COURSE DESCRIPTION AND SYLLABUS

TIME and PLACE

Tuesdays, 9:00 a.m. -12:00 p.m., GSB 5.154.

FACILITATOR

DAVE HARRISON: Please call me ‘Dave.’ ‘Dr. Harrison’ makes jump into scrubs and run down the hallways trying to resuscitate a Code Blue.

4.242 GSB, 512/471-4930 (work), 512/471-3937 (work fax), and 512/354-1072 (cell/home). The work phone is not particularly useful, being corded and all. I prefer using my cell. I only text with my kids and BFFs. My email is drdaveharrison@mail.utexas.edu. I read it at least once every business day, but it isn't instantaneous. It's not a good medium for urgent or complex questions (requiring more than 3 or 4-sentence answers). Phone calls and face-to-face meetings are better for those, respectively. Leave a message; I always call back. Still, for most simple communications, e-mail is best.

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays, 12:00 - 1:30 p.m. and other times by appointment (these may change with my teaching schedule after spring break). Those other times can be flexible, but I often travel for my research work, so office hours are preferable. I'll give advance notice when I can't make this time.

PREREQUISITES

This course covers a great deal of difficult, abstract material. It is designed for Ph.D. students in various administrative sciences, or anyone who will be conducting organizational research. Although the course is not primarily about statistics, we will discuss some statistical procedures in a fairly broad, top-down way. Statistics are just one (large) set of tools in your research toolkit. All students should have taken and had no trouble with a graduate-level statistics course, specifically, one that covers the basics of linear regression. Most MBA programs or masters’ programs in science or engineering have such a course. A final prerequisite is an open mind and a high initial interest in doing research. As you've probably been told repeatedly, a Ph.D. is a research degree. Those who learn it have a responsibility to add to what is known about the world, and to pass that knowledge along to others in a lucid way.

OBJECTIVES

By excelling in this course, you'll build your core set of skills as a Ph.D., those that involve how we come to ‘know’ things in the social and behavioral science of organizations. That is, you'll have the
foundation necessary to do three essential tasks as a doctoral-level professional:

a) communicate about empirical research with the community of scholars in your field using a common language of methodological principles,
b) evaluate (critically review) the methods used in empirical studies -- for yourself, for students and peers seeking feedback, or for journal editors, and
c) design your own research to maximize the possible knowledge to be gained from it, while at the same time recognizing its inherent limitations.

Specifically, this course gives you a chance to learn about the toolbox of research strategies, designs, and operations you can use, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of each one. We'll repeatedly return to a '3C' theme of methodological choices, constraints, and compromises. By the end of the term, you should get a full appreciation of the complexity of those choices (and how such complexity is typically hidden in published articles). You should also get a basic appreciation of how each choice is affected by previous choices and factors external to the research itself. Each reasonable choice trades off some handsome advantages against some ugly disadvantages. There are boatloads of bad methods. However, there is no, one, best method for trying to answer a scientific question. Our ongoing premise will be that knowledge about organizational phenomena accrues only through a triangulation of methods, each with its own inherent drawbacks.

Every week we will examine a stage or a step in the research process. We'll start the semester with an overview of that process, and then move to how one frames "researchable" problems, as well as how to formulate and express the hypotheses or theories one might use to address them. Later, we'll move to general research strategies, specific designs (including classic quasi-experimental formulations and threats laid out by Cook and Campbell), operationalization or measurement techniques, ways to convert raw observations into numerical data, statistical approaches (from an outside-in rather than an inside-out perspective; this won't be a statistics class), and importantly, ethics in the scientific process, including choosing conclusions from one's results. Yes, we "choose" conclusions.

This course is focused on helping you prepare for a career in a research-oriented academic institution where you publish "behavioral" or "social" (rather than economic or capital market) studies about organizational phenomena. Throughout the semester, we'll discuss aspects of what it means to work as a professor and the skills necessary for doing so. We'll have much to mull over regarding the publication process, and I encourage you to ask questions about that at any time.

TEXTBOOKS & READING MATERIALS


Pedhazur, E.J., & Schmelkin, L.P. 1991. Measurement, design, and analysis: An integrated approach. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum. (referred to as PS; I wish there was a better version, as this is a bit dated in its coverage of statistical analyses; fortunately, statistics is not what this class is about; PS is also an excellent reference beyond this class).
These texts are old, but I use them mainly for top-down organizing or template-setting. Most of the reading is from other articles and chapters assigned at specified times. They will be scanned into pdf files and put on a CD for you, available in the first class session and then in the Management Department office. I would appreciate your help in that process if something isn't scanned correctly. I also have a cadre of optional books available if you're interested. Again, they might serve as helpful references later in your careers. They might even help you study for comprehensive exams.

**FORMAT**

My attire will be pretty formal, but my teaching style is pretty informal. In my career, methods courses were the ones for which I was most grateful to have a plain-speaking professor. I'll aspire to that in my own teaching. Unlike the content seminars that you may have had with other professors, I'll spend much of the period lecturing, with significant time spent on class discussions. *Get in on those discussions, but don't do so just to mark your 'air time;' this is not an MBA class.* Participation in intellectual conversation is an important part of your grade and more importantly, your education. Take the opportunity to further your understanding of the issues. The question you ask will likely help the other students in class. Finally, please don't come to class late or leave early. There is only one door and there are not many people in class; to them, it is distracting, disruptive and oftentimes just rude to them.

**EXPECTATIONS FOR CLASS PERFORMANCE**

**ATTENDANCE:** This course material can be difficult, especially if it's your first exposure to the main principles of research methods. It also builds on itself, given that we're taking the step-based or stage-based approach described above. So, it's important that you show up for lectures; I indeed take daily attendance as part of your participation. We only have 15 sessions and I'm jealous of my time with you! If you're not there, you can't discuss or participate. Attendance problems will keep you from doing well.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** You'll also be responsible for some of the discussion in each class period. Each week I will email you a discussion question to help you prepare for the next week's class. I will expect you to have prepared an answer to this question that you will be ready to discuss in class. Each week I will pick a different person to lead off the discussion of the question. To prepare for these discussions, you'll need to read the assigned materials. I've tried to keep those materials from being too "thick." That is, articles and chapters stuffed with Greek symbols have been kept to a minimum. Still, there is a pretty stiff quantitative backbone to what we'll be discussing. The Cook and Campbell terminology can be especially difficult. *Note now that we'll be covering it in weeks 5 and 6. Read to get the big picture.* Ask questions to fill in the small pictures that make up the big one. *Read with applications to research (not to practitioners) in mind.* Try to connect what you're reading to research projects you've been on, or to articles you've read. Attendance and Discussion are worth 30 pts of your course grade.

Your 1-paragraph to 1-page answers to the Discussion Question will be due at 7:00 p.m. (e-mail attachment) on the night before the next class. I'll look it over and hand it back during the class session.
EXERCISE / EXAM

There will be a monster, take-home, exercise / exam that I'll grade. It's worth 40 pts., and it will be designed to further embed and illustrate the issues we cover in class. It will be a blend of ways for you to push your final paper forward as well as demonstrate your understanding of the methodological principles we cover. I don't want your semester to be horribly back-end loaded. So, I will hand this assignment out early and you can work on it as we go forward, handing it in right before spring break. Your review paper, described below, will be due during finals week.

PAPER:

The final paper is worth 30 points. It isn't just a proposal or "practice" piece. You need to write it in a way that improves its chances of acceptance at a journal or a national conference in your field (including using the proper format and so on). It will involve a review and critique of the theoretical and empirical research (methods used) in a particular area of research in your discipline. The trickiest thing will be to get to the proper scope (not too big, not too small) in terms of the area you're going to cover in the review. I'll help you with that at the beginning of the semester.

GRADERS

There are 100 possible points you can get in the course. I don't bend grades to fit a normal distribution. Instead, I assign them from values in the simple-minded but functional table below:

- **A** = 90-100% = 90-100 pts.
- **B** = 80-89% = 80-89 pts.
- **C** = 70-79% = 70-79 pts.
- **D** = 60-69% = 60-69 pts.
- **F** = < 60% = < 60 pts.

If, as a class, you feel that having a plus/minus system is to your collective benefit, I can make the system more nuanced. If so, it would have to apply to everyone. Because faculty are not allowed to assign an A+ grade, but we can assign A- and B-, I feel that such a system tends to drag GPA's downward for Ph.D. students (in measurement terms, it is "negatively biased"). *Let me know how you feel about this, near the start of the term.* The same system has to be used for everyone. Points are based on your participation and discussion questions, performance on the four research design exercises, and a formal paper that includes a comprehensive methodological critique of a certain topic of interest to you.

- **PARTICIPATION** = 15 @ 2 pts = 30 pts.
- **EXERCISE - EXAM** = 1 @ 40 pts = 40 pts.
- **REVIEW (CRITIQUE) PAPER** = 1 @ 30 pts = 30 pts.

**TOTAL** = 100 pts.

In terms of participation, we're scheduled to meet from 9:00 sharp to 12:00 on Tuesdays. We'll take a 10-minute break around the midpoint of class. We always have class. I enjoy teaching Ph.D. students too much to ever cancel a planned class session. But, if some dire emergency pops up and I have to, I'll re-schedule the session for a time that everyone can come that week. Obviously you'll need to read the assignments beforehand (see the "Timetable"), and come to class with a head full of knowledge ready to spill out, as part of participation.
What are those zany discussion questions that are part of participation? I've told you a bit about them above. Each week, I will ask the discussion question, and you will write a 5-10 sentence (1-paragraph to 1-page) answer, and send it to me by 7:00 p.m., on the night before the beginning of class. I'll look over the answers to help steer our discussion toward open or to-be-clarified issues that come up. I'll generally try to make my questions about the big picture, to get you to see connections or integrative themes in the readings. There's no better way to acquaint yourself with the material and digest it. If there is a strong desire for it, we may move to a system of posting these discussion questions to BlackBoard. I haven't used Blackboard-type systems too much for doctoral-level courses in the past, but I would be happy to do it if you believe it would be helpful.

What is the even zanier exercise-exam? It will be multi-week, multi-part take-home assignment dealing with methodological topic(s) we cover in class. The questions in the assignment will be progressive, building on each other. Their structure should allow you to use the same conceptual domain or phenomenon you want to study in each one. This will help you craft your end-of-semester paper (a research critique) and perhaps even your dissertation. The format will be a mix of an assignment and something like a comp question. A hard copy is due at 9:00 a.m. on Friday, March 8 (I'll grade them over spring break). After that, the exercise-exam is worth zero points. Harsh, much? Maybe a little. What happened to my sense of humor? Well, deadlines like this permeate your profession. You absolutely have to get things submitted on time. To help me be a more objective grader, please don't put your name on these exercise-exams. Instead, label them with your student ID number.

RESEARCH PAPER / METHODOLOGICAL CRITIQUE

A major purpose of this class is to help you critically review research in your own area of organizational science. Therefore, in your paper, you'll comprehensively summarize and critique empirical investigations that have examined a substantive problem that interests you, using a particular conceptual orientation or theoretical paradigm. The conceptual theory or hypothesis must be one that has been examined in at least 30 or more empirical investigations; that is, data were collected in the investigation to test the hypothesis or provide an answer to the substantive problem. You will do a careful, exhaustive review and analysis of that published literature. An example of such a critique, although it is much wider, longer and gloomier than I expect yours to be, is in your supplemental readings: Martocchio and Harrison (1993). What can I say? I was channeling Eeyore. These days I hope I'm more like Tigger.

All papers must be prepared according to the format prescribed by your discipline. Given that we will sometimes have accounting, marketing, psychology, information systems, supply chain, and management students in class, those formats are covered by the Chicago Manual of Style, 14th Edition, American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual, 5th Edition (many of the Graduate School's dissertation guidelines are also based on the APA manual), or by the Style Guide for the Academy of Management. The Chicago and APA Manuals can be found at any bookstore. The Academy Style Guide is in the back of the first issues of either the Academy of Management Journal or the Academy of Management Review in any of the past few years (2009-2012). If you'd like to see an example paper in either of these formats, your graduate student colleagues and professors have several of them.

Papers should include a critical view of how investigators have made choices regarding each of the important steps in the research process that we cover in class. What we're really interested in at each step is how much a single methodological choice dominates the research area, and therefore the possible errors inherent in such a dominant choice, that might underlie general conclusions about substantive phenomena. To reduce some of ambiguity about what these choices or points of
criticism are, you can use the Martocchio and Harrison (1993) week 2 optional chapter, the Scandura and Williams (2000) week 4 article, or the Leidner and Kayworth (2006) article as very loose guides. You can also take cues from the paper grading sheet that I've attached to this syllabus. The text of the paper (i.e., not counting references, tables, figures, and appendices) should not exceed 30 pages of double-spaced (6 lines per inch, 3 of which contain text), Times-Roman 12-pitch proportional text, with margins that follow APA, AMA, or Academy of Management Guidelines. The paper is due at 9:00 a.m., May 7th, in *hard copy.* That's the Tuesday of finals week. During each day the paper is late, its value drops by 33% of the original value (e.g., from Tuesday to Wednesday morning, it's worth 30 – 10 = 20 points instead of 30, then 10 more drop for Thursday, and so on).

We'll talk more about this critique as the semester goes on. As I mentioned above, each of the exercises and discussion questions will help to complete the paper. More importantly, several students have used the paper to gain deep expertise in a topic area, and then publish a meta-analytic summary of the research in that area, using the methodological critique as a guide.

**FINAL COMMENTS**

Everyone is capable of A-level work in this class, and it's quite possible that everyone will get an A. It's happened occasionally before, but I sure wouldn't mind if it happened again. I don't force any percentage of B's and sometimes even C's. I also realize that this course will be hard. I recognize the strains of juggling GTA (GRA) work, and course requirements. Therefore, I've tried to build some flexibility into the course in case we get behind. Each type of reading and assignment should have positive overlap with others, and with the Qualitative Methods course many of you have taken in the fall. However, if things get too wild or too oppressive, let me know. Feedback works best during the term, as I can use it to make immediate changes. In that regard, the syllabus content might change and should be considered tentative, even though dates and readings are all laid out.

As I mentioned earlier, a Ph.D. is a research degree. This course is designed to lay the foundation for your scholarly endeavors. I'm here to help you pour a good slab, and anchor your beams with solid piers, and do other stuff that might not fit my corny construction metaphor. If things get boring, tell me. If something doesn't make sense, tell me. If you're having trouble, tell me. If you want to rent one of the Twilight movies, for the love of all things holy, don't tell me. I'm looking forward to an enjoyable, stimulating semester in this course. I'll do everything I can to make it so. Hey, I love teaching this class. It's what I do!
ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

A fundamental principle for any educational institution, academic integrity is highly valued and seriously regarded at The University of Texas at Austin, as emphasized in the standards of conduct. More specifically, you and other students are expected to "maintain absolute integrity and a high standard of individual honor in scholastic work" undertaken at the University (Sec. 11-801, Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities). This is a very basic expectation that is further reinforced by the University's Honor Code. At a minimum, you should complete any assignments, exams, and other scholastic endeavors with the utmost honesty, which requires you to:

- acknowledge the contributions of other sources to your scholastic efforts;
- complete your assignments independently unless expressly authorized to seek or obtain assistance in preparing them;
- follow instructions for assignments and exams, and observe the standards of your academic discipline; and
- avoid engaging in any form of academic dishonesty on behalf of yourself or another student.

For the official policies on academic integrity and scholastic dishonesty, please refer to Chapter 11 of the Institutional Rules on Student Services and Activities.

Personally, I have no tolerance for acts of academic dishonesty. Such acts damage the reputation of the school and the degree and demean the honest efforts of the majority of students. The minimum penalty for an act of academic dishonesty will be a zero for that assignment or exam.

The responsibilities for both students and faculty with regard to the Honor System are described on http://mba.mccombs.utexas.edu/students/academics/honor/index.asp and on the final pages of this syllabus. As the instructor for this course, I agree to observe all the faculty responsibilities described therein. During Orientation, you signed the Honor Code Pledge. In doing so, you agreed to observe all of the student responsibilities of the Honor Code. If the application of the Honor System to this class and its assignments is unclear in any way, it is your responsibility to ask me for clarification.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Upon request, the University of Texas at Austin provides appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) is housed in the Office of the Dean of Students, located on the fourth floor of the Student Services Building. Information on how to register, downloadable forms, including guidelines for documentation, accommodation request letters, and releases of information are available online at http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/ssa/index.php. Please do not hesitate to contact SSD at (512) 471-6259, VP: (512) 232-2937 or via e-mail if you have any questions.
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<td>1/15</td>
<td>MMK: Ch1-2</td>
<td>Ch3: p69-72</td>
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<td>Readings 1</td>
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<td>PS: Ch8</td>
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<td>MMK: Ch3 p72-80</td>
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<td>PS: Ch10</td>
<td>Readings 4</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>2/12</td>
<td>Readings 5-6</td>
<td>Choosing Designs; Quasi-Experimental Methods and Threats to Validity I;</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>2/19</td>
<td>Readings 5-6</td>
<td>Choosing Designs; Quasi-Experimental Methods and Threats to Validity II</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>2/26</td>
<td>PS: Ch11-12</td>
<td>Readings 7</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3/5</td>
<td>MMK: Ch3 p80-98</td>
<td>Readings 8</td>
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**EXERCISE-EXAM DUE, MARCH 8TH AT 9:00 A.M.**

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<td>3/19</td>
<td>Readings 9</td>
<td>Choosing Time and Methods in Hypotheses, Strategies &amp; Designs</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>3/26</td>
<td>MMK: Ch3 p80-98,98-102</td>
<td>PS: Ch6</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>4/2</td>
<td>PS: Ch2</td>
<td>Ch5: 81-88</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>4/9</td>
<td>PS: Ch5: 88-117</td>
<td>Ch4 Readings 12</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>4/16</td>
<td>PS: Ch15</td>
<td>Ch15: p322-329</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>4/23</td>
<td>PS: Ch17-18</td>
<td>Choosing Data Analyses; Inferences; General Linear Model Assumptions, Basics, and Problems</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>4/30</td>
<td>PS: Ch15</td>
<td>Ch9: p336-341, 196-210</td>
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**CRITIQUE PAPERS DUE, MAY 7TH AT 9:00 A.M.**
PAPER EVALUATION

_____ /2.0 pts.  FORMAT

_____/0.5  References
_____ /1.5  Rest of Paper (headings; organization, sequence, citations, etc)

_____ /3.0  COMMUNICATION (brevity, clarity of expression; transition, flow; jargon-free)

_____ /5.0  INTRODUCTION SECTION

_____/2.0  Statement/Framing of Problem (importance; relevance)
_____ /3.0  Choices of Theories or Hypotheses (definitions; clarity of statement; rationale; presentation; consistency)

_____ /16.0  METHODS CRITIQUE SECTION

_____/3.0  Research Strategy (relative uses of Big 8; rationale; + & - ‘s)
_____ /2.0  Threats to Internal, External Validity
_____ /2.0  Modes of Operation (design; rationale; match to hypothesis)
_____ /3.0  Method(s) of Measurement (self-report, archive, etc.; reliability & construct validity; rationale for choices; use of manipulation checks)
_____ /3.0  Consideration of Time Issues
_____ /1.5  Consideration of Ethics (benefit/harm; informed consent; deception; debriefing; etc.)
_____ /1.5  Statistical Analyses (set-up; match to data; appropriateness for hypothesis; null hypothesis; choice & rationale)

_____ /4.0  DISCUSSION/CONCLUSIONS SECTION

_____/2.0  Most Important Limitations on Current Conclusions
_____ /2.0  Suggestions for Future Research (in light of critique)

_____ /30.0 pts.  GRAND TOTAL

(OTHER WRITTEN COMMENTS WILL BE ON YOUR PAPER)
The research process can be thought of as a series of choices, restricted by previous choices, available resources and environmental pressures. One study (cycle) can never provide a definitive answer to an initial research question. It often will stimulate new questions. Rather than one smooth flow, research is often a loosely coupled series of steps, in multiple cycles. Only through conclusions from non-redundant, complementary choices of research methods in successive cycles can important knowledge accrue about answers to the original research question. Adapted from Runkel and McGrath (1972) and Martin (1982).
Hybrid Model of Applied Research

Influences and Constraints Imposed on the Research Process by Individual and Group Characteristics of the Research Team

Moving from Organizational Problems to Research Questions

Communicating Results and Conclusions To Multiple Audiences

Reaching Conclusions and Forming Suggestions for Action

Checking Assumptions and Analyzing Data with Statistics

Converting "Raw" Observations Into Usable Data

Developing Measures and Other Operations for Constructs

Pushing, Pulling, and Carrying Out the Research Plan

Creating Specific Designs of Persons, Settings, and Times

Choosing General Strategies for Testing Hypotheses

Finding Hypotheses and Constructs for Addressing the Questions

... Organizational Stakeholders and Environmental (Resource) Constraints

Communicating Results and Conclusions To Multiple Audiences

Reaching Conclusions and Forming Suggestions for Action

Checking Assumptions and Analyzing Data with Statistics

Converting "Raw" Observations Into Usable Data

Developing Measures and Other Operations for Constructs

Pushing, Pulling, and Carrying Out the Research Plan

Creating Specific Designs of Persons, Settings, and Times

Choosing General Strategies for Testing Hypotheses

Finding Hypotheses and Constructs for Addressing the Questions

Moving from Organizational Problems to Research Questions
Readings 1:  
Idealized Cycle vs. Garbage Can  
Writing, Publishing, and Exemplary Methods

(Note: References for required articles are listed in an order that would generate the best understanding)


(optional: additional writing and career considerations)


Readings 2: Choosing Problems, Questions, and Hypotheses


(don’t worry, this sixth paper is just for fun, but it’s funny enough to put on the “must read” list).

(optional: debates and perspectives on organizational science)

Davis, M. S. (1971). That’s interesting! Toward a phenomenology of sociology and a sociology of phenomenology. Philosophy of the Social Sciences, 1, 309-344. (this is work repeating from the qualitative methods class)


Martocchio, J.J., & Harrison, D.A. 1993. To be there or not to be there?: Questions, theories, and methods in absenteeism research. Research in Personnel and Human Resources Management, 11: 259-328. (helpful for your eventual critique, but in a broad way)


Readings 3:
Choosing Ontology, Epistemology, & Philosophy:
Positivistic versus Interpretive Strategies


(optional: including advantages of computational modeling strategy)


Readings 4:
Choosing Strategies: Sample Survey, and Field-Study Designs

**Scandura, T. A., & Williams, E. A.  2000.  Research methodology in management:  Current practices, trends, and implications for future research.  *Academy of Management Journal*, 43: 1248-1264. (**this article is critical as an example of critiquing methods using the frameworks we'll use in class)


*(optional:  back to real-world constraints)*

Harrison, D. A.  1995.  Volunteer motivation and attendance decisions:  Competitive theory testing in multiple samples from a homeless shelter.  *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 80: 371-385. (in-depth field study example; what does it take to get high response plus observations?).


Readings 5-6: Choosing Quasi-Experimental Designs


(optional: other examples of quasi- and true experimental designs)


Readings 7:
Choosing Experimental Strategies:

Overviews and Controversies


(optional: other examples of lab experiments)


Readings 8:
Choosing Experimental Strategies:

**Between-Subject and Within-Subject (Judgment Task) Designs**


*(optional: other examples of repeated or judgment tasks)*


Readings 9: Choosing Time and Methods


(optional)


Readings 10:
Choosing Time and Methods

There are no addition readings for Week 10. Time to crank hard on the critique paper.
**Readings 11:**
**Choosing, Developing, and Evaluating Measures** (no Readings 10)

Types of Measures and Construct Validity


*(optional: additional issues of specific measurement content)*


Readings 12:
Choosing, Developing, and Evaluating Measures

Technical and Quantitative Issues


Readings 13:
Choosing Observations and Data Analyses


Readings 14:
Choosing Data Analyses

There are no addition readings for Week 14, but there will be some extra PowerPoints. Time to crank even harder on the critique paper.
Readings 15: Choosing (Un)Ethical Methods


