

RESEARCH METHODS HLP 6535
Dept. of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management
College of Health and Human Performance
University of Florida
FALL 2025

INSTRUCTOR

Svetlana Stepchenkova, Ph.D.
Professor
FLG 186C; 352.294.1652
svetlana.step@ufl.edu

DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Rachel Fu, Ph.D.
Professor
FLG 240C
racheljuichifu@ufl.edu

TEACHING ASSISTANT: Rezvan Eftekhary, Ph.D. student. FLG 166. rezvan.eftekhary@ufl.edu.

CLASS MEETS: Fridays 12:50-3:50 PM in FLG 235.

OFFICE HOURS: Tuesdays 11 am – noon and 1-2 pm. Or by appointment.

COURSE COMMUNICATIONS

If not in class or office, then **strictly via Canvas Inbox!** Your message with your name, course, and section number will be forwarded to the instructor's UF e-mail box. Using the instructor's e-mail creates course management and record-keeping issues. Use Canvas mail for questions about the course content, grades, special circumstances, and accommodations. Expect a response within 24 hours, not including weekends and holidays.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course lays out the foundations for conducting research in the business and academic world. This process involves stating a problem, gathering information to determine the current state of knowledge on the topic, developing a sound research plan, preparing the study with ethical considerations in mind, collecting data, analyzing the data, and writing a report based on the study's results. The course largely concentrates on quantitative study designs, although qualitative approaches are also covered.

COURSE OBJECTIVES AND OUTCOMES

- Define a scientific method to answer questions of theoretical or practical significance. Describe how to conduct a study using a scientific method.
- Discuss ethical guidelines in research.
- Demonstrate comprehension and knowledge of various research designs covered in the course through quizzes, individual homework assignments, exams, and the term project.
- Formulate research questions, state hypotheses, select an appropriate method, create a research instrument, collect data, do basic analyses, and report and interpret the results.

- By the end of the course, students will be able to design and carry out a small-scale research project in tourism, hospitality, leisure, park management, sport management, or related fields. The project encompasses a problem statement, a search for related literature on the topic of interest and available statistical data, the selection of an appropriate research method, the formulation of hypotheses and/or expected outcomes, data collection, and analysis.
- Practice oral and written skills in presenting the term project results.

TEXTBOOKS

The required textbook is *DOING RESEARCH IN THE BUSINESS WORLD* by David E. Gray (ISBN: 9781529706727). Material about qualitative methods is also taken from “Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods” by John W. Creswell. Another suitable book for quantitative methods is “Exploring Research” by Neil J. Salkind, any edition.

ASSESSMENT

This class will have practicums, two exams, a research method presentation, and a term project. The overall grade will be a combination of the grades in the following categories:

1. Reading assignments (10%)
2. Exam 1 and Exam 2 (50%)
3. Method Presentation (10%)
4. Term Project Presentation and Written Report (30%)

The final percentage points are translated into the letter grades as follows:

Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade	Percentage	Letter Grade
		87-89.99	B+	77-79.99	C+	67-69.99	D+
93-100	A	83-86.99	B	73-76.99	C	63-66.99	D
90-92.99	A-	80-82.99	B-	70-72.99	C-	60-62.99	D-

A score below 60 constitutes a failing grade. After the assignment’s grade is released, students are given one week to contest the grade. **IMPORTANT:** Students with a failing score for the TERM PROJECT assignment group receive the grade of Incomplete for the course, regardless of how well they did in the other areas.

READING ASSIGNMENTS. There will be seven assignments in this group. Assignments are conducted at home. They are evaluated upon completion and the student’s participation in class discussions. Details for each assignment are provided on Canvas.

EXAMS. Exams are conducted in class. Students are given 2 hours for each exam. Assessment consists of multiple-choice, multiple-answer, and true-false questions. They also include research scenarios and case studies. Details for each exam are provided on Canvas two weeks before the exam date.

METHOD PRESENTATION. Each student group will present a research method, such as qualitative interviews, focus groups, case studies, non-participant observation, participant observation, or

ethnography. Students will introduce and explain the method, outline its applicability scope, and demonstrate how it works using a research study. Details are provided on Canvas.

TERM PROJECT. This assignment group consists of the Presentation and Written Report assignments. Students will conduct a small-scale study on a topic of their choice. Details are provided on Canvas

POLICIES

Class Policies

Students are expected to demonstrate professionalism by:

- Actively participating in discussions (e.g., asking questions, contributing ideas, and sharing relevant materials).
- Meeting all deadlines.
- Coming prepared, having read the assigned materials.
- Showing respect to peers and the instructor.
- Food is not allowed in class. Students are allowed to bring drinks in spill-proof cups.

Submission Policies

Follow the course logistics closely regarding the submission of your work. Students are given ample time to finish their homework assignments; therefore, late submissions are not accepted.

The course follows the UF policy regarding plagiarism and other violations of academic honesty. The UF defines plagiarism in the following way:

“(a) Plagiarism. A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to:

- 1. Quoting oral or written materials, including but not limited to those found online, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.*
- 2. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student.”*

Refer to the abovementioned Honor Code for a complete explanation of the University of Florida Academic Honesty Policy: <https://policy.ufl.edu/regulation/4-040/>

Attendance Policies

The course follows the UF Attendance Policy:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>

There are 13 three-period classes in this course. A student can miss, without penalty, one class that does not have an exam or presentation. However, if a missed class has a graded assignment, there will be no opportunity for makeup. Students cannot miss classes in which they present. Beyond this allowance, each class missed without a legitimate reason, as identified by the UF attendance policy, will result in a 2% deduction from the overall course grade. **Four classes missed for an unexcused reason will result in a failing grade for the course.**

Students with Disabilities

Support services for students with disabilities are coordinated by the Disability Resource Center in the Dean of Students Office. Students requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, <https://disability.ufl.edu/get-started/>) by providing the necessary documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Any student who believes they may require accommodation due to the impact of a disability should contact the instructor privately to discuss their specific needs. The University encourages students to follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Online Course Evaluations

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluer.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

Course Calendar

As we proceed through the semester, there may be changes to the course calendar. Such adjustments—clearly communicated in advance—are not unusual and should be expected. Changes may be made to enhance learning or in response to unforeseen circumstances such as weather events or hurricanes. ***I wish you success in this course!*** See next page.

HLP 6535 Fall 2025 Course Calendar.

W	Date	Topic	Readings from David Gray Student Presentations
W1	22-Aug	COURSE OUTLINE Philosophical foundations of research Scientific method Quantitative vs. qualitative research. Steps in the research process. Role of theory	DG 1, 2, 6, 7, 8
W2	29-Aug	Research designs: cross-sectional, experimental, longitudinal, historical, etc. Research ethics The concept of variables	DG 3, 4, 6, 7, 8
W3	5-Sep	Population and sample Sampling error Types of probability sample Sample size Types of non-probability sample Limits to generalization. Hypotheses	DG 9, 15 Method: Qualitative Interview
W4	12-Sep	Operationalization and measurement Reliability Validity	DG 6, 18 Method: Focus Group
W5	19-Sep	Reducing error Scales Interview contexts Potential problems	DG 6, 16 Method: Non-participant Observation
W6	26-Sep	Designing a questionnaire Types of questions Rules for designing questions Data collection	DG 10, 11 Method: Participant observation
W7	3-Oct	EXAM 1	
W8	10-Oct	Experimental designs Quasi-experimental design	DG 17 Method: Ethnography
W9	17-Oct	Homecoming, no class	
W10	24-Oct	Descriptive and inferential statistics, Hypothesis testing.	DG 23
W11	31-Oct	T-test, ANOVA	DG 23
W12	7-Nov	Correlation, Regression. Big Data Research	
W13	14-Nov	EXAM 2	
W14	21-Nov	Term Project Presentations	DG 26, 27
W15	28-Nov	Thanksgiving, no class	
W16	5-Dec	Reading Day, no class	
W17	9-Dec	Written Report is due	DG 26, 27