

## Fall 2026: PUBP 6112 Research Design in Policy Science (DRAFT)

Class Location: Clough 323

Class Hours: Tues/Thurs 3:30-4:45pm

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Georgia Institute of Technology

### Course Description

How researchers design their studies determines the quality of work. You can easily understand the elements of research—intro, literature review, theory, research questions and hypotheses, data, methods, results, discussion, and conclusion. With the aid of various textbooks, you can also obtain a decent understanding of what makes up each of these sections and some recommended principles and general guidelines. But from these textbooks alone, you cannot learn how to design research effectively or assess the quality of design. Having studied as a graduate student in the past and now working as a productive researcher, I have designed this course to help you obtain both intuitive insights and practical skills, adopting the “learning by doing” approach. You will have ample opportunities to analyze and criticize some work-in-progress research papers and those submitted to and reviewed by premier journals in public policy and management fields. While attaining these practical research design skills, you will also enjoy an opportunity to develop your own research design proposal for a topic of interest. Most research design courses focus on teaching empirical methods part. This course follows the suit of such standard practice in the public policy field, but it also places a great emphasis on 1) how to distinguish a good versus bad literature review, 2) effectively formulating a hypothesis statement, 3) how to set up a compelling theoretical framing, and lastly, 4) whether theoretical claiming and hypotheses are well-matched with empirical measurements. After this course, you will be able to do the following.

### Learning Objectives

- 1) Understand the ways in which research enterprises are effectively conducted;
- 2) Critically analyze the quality of research from a design perspective;
- 3) Assess the extent to which the theoretical and empirical approaches of research needs revision;
- 4) Offer critical and constructive suggestions regarding what those revisions should look like to convince academic experts; and
- 5) Draft your own robust research proposal.

### Required Readings (TBD)

*All reading materials will be provided directly to students in the course.*

### Grading

Participation	40%
Precis & presentation	5%
Proposal presentation	5%
Problem Set	20% (4% each)
Proposal	30%

Your final grade will be assigned as a letter grade according to the following scale:

A	90-100%
B	80-89%
C	70-79%
D	60-69%
F	0-59%

## **Class and Student Conduct**

**Use of web and email:** We will post course materials to the university's CANVAS web-based course management system: the URL is <https://gatech.instructure.com/courses/241206>. Students are responsible for all material posted there.

**Email access:** All enrolled students have an e-mail account provided by Georgia Tech. This account is a student's official point of contact with the Institute, and students are expected to check it each school day. Please see <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/3/>.

**Attendance and Absence Policy:** Georgia Tech's official attendance policy can be found at <https://catalog.gatech.edu/rules/4/>. In addition to the GT rules, it states "All students are responsible for obtaining an understanding of each instructor's policy regarding absences." Information about how to notify instructors when you need to miss class and what kind of documentation you should provide is at: <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/student-absence-regulations/>.

**Academic integrity:** Georgia Tech aims to cultivate a community based on trust, academic integrity, and honor. Students are expected to act according to the highest ethical standards. For information on Georgia Tech's Academic Honor Code, please visit <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/policies/honor-code/> or <http://www.catalog.gatech.edu/rules/18/>. Any student suspected of cheating or plagiarizing on a quiz, exam, or assignment will be reported to the Office of Student Integrity, who will investigate the incident and identify the appropriate penalty for violations. Students who violate the honor code are subject to a grade penalty of receiving a grade of 0 on the assignment in question. Multiple violations can result in sanctions up to and including suspension or expulsion from the Institute. The sanctioning guidelines of academic misconduct can be found at [https://osi.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/images/academic\\_sanction\\_guidelines9.pdf](https://osi.gatech.edu/sites/default/files/images/academic_sanction_guidelines9.pdf)

**Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** If you are a student with learning needs that require special accommodation, contact the Office of Disability Services at (404)894-2563 or <http://disabilityservices.gatech.edu/>, as soon as possible, to make an appointment to discuss your special needs and to obtain an accommodations letter. Please also e-mail me as soon as possible in order to set up a time to discuss your learning needs.

**Course Syllabus Revision:** The current syllabus is subject to revisions throughout the semester