

Conservation Social Science Methods

NRSM 500, 3.0 credits

T and Th 8:15-9:30am Zoom

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Office Hours by appointment

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Course Description

This course provides a foundational understating of key research methods utilized in natural resource social science. The course is designed to provide students with basic knowledge of the scientific process and in-depth knowledge of common qualitative and quantitative methods used in the field. Research ethics and IRB, research design and proposal writing, the role of paradigms and theories, and publishing and the peer review process will also be explored. The course will help prepare students to develop their research proposals by providing the knowledge and skills necessary to write a methods section.

Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete this course will:

- Demonstrate a basic understanding of key research methods relevant to natural resource social science
- Integrate course material into their own research proposals
- Offer insightful critiques of methods used in natural resource social science
- Communicate knowledge of science and research methods in both written work and oral presentations

Seminar Format and Focus

PTRM 500/NRSM 500 is a graduate seminar, which means that students are responsible for contributing to the content of the course through engaged participation, discussion, and presentations. The success of the course depends on a collective dialogue about the meaning and implications of the readings and other course materials. Students are expected to carefully and thoroughly read ALL assigned readings prior to class and come to class prepared to discuss, examine, analyze, and critique each reading. The course is reading intensive, especially at the outset. Throughout the course, the instructors will provide short lectures to build a common foundation amongst course participants. However, for the most part, classes will be discussion-oriented. In class discussions, please follow the thread or theme of the discussion, rather than the queue (who is next in line to speak).

Do not take this class unless you are prepared to read, think, and take responsibility for your learning – this is a graduate seminar, not an undergraduate lecture class! “Engaged participation” does not refer to the number of comments you make during class or your level of expertise, but rather describes the sort of thoughtful, meaningful, prepared (meaning you *actively* read/completed the assignments) questions and comments that further your own intellectual development and that of the group. A willingness to work on the material at hand, and consider its application to the field is critical. Civility and respect for different views and ideas are also expected.

Students with Disabilities

The University of Montana assures equal access to instruction through collaboration between students with disabilities, instructors, and Disability Services for Students (DSS). If you think you may have a disability adversely affecting your academic performance, and you have not already registered with DSS, please contact DSS in Lommason 154 or 406 243 2243. We will work with you and DSS to provide an appropriate modification.

Student Conduct Code

All students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University. All students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code.

Grading Statement

Please note, this class is offered for traditional letter grade only. It is not offered under the credit/no credit option.

Course Withdrawal Deadlines

Deadline	Description	Date
To 15 th instructional day	Students can drop classes on CyberBear with refund & no "W" on Transcript	September 9, @5 PM
16 th to 45 th instructional day	A class drop requires a form with instructor and advisor signature, a \$10 fee from registrar's office, student will receive a 'W' on transcript, no refund.	September 10 – October 21 @5 PM
Beginning 46 th instructional day	If possible, students should drop courses by the 45th instructional day! Drops after the 45 th instructional day require instructor's, advisor's, and Dean's approval. A \$10 fee applies. A 'WP' or 'WF' will appear on your transcript. No refunds.	October 22 – November 18 @5 PM

Readings

Readings for this course include articles, book chapters, a book, interview transcripts, and other materials relevant to research methods. Please purchase the following books as soon as possible at a local bookstore (you will need to order it) or through an online vendor:

Babbie, E. (2012). *The Practice of Social Research*. Wadsworth Publishing, Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Publishing.

Hesse-Biber, S.N. and P. Leavy. 2011. *The Practice of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.

Dillman, D., Smyth, J., & Christian, L. (2009). *Internet, Mail, and Mixed-Mode Surveys*. John Wiley & Sons.

Creswell, J. W. Research Design. 2009. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.

Assignments and Evaluation

Course Grades

Final course grades will be based on the following:

Attendance and participation	10%
Response papers	30%
Final paper	35%
Peer review	15%
Presentations	10%

Class Participation (10%)

Participation grades will be based on regular attendance and engaged participation (see above for a description of engaged participation).

Response Papers (30%)

You will submit at least 4 response papers before November 24th. They can be completed as a team or in pairs. Responses should consist of a VERY brief summary of the main points/argument of the readings (this is largely a description.). The bulk of the paper should be a response, wherein you evaluate, analyze, question, connect, synthesize, or critique. Your response can explore how a particular method is justified or applied, how different methods and methodologies are similar or different, how the readings connect to other readings or topics, the normative commitments or theoretical assumptions they reflect, why particular points or conclusions were surprising or new, what was contradictory in the reading, or alternative explanations or views. Please remember that a response does not need to be negative to be thoughtful (although it's okay to disagree with an author). Also, responses do not need to be comprehensive; rather, you can focus on several key aspects of the reading. At the end of your response, please ask 2-4 questions. Questions can be focused on clarification (Why did the author reach this conclusion? Why do they describe the approach in a way that is different from another author?), theory/methodology (What are the normative commitments built into this approach? What are the assumptions about knowledge and science?), application (What does this imply for research practice? How would a researcher implement this idea?), or alternative explanations (If X were considered, how would it change the approach?). The purpose of the responses is to facilitate a level of participation appropriate for a graduate seminar. You may miss two days of response papers throughout the semester. Response papers may not be turned in late, except in cases of documented medical or family emergencies. Response papers should be 400-600 words only, single-spaced.

Final Paper (35%)

Your final paper for this course will be a 18-20 page research proposal focusing on methods. Students will receive a detailed final paper assignment in October. The paper will include a very brief introduction to your research topic and questions and then a detailed description of methods and methodology.

Article Review (15%)

Students will review social science articles assigned by instructors to learn more about the peer review process. Article reviews will evaluate the merits and shortcomings of the methods in the context of the article as a whole. Questions to address in your review include: How does the author justify the choice of methods (if at all)? Is the research design suitable for answering the questions posed? Do the methods make sense in the context of the theoretical orientation of the article? Does the author effectively explain how the data was collected? Is sufficient detail provided for you to understand, evaluate, and even replicate the methods? What information is missing? Does the article identify the

procedures followed? Are these procedures ordered in a meaningful way? Was the sampling appropriate for the questions asked/methods used? Have the equipment and materials been adequately described? Is the nature of the data/measurements clear? Is the data analysis adequately explained? How is the data used as evidence to support particular interpretations/conclusions? Are the conclusions merited given the methods used? Article reviews should be 4-6 pages, typed, double-spaced, 12-point font with relevant references.

Presentations (10%)

Each student will be required to give a 10 minute presentation about their research proposal (see final paper).

Course Schedule: Subject to change

Class topic	Readings/Assignments	Faculty lead
Introduction to the course, what is science?		Libby
What is science?	Sarewitz 2016 Watts 2017	Libby
Paradigms and theories	Creswell Ch 1	Libby
Research design	Creswell Ch 2-3	Libby
Mixed Method Design	Creswell Ch 5 Creswell Mixed method PCCP mixed method	Libby
Sampling	Babbie Ch 7 Vaske Ch 8	Libby
Research ethics and IRB	Babbie Ch 3	Libby
Proposal writing	Creswell Ch 6-7	Libby
Peer review process	Babbie Ch. 17	Peer review process
Content after Nov. 24th		
Qualitative research	Hesse-Biber and Leavy Ch 1-3	
In-depth interviews	Hesse-Biber and Leavy Ch 5	
Interview guides and data collection	Hesse-Biber and Leavy Ch 12 Babbie Ch 13	
Interview analysis	Two interview transcripts	
Coding in Nvivo		
Quantitative methods	Dillman Ch. 1-2	
Indigenous research	Kovach 2015	
International research		
Scales and question development	Babbie Ch. 9 Vaske Ch 7	
Scales and question development	Dillman Ch. 3-4	
Designing a study	Dillman Ch. 6	
Data analysis basics Stone	Vaske Ch. 9-11	