UNIVERSITY of NORTH TEXAS
Department of Public Administration – Fall 2020

PADM 6035.001 Dr. Robert Bland
Social Science Inquiry bbland@unt.edu
Tuesdays, 9:00 - 1150 am 940/566-5695

SYLLABUS

COVID-19 PROTOCOL

• Please do not enter the classroom until the previous class has completely vacated the room.
• Face mask must be worn at all times while on campus.
• Sit only in the seats that are not taped off.
• Cleaning and disinfecting supplies are available in each classroom for your use.
• If you need to leave during class, please do so by keeping a safe distance from others.
• Class will be dismissed by rows so as to maintain safe distances.
• If you need to meet with me after class, I will be available outside the nearest exit door (weather permitting).
• If you have any symptoms, please do not come to campus.
• Some class sessions may be moved to remote (Zoom) at the regular scheduled time (synchronous remote). Those will be announced in advance of the class.
• All on-campus classes will move to remote delivery after Thanksgiving.

This required research methods seminar for doctoral students in public administration equips students to

1. Define and differentiate various concepts of science that undergird the professional practice of social scientific inquiry.
2. Define and construct the intellectual building blocks of professional scientific research: theories, hypotheses, and operational definitions.
3. Develop pragmatic research designs that employ the logic of control and identify a feasible means of data collection.
4. Effectively and ethically review social scientific research.

This seminar immerses students in the proposition that scientific inquiry has a logic and process that shapes our ideas about the nature of knowledge and the questions to which we seek answers. The process involves determining what counts as evidence, proper relationships between the inquirer and the field of inquiry, appropriate methodology, standards of validity, and standards of scholarly quality. Logic implies the existence of a structure of premises and processes on which inquiry is based. In social science generally, and public administration in particular, no one logic governs all inquiry, but the class will focus on orthodox social scientific inquiry.

Pursuing a Ph.D. involves developing an eye for researchable questions that builds on theory. While some of the challenge lies in acquiring specific knowledge and skills, much of it entails shifting yourself from the role of student to the role of scholar and intellectual -- from consumer