

**NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY**  
**EDUC 725: Institutional Analysis Techniques**  
**Course Syllabus – Fall 2010**  
*3 Credit Hours*

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**Prerequisite(s)**

Admission to doctoral program, completion of Master's degree, and/or instructor approval.

**NDSU Catalog Description of Course**

Surveys, focus groups, longitudinal studies, national data sets, correct statistical design and analyses, and effective reporting techniques will be reviewed and utilized in depth to address questions of institutional performance in academic and student affairs.

**Course Description**

The purpose of this course is to acquaint students with several research methods commonly utilized in analyses of institutional performance and to create an environment for students to conceptualize, within methods of science, various issues in the analysis of institutional performance. The practice of skills related to understanding, appropriately utilizing, planning, and conducting research will be an additional outcome of this course. To that end, students will explore a wide range of subject areas (such as student services, academic administration, financial affairs, student learning, and institutional administration), research methods (quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods), and skills (such as communication, interpretation, design, and analysis). This is a doctoral level course of study with commensurate expectations (i.e., this is not intended to be an introductory course).

**Course Objectives**

The purpose of this course will be accomplished by the following objectives:

1. Develop and defend in writing and verbally at least one research question concerning academic affairs and at least one research question in student affairs;
2. Develop and defend in writing and verbally a survey project, a focus group process, and a longitudinal study that address the student affairs and/or academic affairs questions;
3. Obtain a subset of a nationally available data set that pertains to either the academic or student affairs questions or another institutional performance question; and
4. Analyze the obtained data and present the results both in writing and verbally.

## Course Readings

Fink, A., (2008). *How to conduct surveys: A step-by-step guide, fourth edition*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Milam, J.H., Jr. (2003) Using national datasets for postsecondary education research. In W.E. Knight (Ed.) *Primer for Institutional Research*. Tallahassee: Association for Institutional Research. (This will be posted on the course website.)

Menard, S. (2002). *Longitudinal research, second edition*. Quantitative Applications in the Social Sciences. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Stewart, D., Shamdasani, P., & Rook, D. (2007). *Focus groups: Theory and practice, second edition*. Applied Social Research Methods Series, Volume 20. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Additional Readings: The above texts are only intended to provide an introduction to the topics covered in the course. Additional readings will be assigned each week and we will continue to construct an Annotated Reading List, including recent research. To complete your final project, you will also be expected to review other academic texts (books, journal articles, etc.) of your choice with a focus on both the research question and the research method that you choose.

## Style of Teaching

The Reason Action Model-based framework sequentially guides instruction through phases involving comprehension, transformation, instruction, evaluation, reflection, and new comprehension. The process typically includes presentations, group-based activities for active engagement and/or discussion, skill demonstrations and/or experiential activities, and use of educational technologies as appropriate.

Conducted as a seminar course, most of the class sessions will be an in-depth discussion of the readings within the context of student and instructor research, supplemented with individual and group activities, both in and out of class. These discussions will be based on student-generated concerns and responses to focus questions developed by the instructor on the content of the course.

This course is structured so that you have the freedom to learn as deeply and as broadly as you choose. You will be invited to collaborate in the process of student evaluation and will have an opportunity to continue to improve any professional product you are developing for this class. Negotiation for group work is welcomed, but must be pre-planned with the instructor.

## Course Structure

The course will be taught primarily face-to-face using the IVN system and may be supplemented with online work using Blackboard and Wimba Classroom. Additionally, course readings will be posted on Blackboard, and all assignments are expected to be submitted using the Blackboard dropbox as described below. The schedule will be posted separately on Blackboard.

## IVN Broadcast And Video Streaming

This course serves students across North Dakota, Minnesota, and beyond. Therefore, live videoconference connections (IVN) are provided to students in remote locations. By attending this course, students imply consent for their image and voice to be recorded and broadcast via IVN and online video-streaming for later playback (for course-related purposes). Class recordings are maintained for approximately two weeks and can be accessed at [www.ndivn.nodak.edu/web/streaming.asp](http://www.ndivn.nodak.edu/web/streaming.asp). The password to access the course recordings will be provided in class.

Those attending this class at an off-campus site are responsible for arriving 10 minutes before the start of class to participate in the technical roll call. This ensures equipment, audio, and video are functioning properly when class begins. Should you experience difficulties during the class, please call the host site at (701) 231-8523. You should also ensure that you know how to mute/unmute the microphone, maneuver the camera, and how to restart the equipment if asked to do so.

### Course Website

A course website has been created on the Blackboard learning system. You can log in to Blackboard at: <http://bb.ndsu.nodak.edu>. The most current version of the course schedule will be maintained on this site, so it is important that you check the site regularly. You will also be responsible for announcements and assignments made available via Blackboard and will be required to submit assignments to this website for instructor feedback and grading. *The instructor is only responsible for grading assignments that are submitted properly through the Blackboard dropbox.* You will also be able to access a number of other potentially useful resources such as internet links, copies of course documents and other resources, and a Wimba classroom.

### Course Learning Opportunities

#### **I. Attendance and Participation**

*Expectation:* You are expected to prepare for and attend all class sessions and to participate in class discussions. Should you find an extreme circumstance that prevents you from attending class, arrangements must be made before class begins. Appropriate make-up work is mandatory or any absence will result in one letter grade lower than the grade you normally earned.

*Expectation:* Each week, one student will be randomly selected to summarize the assigned reading(s) for the week at the start of the class period. As such, you are expected to sufficiently comprehend the readings to be able to provide a coherent, 5-10 minute overview of the material if you are selected.

*Expectation:* Preparation for each session includes an integrative reflection of the assigned readings (Lesson) and a question to pose for discussion (Puzzle). These will be written (no more than two pages in total) and turned in at the end of each class session for credit.

*Format of Lessons:* For each lesson learned, you should quote from the textbook or journal article the section of text that includes the lesson. In one or more paragraphs, you should discuss **in your own words** (1) why this lesson is the most important one gleaned from the material, (2) what that lesson means to you, **and** (3) *why that lesson is important to your field of study or practice*. Appropriate APA citation of quoted versus paraphrased material must be used.

*Format of Puzzles:* For each puzzle, you must identify (1) pertinent issues omitted by the authors, (2) key research remaining to be done, **or** (3) concepts or methodologies that require clarification not included in the textbook or journal article.

The “Lessons and Puzzles” assignments will each be graded as full credit or no credit, and in total will comprise 15% of your course grade. You have the opportunity to rewrite any of your Lessons and Puzzles assignments within one week of the discussion should you find ways to improve your work after the discussion.

*Invitation:* As you consider the wide range of possibilities for understanding institutional analysis in various integrated ways, you are invited to bring in relevant topics, cognitive connections, or articles of new knowledge and understanding to present to the class members. This is not graded but is a necessity for collegiality, collaboration and other professional skills of researchers and practitioners in education.

## II. Demonstration of Competencies Learned and Breadth of Content

Expectation: Develop and defend both in writing and verbally a survey project, a focus group process, and a longitudinal study. These 5-7 page “mini-proposals” and the corresponding informal presentations will be evaluated according to rubrics presented in class and will each comprise 15% of your final grade. At least one of these research proposals must include a research question pertaining to student affairs and at least one must include a research question pertaining to academic affairs.

Invitation: You are strongly encouraged to select research questions for these mini-proposals that are both personally and professionally meaningful, including topics that can be used as the basis for future research or other productive, scholarly endeavors including the final manuscript. Should you wish to pursue any of the research projects after the conclusion of the course the instructor will provide additional guidance and feedback upon request.

## III. Depth of Learning Content (Integrative and Creative Thought)

Expectation: You are expected to develop a **research manuscript** based on your **theoretical** interest in institutional performance. This will be accomplished by analyzing the computer generated data or data from a nationally available data set. Your product includes an initial draft to be critiqued by at least two peer readers and the instructor, a concluding paper of your best work that incorporates the feedback of the reviewers, an oral presentation evaluated by the instructor and your peers, and your self-evaluation. The final product will be evaluated by the instructor and will comprise 30% of your course grade (10% for the initial draft, 10% for the concluding paper, and 10% for the oral presentation). Criteria for evaluation will be co-constructed during the semester.

Expectation: You are expected to complete a reflective essay at the completion of the course, which will comprise 10% of your course grade. This reflective essay should address each of the following:

- The course description and objectives;
- The overall content of the course;
- The significant authors or resources you examined, including citations and references;
- The assignments you completed; and
- The significance of the course to your degree program, work experience, and/or professional goals.

Invitation: You are strongly encouraged to select a final research topic that is both personally and professionally meaningful, including topics that can be used as the basis for future research or other productive, scholarly endeavors. Should you wish to pursue the project after the conclusion of the course, including presenting or publishing the results, the instructor will provide additional guidance and feedback upon request.

### Grading and Other Significant Details

- Course grades can be calculated as follows: An A is 92% or above of all possible points with no absences, high quality work and thinking, and consistent contributions to each session, a B is 84 to 91%, a C is 76 to 83%, a D is 68 to 75%, and an F is less than 68% of all possible points and typically indicates a semester in which you didn't have the time or energy to devote yourself to learning the depth and breadth of the course topics. The specific contribution of each requirement to the grade is as follows:

Lessons & Puzzles	15
Survey Research Mini-Proposal	15
Focus Group Research Mini-Proposal	15

Longitudinal Research Mini-Proposal	15
Manuscript: Initial Draft	10
Manuscript: Concluding Paper	10
Manuscript: Oral Presentation	10
Course Reflection	10

- As the students in this course are typically working toward a Ph.D. in Education with an emphasis in Institutional Analysis, the products utilized for summative assessment are intended to be authentic to the professional experience of such individuals after graduation. Thus, the products are primarily intended to promote the development of skills related to conducting independent research and/or the development and modification of theory. If you are not pursuing a Ph.D. in the Institutional Analysis track, the instructor will gladly work with you on an individual basis to develop products that will be meaningful to your professional goals. Any substituted course products must require similar levels of student effort and an agreement between the instructor and student must be finalized, in writing, by the end of the third week of class.
- Although self-evaluation and peer evaluation are a significant portion of your growth and development in this course, the instructor does final grading of the assignments. Upon the receipt of your Grade Expectation form during pre-finals week, which will be after all work for this class is fully complete, any inconsistencies between your expectation for a grade and the grade assigned will be discussed with the instructor. Final exam week will be used for any interviews about grades and course assignments as needed.
- Use a realistic estimate when predicting the time you will need to complete the course activities and requirements. Although the option of taking an incomplete (“I”) is available to you at the end of the semester should you encounter an emergency or other unexpected events, it may mean that you will receive one letter grade decrease in your course grade.

If you find that you are falling behind or are experiencing difficulty in completing course assignments, please discuss the situation with the instructor as soon as possible so that mutually-negotiated accommodations can be made that will enable you to fulfill the requirements of the course and to avoid having to take an incomplete. University policy dictates that incomplete grades can only be given if at least two-thirds of the course requirements have been completed by the end of the grading period.

- Structure professional input from others. In other words, fully utilize your colleagues (including fellow students and the instructor).
- As all work in this class is expected to utilize APA (*6<sup>th</sup> edition*) style, learn and practice it early.

### Course Outline

The course will be structured as follows:

- **Phase I** will focus on the proper design and conduct of surveys and proper statistical analyses of the data;
- **Phase II** will focus on the proper design and conduct of focus groups and proper analyses of the data;
- **Phase III** will focus on the proper design and conduct of longitudinal studies and proper statistical analyses of the data;
- **Phase IV** will focus on available national data sets, statistical analyses of subsets of such, and effective presentation of the results; and
- **Phase V** will focus on the written and verbal defense of research questions concerning institutional performance, the proper statistical analyses of the data, and the presentation of results.

## Tentative Course Schedule

<u>Session</u>	<u>Topics</u>	<u>Readings &amp; Due Dates</u>
1 – August 23	Introduction & Responsible Research	Supplemental Articles on Blackboard
2 – August 30	Surveys: Development	Fink (pp 1-49) Supplemental Articles on Blackboard <b>L&amp;Ps Due for Classes 2-13</b>
<i>September 6</i>	<i>Labor Day – NO CLASS</i>	
3 – September 13	Surveys: Design and Sampling	Fink (pp 51-76) Supplemental Articles on Blackboard
4 – September 20	Surveys: Analysis and Results	Fink (pp 77-116) Supplemental Articles on Blackboard
5 – September 27	Focus Groups: Development	Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook (pp 1-50) <b>Mini-Proposal 1 Due</b>
6 – October 4	Focus Groups: Design and Sampling	Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook (pp 51-107) Supplemental Articles on Blackboard
7 – October 11	Focus Groups: Analysis and Results	Stewart, Shamdasani, & Rook (pp 109-166) Supplemental Articles on Blackboard
8 – October 18	Longitudinal Research: Introduction	Menard (pp 1-24) Supplemental Articles on Blackboard <b>Mini-Proposal 2 Due</b>
9 – October 25	Longitudinal Research: Design and Issues	Menard (pp 24-49) Supplemental Articles on Blackboard
10 – November 1	Longitudinal Research: Analysis and Results	Menard (pp 50-80) Supplemental Articles on Blackboard
11 – November 8	National Data Sets: Overview	Milam (pp 1-23) Supplemental Articles on Blackboard <b>Mini-Proposal 3 Due</b>
12 – November 15	National Data Sets: Development	Supplemental Articles on Blackboard
13 – November 22	National Data Sets: Analysis and Results	Supplemental Articles on Blackboard
14 – November 29	Independent Work on Manuscripts	Supplemental Articles on Blackboard <b>Initial Manuscript Draft Due 12/1</b>
15 – December 6	Group Review of Manuscripts	Assigned Manuscript Drafts
16 – December 13	Final Exams Week: Final Presentations Student Interviews (as Needed)	<b>Concluding Manuscript Due</b> <b>Course Reflection Due 12/15</b> <b>Self-Evaluation Due 12/15</b>

## **Possible Changes in the Syllabus**

This syllabus is your contract for production in the course. If changes are made to it they will be announced in class and posted on the course website as soon as possible. No changes increasing requirements will be made without unanimous consent of the entire class as these might adversely affect your grade.

## **Drop and Add Policy**

The standard drop/add policy for classes will be followed as determined by the Office of Registration and Records (<http://www.ndsu.edu/bisonconnection/registration/policies/registration/>).

## **Intellectual Property Policy**

Words and ideas are the intellectual property of the individuals who originated them. Thus, whenever you quote more than three words in sequence from any single source, you must enclose those words in quotation marks. Cite in parentheses the author of the book or article, the year of publication, and the number of the page on which the words were written (e.g., Fink, 2008, p. 25). Include the complete citation of the source in your references at the end of your paper. Failure to follow these procedures will result in loss of points on any paper in which such failure occurs. Furthermore, failure to follow these procedures may be viewed as plagiarism and, thus, a violation of university policies that pertain to academic integrity.

## **Academic Integrity**

All work in this course must be completed in a manner consistent with standards suitable to members of an academic community. The following specific policies apply:

- “Right and Responsibilities of Community: A Code of Student Behavior (2008, August) available from the dean of Student Life (MU 250) or on the NDSU Student Life website ([http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/studentlife/PDF\\_Files/CodeofStudentBehavior.pdf](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/studentlife/PDF_Files/CodeofStudentBehavior.pdf));
- The College of Human Development and Education’s Professional and Academic Honor Codes ([http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hde/undergraduate/HDE\\_Honor\\_Code.pdf](http://www.ndsu.edu/fileadmin/hde/undergraduate/HDE_Honor_Code.pdf)); and
- NDSU University Senate Policy, Section 335: Code of Academic Responsibility and Conduct (<http://www.ndsu.edu/policy/335.htm>).

**Notice:** The instructor reserves the right to report academic integrity violations and assign a grade of “F” for the assignment or for the entire course as appropriate.

## **Students with Disabilities**

Any student with disabilities or other special needs who needs special accommodations in this course is invited to share these concerns or requests with the instructor as soon as possible.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Please see the following link to review university policy and procedures regarding sexual harassment:

<http://www.ndsu.edu/policy/162.htm>