 3 (10 points)**.
- Each student will also build a 5-7-minute presentation defending their proposal, these presentations will be on **December 1 or December 7 (5 points)**.

**Participation (5 points):**

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 6 discussion questions by noon each Wednesday that you have readings due. 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:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IRB Certificate</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Survey</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding Exercise</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Research Question</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Proposal</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 100 points

A | 90% and above  
B | 80% - 89%     
C | 70% - 79%     
D | 60% - 69%     
F | 0 – 59%

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.

**Face Coverings**
UNT encourages everyone to wear a face covering when indoors, regardless of
vaccination status, to protect yourself and others from COVID infection, as
recommended by current CDC guidelines. Face covering guidelines could change
based on community health conditions.

**COVID-19 Impact on Attendance**
While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful
of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about
COVID-19. Please contact me if you are unable to attend class because you are ill, or
unable to attend class due to a related issue regarding COVID-19. It is important that
you communicate with me prior to being absent so I may make a decision about
accommodating your request to be excused from class.
If you are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19
seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or
askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider PRIOR to coming to campus. UNT
also requires you to contact the UNT COVID Hotline at 844-366-5892 or
COVID@unt.edu for guidance on actions to take due to symptoms, pending or positive
test results, or potential exposure. While attendance is an important part of succeeding
in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

**Class Materials for Remote Instruction**
Remote instruction may be necessary if community health conditions change or you
need to self-isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19. Students will need access to a
webcam and microphone to participate in fully remote portions of the class. Information
on how to be successful in a remote learning environment can be found
at https://online.unt.edu/learn.

**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](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 25**

Introduction to EMDS, go over the syllabus and the course

**Week 2: September 1**

*The Research Process*

**Readings**

- Creswell Ch. 1
- Phillips Ch. 1
- Drabek 1997
- Quarantelli 2002

**Week 3: September 8**

*Literature Reviews and Developing Propositions*

**Readings**

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

**Week 4: September 15**

*Using Theory in Research*

**Readings**

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

**IRB Certificate due by September 17 by 11:59pm**

**Week 5: September 22**

*The Ethics of Research*

**Readings**

- Creswell Ch. 4
Research Question Due September 24 by 11:59 pm

Week 6: September 29
Research Design
Readings
  Creswell Chapters 5-7
  Phillips Ch. 2

Week 7: October 6
Choosing your Methods: Quantitative
Readings
  Creswell Ch. 8
  Freedman 1991
  Utts 2003

Week 8: October 13
Choosing your Methods: Quantitative Cont.
Readings
  Bourque, Shoaf, and Nguyen 1997
  Riad, Norris, Ruback 1999
  Kang, Lindell, Prater 2007

Literature Review Due October 15 by 11:59 pm

Week 9: October 20
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 Draft Due October 22 by 11:59 pm

Week 10: October 27
Each student will need to set up an appointment with me at a time during class to
discuss their research question and topic for the final project. This will be in place
of traditional class.

Survey Code Book & Excel Worksheet due October 29 by 11:59 pm

Week 11: November 3
Choosing your Methods: Qualitative cont.
Readings
  Phillips Chapters 4 & 5
  Rubin & Rubin Chapters 3 & 4
  Michaels 2003

Revised Survey and Reflection Due November 5 by 11:59 pm

Week 12: November 10
Content Analysis and Coding

Readings
- Elo and Kyngäs 2007
- Ariyasriwatana and Quiroga 2016
- Gurman and Ellenberger 2015

Send Draft to Reviewer by November 12 at 11:59 pm

Week 13: November 17
Choosing your Methods: Mixed Methods

Readings
- Creswell Ch. 10
- Bergman 2011
- Bevinton et. al 2011

Proposal Reviews Due November 19 by 11:59 pm

Week 14: November 24
No Class – Day before thanksgiving

Week 15: December 1
Presentations Part 1
Final Proposal Due December 3 by 11:59 pm

Final Week:
Presentations Part 2 on December 7 from 6:00 – 8:50 pm