

EPS 780: MIXED METHODS RESEARCH FOR SOCIAL SCIENTISTS
V1.0

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Fall 2015
Mondays 2:25-5:25PM
Location: Education L150

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Course Description

Social scientists are increasingly concerned with both identifying and explaining phenomena of interest, including the impacts of policies and practices. Many agree that given the limitations of any specific methodological tool, endeavors to understand the “hows” and “whys” of observed relationships are best informed by mixed methods research. But what *is* mixed methods research and how is it best conducted?

This course covers the theory and practice of mixed methods research in the social sciences with an emphasis on the pragmatic considerations that contribute to the success or failure of such projects. We discuss the development and execution of mixed method studies, the analyses of data obtained from multiple methodological approaches, and the practical tools required to do the work. Throughout the course, we examine specific applications of mixed methods research and learn from researchers who have thought through the art and the science required to utilize this approach.

Accessibility

Students with disabilities will be fully included in this course. Should you require any special accommodations, as provided under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please see me as soon as possible so that we may ensure your full participation in class activities. All information shared with me will be held in the strictest confidence possible.

Prerequisites

All graduate students interested in mixed-methods approaches to data analysis are welcome. I recommend that students have completed at least one course in quantitative methods and in qualitative methods—*but this is not required*. The course is appropriate for both new and continuing graduate students, as there is space provided for students to work at their own pace, and time built in for instruction in “building block” research skills. The course meets the “education in context” and “measurement” requirements of the Interdisciplinary Training Program. It also counts toward the “social science” concentration in Educational Policy Studies (and possibly others, according to the preferences of students’ advisers).

I urge students who have not taken a graduate statistics course to obtain the following book and read it early in the course:

Vickers, Andrew. 2010. *What is a p-value anyway? 34 Stories to help you actually understand statistics*. Addison-Wesley.

Assignments

All assignments should be typed double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font, page-numbered, labeled with your name/assignment title/date, and submitted via the appropriate Learn@UW dropbox. All are due by 9AM CST on the dates indicated.

1. Memo #1: Due September 28

Identify a key article in your field of interest that uses a single method (quantitative or qualitative). In a 2-3 page memo, briefly describe the research questions, methods, and key findings. Then, describe the shortcomings of the study. In particular, explain what about the study frustrates you and how the addition of an additional method to the study might help address that frustration. Submit a copy of the article along with your memo.

Grading: This assignment will count for 10% of the total grade in the course and will be graded on a scale of 1-10. You will receive up to 5 points for accurately describing the study’s methods. You will receive up to 3 points for

clearly articulating at least one shortcoming of the study and up to 2 points for explaining how you might improve it.

2. Memo #2: Due October 5

Think about your research interests and identify a theory that intrigues you. For example, consider theories about how peers affect student learning, what causes high school dropout, or how families affect how students do in college. In a 4-5 page memo, briefly describe your area of interest and then describe the theory. When describing the theory, be sure to articulate what process or outcome it aims to explain and what hypotheses or supposed actions it includes. Then, describe how a mixed methods study might be used to explore that theory, either in whole or in part.

Grading: This assignment will count for 15% of the total grade in the course and will be graded on a scale of 1-10. You will receive up to 5 points for describing the theory. You will receive up to 2 points for clearly identifying what aspect of the theory you want to test, and up to 3 points for explaining how you might examine it using a mixed methods approach.

3. Memo #3: Due October 19

Select an article from a list we will provide, read it, and in a memo no longer than 5-7 pages address the following questions:

- (a) What were the research questions and study objectives? Did they lend themselves to a mixed methods research design? What made it superior to a purely quantitative or qualitative approach?
- (b) Summarize the research design. What are the key elements that made it mixed methods?
- (c) What benefits did the use of mixed methods bring to the study? What limitations did it bring?
- (d) Could the study have been better executed, in your review? How?

Grading: This assignment will count for 15% of the total grade in the course and will be graded on a scale of 1-20. Up to five points will be awarded for precise and detailed responses to each of the four parts of the assignment.

4. Book Report: Due November 16

Select a book from a list we will provide, read it, and in a paper no longer than 7-10 pages address the following questions:

- (a) What were the research questions and study objectives? Did they lend themselves to a mixed methods research design? What made it superior to a purely quantitative or qualitative approach?

- (b) Summarize the research design. What are the key elements that made it mixed methods?
- (c) What benefits did the use of mixed methods bring to the study? What limitations did it bring?
- (d) Could the study have been better executed, in your review? How?

Grading: This assignment will count for 25% of the total grade in the course and will be graded on a scale of 1-20. Up to five points will be awarded for precise and detailed responses to each of the four parts of the assignment.

5. Final Project: Due December 18

Choose one of the following two options based on your current development in graduate school. You may wish to confer with your advisor before selecting an option to align this assignment with your other goals.

- (a) Identify a topic of interest in your field of study and design a mixed methods research study. In a paper of 20-25 pages in length, describe the topic, research questions, research design, data collection strategy, and plans for analysis. In addition, include a reflective discussion on the key decisions you made in planning the study, and how you will prepare to have the resources (knowledge, funds, permission, etc) required to conduct the study successfully.
- (b) Conduct and write-up a mixed-method data analysis using data you already have available. In a paper of 20-25 pages in length, describe the topic, research questions, and data—and then execute the analysis. Reflect on the challenges you faced in doing this analysis and what you learned.

Additional details on this assignment will be provided later in the term.

Grading: This assignment will count for 30% of the total grade in the course.

Percentage Points & Deadlines

Memo #1	10%	Due Sept. 28
Memo #2	15%	Due Oct. 5
Memo #3	15%	Due Oct. 19
Book Report	25%	Due Nov. 16
Final Project	35%	Due Dec. 18

Please note that class attendance is required. More than 2 unexcused absences may result in a reduction of a letter grade in the final assessment.

Course Materials

I strive to keep the costs of this course to a minimum. Except for the one required book (see below), all materials are accessible via the course website at Learn@UW. I've placed them into a single zipped folder for ease of downloading. Feel free to download them to your laptops and bring laptops to class for note-taking, rather than printing paper. However, I ask that you TURN OFF your internet connection during class unless explicitly instructed otherwise. Email or Facebook during class will not be tolerated.

There is just one required book for this course. It may be rented on Amazon for less than \$20, or purchased for less than \$40. I have also placed a copy on reserve at the Library. **Please obtain this book ASAP as you need it to prepare for the September 21 class.**

Morgan, David L. (2014). *Integrating qualitative and quantitative methods: A pragmatic approach*. Sage.

Semester Schedule

Each week there is a discussion topic, and (usually) a guest speaker. Note that there are readings associated with the topic, and readings associated with the speaker. Readings for those weeks will be selected by the class in advance of the week and distributed. The last class is reserved for topics the class would like to cover further.

SEPTEMBER 14: Introductions, and a First Look at Mixed Methods Research

Guest Speaker:
Anthony Jack, Harvard University

Jack, A. A. (2015). "(No) harm in asking: Class, acquired cultural capital, and academic engagement at an elite university." *Conditional accept at Sociology of Education*.

Note: Mr. Jack will be giving a public lecture on Tuesday Sept. 15 at 12:10 pm in the Wisconsin Idea Room, School of Education, on "I, Too, Am Hungry." I urge you to attend.

SEPTEMBER 21: Methodology—What it Means and Why it Matters

Leahey, E. (2008). Methodological memes and mores: Toward a sociology of social research. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 34, 33-53.

Morgan, D. L. Chapters 2 and 3.

SEPTEMBER 28: Why Mix Methods?

Note: Dr. Goldrick-Rab will be out of the country; office hours are cancelled

Guest Speakers:

Peter Kinsley (PhD Educational Policy Studies, UW Madison):
Senior Researcher at the Wisconsin HOPE Lab

David Monaghan (PhD Sociology, CUNY Graduate Center):
Senior Researcher at the Wisconsin HOPE Lab

Creswell, J. & Plano Clark, V. (2007). Chapter 3: Choosing a Mixed-Methods Project.
In Designing and Conducting Mixed-Methods Research.

Briggs, X. d. S., Ferryman, K. S., Popkin, S. J., & Rendón, M. (2008). Why did the moving to opportunity experiment not get young people into better schools?
Housing Policy Debate, 19(1), 53.

OCTOBER 5: Mixed Method Research Designs (Part 1)

Guest Speaker (4-530 pm)

Kathryn Edin, Professor of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University

Luke Schaefer, Associate Professor of Social Work & Public Policy, U. Michigan

Note: Drs. Edin & Schaefer will be giving a public lecture on Tuesday Oct 6 at 12:15 pm in the Wisconsin Idea Room, School of Education, on their new book "\$2.00 a day: Living on almost nothing in America." I urge you to attend.

Small, M. (2011). How to conduct a mixed methods study: Recent trends in a rapidly growing literature. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 57-86.

Morgan, D. L. Chapter 4.

Greene, J. C., Caracelli, V. J., & Graham, W. F. Toward a conceptual framework for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 11(3), 255-274.

Additional reading from Edin, TBD

OCTOBER 12: Mixed Method Research Designs (Part 2)

Guest Speaker: Dr. Annalee Good, WCER

Morgan, D. L. Chapters 6, 7, and 9.

Burch, P., Good, A., & C. Heinrich. (forthcoming). Improving access to, quality, and effectiveness of digital tutoring in K12 education. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*.

Good, A., Burch, P., Stewart, M., Acosta, R., & C. Heinrich. (2014). Instruction matters: Lessons from a mixed-method evaluation of out-of-school time tutoring under No Child Left Behind. *Teachers College Record*, 116(3).

OCTOBER 19: Mixed Methods and Intervention Research

Guest Speaker: Nathan Jones, Assistant Professor of Special Education, Boston University

Grissmer, D. W., Subotnik, R. F., & Orland, M. (2009) *A guide to incorporating multiple methods in randomized controlled trials to assess intervention effects*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Spillane, J., Pareja, A. S., Dorner, L., Barnes, C., May, H., Huff, J., & Camburn, E. (2010). Mixing methods in randomized controlled trials (RCTs): Validation, contextualization, triangulation, and control. *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, 22(1), 5-28.

Morgan, D. L. Chapter 8.

OCTOBER 26: Data Collection and “Quality” in Mixed Methods Research

Gibson, C. M., & Duncan, G. J. (2005). Qualitative/quantitative synergies in a random-assignment program evaluation. In T. Weisner (Ed.), *Discovering successful pathways in children’s development: New methods in the study of childhood and family life* (pp.283-315). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Weisner, T., Ryan, G. W., Reese, L., Kroessen, K., Bernheimer, L., & Gallimore, R. (2001). Behavioral sampling and ethnography: Complementary methods for understanding home-school connections among Latino immigrant families. *Field Methods*, 13(1), 20-46.

Yoshikawa, H., Weisner, T. S., Kalil, A., & Way, N. (2008). Mixing qualitative and quantitative research in developmental science: Uses and methodological choices. *Developmental Psychology*, 44(2), 344-354.

NOVEMBER 2: Assessing Quality in Mixed Methods Research

Guest Speaker (4-530 pm)

Micere Keels, Assistant Professor of Comparative Human Development, U. Chicago

Creswell, J. W. et al. (2011). *Best practices for mixed methods research in the health sciences*. Bethesda, MA: National Institutes of Health Office of Behavioral and Social Sciences Research.

Dellinger, A. B. & Leech, N. L. (2007). Toward a unified validation framework in mixed methods research. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, 1(4), 309-332.

Additional reading from Keels, TBD

NOVEMBER 9: Data Analysis in the Mixed Methods Context (Part 1)

Caracelli, V. J., & Greene, J. C. (1993). Data analysis strategies for mixed-method evaluation designs. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 15(2), 195-207.

Leahey, E. (2007). Convergence and confidentiality? Limits to the implementation of mixed methodology. *Social Science Research*, 36(1), 149-158.

NOVEMBER 16: Data Analysis in the Mixed Methods Context (Part 2)

Goldrick-Rab, S. (2016). *Paying the Price: College Costs and the Betrayal of the American Dream*. University of Chicago Press.

NOVEMBER 23: Writing and Displaying Mixed Methods Research (Part 1)

Guest Speaker (2:30-3:45PM)

Sarah Halperin-Meehin, Assistant Professor of Human Ecology, UW-Madison

Creswell, J. & Plano Clark, V. (2007). Chapter 8 in *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*.

Additional reading from Halperin-Meehin TBD

NOVEMBER 30: Writing and Displaying Mixed Methods Research (Part 2)

Guest Speaker:

Stefanie DeLuca, Associate Professor of Sociology, Johns Hopkins University

DeLuca, Stefanie and Peter Rosenblatt. 2010. Does moving to better neighborhoods lead to better schooling opportunities? Parental school choice in an experimental housing voucher program. *Teachers College Record* 112 (5), 1441-1489.

DeLuca, Stefanie, Philip Garboden and Peter Rosenblatt. 2013. Segregating shelter: How housing policies shape the residential locations of low income minority families. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 647, 268-299.

Onwuegbuzie, A. J. & Dickinson, W. B. (2008). Mixed methods analysis and information visualization: Graphical display for effective communication of research results. *The Qualitative Report*, 13(2), 204-225.

DECEMBER 7: Teamwork, Ethics, Fundraising

Guest Speakers:

Members of the Wisconsin HOPE Lab

Morgan, D. L. Chapter 11.

Dahlberg, B., Wittink, M.N., & Gallo, J.J. (2010). Funding and publishing integrated studies: Writing effective mixed methods manuscripts and grant proposals. In A. Tashakkori & C. Teddlie (Eds.), *Sage handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research* (pp. 775-802). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE.

DECEMBER 14: Class Choice