EVSP500

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**Course Summary**

**Course:** EVSP500  
**Title:** Research Methods for Environmental Science and Policy  
**Length of Course:** 8  
**Prerequisites:** N/A  
**Credit Hours:** 3

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**Description**

**Course Description:** This course presents the research methods commonly used by environmental scientists and professionals. The course will prepare the student to understand the scientific method, the principles of research design, and the statistical analysis of data. The course is intended to provide the student with a foundation in research methods that will be employed throughout their graduate program.

**Course Scope:**

This course of study will take the student through the various steps of a traditional research design. The student will select a specific and appropriate research topic on a current global issue that will be approved by the instructor. With the approved topic, the student will begin to acquire the basic information and tools in order to complete a research proposal. By accomplishing exercises, the student will gather information, assess materials, and analyze data. This course will culminate in the submission of a final research proposal.

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**Objectives**

After successfully completing this course, you will be able to:

- LO-1 Demonstrate the use of selected research methods and tools in researching a given course topic.
- LO-2 Apply the scientific method to the investigation of a research question.
- LO-3 Prepare a hypothesis, literature review, and critical analysis.
- LO-4 Discriminate between scientifically valid primary literature and popular literature.
- LO-5 Evaluate the usefulness of various research approaches.
- LO-6 Formulate new research questions, using scientific data, reason and persuasion in a logical argument.
- LO-7 Create a research proposal.

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**Outline**
Week 1: Basic Concepts of Research

Learning Objectives

LO-1 Demonstrate the use of selected research methods and tools in researching a given course topic.

LO-3 Prepare a hypothesis, literature review, and critical analysis.

Readings

Preface & Chapters 1-4 Creswell

Additional readings in Lessons

Assignments

Week 1 Forum

APUS Library Exercise

Graduate Student Orientation

Week 2: Research Design: Hypothesis Construction

Learning Objectives

LO-2 Apply the scientific method to the investigation of a research question.

LO-3 Prepare a hypothesis, literature review, and critical analysis.

Readings

Chapters 5-7 Creswell

Additional readings in Lessons

Assignments

Week 2 Forum

Hypothesis Exercise

Week 3: Research Design: Literature Review

Learning Objectives

LO-2 Apply the scientific method to the investigation of a research question.

LO-3 Prepare a hypothesis, literature review, and critical analysis.

Readings

Review Chapters 1-7 Creswell

Additional readings in Lessons

Assignments
Week 3 Forum

Literature Review

Week 4: Research Design

Learning Objectives

LO-1 Demonstrate the use of selected research methods and tools in researching a given course topic.

LO-2 Apply the scientific method to the investigation of a research question.

LO-3 Prepare a hypothesis, literature review, and critical analysis.

Readings

Review Chapters 1-7 Creswell, *special emphasis on Chapter 6*

Additional readings in Lessons

Assignments

Week 4 Forum

Week 5: Research Approach: Content and Comparative Research

Learning Objectives

LO-3 Prepare a hypothesis, literature review, and critical analysis.

LO-5 Evaluate the usefulness of various research approaches.

Readings

Chapters 8-10 Creswell

Additional readings in Lessons

Assignments

Week 5 Forum

Content Analysis

Week 6: Analysis of Data

Learning Objectives

LO-3 Prepare a hypothesis, literature review, and critical analysis.

LO-4 Discriminate between scientifically valid primary literature and popular literature.

LO-5 Evaluate the usefulness of various research approaches.

Readings

Review Chapters 8-10 Creswell
Additional readings in Lessons
Assignments
Week 6 Forum
Data Collection Exercise

**Week 7: Research Approach: Surveys**

Learning Objectives

LO-3 Prepare a hypothesis, literature review, and critical analysis.
LO-5 Evaluate the usefulness of various research approaches.

Readings

Review Chapters 8-10 Creswell
Additional readings in Lessons
Assignments
Week 7 Forum

**Week 8: Research Proposal**

Learning Objectives

LO-1 Demonstrate the use of selected research methods and tools in researching a given course topic.
LO-3 Prepare a hypothesis, literature review, and critical analysis.
LO-4 Discriminate between scientifically valid primary literature and popular literature.
LO-6 Formulate new research questions, using scientific data, reason and persuasion in a logical argument.
LO-7 Create a research proposal.

Readings

Review Chapters 1-10 Creswell
Additional readings in Lessons
Assignments
Week 8 Forum
Final Research Proposal

**Evaluation**

Your final grade will be based on the following course requirements:

Grading:
## Materials

**Book Title:** Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches, 4th ed.

**Author:** John Creswell

**Publication Info:** Sage

**ISBN:** 9781452226101

Other readings as identified in the Lessons

**Additional Resources:** Please go to the program guides in the APUS Library for additional resources:

   Environmental Policy and Management:

**Software Requirements**

- Microsoft Office (MS Word, MS Excel, MS PowerPoint) - American Public University System provides Microsoft Office 365 to AMU/APU students and faculty at no cost
- Adobe Acrobat Reader

## Course Guidelines

**Citation and Reference Style**

- Attention Please: Students will follow the APA Format as the sole citation and reference style used in
written work submitted as part of coursework to the University. Assignments completed in a narrative essay or composition format must follow the citation style cited in the APA Format.

Tutoring

- Tutor.com offers online homework help and learning resources by connecting students to certified tutors for one-on-one help. AMU and APU students are eligible for 10 free hours* of tutoring provided by APUS. Tutors are available 24/7 unless otherwise noted. Tutor.com also has a SkillCenter Resource Library offering educational resources, worksheets, videos, websites and career help. Accessing these resources does not count against tutoring hours and is also available 24/7. Please visit the APUS Library and search for 'Tutor' to create an account.

Late Assignments

- Students are expected to submit classroom assignments by the posted due date and to complete the course according to the published class schedule. The due date for each assignment is listed under each Assignment.
- Generally speaking, late work may result in a deduction up to 15% of the grade for each day late, not to exceed 5 days.
- As a working adult I know your time is limited and often out of your control. Faculty may be more flexible if they know ahead of time of any potential late assignments.

Turn It In

- Faculty may require assignments be submitted to Turnitin.com. Turnitin.com will analyze a paper and report instances of potential plagiarism for the student to edit before submitting it for a grade. In some cases professors may require students to use Turnitin.com. This is automatically processed through the Assignments area of the course.

Academic Dishonesty

- Academic Dishonesty incorporates more than plagiarism, which is using the work of others without citation. Academic dishonesty includes any use of content purchased or retrieved from web services such as CourseHero.com. Additionally, allowing your work to be placed on such web services is academic dishonesty, as it is enabling the dishonesty of others. The copy and pasting of content from any web page, without citation as a direct quote, is academic dishonesty. When in doubt, do not copy/paste, and always cite.

Submission Guidelines

- Some assignments may have very specific requirements for formatting (such as font, margins, etc) and submission file type (such as .docx, .pdf, etc) See the assignment instructions for details. In general, standard file types such as those associated with Microsoft Office are preferred, unless otherwise specified.

Disclaimer Statement

- Course content may vary from the outline to meet the needs of this particular group.

Communicating on the Forum

- Forums are the heart of the interaction in this course. The more engaged and lively the exchanges, the more interesting and fun the course will be. Only substantive comments will receive credit. Although there is a final posting time after which the instructor will grade comments, it is not sufficient to wait until the last day to contribute your comments/questions on the forum. The purpose of the forums is to actively participate in an on-going discussion about the assigned content.
- “Substantive” means comments that contribute something new and hopefully important to the discussion. Thus a message that simply says “I agree” is not substantive. A substantive comment contributes a new idea or perspective, a good follow-up question to a point made, offers a response to
a question, provides an example or illustration of a key point, points out an inconsistency in an argument, etc.

- As a class, if we run into conflicting viewpoints, we must respect each individual's own opinion. Hateful and hurtful comments towards other individuals, students, groups, peoples, and/or societies will not be tolerated.

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**University Policies**

**Student Handbook**

- Drop/Withdrawal policy
- Extension Requests
- Academic Probation
- Appeals
- Disability Accommodations

The mission of American Public University System is to provide high quality higher education with emphasis on educating the nation's military and public service communities by offering respected, relevant, accessible, affordable, and student-focused online programs that prepare students for service and leadership in a diverse, global society.

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