URBS 4/502—Urban Analysis

Term: Spring, 2009

Lead Instructor: This course is team-taught by many members of the department. Dr. Raymond Asomani-Boateng will be lead instructor for this class.

Class hours: Thursdays: 2:00 pm-4:45pm

Office Hours: Mondays: 10:00am-4:00pm

Required Text:


Recommended Text:


Floyd J. Fowler, Jr. Survey Research Methods

Outcomes:

This course is designed to develop the skills needed to gather, analyze, and present information for resolving applied problems in local government and community settings.

By the end of the course, you should be able to:

1. Communicate orally (using power-point & graphics) and in writing (memos, issue papers, research reports, and case studies).
2. Solve practical problems using (and modifying) spreadsheets (Microsoft Excel is the department standard).
3. Gather and organize data (using focus groups, sampling frames, surveys & questionnaires, and benchmarking)
4. Analyze data using statistical tools
5. Frame a question and arrive at a solution using non-statistical quantitative tools (forecasting, benefit/cost, and GIS)
Course Calendar:

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<th>Week</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Reading</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>1/15</td>
<td>Introduction to course &amp; conventions used in course</td>
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<td>1/22</td>
<td>Oral communication (powerpoint) &amp; Graphics</td>
<td>Dandekar, Ch. 8 &amp; 10</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
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<td>1/29</td>
<td>Written Communication (memo, issue paper, research report, case study)</td>
<td>Dandekar, Ch. 9</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
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<td><strong>Basics</strong></td>
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<td>2/5</td>
<td>Analysis using Excel</td>
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<td>Excel Project</td>
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<td>2/12</td>
<td>Sampling (random, stratified, area—point, area, line)</td>
<td>Dandekar, Ch. 2</td>
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<td>2/19</td>
<td>Survey &amp; questionnaire design</td>
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<td>Exercise</td>
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<td>2/26</td>
<td>Benchmarking</td>
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<td><strong>Gathering Data</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Statistical Analysis of Data</strong></td>
<td>Dandekar, Ch. 4</td>
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<td>3/5</td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
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<td>Descriptive statistics &amp; the normal curve</td>
<td>Dandekar, Ch. 3</td>
<td>Descriptive statistics exercise</td>
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<td><strong>Other Quantitative Analysis</strong></td>
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<td>3/26</td>
<td>Population &amp; other forecasting</td>
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<td>Forecasting Project</td>
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<td>4/2</td>
<td>Benefit/Cost analysis &amp; fiscal impact assessment</td>
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<td>Fiscal Impact Project</td>
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<td>4/9 &amp; 16</td>
<td>GIS for urban analysis</td>
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<td>GIS exercise</td>
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<td>4/23</td>
<td>Writing for Scholarly Publication</td>
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<td>Exercise</td>
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<td>4/30</td>
<td>Evaluation and Review</td>
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Requirements:

Classwork

This is primarily a case-study and discussion class, although we may indulge in the occasional lecture and demonstration. You are expected to do the reading assigned from the text and linked to the course calendar, and be prepared to discuss them in class on the assigned date. Attendance at all class meetings is presumed.

Memos

Students will submit a memo for each unit, applying the tool to a concrete problem and interpreting the application of that topic. The memos should follow the format described
in “The Basics.” The body of the memo should be 1-2 pages, although there may be attachments. Memos should be sent to the instructor on e-mail. Graduate students

**Course Expectations:**

**Attendance & Class Participation:**

Students play an important role in educating and challenging each other. This can only happen if there is consistent attendance. We expect you to attend, and we may take the class roll. Unexcused absence (*prior* notification is required—even if the lead instructor is not available, voice mail and e-mail always are) can result in loss of points toward one’s grade. You are paying for this class—make sure to get your “money’s worth.” Most importantly, this is an excellent foundation of knowledge for future activities, and it is a chance for you to learn, teach, and grow with others.

**Grading:**

There are no examinations in this course. Undergraduate students will be graded on the weekly assignments (Skills memo assignments) whilst Graduate students will be graded on both the Skills memo assignments (80%) and a project assignment (20%).

The final grade may be based on a curve, but students can expect an A if they achieve at least 90%, a B with 80%, etc.

**Other Matters:**

**Extra Credit:** In general, we do not encourage extra credit in this class. We would rather that you put the extra effort into your regular assignments.

All assignments are due on the assigned date. Partial credit may be given for assignments that are less than one week late, unless other arrangements have been made *in advance*.

Written reports are expected to be free of grammatical, spelling, and content errors. They should be submitted in typewritten, standard formats (APA, MLA, URSI Style Sheets). You must familiarize yourself with the University’s [Academic Honesty Policy](#). We encourage you to draw on the ideas of others—but you must also identify when you do so (you *gain* “brownie points” for citing the work of others!). Plagiarism is a serious breach of academic behavior and will result in an F for the course.

We will help you in whatever manner humanly possible. However, once the semester is over, there is not a great deal we can do. If there is something that you don’t understand, are having problems with, or need help on, please get in touch with us as early as possible.
Every attempt will be made to accommodate qualified students with disabilities. If you are a student with a documented disability, please contact us as early in the semester as possible to discuss the necessary accommodations, and/or contact the Disability Services Office at 507-389-2825 (V) or 1-800-627-3529 (MRS/TTY).

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**Bibliography**

*Each unit includes its own bibliography. The following is a list of general references about the use of quantitative data (some are classics), and might be useful for several of the units:*


